DR. ANDREW FOSTER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEAF EDUCATION IN AFRICA, THE GHANA YEARS (1957-1965)

by

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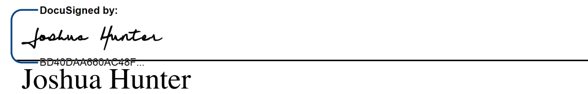

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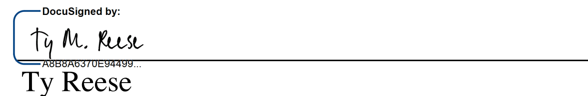

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xvi

ABSTRACT xxii

INTRODUCTION TO AN UNSUNG DEAF AFRICAN AMERICAN HERO xxv

CHAPTER ONE: THE SON OF AN ALABAMA COAL MINER 1

Walking into a Silent World 3

The Religious Roots of Deaf Education in the United States 5

EPHPHATHA at Gallaudet University 6

America's Segregated Schools for the Deaf 8

Alexander Graham Bell: Oralism vs. American Sign Language 10

Foster's "New Normal" 12

Deaf African American Students in the Jim Crow South 15

Dr. Carolyn McCaskill's Experiences with Segregated Deaf Education 16

CHAPTER TWO: A BIGGER DREAM 20

Foster: The Moses of the Deaf 21

Becoming a 'Preacher Boy' 24

Chuck Williams: Foster Became a Future Pastor for the Deaf People 27

God's Calling to a Place Like Africa 29

The Deaf Renaissance Man 30

"Technical" Rejection at Michigan School for the Deaf 32

Gallaudet's First African American Graduate? 37

Twice as Good in Half the Time: Foster's Three Years at Gallaudet....................40

Schools for the Deaf in the World 43

The Historical Roots of Deaf Education in Africa....................46

Without Education, Deaf People Can't be Reached 48

Foster's Transition from Gallaudet to Graduate School....................49

Audism and Racism in Higher Education....................50

They Turned Me Down on Racial Grounds....................53

The Genesis of Christian Mission for the Deaf Africans....................54

Deafness Seems to Appeal the Least to Those with Funds 56

Foster's North American Fund Drive Tours....................58

CHAPTER THREE: AN ADDRESS FROM SOME PLACE IN WEST AFRICA 60

Andrew Foster Always Had Africa on the Mind 63

Pan Africanism and Black Missionaries....................66

Foster's "Stopovers" In the United Kingdom and Europe....................68

The Love of Liberty Brought Them There 72

Foster's Greetings from the Not-Too-Dark Continent! 75

American Small Small 76

The "Deaf and Dumb" in West Africa is a New Field 78

I was a "Boeboe" 82

An Educational Program for the Deaf in Liberia....................84

Unsatisfactory Conditions in Liberia....................88

CHAPTER FOUR: A SAFARI FOR SOULS....................91

Welcome to Ghana: The Center of the World 91
The Black Star of Africa 93
"That's What I Call Making a Real Revolution" 95
Africa Awakens 97
The Roots of Mission Education in Ghana 99
Africanization of Ghana's Mission Schools 101
Foster and Forgotten Heroes of Deaf Education in Ghana 101
Education Plan Ghana 104
"You're Deaf?" 107
Foster's Cultural Misunderstandings 110
Foster's 43 Seconds of Fame 112
Give Them a Name! 114
Ghana May Have a Deaf-Mute School 116
Many Are Called But the Few Are Chosen 117
The CMDA Local Advisory Board 119
Breaking through the Sound Barrier 121
A Journey to Adamorobe 122
Look Deaf 127
Ghana Mission School for the Deaf 128
CHAPTER FIVE: ROOTS OUT OF DRY GROUND 130
"Hooked on the Deaf and Dumb Business": Dr. Seth Lawrence Tetteh Ocloo 131
The Osu Deaf Church 138
"Mafo Taught Us" 141

Ephphaptha Appeal Fund....144

The Banana Diet....148

Deaf-Deaf-Same....150

Dollar and Sense Decisions at the Mission School for the Deaf....152

Foster had a Heart for the Deaf....155

Enrollment at GMSD....158

What is the Language of the Signs?....160

Contact Sign Languages....161

Sign Language Empires....164

Foster and the Fitzgerald Key....167

You Have to Know the Signs....169

The "4 R's" and Religious Based Education for the Deaf....170

A Welcome Relief....172

Nkrumah and Ghanaians with Disabilities....174

CHAPTER SIX: SINCERELY YOURS FOR AFRICA'S DEAF....178

Education on the Akwapim Ridge....179

Land Hunting Far and Near....180

Mampong-Akwapim....182

Paramount Chiefs and Mission Education in Ghana....183

Foster and Mampong-Akwapim Mamponhene....185

The Giant of Africa: Nigeria....187

From Greenhorns to Pioneers....188

Berta Foster (Zuther)....193

Foster in Africa's Year of Destiny 195
Ghana Mission School for the Deaf: Stage Two 196
Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf (Youth and Adults) 200
Prayers Answered: Foster's VW Kombi..........203
Paving the Road for Deaf Drivers..........204
Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf 209
Report on Education of the Deaf in Ghana 211
Foster's "Girlfriend" 214
The Next Milestones 216
Foster's African Airlift..........217
Ghana School Taken Over 220
Foster's Transition from Ghana to Nigeria 223
Open Another School for the Deaf 226
He Really Accomplished an Awful Lot: Foster's Best Practices 228
EPILOGUE – PREMONITIONS 232
REFERENCES 303

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

1. Foster in traditional African clothing in Nigeria 1961 xxiv

2. Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Foster, Andrew Foster's parents 255

3. Foster with his mother Veilline (on the left) and younger sister Blanche (on the right)....................256

4. Foster, the son of an Alabama coal miner, with his father Wiley. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission....................257

5. Foster learned sign language and received basic religious based education at Alabama School for the Negro Deaf-Mute and Blind 258

6. A portrait of Foster at age 19 259

7. Foster standing on the outside of Bethany Tabernacle in Detroit, Michigan 260

8. Walter J. Lyon ("Bro Lion") delivering sermon in sign language at Bethany Tabernacle....................261

9. Foster used his voice to preach to hearing congregations....................262

10. Foster trained to fly small planes. This photo was taken in Detroit in 1951 263

11. Foster attending night classes at Detroit Institute of Commerce between 1947 and 1950....................264

12. Foster graduated from Gallaudet University in 1954 265

13. Foster arrived in Liberia, on May 30, 1957. Mr. and Mrs. de la Hayes hosted Foster's first night in Africa. They ran the Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) radio station and stayed next to the compound....................266

14. Foster's arrived in Accra, Ghana on June 10, 1957. Three months after he launched Ghana Mission School for the Deaf 267

15. By 1957, Accra was a bustling and vibrant city. It was an ideal laboratory for Foster's d/Deaf education experiment. He remained in Accra, rather than moving on to Nigeria 268

16. The British Colonial Government trialed rehabilitation for Ghanaians soldiers who fought for the Crown in World War II. Neither colonists nor missionaries offered services to the d/Deaf. 269

17. Florence Abenaa Serwaa Oteng was a d/Deaf Ghanaian who Foster hired to work at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Christiansborg. She didn't come on board until it moved to Akwapim-Mampong 270

18. Oteng, a d/Deaf Ghanaian, worked with Foster at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim. Per her experiences with Foster, she wrote two books, *Deaf Adwoa Benewaa* and *Give Them A Name* 270

19. Foster (middle with Seth Ocloo (left), Sono (right), and first cohort of d/Deaf students at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Accra on September 10, 1957 271

20. Foster with d/Deaf adults and youth students at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Accra in 1957 271

21. Foster printed, distributed, and used the fingerspelling alphabet for this work with the d/Deaf in Ghana 272

22. Ghana's Ministry of Education adopted and applied the sign language and fingerspelling which Foster brought, circulating it all 14 of its school of the d/Deaf....................272

23. Foster teaching fingerspelling alphabet to the d/Deaf adults at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Accra 273

24. Foster trained his teachers to use sign language, which they used as their mode of instruction and communication in class....................272

25. Foster came to Ghana to evangelize to the d/Deaf. That was his primary motivation, which he intersected with communication and education 275

26. The EPHPHATA Appeal Fund, launched to fund Ghana Mission for the Deaf, lost more money than it made. This led to even greater financial hardship for Foster 276

27. After EPHPHATA Appeal Fund failed to raise resources, Foster had to go on a "banana diet". He subsisted on bananas and water for two weeks, until money arrived from the United States to bail him out....................277

28. In late 1958, Foster made a deal to rent the Mamponhene's (paramount chief's) house and land to accommodate Ghana Mission School for the Deaf 278

29. By January 1959, Foster moved his mission school from Accra to the Mamponhene's land. The school (now the Secondary Technical School for the Deaf) has remained at this "temporary" rental site ever since. 279

30. Foster (far left) with his students and teachers at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim 279

31. Dr. Seth Tetteh Ocloo was Foster's "right had man" at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf between 1957 and 1961. He administered the school and "taught" the teachers-in-training while Foster mobilized its resources in the Ghana and the United States. Ocloo is a d/Deaf Ghanaian unsung hero 280

32. Foster drove this VW kombi across West and Central Africa to establish mission schools for the d/Deaf. It became a symbol of his field work; often appearing in the background of photos from mission school visits..281

33. Foster is driving his VW kombi, but he also taught and empowered d/Deaf West Africans to drive… 282

34. Foster recruited the "Greenhorns" (d/Deaf Nigerians) from Nigeria to teach and train at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, then returned to run his replication schools in Nigeria. 283

35. Foster trained Ocloo (left), who then trained this cadres of "Greenhorns" (Boniface Okorie, Jonathan Olojeole, Moses Ariobasa). Critics complained this system didn't adequately prepare them to teach the d/Deaf 283

36. "Brother" and "Sister" Wilson Nah Dixon, from Liberia, trained at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in 1960. Bro. Dixon was the Principal at Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf between 1961 and 1962. He then returned to Liberia to replicate Foster's model. He founded Liberia School for the Deaf in 1964 284

37. In 1960, Foster received funding from Government of Nigeria to replicate his Ghana prototype in the Western Region (now Oyo State). He launched Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf in a large rental property..285

38. Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf launched with Jonathan Olojeole as the first Principal. Foster moved his "headquarters" from Ghana to Ibadan. Note his trademark VW kombi in the background..285

39. Foster married Berta Zuther, a d/Deaf German missionary. They held their wedding in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1961 286

40. Ghana's Ministry of Education took over Foster's school in 1962. They renamed it School for the Deaf. Foster was retained as the headmaster, but increasing focused on expanding his prototype in Nigeria 287

41. Foster piloted an audiology-training program at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, which was later expanded at Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf. This program, in combination with his in-service teacher program, became the Deaf Teacher Specialist Training College in 1965 288

42. Foster asked people to avoid using the derogatory term "deaf and dumb". Evidence suggests, however, that he appropriated and propagated this term when it suited him 289

43. Foster (right) opened opportunity for Gabriel Adepoju ((left) and James Agazie (center), d/Deaf Nigerians who taught at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, to pursue degrees from Gallaudet University 290

44. Dr. Elstad, (left) Gallaudet University's President, was a CMDA board member and supported Foster's mission education for the deaf in Ghana. He helped establish scholarships for Foster's mentees, such as Mrs. Oyesola (middle) and Ocloo (right) to study at Gallaudet 291

45. Foster replicated his d/Deaf education across much of West and Central Africa. He refused to name schools after himself (none of his 32 carry his name). He instead called them "EPHPHATHA". This EPHPATHA Pour Les Sourds (school for the deaf) was in Senegal 292

46. Foster died in 1987. His legacy lives on in the education, sign language, and symbols such as "EPHAPHATA" which he planted at his schools in Ghana 293

47. Foster founded 32 school of Africa's first school for the d/Deaf. He died in the 1987 Rwandan plane accident....294

48. Memorial marker for 1987 Rwandan air accident 295

49. Thirteen Rwandan air accident victims named 295

50. Inside mass grave for victims of 1987 Rwandan air accident 296

51. Outside mass grave for victims of 1987 Rwandan air accident....296

52. Ghanaian paid their final respects to Foster at the church where he began his work in 1957 297

53. Ghana’s Ministry of Education replicated Foster’s prototype mission school for the d/Deaf model, establishing a nation-wide d/Dear system..298

54. Foster is remembered at many of the mission schools for the d/Deaf he founded across West and Central Africa, as seen in the DRC..299

55. On October 22, 2004, Gallaudet University opened the Andrew J. Foster Auditorium. An African American sculptor created Foster’s bust and a Foster mentee authored the narrative plaque was authored. Both are positioned at the auditorium’s foray 300

56. Foster and Ocloo are honored in Ghana. Godwin Amenumey, a Foster mentee, holds their portraits which hang on the wall at Ghana National Association of the Deaf in Accra. Foster’s portrait also features on a corridor wall at U.S. Embassy Ghana.............301

57. Foster’s work in Ghana (1957-1965) laid the roots of d/Deaf education in sub-Saharan Africa...302

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Foster’s 32 Mission Schools for the d/Deaf..233

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[1] I use the term sub Saharan Africa to describe the whole of the West, Central and East African countries where Foster implemented his work. My intent is to geographically locate his work below the Sahara.

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There are doctoral candidates who say the "best thing" about writing a dissertation is "getting done". This may be true, but the best thing about writing my dissertation was realizing an opportunity to explore, share and construct an impactful and significant educational story with old and new friends. While it's not feasibility to mention all of your names on these pages, know that your allyship was paramount in bringing this story about Foster into final fruition. It's been a pleasure to sojourn with all of you.

To my father and mother
Who honored and empowered me to be who I am

Just as in the days of the Egyptians, so today God had ordained that certain among the African race should journey westwards to equip themselves with knowledge and experience for the day when they would be called upon to return to their motherland and to use the learning they had acquired to help improve the lot of their brethren. ...I had not realised at the time that I would contribute so much towards the fulfillment of this prophecy. (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, quoted in Arhin, 1993, p. 14)

ABSTRACT

Dr. Andrew Foster (1925-1987) was a Deaf African American missionary educator known to have established among the first 32 schools for the d/Deaf across 13 African nations. Foster tragically died in the 1987 Rwanda airplane accident. Deaf communities in Africa and the United States, soon after, lionized him as the "father of d/Deaf education in Africa". Chroniclers of history largely ignored Foster and treated as invisible his contributions to d/Deaf education.

I had been waiting, like many, for researchers to give an in depth, historical treatment to Foster's work. I felt knowledge from such a study would support me to learn from, teach others about, and apply his best practice to serve marginalized communities. I decided to research and write it myself, after waiting more than two decades for this scholarly study.

This is an ethnohistory to explore Foster's life, work and legacy. My study was grounded by five questions: 1) Who was he?; 2) What were his goals?; 3) How did he accomplish his goals?; 4) What is his legacy?; and 5) What can be learned, taught and applied from his work? I examined media about Foster, gathered archival and oral histories, and observed activities at communities where he trialed his work. I thematically combined and analyzed this information to write this ethnohistory.

My key findings revealed that Foster responded to a Christian calling and curiosity about his ancestral roots that inspired him to serve the d/Deaf in Africa. Foster successfully constructed a faith based-service delivery schema to reach tens of thousands of d/Deaf Africans overlooked by government and hearing missionaries.

Foster laid the groundwork to launch the Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (his prototype) during his Ghana years (1957 - 1965). He allied with Ghanaians to: 1) mobilize resources, 2) pilot communication modalities and teaching pedagogies, 3) train and empower d/Deaf African mentees, and 4) transfer his prototype to d/Deaf West African mentees who would scale it across Africa. The last two components are the greatest educational legacies of Foster's work, building d/Deaf Africans' capacity to run their d/Deaf mission school system.

Figure 1. Foster in traditional African clothing in Nigeria 1961. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

INTRODUCTION TO AN UNSUNG DEAF AFRICAN AMERICAN HERO

As a Deaf African American missionary educator, Dr. Andrew Foster brought education to tens of thousands of d/Deaf[2] children across sub-Saharan Africa over the span of 30 years, earning him the honorific "father of d/Deaf education in Africa".

Similar to civil rights icons such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Dr. Maya Angelou, Foster made significant contributions to Africa, both through early collaborations in Ghana and his later work across the continent. Unlike those better-known contemporaries, whose work is well documented, Foster's paralleling achievements are all but absent from the literature about African American leaders. This paucity of information has limited what we can learn, teach and apply from Foster's impactful work.

Foster was a man who turned his intersectional[3] adversities into opportunities to serve others. Succumbing to deafness during his childhood in Alabama, Foster was subjected to sub-par, segregated d/Deaf education endemic in the "Jim Crow South". As a Deaf African American, Foster persevered against audism[4] and racism. He transcended these intersectional barriers to complete two undergraduate degrees, a graduate degree, and to receive an honorary doctorate.

Foster (1980) said he answered a spiritual calling, and followed his ancestral roots, to serve as a Deaf American African missionary in Africa. With degrees and determination, he relocated from the United States to Ghana in 1957. Beginning from the sprawling capital of

[2] The term d/Deaf recognizes *Deaf* persons self-identification with a distinct culture, community and sign language (Lane, 2002), while *deaf* represents hearing loss and persons who can't hear (Padden & Humphries, 1990).
[3] Intersectionality is a theoretical perspective to explain how membership to multiple marginalized groups combines to creates a unique kind of discrimination (Creshaw, 1990).
[4] Audism is a term used to describe a hearing hegemony. It ascribes value and worth to d/Deaf people according to their ability to speak, hear and otherwise "pass" as a hearing person (Eckert & Rowley, 2013; Humphries, 1975).

Accra, Foster allied with d/Deaf and hearing Ghanaians to deliver faith-based services to a marginalized community which governments and missionaries had overlooked. Less than three months after his arrival, Foster launched the Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (GMSD) in a borrowed "after hours" classroom. GMSD was one of sub-Saharan Africa's first schools for the deaf (along with one in Nigeria and another in Eritrea), and the first known to have used sign language and provided d/Deaf education teacher training.

Foster built sustainability into his prototype mission school between 1957 and 1962. He transformed into a multitasker, tirelessly championing access to education and communication (through sign language and English literacy) for d/Deaf Ghanaians to become full citizens. Foster advocated, recruited, role modeled, taught, administered, and raised funds to cement GMSD's future (Anderson & Miller, 2004/2005). As a result of his herculean efforts, Foster mobilized resources to move a burgeoning GMSD from its borrowed classroom in Accra to its own permanent site, a residential boarding school in Mampong-Akwipem, Ghana.

At GMSD in Mampong-Akwipem, Foster set up a Pan African d/Deaf education and sign language training program in 1959. Foster identified, interviewed, selected, trained and mentored cohorts of d/Deaf and hearing West Africans who expanded Foster's deaf education prototype. Those cohorts of Ghanaians, Nigerians and Liberians were trained to use sign language and teach the d/Deaf at GMSD. When Foster replicated his GMSD model in Nigeria, between 1960 and 1963, he sent his Nigerian and Liberian d/Deaf education team members from GMSD to run these mission schools for the d/Deaf.

Foster transferred his five-year-old prototype to the Government of Ghana by 1962. Ghana's Ministry of Education took ownership of GMSD, which they adapted and then replicated nationwide. Building on their foundational work with Foster, Ghanaians constructed

one of Africa's leading d/Deaf education and sign language systems. Ghana's national d/Deaf education system remains a model to, and the envy of, its African neighbors (Oppong & Fobi, 2019).

Foster and his West African team duplicated his work from Ghana, over the course of the next 25 years (1962-1987), rolling out his d/Deaf mission school model into 12 more independent African nations (13 countries in total). Foster is credited with founding among the Continent's first 32 schools for the d/Deaf and popularizing the use of sign language to teach the d/Deaf. These mission schools trained and inspired generations of Africa's d/Deaf leaders (Miles, 2002). Foster's network of mission schools for the d/Deaf established Africa's contemporary d/Deaf education and sign language infrastructure.

Foster's life story is laced with both triumphant and tragedy. While trail blazing his work through in Africa, Foster's life was suddenly cut short in the 1987 Rwanda[5] air accident. His body was laid to rest with 12 others from the plane crash in an unmarked mass grave outside of Gisenyi, Rwanda (Ilabor, 2010).

Foster's life is as remarkable as it is dramatic and complicated, yet d/Deaf education and d/Deaf history literature avails only the most cursory and uncritical contours of his story. This truncation of knowledge leaves in place the "feel good", sugar rush highlights about Foster "the heroic figure", minus the complex shortcomings of the multifaceted man inside that hero. A full biographical treatment of Foster's story can't shy away from critically examining the arch of Foster's work. There are two sides to every story, and Foster's is no different.

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[5] The 1987 Rwandan air accident and Foster's subsequent burial in Rwanda has no baring, or relation to, the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

For example, scholars who covered Foster's affinity for Africa seemed to have glossed over his erroneous characterization of the Continent as a "void" and of d/Deaf Africans as illiterate and language-less.[6] But Foster's complicated, and at time colonial, relationship with Africa didn't escape all researchers. Nyst (2015), Kuster (2014) and Kiyaga and Moores (2003) all explored if Foster's insistence on use of American Sign Language in Ghana, rather than application of the indigenous sign languages he found there, was akin to linguistic imperialist. I critiqued Foster's critique of persons with whom he served. Foster publicly criticized hearing people for disparaging the d/Deaf with derogatory labels such as "deaf and dumb" or "deaf - mute". But then he had no problem with using these terms in his literature and presentations, promptingly a mentee to grouse about his "do as I say, not as I do" approach to mission work. Foster wrote and acted on the guiding philosophies of Pan African ideals, and yet ignored nuances of African culture which resulting in serious misunderstandings that jeopardized his mission there altogether.

These topics can be difficult and uncomfortable to discuss, but I argue that we more genuinely celebrate our heroic figures when we contextual our exploration of their story. Foster is not the only American d/Deaf education figure whose story is warped by one dimensional "hero worship".

The authors of history sainted White figures like Alexander Graham Bell, Laurent Clerc and Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet in d/Deaf education origin stories, whom have become ubiquitous to consumers of literature about the d/Deaf. The same chroniclers of the past treated d/Deaf heroes of color, such as Foster, as invisible. The National Black Deaf Advocates (NDBA)

[6] Researchers have revealed that a significant number of d/Deaf Ghanaian used indigenous sign languages before Foster's arrival in 1957 ((Kusters, 2014).

pushed back: “African American Deaf history has long been overshadowed by the history of Deaf Americans of European descent. While there have been numerous books, films and articles written on Deaf life”, they lamented, “few have focused on the experiences of Black Deaf America” (National Black Deaf Advocates, n.d.). The authors of d/Deaf education literature haven’t moved beyond the grand narratives that exclusively recognized White “founding fathers” (Jowers, 2014). Does the history of d/Deaf persons of color not deserve consideration? Andrew and Bowe (1972) determined that distortions of racial history in not just inaccurate, its harmful. These false narratives injure students of color, including those who are d/Deaf:

> In schools for the deaf, the black students learn very little about themselves, the problems of their people, or the contributions of their ancestors. They are exposed to texts oriented toward a belief in white supremacy. They learn that their ancestors were savages brought in from Africa for use as slaves in America (Andrew & Bowie, 1972, p. 619).

This exclusion of persons of color from literature about the d/Deaf led one community member to a jarring observation: “Growing up as a CODA [child of d/Deaf adults] I thought I knew everything about Deaf history….I wondered why all these years I haven’t heard of this man [Foster] who was just an important as Laurent Clerc” (Ryder, 2018). This quandary emerged in Ghana at the University of Education Winneba (UEW) during a presentation I delivered, in 2018, to trace the genesis of their special education department back to the teacher-training program Foster trialed at GMSD. I concluded my presentation to d/Deaf education/sign language students and a stillness filled the lecture hall. It was as if they were meditating on an important page of their d/Deaf education history which had been omitted from their foundational course work. Together we sat in silence until one student broke the ice and indignantly asked “Then why

didn't we know about this?," followed by another "Why weren't we ever taught about Foster?". While I didn't have answers to their questions, their inquiries motivated me to examine it further.

As I left UEW, faculty urged me to continue my research and publish foundational literature for their pre-service teachers of the d/Deaf and sign language students. Similar appeals inundated my inbox from the University of Ghana's Sign Language Program, the University of Cape Coast's Special Education Department and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Technology and Science's Center on Disability Studies. Ghanaians were not alone in their realization that Foster's work was profoundly impactful but oddly absent from their d/Deaf education origin story.

The NBDA and Gallaudet University issued a joint statement that "[Foster's] phenomenal success has been unsurpassed in the history of deaf education. He is credited for establishing more schools for the deaf than anyone in the history of deaf education" (1998). Why has Foster's story, a story about an unsung Deaf African American hero, been silenced? What did Foster's mission schools for the d/Deaf contribute to d/Deaf education in Ghana? To sub-Saharan Africa? To the United States? The purpose of this ethnohistory is to begin to unravel these mysteries, answer these questions, and ultimately give voice to Foster's story.

My journey to write a story about Foster began by accident. I'm not d/Deaf or hard of hearing. I'm not African American or a person of color. None of my family members, neighbors, childhood or school friends have a hearing loss. Disclosing my personal background to audiences at Ghana's public tertiary institutions triggered probing inquiries which put me on the spot. I presented on Foster to University of Ghana and was asked, "Why did you come all the way to research about him?", and more forthrightly, "What do you get out of this?", "What's in it

for you?”. These questions challenged me to self-examine and ask myself “What – if any – right do I have to tell a story about Foster?” What is my motivation?

Growing up with a moderate to severe speech impediment, I studied Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences for my undergraduate degree. I desired to learn more about myself and others with similar life experiences. Undergraduate studies of this nature cultivated my interest in American Sign Language (ASL) and in turn led me to meaningful interactions with members of the Deaf Community.

I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in 1997, then applied to the U.S. Peace Corps. My application was approved and I was assigned to volunteer with special education in Guatemala. However, prior to departure from the United States, I was unexpectedly re-assigned to teach d/Deaf children in Kenya. I served at Kuja Primary School for the Deaf in rural Kenya between 1997 and 2000. There my d/Deaf students wrongly assumed that I, as an American teacher of the d/Deaf, knew and could tell them more about Foster. Rather, they told me about the “father of d/Deaf education in Africa”. In response, I conceded that I knew nothing about Foster. I began to educate myself about him, with a goal of sharing my findings with them. The serendipity of exposure to ASL set me on a trajectory which inadvertently intersected with Foster’s 30 years of d/Deaf education work in Africa that forever changed my life.

I launched my twenty-year study on Foster in 2000. I began my inquiry with his widow, Mrs. Berta Foster. Mrs. Foster was a d/Deaf German who also aspired to become missionary for the d/Deaf in the developing world. In my personal communications with her, she confided that a scholarly Foster biography had not yet been written. She was adamant that someone should undertake a detailed documentation of her husband’s groundbreaking work. In 2018, Mrs. Foster died at the age of 77 before reading any comprehensive literature about her husband.

Chief Dr. Peter Okoro Mba was a d/Deaf Nigerian who Foster recruited from Nigeria and trained in Ghana (Ademokoya, 1998). After assisting Mba to pursue graduate and doctoral studies in the United Stated, Mba wanted to give back to Foster. He approached Gallaudet University in 1990 to write Foster's biography, tentatively entitled *America's Best Gift to Deaf Africans* (Ilabor, 2009). Mba died before bringing his Foster biography to fruition (Ilabor, personal communication, April 2020). The notion of publishing a scholarly biography about a d/Deaf African American hero might have been buried with Mba, as Foster's name all but disappeared from public view for more than a decade.

In recent times, numerous media have resurrected the legend of Foster: book chapters, dissertations, a full length drama documentary, a cameo role in a prime-time TV show episode, a university advertisement, YouTube videos, a symposia, art exhibits, a self-published literature review/memoir from one of his many mentees, and even a statue bust with a narrative plaque positioned in front of an auditorium at Gallaudet University named in his memory. I sorted through the aforementioned scattered fragments of media in hopes of discovering a fuller, in depth historical treatment of Foster's work. I didn't find any.

The more I investigated media about Foster, the more the genesis of his work intrigued me. I examined an old grainy black and white photo of Foster taken in Ghana in 1957. Foster stood proudly with a group of d/Deaf Ghanaian students and teachers in Accra. I felt overwhelmed by an array of questions about him. What did he do during those first foundational years in Ghana?, How did he do it?, With whom did he do it? and What can I learn and teach others from it? I scanned Foster's photos to find answers but felt like the more I saw the less I knew. It was at this juncture that I realized if I wanted answers to these questions, then I'd have

to investigate for my myself. But where would I begin this proverbial journey of a thousand miles?

In 2014 I decided to undertake doctoral studies to academically buttress my quest to gather and connect individual pieces of the “Foster puzzle”. People who knew Foster, and held knowledge about him, seemed isolated into their individual silos. My goal was to find and put together enough fragments of the story to construct an ethnohistory (Dorson, (1961) where the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Aristotle, 2018)—a comprehensive narrative about Foster’s life, work and legacy.

Ethnohistorical research applies a selection of historical and cultural-anthropological techniques to gather, prepare and analyze oral and written traditions of marginalized persons to answer a set of questions (Spores (1980). Wood (1990) wrote that the “[ethnohistorian’s] goal may be cultural history, the reconstruction of past lifeways, or understanding cultural process” (p. 81). I endeavored to reconstruct Foster’s story from the historical, cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and geopolitical intersections of his work.

Per my chosen ethnohistorical techniques, I collected oral and archived histories from the lived experiences of d/Deaf and hearing persons closest to Foster. I also conducted participant observations at a selection of Foster’s institutions in Africa, inclusive of Demonstration School for the Deaf in Ghana (2017-2018, 2020), Osu Deaf Church in Ghana (2017-2018, 2020), Christian Mission School for the Deaf in Nigeria (2016), Oscar Romero School for the Deaf in Liberia (2016-2017) and Rwanda Church for the Deaf (2017). I documented my key observations, formulated during months (and in some cases years) of participation in activities at Foster’s institutions.

As Brown (1991) conceded, “for many of us, ethnohistory has personal meanings associated with our individual odysseys” (p. 113). Indeed, my individual odyssey through Foster’s story presented a once in a life-time opportunity to apply my “special knowledge of the group, linguistic insights and understanding of cultural phenomena…. to utilize data more fully than would the average historian” (Lurie, 1961, p. 87). I brought together the information I collected from my individual odysseys into Foster’s story to investigate research five key questions.

My research questions about Foster are: 1) Who was he?, 2) What were his goals? 3) How did he accomplish his goals?, 4) What is legacy?, and 5) What can be learned, taught and applied from his work?

Why did I choose to focus on Foster’s work in Ghana, between 1957 and 1965? After surveying the whole of Foster’s 30 years (1957-1987) in sub-Saharan Africa, I decided to start this project at the beginning of his story. I came to this determination after a realization that the first eight years of his work were rich in data to answer my research questions. It was in Ghana, between 1957 and 1965, that Foster forged alliances to experiment with key components of his prototype mission school for the deaf. By 1960, Foster solidified his d/Deaf education model in Ghana and began his first replication phase in neighboring Nigeria, followed by 10 more sub-Saharan African nations. To know what he did in Ghana is, generally, to know what he did in the others too.

Dr. Isaac Agboola (2004), Foster’s mentee from Ghana, had said “many of you unfortunately did not have the opportunity to know Andrew Foster, but one thing I would like to make sure all of you know is that he has done legendary work” (1:00:56-1:01:13). In full

disclosure, I never had the good fortune to meet Foster. How then can I be "sure" of Foster's "legendary work"?, or indeed anything about him, without having known him?

I leaned heavily on pockets of information, such as those from primary sources, to answer my research questions about Foster's life and work. I first searched his writings to answer my research question. This was no easy task. Foster seemed to have intentionally made himself an enigma. Victor Ajayi, a Nigerian who served with Foster, divulged that Foster "refused" to write about himself "because of the controversy such pieces of literary work would generate" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 193). For this reason, the fine details about his children and adolescence are missing. I found a treasure trove of primary source of information about Foster by picking through the mission letters he faithfully wrote to his "prayers supporters" between 1957 and 1987. These letters enabled me to bring more of his own authentic "voice" into story. I utilized other primary sources of information about Foster, such as his fund-raising brochures and booklets, as well as third party letters and reports related to his work.

The bulk of my primary information about Foster, however, came from my facilitation of semi-structured interviews to gather oral histories. I conducted 23 of such interviews semi-between 2015 and 2020 in the United States, Nigeria and Ghana, comprised of: 1) nine with his d/Deaf African mentees, 2) three with his adult children, 3) three with his contemporaries, 4) three with hearing missionary colleagues, 5) three with his Ghanaian teacher colleagues and, 6) two with Ghanaian linguistics/African Studies professors. I video recorded the interviews (most often in sign languages), transcribed them into English, then verified linguistic authenticity with a fluent user of the respective language (to strengthen research reliability and validity).

I leveraged secondary sources of information about Foster too, such as: 1) portions of published articles and book chapters, 2) public events, like symposia and ceremonies, 3) print,

digital and social media. I thematically combined and analyzed the data to identify (code) emerging patterns (Saldana, 2013). I meticulously triangulated the aforementioned data sets, between primary source oral and archived histories, my observation notes, and secondary source literature to: 1) ensure authenticity of my findings (Patton, 2005), 2) identify and deconstruct questionable claims others (including Foster) might have made about Foster's story, and 3) critique Foster's work in the United States and Africa.

I decided to tell this story about Foster in three distinct parts: 1) Foster's story, 2) his mentees stories and, 3) my story. Each of these three components are different, yet share commonalities, in their own ways. Foster, his mentees and I took on varying degrees of personal risk (often ignoring warnings from others) to embark on an odyssey into the unknown to advance participation of marginalized persons in society. Contrary to common belief, none of us were necessarily "altruists", in that we each had much to gain (even when paying our own costs) through our service work. Foster answer a call to missionize to the d/Deaf in Africa, his mentees accessed free education, employment (albeit volunteer based) and enhanced socio-economic status, and I got my PhD!

First and foremost, this is Foster's story. It covers his: a) childhood years, hearing loss and elementary/middle school education in Alabama, b) secondary education, employment and the church in Detroit, c) post-secondary studies, chartership of a Christian mission in Michigan, and, fundraising across various locations in the North America, d) creation of his d/Deaf mission education prototype in Ghana and expansion into Nigeria, e) end of life and nuanced remembrances in Africa and the United States.

Foster didn't become the "father of d/Deaf education in Africa" in a vacuum, but rather there were significant events which set the table for the work that he did. Foster's story is

intersectional, because his life and work intersected with an array of racial, ethnic, socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, religious and geopolitical currents of history. As I wrote, I traced the movements of these currents, by leaning in and out of relevant topics inside for them, to weave a historical context into Foster's story.

Secondly, this is a story that gives credit where credit is due--to the unsung Ghanaian d/Deaf education heroes who paved the way for d/Deaf Africans to access education. If Foster's story is obscure, then those of the Ghanaians who labored behind the scenes of his success are non-existent. Ghanaians made key contributions to Foster's d/Deaf education model which took flight from Accra to cross almost the whole of the African continent. There would no "father of deaf education in Africa" if Ghanaian d/Deaf education heroes, like Dr. Seth Ocloo, Ludwig Ahmere Bafo and Pastor Thomas Marfo, hadn't recognized the significance of his mission and made enormous personal sacrifices to underpin it. Research into Ghana's d/Deaf education heroes could easily (and in future should) fill an ethnohistory of its own.

Lastly, this is also my story. Katz (1986), wrote that: "unbiased history has yet to be written in our world" (p. 7). The history I write about Foster is in no way objective, neural or unbiased. It is biased by my background, wanderings, musings, explorations, perspectives and lived experiences. In exploring the reflexivity of my journey inside this story (Creswell, 2015), I recognized that I'm privileged access to Foster's story. The last six years of ethnographic research (Flick, 2014) between the United States and West Africa gifted me with invaluable opportunities to: 1) enhance linguistic and cultural fluencies, 2) construct interpersonal relationships with the people whom he loved and served, 3) build competencies to undertake archival, print and oral historical research, and 4) learn and leverage ethnohistorical research methods with which to write up my findings (Washburn, 1961).

I presented my findings to communities of practice, at conferences and associations for d/Deaf persons in the United States and Ghana, to strengthen the reliability and validity of the information (Patton, 2014). I presented about Foster to the National Black Deaf Advocates and the National Deaf Persons of Color Association and I received an up front and candid critique about my findings. In participating in intellectual exchange about Foster, I humbly heard a mixture of excitement and resignation about my work from d/Deaf communities of color who long identified with and revered him.

The members most enthused by my findings were often those who had long intended to write about Foster but hadn't been able to do it. They were withheld the advantages and privileges which fostered this work. Dr. Harry Lang, a Deaf historian, asked: "Just because a white hearing person can write a story about a Black Deaf person, should he?" (H. Lang, personal communication, January 2016). The answer I came to was "Yes, I should be able to write the kind of story about Foster which I've wanted to read". Likewise, I should be able to share my story about Foster with others.

I don't claim to be the ideal person to tell a story about Foster. Nor is this the only one that could (or ever will) be told. This is not *the* definitive Foster story; it is *a* Foster story from my perspective. My sojourn with Foster's story has been coming through in cycles. It has been an iterative, rather than linear, experience for me. This iteration of my sojourn, which you are reading, presents an opportunity to learn and teach others about how an unsung d/Deaf African American hero allied with Ghanaian counterparts to deliver services to tens of thousands of forgotten, marginalized people. It's my sincere hope that my perspective on Foster's work will spur further scholarly inquiry and research into the questions, topics and issues I've raised in this space.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SON OF AN ALABAMA COAL MINER

Andrew Jackson Foster II was the born at the family home, in Ensley, Alabama, on June 27, 1925 (F. Haynes, personal communication, August 2020). He was the second of four children born to Wiley Foster and Veilline Reese Foster (see figure 2). Wiley named his son after his brother, Andrew Jackson Foster I. Andrew Jackson Foster I then named his son Andrew Jackson Foster III (F. Haynes, personal communication, September 2015). According to Foster's elder daughter, "there were a lot of Andrew Jackson Foster's in our family!" (F. Haynes, personal communication, September 2015).

Foster's siblings included older sister Bessie, younger sister Blanche, and younger brother Edward (see figure 3). Wiley Foster had a son named Thomas from a previous marriage (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020). Though Thomas didn't reside with his half siblings, he would later join some of them in Detroit.

Veilline Reese, Foster's mother, was an African American born in Florida in either 1895 or 1897 (F. Haynes, personal communication, September 2015).[7] Veilline is reported to have run away from her home, at age 14, and journeyed with Seminoles Indians (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). This follows a conventional, though at times contested, narrative about the historic cooperation between African Americans and Native Americans in Florida between the 1700s and 1800s (Monaco, 2017). Traveling north, Veilline ended up in Birmingham, Alabama. It was there she met and was courted by Wiley. Veilline got married to Wiley at age 18 (F. Haynes, personal Communication, April 2019).

[7] Foster's daughter attributed the ambiguity of Veilline's date of birth to "poor record keeping of that era" (F. Haynes, personal communication, September 2015)

Veilline was a classroom teacher by profession, "but didn't have a degree since it wasn't required back then" (F. Haynes, personal Communication, April 2019). She left teaching, after getting married to Wiley, then stayed at home to raise Foster and his siblings. Veilline, however, continued to pursue education, attending post-secondary night classes for American African adults offered at Park High School in Birmingham (F. Haynes, personal Communication, April 2019). Veilline was an active member of the Miles Chapel in Fairfield, Alabama.

Wiley Foster was born in Georgia in 1876. He was an African American who self-identified as 50% Native American. Some historians (Brook, 2002; Katz,1986) would use the term "Black Indian" to describe Wiley. Wiley was born near the end of an era when approximately one third of African Americans (including Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglas, and Langston Hughes) claimed some Native American ancestry (Katz, 2012; Rogers, 1955). Specifics of Wiley's mixed heritage, however, remain unknown because "back then, Black Indians were considered Black, and their native heritage was expunged from census records" (F. Haynes, personal communication, September 1, 2015).

Wiley served in the military as a private in Spanish-American War with the 10th Calvary Regiment (F. Haynes, personal communication, September 1, 2015). William Katz (1986), who wrote *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage,* notes that: "in an age that offered black men few decent manly jobs, military life appeals to the recruits" (p. 212). It's likely that Wiley, who self-identified as half Native American, served alongside "Buffalo Soldiers" who fought Native Americans in the American West. Wiley wasn't a Buffalo Soldier, a nickname given to members of the African American Calvary that fought in the "Indian Wars" (Willard, 1997). The 10th Calvary Regiment, however, became synonymous with this term because many of its members fought in the "Indian Wars".

After military service, Wiley worked as a coal miner, fueling Birmingham's bustling steel industry. Wiley settled in near-by Ensley. He moved himself and his family to neighboring Fairfield soon after Foster's birth. In Fairfield, Wiley was said to have served as a lay preacher on Sundays (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). Foster (n.d.) often referred to his father as a "chesty coal miner" (p. 2) and himself as the "son of an Alabama coal miner" (see figure 4; Foster, 1980). One of Foster's former students, Marcus Titus, metaphorically suggested that he was even more a miner than his father, unearthing the rich potential of d/Deaf students in Africa (Veditz, 2015).

Foster (n.d.) described his hometown of Fairfield as "a growing steel and wire mill sub-division of Birmingham" (p. 2). Fairfield was sub-divided into generous housing lots during the 1920's. This afforded Wiley one half acre to build his house and keep a garden, chickens, and an assortment of fruit trees. Foster is said to have enjoyed this childhood home (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020). The family house was at the furthest outreaches of Fairfield (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020), about a half-mile from a forest where Foster had "merry adventures with neighborhood kids" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 5). These adventures would be put on hold when an epidemic spread through Fairfield.

Walking into a Silent World

Alabama recorded its first two poliomyelitis ("polio') epidemics between 1932 and 1942. (Wenner & Casey, 1943). Mischaracterized as a "White" disease, these outbreaks of polio disproportionally impacted African American children (Rogers, 2011). While incidence rates amongst African American children were slightly lower than their White counterparts, fatality rates of African American children were significantly higher and 20% of the Black survivors sustained a disability such as deafness (Turner, 2015).

Turner (2015) pointed out that "this [1936] outbreak further exposed the challenges that Black polio patients faced when seeking or receiving medical care. The discriminatory practices of the time, especially in the South, left most Black patients with the disease perpetually searching for suitable treatment facilities" (p. 2). Data are unavailable to determine if racial issues impeded Foster's access to medical care. It is clear, however, that the 1936 polio endemic set into motion a chain of events that profoundly altered Foster's life and that of his younger brother.

Foster described his younger brother's battle with polio and his own contraction of meningitis:

> My three-year old brother was 'hit' [by polio]. Preventative measures were stepped up. My two sisters and I, then just past my eleventh birthday, were quarantined. Still, about a week later another 'bolt from the blue'. This time I went down with spinal meningitis…the high fever destroyed our hearing nerves completely. (Foster, n.d., p. 2)

In 1936, Foster and his young brother Edward both lost their hearing --"same family, same year, but different illnesses" (F. Haynes, personal Communication, August 2015). Edward contracted polio at age three and became profoundly d/Deaf. Foster contracted spinal meningitis at age 11 which left him hard of hearing with a steady and progressive hearing loss (F. Haynes, personal Communication March, 2020).

Foster recounted his initial anxiety about dealing with hearing loss in the Jim Crow South:

> Since first I walked from the hospital into this silent world, I had wondered what a deaf person could do? How could one get ahead in life? With childhood ambitions swept away and education for the deaf being what it was in the South then [1936]. (Foster, n.d, p. 3)

At the family level, Foster's parents were equally as distraught and devastated that their sons had lost hearing almost simultaneously:

> Naturally, parents of physically impaired persons do not readily accept their 'fate'…Therefore, most parents are willing to sacrifice money and time seeking a cure from other doctors, faith healing and even quacks!.. so around and around we went with mom. All to no avail…this must have been a terrible blow to our hard working parents…But as I was to learn in later years, all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Foster, n.d., p. 2)

Foster's walk through the silent world would take him to the intersections of deafness, religiosity, race, language and education. An exploration of these connections is an essential part of understanding how their convergence impacted Foster's world and influenced his work.

The Religious Roots of Deaf Education in the United States

The Second Great Awakening (1790-1840) swept across the United States as the White settler population rapidly expanded and occupied land (Hankins, 2004). Its fury sermons were often delivered at revival meetings and Bible camps, to soothe socio-economic tensions that accompanied the Manifest Destiny era (Pratt, 1927). Evangelicals from the Second Great Awakenings applied Christian teachings from the Bible to the new nation's emerging societal issues, like teaching the d/Deaf (Altschuler, 2011). The Second Great Awakening touched Foster too, through Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (THG).

THG became a fervent evangelical during the Second Great Awakening (Valentine, 1993). In 1814, he took a keen, Christian interest in educating the d/Deaf daughter of his wealthy neighbor, Dr. Mason Cogswell (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989). Prior to THG's intervention, Dr. Cogwell's daughter had no exposure to education because d/Deaf students

couldn't access the Colonies' burgeoning common school system (Edwards, 2001). In 1814, THG surveyed d/Deaf education pedagogy and communication modalities used in the United Kingdom and Europe. He subsequently met a Deaf French teacher named Laurent Clerc at the Royal Institute of Deaf in Paris (Lane, 1989). Clerc persuaded THG to institute the manual methods/sign language (rather than oral-based methods) to teach the d/Deaf in the United States. THG seemed willing to do so if Clerc joined him (Caroll & Lane, 1991). The two men set sail for France to Hartford, Connecticut in 1816.

In Hartford, THG and Clerc collaborated and founded Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb Persons in 1817. This first of its kind institution was later renamed American School for the Deaf (ASD; Cerney, 2005). Clerc trained THG and cohorts of teachers in sign language and d/Deaf education pedagogy at ASD. Clerc's d/Deaf education template was scaled into every state in the Union, and even Washington, D.C.

EPHPHATHA at Gallaudet University

The Columbia Institute for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind was founded, in 1857, in Washington, D.C. (Armstong, 2014). This Federally-funded institution housed a post-secondary unit to educate d/Deaf youth and young adults, and also taught d/Deaf children at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (known as Kendall). THG's son, Edwin Miner Gallaudet (EMG), served as the first president between 1857 and 1910. The institution was later renamed in THG's honor, becoming Gallaudet College, and then Gallaudet University (known as Gallaudet). Foster would later attend Gallaudet and then send cohorts of his d/Deaf mentees there for post-secondary education. Gallaudet has the distinction of being the world's first and only liberal arts college for d/Deaf post-secondary students. It remains a beacon of pride for d/Deaf persons worldwide (even those who don't attend). While many d/Deaf and hearing

persons are familiar with the school, few are as knowledgeable of the origins and impacts of its mission education roots.

In keeping with the Christian beliefs of its namesake, Gallaudet's founders enshrined *Ephphatha* on the school's official seal in 1864. Foster would appropriate and use the *Ephphatha* moto in his work, thence I'll explore its intersections with the d/Deaf and education in the West. *Ephphatha* was referenced from Mark Chapter seven. It was written that when Jesus approached a certain d/Deaf man that he "looked up to the heaven, he sighed, and said unto him, 'Eph'phatha, that is be opened'. Straightway his ears were opened" (34-53, King James Bible, 1769/2017). The inner circle of Gallaudet's official seal depicts an open Bible with *Ephphatha* written in Syriac across the pages and fingerspelled around it. It's cryptic written and fingerspelled appearance is probably not scrutinized by most Gallaudet students. It didn't escape the attention of all. Jason Tozier (2013) emphatically asked: "it is an evangelistic effort to impose Christian value on all [Gallaudet] degrees and diplomas? Even university class rings too! EPHPHATHA means loss of individual liberties, which are 'inalienable rights' of the state of being Deaf. Audism needs to be rejected. " Reverend Kang, a Gallaudet chaplain, countered that the short passage invokes equality and not audism: "It would be no mistake to conclude that Jesus wanted to open not only the ears and mouth, but also the doors of many opportunities that had been tightly shut to d/Deaf people. We must thank Jesus for opening great opportunities for us because he has commanded in a firm tone to be opened (Ephphatha) for the sake of the d/Deaf man" (Kang, 2008).

Gallaudet University's continued use of Christian symbols (even to this day) would have greatly pleased THG, who regarded conversion as the soul impetus behind founding schools for the d/Deaf (Valentine, 1995). He professed that "mass conversions amongst the deaf had

always been regarded not only as the school's [ASD] primary purpose but also as its justification for using sign language" (Sayer, 2017, p. 135). Aside from establishing America's d/Deaf education system with a decidedly Christian ethos, THG had the dubious distinction of participating in political activities which subverted the position of Black people (both d/Deaf and hearing) in United States and Africa (Sayer, 2017).

America's Segregated Schools for the Deaf

THG was said to have opposed abolition (Sayer, 2017) and backed the infamous American Society for the Colonization (ACS; Banton 2019; Diouf, 2013). The ACS was born out a White evangelical attempt to interrupt abolition by ostensibly repatriating African Americans to Liberia between 1821 and 1847 (Ciment, 2013). Despite THG's apparent racial prejudice and misadventures in African geopolitics, his enlightened Deaf French colleague, Clerc, did the right thing at ASD and enrolled three African American students (Sayer, 2017). Deaf African American students in the Southern states, like Foster, would have to wait more than a century to benefit from the education and language that THG and Clerc imported to the Colonies.

African American d/Deaf children in the pre-Civil War era were denied education as were hearing African American children (McCaskill, 2010). The first formal schools for hearing and d/Deaf African American students were established in the South by 1865. In accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) ruling, Alabama (and neighboring states in the South) established separate school facilities for African American and White children (Bartz, 2019). Hearing African American students continued to deal with discrimination in the educational setting in the Jim Crow South. But the discrimination d/Deaf black children faced

was worse; students like Foster dealt with a “double discrimination” at the intersections of racism and audism:

> Being Black and deaf is in my ways a ‘double whammy’ because of society’s abrogation of each of the minorities. When the conditions of Blackness and deafness were combined in one person, the individual effects of prejudice, discrimination, and negative self-image are compounded exponentially. (Werner, 2017, p.1)

America’s segregated schools for the d/Deaf were a case in point.

Between 1865 and 1978, approximately 20 segregated schools and departments sprung up across Southern states and below the Mason-Dixie line into Washington, D.C. (Burch, 2000). On the whole, segregated schools for d/Deaf African Americans were considerably less resourced then the White schools for the d/Deaf (Anderson & Grace, 1991). Foster would attend a segregated school for the d/Deaf. But because he wrote sparingly about the experience, I sought literature from his d/Deaf African American contemporaries to add insight these lived experiences.

Dr. Ernest Hairston is a West Virginia School for the Colored Deaf and Blind alumnus. He looked back on this hidden (and infrequently discussed) era of American d/Deaf education history and explained that, “In the South, most of these schools were jointly for d/Deaf and blind students and were called schools for the ‘colored’ or ‘Negro Deaf and blind’, such as North Carolina School for the Negro Deaf and Blind” (NCSNDB; Hairston & Smith, 2001, p. 194).

The institutions that populated America’s segregated d/Deaf education system took on names, from a bygone era, which might appear arcane and even offensive by today’s standards. For example, the eclectically entitled “Oklahoma Industrial Institution for the Deaf, Blind, and

Orphans of the Colored Race," or the confoundingly named "Florida Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Colored Department."

Mary Wright is NCNSBD alumina. In *Sounds Like Home: Growing up Black and Deaf in the South*, Wright (1999) wrote a memoir on her experiences at NCSNDB, which was the first segregated school for the d/Deaf in the United States. Foster didn't detail the layout of the segregated school he attended in Alabama, but Wright described NCSNDB's in her book:

> The North Carolina Negro School for the Blind and Deaf was for Black children. When I was there, it could handle about 300 children altogether….The school for White blind children was in town and the school for White deaf children was in western North Carolina.…During the course of the day I got my first real look at the campus. The buildings were arranged in a square with two dorms on one side—one for the deaf boys and one for the blind boys—and two dorms on the opposite side—one for the deaf girls and one for the blind girls. The largest building, housing classrooms. (p. 95)

Deaf African American alumni (Hairston & Smith, 2001) from these institutions reported that facilities were poor quality, education pedagogy was sub-standard and academic expectation was low. Deaf African American students, like Foster, had one unexpected and surprising advantage, the freedom to use sign language. And yet use of sign language was a controversial topic which divided American educators of the d/Deaf. It's implications on Foster's work are significant and warrant further investigation.

Alexander Graham Bell, Oralism and American Sign Language

THG and Clerc had woven sign language into the first iteration of America's d/Deaf education system, where it was used as the primary mode of instruction. Most educators of the d/Deaf, during that time, seemed to understand that "deafness creates beings who are more

visually orientated compared to their auditory oriented peers" (Hauser et. al., 2010, p. 486). It was not until the 1960's that Dr. William Stokoe, a language scholar at Gallaudet University, demonstrated that the sign language used by d/Deaf people in North America (and in other locations) met linguistic criteria of a legitimate language (Maher, 1996). His early publication specified that "American Sign Language" (ASL) was the name of the sign language used by d/Deaf people in North America (Stokoe et al., 1965). Stokoe's scholarship on sign language, and coinage of the term ASL, postdated influential opponents to manual communication, such as Alexander Graham Bell.

Alexander Graham Bell's is best known as an American scientist who invented the telephone and well as aided learning devices. He is also considered a founding father of oral education for the deaf in the United States (Winefield, 1987). Bell and other business leaders pressured hearing decision-makers to replace sign language in the schools for the d/Deaf with the supposedly "superior" oral-based instructional strategies. Perhaps it's not surprising that hearing people equated speech with education, because "to the hearing world…speaking ability is the hallmark of an educated persons" (Plann, 1993, p. 2). There was a strange caveat given to the discretionary use of oralism in American schools for the d/Deaf. The "superior" oral based method was reserved for the d/Deaf students deemed most worthy of its merits. The manual method was only offered to "inferior" d/Deaf students thought "incapable" of benefiting from oralism, such as African Americans. Baynton (1996) shared that "because of the continued use of sign language in the [Black] classroom, the ironic result of this policy of discrimination may have been that Southern deaf African-Americans, in spite of chronic underfunding at their schools, received a better education than most deaf white students" (p. 180). Pedagogical differences at America's segregated schools for the d/Deaf meant that White d/Deaf students

spent their school days trying to master spoken English and lip reading, while d/Deaf African Americans simply got on with learning academic subjects via ASL.

Per this twist of history, Foster was taught with sign language and would go on to replicate a manually (not orally) based pedagogy across sub Saharan Africa. There has been confusion as to whether Foster used ASL. The term postdated most of Foster's work and didn't appear in his literature.

Foster's "New Normal"

In the final sections of this chapter I will investigate how the aforementioned religious, racial, economic and linguistic foundations of d/Deaf education in the United States impacted d/Deaf African Americans. Per this examination, I'll cast more light on the lived experiences of Foster, beginning with his transition from a general education program to a segregated school for the d/Deaf.

After losing hearing, Foster initially tried to reintegrate into general education at one of Fairfield's public elementary schools. Florence Oteng (1988), a d/Deaf confidante of Foster's in Ghana, said that school's principal realized something about him had changed after his bout with meningitis. According to the story from Oteng, the principal "once asked him if he could hear the thunder when it rains. Andrew's answer was no. Andrew's parents were advised…to send him to a school for the deaf" (Oteng, 1988, p.v). Assuming this is true, such a recommendation from a school principal might have been a catalyst to recognize the inevitable–that young Foster's hearing loss was indeed irreversible. Foster's parents "did what they could to adjust to that new normal" (F. Haynes, personal Communication, March 2020). This adjustment meant following the principal's advice. Foster's parents sent him and his brother from their family home in Fairfield, Alabama to ASNDB.

ASNDB was established in 1892 on a campus separate from the “White” school for the d/Deaf (known as Alabama School for the Deaf), which opened 34 years earlier. ASNDB was a residential institution in Talladega approximately an hour’s drive east of Fairfield (see figure 5). The school had between 95 and 100 d/Deaf African American students during Foster’s time there (Veditz, 2015). Foster started middle school at ASNDB in 1937 (Foster, n.d.). He would spend five formative years on the campus, receiving a linguistic and religious grounding that positioned him for his future d/Deaf education mission work.

Foster’s deafness reoriented him toward visually based communication through sign language, which he first learned at ANSDB and later expanded on at Gallaudet (Sunday School Times, 1957). Foster didn’t account for how he was taught sign language at ANSDB, but Wright (1999) offered an example of paralleling pedagogy at North Carolina School for the Negro Deaf and Blind (NCSNBD): “I was shown a picture of an apple, the letter A, and how to say apple in sign language… In the classroom after dinner it was more of the same. Different letters and pictures, but I was beginning to catch a sign or two” (p. 94). Foster became a proficient signer and, later, a stalwart proponent of the language. In his writing he argued that “sign language is the vernacular of the deaf” (1959c, September – October). Although Foster’s father never tried his hand at sign language, his mother and sisters learned the fingerspelling alphabet and enough vocabulary to sign with Foster and his brother Edwin (F. Haynes, personal Communication, March 2020).

Deafness interrupted Foster’s access to religion as much as it did to his education. Prior to losing his hearing Foster “always loved going to Sunday school and singing” (Ilabor, 2010, p. 6). Foster attended church regularly as a child, alternating between Miles Chapel with his mother and the Church of Christ with his father Wiley Foster (F. Haynes,

personal communication, April 2019). “His hearing loss was not only a physical loss to him,” his daughter said, “it was an emotional loss too. He looked forward to joining the youth choir at Miles [Chapel]…it really made him sad, not being able to join” (F. Haynes, personal communication, April 2019).

Fortunately for Foster, America’s schools for the d/Deaf didn’t separate church from state education during this era (Fernandes, 1981). This mission education model might have been problematic, and even ineffectual, for d/Deaf students who sought a more secular.

Mary Wright (1999), for example, described how teachers routinely tried to applied Christianity to maintain class discipline at NCSNBD: “Miss Laws proved to be a very nice teacher—strict…She was also a missionary for her church. Most of the time, instead of punishing the children, she tried to tell them of Jesus to get them to behave for him” (p. 118). But the d/Deaf students who didn’t care to be told about Jesus might not have learned to behave. Non-believers confronted with this style of mission d/Deaf education might have received more of a “miseducation”, or simply tuned out and learned nothing at all.

ASNDB was founded during the Second Great Awakening (like NCSNBD and Gallaudet University) and appeared grounded in the same kind of mission-based instruction described by Wright (1999). Foster’s writing suggested that the school’s steady diet of sermons, Bible readings, and daily devotions offered him an opportunity to continue to explore his spirituality after hearing loss. “Here I believe God distinctly spoke to me during my second year. During the daily devotion period,” Foster (n.d.) wrote, “a Bible verse would be taught from the blackboard…I began a habit of daily Bible reading” (p. 3). Foster noted how one verse particularly caught his attention “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you” (“Deaf Missionary Killed in Plane Crash,” 1988). Per

Foster's spiritual journey, he cultivated a relationship with the divine which he increasingly leaned into during later stages of life.

Deaf African American Students in the Jim Crow South

Foster received his secondary education at ASNDB, but he never graduated nor received a diploma (Agboola, 2014). Deaf African American scholars (Hairston & Smith, 2001; McCaskill, 2010) lamented that "academic success and high school graduation were often not possible for d/Deaf African American students in the Jim Crow South" (Hairston & Smith, 2001, p. 193). Dr. Isaac Agboola was a Deaf Nigerian who Foster taught and later assisted to study at Gallaudet. Agboola (2014) wondered aloud, at a symposium entitled *The Life and Work of Andrew Foster*, about the impact of racial segregation on Foster's youthful ambitions, hopes and dreams.

> I was trying to imagine what would be going on through Andrew Foster's mind as he was growing up in the South...and being told that throughout his life and that he had certain limits and that he could only go so far. I could imagine him in his childhood being told of these limitations, and struggling with who he was as a person, understanding the segregation that was happening in his hometown, and why were his people marginalized and disenfranchised? (Agboola, 2014, pp. 24 – 25)

Scant evidence is available to triangulate Agboola's musing about what conditions Foster might have faced in Jim Crow Alabama. Foster exhibited a humility in his writings that made him loathe to divulge details about difficulties he encountered at ANSDB. Other ANSDB alumni left no written documentation about those years. ANSDB, like the history of d/Deaf persons of color, was absent in the literature. Because Gallaudet University archives didn't have information about ANSDB, I decide to go to Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB),

the body which absorbed the segregated campuses, for further information. I inquired at the AIDB about accessing their archives to learn about ANSDB during Foster's time. Unfortunately, the response was less than positive. Lynne Hanner, AIDB's Executive Director, regretted to inform me that "the majority of records and information from that part of AIDB were destroyed many years ago" (L. Hanner, personal communication, September 2015). Fortuitously, Dr. Kamei's (2006) previous research on Foster extended into his ANSDB years, including an incident where ANSDB students were served "left over" two-day old food from the neighboring White school for the deaf (Kamei, 2006).

Dr. Carolyn McCaskill's Experiences with Segregated Deaf Education

My ethnohistorical research into print and archival information about ANSDB recovered little information, certainly not enough to glean a picture about Foster's education in Alabama. I therefore opted to reach out to ANSDB alumni to arrange for interviews. My rationale was that their lived experiences might be comparable or similar to that of Foster's. I endeavored to collect an oral history from an ANSDB alumni, then triangulate it with the meager literature I had found. I hoped to get an idea of what Foster's education at ANSDB might have looked like.

In 2017, I had an opportunity to interview Dr. Carolyn McCaskill at the 28th National Black Deaf Advocates Conference in Baltimore. After presenting about Foster at the conference, I sat down with McCaskill to discuss about ASNDB. She was ANSDB alumna who attended the same school as Foster, albeit it two decades later. Her experiences helped frame how those school days molded Foster and informed his service delivery schema.

McCaskill was adventitiously deaf (Rutman, 1989). Similar to Foster, she couldn't easily cope with a general education in Alabama. Her mother transferred McCaskill into ANSDB where she exceled in ASL and education for the d/Deaf. She eventually became a Deaf Studies

professor of at Gallaudet. That said, McCaskill's transition from general education into ANSDB was far from smooth.

> When I arrived [at the Alabama School for the Negro Deaf] I was excited but experienced major shock. My first impression of the Alabama School for the Negro Deaf was that the school grounds and buildings were akin to a prison. It all had an old, tired look about it. The Alabama School for the Negro Deaf was very manual- using signing, not oral methods. I never learned sign language and there was no real sign language class, so I just had to pick it up on the go, which I did rather quickly. I was there from 1964 to 1968, when that school integrated into what was formerly the White school for the d/Deaf. Seeing the White school for the Deaf for the first time… I was really surprised by how nice and pristine it was! Now as I look back at how the White school compared with the Black school, I realize that the Black school was really run down.

Compared to their White classmates, the d/Deaf African American students received vocational rather than academic training (Anderson & Grace, 1991). McCaskill's intelligence and ambition were stifled by ASNDB's non-academic/job training focus.

> The education at Alabama School for the Negro Deaf was very technical and vocationally focused. There was sewing and cooking for girls. For boys, they could choose between woodworking and barbering. Both could learn how to do laundry, that was heavy work! I didn't feel like I was learning much at the Alabama School for the Negro Deaf, because I wasn't academically challenged there. They had such low academic expectations for us and the school only went up to 8th grade. After that it was a big "bye"; no transition plan, no discussion about further education, nothing.

McCaskill was at ASNDB almost 25 years after Foster. She participated in school integration, merging the Black and White campuses into Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. This integration opened up new possibilities which McCaskill never imagined.

> Administrators were in the process of integrating Black and White students. By the fall of 1967, they chose 10 d/Deaf Black students to integrate into the White school for the d/Deaf. My sister and I were in that group. Later, I took a class with the Principal, who looked straight at me said "You're going to college". I kind of looked around with an expression like "Uh, me?". She again pointed at me and said "You, you're going to college." I didn't think that was possible, but…this Principal was not someone you'd say "no" to so…I said "Yes, madam." In the back of mind I was like "Whatever. No way, that's not possible". So after class I was chatting with a group of d/Deaf White students and I remarked "Hey, the Principal said I'm going to college but…she's making that up, there's no way...". They told me "Well, it's up to you. It's possible if you're motivated and study enough to improve your English literacy". I was like "Really?", and they said "Yes." It was important, those three "Rs", of reading, writing and arithmetic. That planted a seed in my life which was a big game changer. I got the big picture, I had dreams, I saw what was possible.

I continued by asking McCaskill if she had met Foster. She affirmed "Yes", that he used to visit ASNDB. McCaskill then shared her first recollection of Foster:

> I remember one day I walked out and I noticed students congregating around someone in great excitement. I wondered "who can that be? It must be someone very famous who I might know". I asked, "who is that?" and I was shown the sign name for Foster [thumb tapping the right side of the neck]. I asked, "who is Foster?" Someone then fingerspelled

his name “A-N-D-R-E-W F-O-S-T-E-R”. More and more students were swarming all around him, like he was movie star. I watched this scene in fascination. He walked away from this crowd and I noticed he was a big, tall, athletic looking guy. He came over, up to me and stopped. I looked up at him in awe, just staring. He said “Hello!”. I shyly said “hi….”, “What’s your name?” he jovially asked. I fingerspelled “C-A-R-O-L-Y-N”, while glancing up at him . He said, “nice to meet you”, firmly shook my hand, then lumbered off. It felt like I had met a star.

In 2020, McCaskill narrated a Gallaudet advertisement, tracing Foster’s studies at Gallaudet to his d/Deaf education mission in Africa, then back to the university’s history (Gallaudet University, 2020).

Foster’s childhood hearing loss had thrust him into a “silent world”, yet he navigated his way through by transitioning from a hearing general education school into the ANSDB. Evidence suggested that the state of ANSDB’s physical infrastructure, academic expectations and even meals left something to be desired. This might be one reason why official records of the “negro d/Deaf school” proved hard to find at AIDB. Or they simply didn’t care enough about d/Deaf African Americans students to preserve their history.

Despite the ABNSDB’s scholastic deficits and less than comfortable conditions, it supported Foster’s access to language and religious, which he wouldn’t have realized at the neighboring White school for the d/Deaf. Foster’s journey would take him further then he (or indeed anyone) could have imagined, but he never forgot the way back to his alma mater.

CHAPTER TWO: A BIGGER DREAM

“What of the future? you may question. That all depends….” (Foster, 1980, p. 11).

Foster left the Alabama School for the Negro Deaf Blind (ASNDB) in 1942 and leapt into the labor force. He worked his first job at an ice cream factory in Birmingham over the summer (Oteng, 1988). But “Andrew Foster was a brilliant man with many aspirations” (Agboola, 2014) which he wouldn’t realize unless he freed himself from the racial discrimination of the “Jim Crow” South. “Andrew had a bigger dream” (Ilabor, 2009, p. 11). With fortitude and courage, Foster relocated from the South to pursue his aspirations and dreams in the North. “I set out for Detroit on my own at age 17,” Foster wrote (n.d.), “and this coincided with the flood of war workers to the industrial north” (p. 3).

The Great Migration has been recognized as “one of the most significant events in United States during the twentieth century” (Tolnay, 2003, p. 210), resulting in the movement of six million African Americans from the American South to the “liberal” North. The First Migration (1916-1940) was set into motion by World War I, which paused European immigration and lead to creation of industrial jobs in the North. African Americans occupied many of these jobs until the Great Depression. The Second Great Migration (1940-1970) was marked by a second wave of African Americans moving north, seeking enhanced economic opportunities generated by World War II (Boehm, 2009; Wilkerson, 2011).

World War II created an acute labor shortage at a time when companies were under the gun to turn out mass military equipment. These economic forces drew not yet conscripted African Americans to power America’s war effort in Northern industrial cities (Tolnay, 2003).

According to Pastor Ken Hampton, an African American evangelist who fellowshipped in Detroit, Foster was the right man for this labor force. I interviewed Hampton and was told that "Foster stood 6' 2'' and weighed approximately 220 pounds. He was a well-built man…strong; he made a very physical, visible impression on you as soon as you met him." (see figure 6; K. Hampton, personal communication, September 2015).

African Americans often followed family ties when migrating from South to North, which influenced Foster's decision to relocate to Detroit. *Seeds of Hope: The Andrew Foster Story* (Harchick & Harris, 2018, 12:50) dramatized that Foster left Alabama to stay with a fictional, ASL fluent aunt in an elegant two-story Victorian house in Detroit. My research didn't uncover an affluent, sign language friendly aunt in Detroit. It revealed that Foster briefly moved in with his uncle in Detroit in 1942. After landing his first job as a dishwasher, Foster promptly moved out to rent a room in a nondescript boarding house (F. Haynes, personal Communication, December, 2017). Foster's brother Edward, half-brother Thomas and sister Bessie would all later migrate to Detroit (F. Haynes, personal communication, August 2015).

Foster: The Moses of the Deaf

Upon arrival in Michigan, Foster was intentional about finding a church which suited him. "In Detroit", Foster (n.d.-a) wrote, "one of my first objectives was to find a church for the deaf." (p. 3). He would need to find a congregation welcoming of d/Deaf African Americans. This task was easier said than done. I will begin an exploration of Foster's relationship with religion by examining insights from one of his mentees.

Gbenga Aina is a d/Deaf Nigerian who met Foster and was inspired to follow his example to study (and later work) at Gallaudet University (known as Gallaudet). After Foster's death, Aina paid respect to the "father of d/Deaf education in Africa" by highlighting his marque

contributions in Ghana and Nigeria. Aina leveraged his findings to co-write the narrative plaque beneath Foster's bust at Gallaudet (as seen in Figure 55) and publish an article entitled *Andrew Foster Touches Eternity: From Nigeria to Fiji* (2015*)*. In gathering and analyzing oral histories for his publications, Aina discovered that the Christian faith most informed and guided Foster's lifelong decisions. Aina's interview with Tim Foster, Foster's third son, helped him reach this conclusion:

> I do wish more people understood the source of my father's passion. Yes- he wanted to help fellow Deaf people advance in the world by education, employment, etc. – but more than this, he cared about the souls of men. He firmly believed that the most important part of a human is not material, but immaterial: his external soul…This passion to reach the souls of men is what drove my father to do the things he did. (Aina, 2015. P. 129)

Foster's literature most aligned with Old Testament stories that offered hope, advocacy, accommodation and agency to persons with disabilities. In "Scriptural Reasons Why You Should Be Concerned About the Lost Deaf" (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 2020) he invoked the book of Leviticus, cautioning "thou shall not curse the deaf, not put stumbling block before the blind" (19:15, King James Bible, 1769/2017). Foster cited this verse in connection to a hearing student who mocked his deafness, only to contract meningitis, become d/Deaf and also enrolled at Alabama School for the Negro Deaf Blind. "The future lies in the hands of his creator, hence a child should not mock the handicapped" (Oteng, 1988, p. v), wrote a d/Deaf Ghanaian mentee.

In *A place of their own: Creating the deaf community in America*, Van Cleve and Crouch (1989) opined that the Old Testament presented disabilities as a manifestation of God's divine plan in which the Lord opted to create some persons with disabilities, and expected the same of

them as others. As per this ethos, the d/Deaf would play the hand they were dealt without complaint. I interpreted a number of Foster's writing and actions as a manifestation of this Old Testament understanding of disability. For example, rather than citing deafness to excuse himself from preaching to the mainstream worshippers, Foster called upon his limited voice to preach to the hearing. In "Scriptural Reasons Why You Should Be Concerned About the Lost Deaf" (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 2020), Foster referenced the Book of Exodus which rhetorically queried "Who has made man's mouth? Who had made him mute?, or deaf, or seeing?, or blind?, is it not I the Lord?" (4:10, King James Bible, 1769/2017). In other chapters from the Old Testament, persons with disabilities were simply included and accommodated, with little ado about the cause and/or meaning of their conditions, as illustrated in the story of Moses.

Moses is a Biblical figure known more for miraculous acts, such as the parting of the Red Sea and delivering the Ten Commandments than dysfluent speech. His disability is more an incidental trait, rather than a defining identity, which God indicated wouldn't be an obstruction to his mission. Foster's d/Deaf African mentees saw Moses-like features in Foster, referring to him as their "Moses for the Deaf in Africa" (Ilabor, 2009, p. 169). They used this term to say that he led them from a world of neglect into a "promised land" of communication (through sign language), education, employment, salvation and eventually full citizenship (Aina, 2015).

In leading d/Deaf Africans, Foster subscribed to the Old Testament's stories which encouraged persons to accept and work with their disabilities, confident that God made them like that and would therefore open the way for them. Foster practiced an ideology of acceptance. His work in Africa was a prime example of his ideology of acceptance in action. He never complained about his deafness, but rather took hearing loss as a calling to work with d/Deaf

people in Africa. To Foster, deafness was not a "curse". It was God's invitation to turn an adversity into an opportunity for others.

Becoming a 'Preacher Boy'

The media and academia have introduced mainstream audiences to the *Green Book* (Mitchell & Collins, 2014; Cook, et al., 2020), a Jim Crow era guide which published addresses of African American friendly businesses. The popular Hollywood movie of the same name made no mention of how African Americans located religious institutions in a new and unfamiliar environment.

How would an African American Christian, much less one with hearing loss, have found a church in 1940's in Michigan? Foster's approach was to turn Detroit's phone book into his own ad hoc Green Book. His adult daughter told me that Foster scanned through the pages for notations about the city's African American churches (F. Haynes, personal communication, April 2019). Applying this method, Foster wrote that "I quickly located a church of the colored deaf, the only one in the state" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1967, p. 2). The church was called Bethany Tabernacle (see figure 7). Foster regularly attended services there between 1942 and 1951.

Pastor Berlin Martin Nottage, a well- known speaker and authority on evangelism in the African American community, founded Bethany Tabernacle (Nottage, 1972). Foster described it as "a small, aging brick house. The minister resided upstairs. Downstairs, walls had been moved to make an assembly room…The Christians there had a tremendous burden for the hearing handicapped. A front section of the hall was reserved for them" (n.d.-a, p. 3).

This African American church included d/Deaf worshippers with ASL interpretation and note-takers. Foster is seen, in an old black and white photo, wearing a Sunday suit and with his

signature bow tie, standing in front of the tabernacle brick structure with a sign board advertising the church services (see figure 7). Religious services listed on the signboard include: Sunday preaching at 10:45 a.m., Bible studies at 12:30 p.m., and a "deaf-mute service" at 3:00 p.m.

Foster's participation in an inclusive church service at Bethany Tabernacle, for the first time in his life, must have been a profound and impactful experience. "Although he had attended Church regularly as a child", Peterman (n.d.) wrote, "he now realized that he might never have been challenged by the gospel had it not penetrated his world of silence at this time…when he heard the gospel in sign language." Foster had been introduced to Christian literature in American Sign Language (ASL) at the Alabama School for the Negro Deaf and Blind, but perhaps the maturity of his young adult years opened him to the messages shared at Bethany Tabernacle.

During the Sunday morning preaching, Foster would have sat with fellow d/Deaf worshippers in the front section of the church. He recounted how "several persons took turns interpreting the service into sign language, by which the deaf also joined in the singing" (n.d.-a, p.3). When "sisters" weren't available to "interpret the Gospel message", Foster recalled, they "patiently wrote it down" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1967). Sign language interpretation was, and still is, fairly standard practice at churches which include d/Deaf members.

It was Bro. Walter J. Lyon (see figure 8), the "short, stocky, jovial" (Foster, n.d.-a, p.3) factory worker, whose Sunday afternoon d/Deaf services most influenced Foster (Agboola, 2014). In analyzing Foster's writing, and reviewing Foster's archived photographs, I surmised that Lyon was a White, hearing, sign language fluent evangelist who served d/Deaf African Americans like Foster. Foster felt comfortable enough to regularly engage Bro. Lyon, wrestling

with, and trying to better understand, the ideas that Pastor Nottage introduced during the mainstream services (Carol & Mather, 1997).

Foster (n.d.-a) wrote:

> Each week I would arrive at the hall early for our friendly debate, which would be resumed after the service…This I did for a numbers of Sundays…Bro. Lyon's gentle face would beam too. But afterwards, using the word of God, he would quietly try to get me straight on Biblical Truths, though I was not always very 'teachable (p. 4).

Inevitably, Bro. Lyon satisfied Foster's persistent inquiries and curiosities about the word of God. Pastor Hampton recalled how Bro. Lyon mentored Foster to became "a person who believed in the word of God, nothing more, nothing less and nothing else" (K. Hampton, personal communication, September 2015).

Foster was baptized on March 21, 1943, less than a year after arriving in Detroit (Peterman, n.d.). Reflecting back on his first year at Bethany Tabernacle, Foster (n.d.-a) would remark, "In fact, unwittingly, I was becoming a 'preacher boy'" (p. 4).

As a preacher boy, Foster utilized his semi-intelligible speech to start preaching to mainstream, hearing worshippers (figure 9). In audiological terms, Foster was post-lingually deaf (Cowie & Cowie, 1983)–he lost hearing after speech acquisition. As is common in post-lingual deafness, Foster's hearing loss left him with some residual ability to talk, albeit "rather mechanically and tonelessly" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1959).

In the Sunday School Times, a reporter marveled that "Mr. Foster, though a deaf-mute, has learned to talk" (1957, p. 1). Another Sunday School Times story noted that "[Foster] speaks sounding most syllables correctly. His voice is pitched quite high. When he becomes excited,

he tends to blur his words together, still speaking with an unmistakable southern accent" (Peterman, n.d, p.2).

Photos show Foster confidently standing on stage, holding a microphone (figure 9) and preaching to hearing congregates. Typically, hearing loss removes one's auditory loop (Waldstein, 1990), or capacity to adjust voice for intelligibility. Fosters third son, however, contended that churchgoers were too immersed in his father's sermons to know he was deaf (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). I wondered if I might have understood Foster's sermons. I put this question to Pastor Hampton. He demurred, "if you listened you could understand him" (K. Hampton, personal communication, September 2015). Of course, Foster was more interested in fellowship with the d/Deaf, not necessarily the mainstream hearing audiences (who already had a plethora of their own church preachers).

Did Foster pilot delivery of sermons to d/Deaf African American in Detroit? If so, what might those early fellowships have looked like? To answer these questions, I sought out Foster's d/Deaf African American contemporaries from his time in Detroit.

Chuck Williams: Foster Became a Future Pastor for the Deaf People

In 2015, I publicly presented on the outlines of research project at 27th National Black Deaf Advocates Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. There I met Chuck Williams, who had been a d/Deaf senior high school student when Foster fellowshipped in Detroit. Williams invited me to interview him about this in Cleveland, Ohio, his hometown. A month later I took Williams up on his offer and drove up to Cleveland for our interview. I opened our discussion by asking about how he met Foster.

> Andrew Foster… I met him back way when he was a young man…that was back in Detroit, Michigan. He was involved with Bible studies, becoming a future pastor for the

> d/Deaf people in Africa. He was a very serious person. He would come to our Deaf Club every Friday, every Friday without fail! Whenever it was time, he would even go into the bars, look for us and tell us "Hey, come on, its time". He would round us up and out we'd go. (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015)

Deaf Clubs, recognized as the bastion of all things Deaf Culture and Deaf Community, were not spared from segregation. While White Deaf people were privileged with use pro bono use of recreational spaces, their African American counterparts had to find their own private meeting space.

> Black Deaf Clubs would meet inside of persons homes back then, so we would meet with him in the homes of d/Deaf Black people, where he preached about Jesus and God. We would be around him and he would preach to d/Deaf Black people in the kitchen or the living room, wherever…it was wonderful. (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015)

From a critical point of view, Foster seemed to have commandeered Detroit's Black Deaf Club to evangelize to its members. I don't know if he was invited to do so? Or if he asked members for permission? Maybe he made an "executive decision" that this particular group of d/Deaf African Americans needed missionizing (i.e., they were in the bars too much) and went for it. I also wondered if this was an early iteration of Foster's mission model which he would later roll out in Ghana.

> Whatever the Bible said, he told us, he knew it well. We would discuss and learn whatever we wanted about these things. It was wonderful, we really were motivated by this and enjoyed his coming on Fridays. He wasn't ever…you know, too overly zealous or dogmatic about the Bible. It was more about picking up some things about God and

> Jesus so that we could learn how to pray. He really got excited when talking to us about God during that time. We were all his friends and would feed him dinner…that was very nice. (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015)

How did Foster's fellowship with Williams and d/Deaf American Africans in Detroit segue into a passion to proselytize to the d/Deaf in Africa? I will next explore serendipitous events which inspired Foster's decision to become the world's first known d/Deaf African American missionary.

God's Calling to a Place Like Africa

Williams (1982) wrote that "many of the [African American] missionaries received their interest from the example of other mission advocates who spoke that their churches" (p. 131). Foster's interest in missionary work was piqued in 1945 during a chance interaction with a missionary who "was instrumental in realizing the missionary call" (A. Foster, Personal communication, January 1957).

Arthur Hart Sr. served as a missionary in Jamaica with Christian Mission in the Many Lands Board (Ilabor, 2009). While on leave from the island, Hart opted to present at Bethany Tabernacle, which had a large number of Jamaican worshippers (F. Haynes, personal communication, January 2016). Foster's daughter recounts that Hart's presentation about the lives of d/Deaf Jamaicans touched Foster, but also raised more questions for him than answers:

> Andrew Foster was quite fascinated with Arthur Hart's ministry and asked him questions about the deaf in Jamaica. 'How many churches?', 'What about the schools for the deaf?'…. Arthur Hart sensed there was some stirring in Andrew Foster. Arthur Hart told him that Jamaica had churches and schools for the deaf, and added 'maybe God laid his burden on your heart to help the deaf, not in Jamaica but maybe God is calling you to a

> place like Africa, a place much larger than Jamaica, where there are no churches for the deaf.' (F. Haynes, personal communication, January 2016)

Foster (n.d.-a) wrote that connecting with Hart: "challenged me concerning the neglected deaf in the Jamaican field of labor and in Africa too" (p. 3).

Yet Foster had already internalized negative American stereotypes about Africa which cast doubt on such a journey:

> Andrew though, 'Africa—me? Never! He thought about wild elephants, lions, snakes and jungles. He had a good job, good clothes and a car. He didn't want to leave them and go to Africa. But when he went home, the same thoughts again came again and again—'Africa'…'Africa' ("Deaf Missionary Killed in Plane Crash," 1988).

Foster's daughter concluded that: "thus was the moment Andrew Foster pinpointed his call to missions in Africa" (F. Haynes, personal communication, January 2016).

The Deaf Renaissance Man

Foster, deeply immersed in the church, simultaneously took on a dizzying array of odd jobs to support himself and his academic endeavors. He worked at restaurants, bakeries, and laundry mats (Agboola, 2015). He was a stock handler, riveter, foundry helper, machine shop inspector, truck driver and departmental clerk at factories ("Ghana's Deaf and Dumb Get a Break," July 1957).

His eldest son recalled that Foster additionally worked as printer at the Detroit Free Press and put together B-24 aircraft ailerons from the Ford plant (A. Foster, April 2020). Foster later explained to *The Ashanti Pioneer* (Ghana) that "it was not easy for me to get job. Each time I had to beg for a chance just to prove myself. When I finally got the job, usually I was soon promoted

or later left to seek now conquests and skills" ("Ghana's Deaf and Dumb Get a Break," July 1957).

Aside from menial labor that paid his bills, Foster was a Deaf renaissance man who engaged in a range of divergent and unexpected hobbies. Foster was a student pilot, flying small planes from Detroit City Airport. "I think if my dad was not d/Deaf he would have gone on to become a pilot and fight the war [World War II]", recalled Foster's eldest son (personal communication, A. Foster, September 2015). A photo shows Foster squatting proudly on the wing of a Cessna plane which is parked on the airfield (see figure 10). "He told me that he was couple of hours short of getting the license. At the time, you needed to fly 20 hours as a student. So that would make it 18" (A. Foster, April 2020). Foster never took time to get his pilot license, but remained an avid aviation enthusiast known to fly small planes on occasion (A. Foster, personal communication, September 2015).

Foster's other lifelong passion was boxing (Ilabor, 2009). Foster joined a proud cohort of d/Deaf boxers who put on the gloves, got into the ring and let their abilities do the "talking" to prove they were equal to (if not better than) their hearing opponents (Gannon, 2011). Foster used to watch Mohamed Ali, Joe Louis and Joe Frasier matches on TV and became a member of the Detroit Golden Gloves (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). Foster's eldest son recalls a photo of his father in boxer shorts and gloves, ready to jump into the ring (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015).

Foster later decided that professional boxing wouldn't be compatible with his educational aspirations. He told *The Ashanti Pioneer* that "I could not reconcile the idea of getting what was in my head knocked out as fast as I could put it in" ("Ghana's Deaf to Get a Break," July 1957).

Archived photos and films show Foster became a boxing coach of sorts, introducing it as a recreational activity for boys at his mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria.

According to Pastor Hampton, Foster was a formidable opponent. Hampton professed that "on occasion he sparred with Mohamed Ali in Detroit and knocked him down –he was quite efficient in anything he did!" (K. Hampton, personal communication, September 2015). As much as I wanted to believe that Foster bested Mohamed Ali in the ring, I wasn't able to affirm or refute this incredible boxing "claim to fame". Diving deeper into Foster's time in Detroit, I did uncover that it wasn't all fun and games for him in the Motor City

"Technical" Rejection at Michigan School for the Deaf

In the fall of 1942, Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) denied Foster's application for enrollment at their senior high school unit. Foster (n.d.-b) noted on his resume that he was "rejected technically as a non-resident" (p.1). Foster's daughter nuanced that: "MSD told him that they couldn't count his uncle as a means to get Michigan residency. If he lived with a parent, or perhaps even a grandparent, that would have sufficed for applying for residency" (F. Haynes, Personal Communication, December 2017). Edward, Foster's brother, moved in with Foster one year later and was admitted into MSD without difficulties (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020). Foster and his family therefore concluded that MSD based their decision on Foster according to his residency (not his race). They denied claims that MSD's technical rejection of Foster was "racist", as insinuated by Caroll and Mather (1997). Caroll and Mather (1997) interviewed Dr. Eric Malzkuhn (known as "Malz"), a Gallaudet University alumni and MSD's Vocational Rehabilitation at time, about Foster's application. Malz said:

> Foster was not really a resident of Michigan, MSD said. His parents were in Alabama: therefore Foster was still a resident there. Malzhuhn wondered if the reason had more to

do with Foster's skin color. In Alabama, segregation by race was law. Black people could not eat, shop, or go to school with white people. But in 1947, Malzkuhn knew black people usually lived separate-and unequal-lives from white people, even in the northern state of Michigan (p. 46).

While Malz's musings about racial discrimination at MSD were speculative, his observations of unofficial segregated education in the Midwest are evidence based. Indeed, interviews with Foster's eldest son (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020) revealed that Foster dealt with racial segregation at Eastern Michigan University. Malz's words and Foster's experiences echoed those of African Americans who fled discrimination in the South only to suffer more of the same (if not worse) in the so-called "liberal" North (Litwack, 2009).

In 1966, Martin Luther King brought these contradictions into the national spotlight when his campaign on poverty was viscously attacked in Illinois (another northern state which practiced unofficial discrimination). King told the media that: "I have never seen, even in Mississippi or Alabama, mobs as hateful as they've been here in Chicago" (Pearce, 2016). According to Foster's daughter, he was greeted by a northern rendition of audism and racism soon after arrival:

> Shortly after my father moved to Detroit, in 1942, he got a streetcar or bus and asked the driver to please let him know when they would be getting to a certain destination. The driver nodded pleasantly. At the 'destination' the driver signaled to my father that they had arrived. My father thanked him, got off to a gated property with a sign "Mental Asylum" on it. It was cruel prank, expensive for my father since he had very little money after moving on his own at age 17 and would have to pay more bus fare to turn around

and find his correct destination. A lot of deaf people used to be thrown into asylums. Or the driver could have been racist. (F. Haynes, personal communication, November 2015)

Although Foster was set back by discrimination in Michigan, he demonstrated remarkable resiliency in the face of harsh adversity. “He was more like ‘take it in stride’…so rather than bang your head against the door trying to get something, it’s like ‘ok maybe it wasn’t meant to be, turn around and go somewhere else’” (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). More than an approach, this would become one of Foster’s guiding philosophies which he applied to overcome adversities big and small.

Indeed, Foster turned in a different direction in seeking further education somewhere else. In 1947, he enrolled in a senior high school correspondence courses through the American School in Chicago while also taking night classes at the Detroit Institute of Commerce. In a photograph (see figure 11) from an adult education classroom, Foster is seen with neatly combed hair, wearing a sharp black suit, white dress shirt and patterned tie. He is studiously seated in front of a typewriter with paper protruding out of the top. Foster is intently focused on the typewriter, eyes gazing downward and hands positioned just over the keys. Other students are seen reading and typing on the side of and behind him. Foster would tell his mentees in Africa that his interest in “business ventures” was second only to evangelism (Ilabor, 2009). Intuitively, he would find a way to marry these two interests in his mission work.

Foster earned a Diploma in Accountancy and Business Administration, in 1950, from the Detroit Institute of Commerce. One year later he got his senior high school diploma from the American School in Chicago (Panara & Panara, 1996). Impressively, Foster obtained both diplomas during an era when 59% of Americans completed senior high school (Simon & Grant, 1965). This was a significant academic achievement for any American student in 1950,

especially so for a d/Deaf African American! With unwavering fortitude, Foster realized his big dreams in Detroit, which he originally set out to achieve from Fairfield, Alabama. While graduation from secondary education afforded Foster his first big taste of success, it was not to be his last. Even bigger dreams loomed on his horizon, as Malz keenly sensed.

Malz (a Gallaudet alumni) was impressed by Foster's intelligence and motivation. He confided that "[Foster] was just as smart as I was, if not smarter" (Moores & Panara, 1996, p. 215). Malz encouraged Foster to apply to his alma mater, though with some reservations. He continued to harbor apprehension about whether America's segregated deaf education system was ready to racially integrate. "At Gallaudet, the policy was not quite 'whites only' but certainly 'whites mostly'. Only one Black student was there[8] and Malz did not know of any African-American who had ever graduated" (Caroll & Mather, 1997, p. 46).

Chuck Williams was Foster's d/Deaf African American contemporary. He echoed lived experienced about discrimination shared by d/Deaf Africans Americans during that era.

> I was at the Ohio School for the Deaf in 1947…at that time I sent a friend of mine from Ohio School for the Deaf to Gallaudet University to get an application form because I wanted to enroll. That person came back and for some reason said "Sorry, they don't accept Black people". I was really devastated…depressed. I was Deaf and Black and faced discrimination (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015).

Mary Wright (an alumna from North Carolina School for the Negro Deaf Blind) had planned to study at Gallaudet, until she was also informed that they don't admit African American students (McCaskill, Lucas, Bayley & Hill, 2011). In the end, Malz decided to assist Foster to craft and submit an application packet to Gallaudet.

[8] I wasn't able to find records about this d/Deaf African American student.

Foster's interest in undergraduate studies at Gallaudet was both predictable and paradoxical on a number of fronts. As the world's first and only liberal arts college for the d/Deaf, Gallaudet would be the obvious "go to" choice for most academically inclined d/Deaf students, regardless of race.

White d/Deaf students were privileged to attend Gallaudet without thinking twice about their race. But this was not the case for d/Deaf African American students in the 1950s. The first African American d/Deaf students to study at Gallaudet during that time must have been cognizant about their presence on a campus historically hostile to Black people. This tradition began with the namesake of the University, Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (THG), an opponent of abolition and supporter of the American Colonization Society. But his son, Edward Minor Gallaudet (EMG) added a touch of humanity and social justice to his father's celebrated, yet checkered, d/Deaf education legacy.

EMG, borrowing a leaf from Clerc's book, admitted and integrated African American d/Deaf students during his tenure as Gallaudet's first President (Jowers-Barber, 2018). The first two African American students were James Gilbert in 1880 and Ennalls Adams in 1883 (personal communication, C. Shea, February 2020). They were harassed by White students and dropped out before graduation (Stuart & Gilchrist, 2005). Battiste Hume was the third and final d/Deaf African American student EMG enrolled (unofficially as a "Native American") in 1908, graduating in 1912. There will be a 50-year gap before Foster, the next d/Deaf African American student, was admitted to Gallaudet.

Increasingly ardent calls for racial segregation made integrated education, whether for the d/Deaf or hearing, untenable at or below the Mason-Dixon line. By the end of EMG's 46- year presidency, he acquiesced to complains from White parents about interracial education at

Gallaudet (Jowers-Barber, 2018). Before retiring, he divided the d/Deaf White and African American students into separate units on either side of the campus, in lock step with the neighboring and regional segregated schools (Hairston & Smith, 2001). Though EMG seemed strong armed into instituting a policy of racially segregated education which he didn't support, he would allow a little known d/Deaf African American student to breach the race line a step ahead of Foster.

Gallaudet's First African American Graduate?

Malz's inquiry, about whether Gallaudet University graduated any African American students prior to Foster's arrival remains a times contentious and complicated question. Foster routinely claimed the title "Gallaudet's first Black d/Deaf graduate" for himself (Christian Mission for Deaf, 1980). Over time, he took to highlighting this accolade in the media and in his prayer letters (Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018). The controversial case of Hume Battiste, however, challenges this most cited achievement of Foster's legacy.

Hume Battiste was born in South Carolina in the midst of Jim Crow, an era when some African Americans opted to by-pass segregation altogether via racial passing (Wald, 2000), claiming (and seeking acceptance into) membership of a more privileged racial group. As told by his cousin, Andre Battise, Hume couldn't pass as White, so instead passed as a Native American "because he looked like it and could" (A. Battiste, personal communication, June 2019). If Hume calculated that he would receive more privileges as a Native American than an African American, then he was right.

At age 12, a bout of scarlet fever left Hume d/Deaf, so he was sent to the Pennsylvania Institute for the Deaf and Dumb (PIDD). I don't know exactly when Hume began passing as a Native American, but PIDD's administration seemed to know he was African American and not

Native American. In 1908, Hume applied to Gallaudet University at a time when the institution publicly endorsed, and strictly practiced, segregated education.

It's perhaps understandable that the PIDD administration harbored apprehension about stoking racial tensions at Gallaudet by sending an African American student into their racially segregated education system. The PIDD administrators hedged their bet and issued a candid letter to their Gallaudet University counterparts, confiding that Hume was African American, then appealing for admission leniency based on his outstanding intellectual merits (Lang, 2020). As an apparent resolution to this conundrum, it appears EMG turned a "d/Deaf ear" to the PIDD letter and invited Hume to campus, where he enrolled as an "Indian" (Lang, 2020). Hume applied stealth tactics to make his unofficial Native American identity "official" in order to get in under Gallaudet's "color line" (A. Battiste, personal communication, June 2019).

I found myself empathizing with Hume instead of critiquing him. I came to view him as a figure who did what he felt he had to do to get a university education during an era of discrimination against African Americans and the d/Deaf. Keeping in mind, there was no inclusive legislation (i.e., Americans with Disabilities Act) to oblige Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to include Hume with disability support services (i.e., extra counseling/advising, ASL interpretation, note-taking). For academically aspiring d/Deaf students, it was Gallaudet University or risk attending a HBCU with steep attitudinal and linguistic barriers. Hume passed as Native American to get the former and skirt the latter.

Hume successfully navigated the racial complications and ambiguities of the early 1900s (Katz, 2012) to convince enough people in Washington, D.C. that he was a d/Deaf Native American (rather than African American), gaining privileged access to Gallaudet. To cement his case, he went as far as to learn and use Native American Sign Language, and marry a white

woman (A. Battiste, personal communication, June 2019). According to his cousin, the story was so convincing that “even his own son Rob, whom I used to talk with, was oblivious to the truth” (A. Battiste, personal communication, June 2019). But what was the truth about Hume?

Hairston and Smith (2001) were perhaps the first Deaf Studies scholars to publish material which broke the silence to contend that Hume (not Foster) was the first African American to graduate from Gallaudet University. So how did Foster remain Gallaudet’s “first Black graduate” despite emerging information that Hume as an American African who graduated more than 50 years ahead of him? It appears that Gallaudet and Deaf Communities dug in and held fast to Hume’s claim to Native American ancestry. Afterall, didn’t he register at Gallaudet as a Native American? Gallaudet’s Library Guide to Deaf Biographies and Index to Deaf Periodicals proclaimed that Hume was not an African American but “was strongly, perhaps totally, Native American instead” (2017). The school released a short promotion clip repeating this narrative on various social media platforms (Gallaudet University, 2020). I engaged a number of Foster mentees about this topic via Facebook posts, but was asked not to discuss Hume because it might “distract the deaf community” (Andrew Foster AfriDeaf Foundation, 2020). Even Burch (2002), a respected d/Deaf education historian, excused herself from this matter, writing that “[Hume’s] racial background hasn’t been confirmed” (p. 184). I felt that confirmation about the lived experiences of d/Deaf persons of color leads to a fuller picture of d/Deaf education history, so I pressed on with my inquiry.

Per my analysis, investigation into social and political histories, triangulated with data from archival and oral history research, doesn’t support Hume’s or Gallaudet claim that he was a Native American. Instead, information on this matter categorized his biological and racial background as African American.

His cousin shared that Hume registered as an African American in public records, with no mention of Native American heritage (A. Battiste, personal communication, March 2020). Personal accounts from his family aligned with public records: “All family members lived then and now as African Americans... Lighter complexioned, but unequivocally black.” (A. Battiste, personal communication, June 2020). The aforementioned data suggests that Hume was the first African American student, albeit “unofficially”, to graduate from Gallaudet University.

Thus the conclusion of scholars, that Foster was the first d/Deaf African American to graduate from Gallaudet University, requires further review and possible modification.

Twice as Good in Half the Time: Foster’s Three Years at Gallaudet

Foster’s submitted his college application to Gallaudet, then received a response which Malz recounted was: “a very nice yet ambiguous letter…they didn’t accept him” (2004, 00:49:38-49:56). Malz was well aware of these racial tensions at Gallaudet (Caroll & Mather, 1997), yet encouraged Foster to continue to seek enrollment there. Malz advised Foster to build his skills, note them in his resume and then re-apply for the next academic year. “Now, did I send Andrew Foster to Gallaudet?,” Malz (2004) reminisced, “by all means, no. I gave him a very strong push!” (00:48:07-00:48:14). The following year Malz helped Foster to craft and submit a more competitive application to Gallaudet University, giving them an offer they couldn’t refuse. Foster’s second attempt was successful.

In 1951, Foster was admitted to Gallaudet and awarded U.S. Congressional scholarship (Ilabor, 2010). As one of only two African American students on a newly integrated campus, Foster was dropped into a “a fishbowl…with the eyes of all of Gallaudet watching his behavior and progress” (Panara & Panara, 1996, p. 96). Tom Skinner, an African American evangelist who often speaks about his struggles with racism in the United States, said that “in order to

succeed, I have to be twice as good as a white person who is doing similar work…I have to be twice as good to reap the same rewards" (Center for Social Justice, 2020). Foster already had to work twice as hard to gain admission into Gallaudet University. He would continue on the same trajectory during his undergraduate years on campus.

A review of Foster's resume disclosed that he accomplished roughly twice as much as a typical Gallaudet University student in half the time (n.d.-b). Dr. Glen Anderson is a d/Deaf African American scholar who met and knew Foster. Anderson (2014) shared his observation about how Foster accelerated his academic achievements:

> [Foster] could see his destiny. Most students would normally just take courses in the fall or spring semesters and continue to do so until they had completed their four-year degree. Dr. Foster, however, came to Gallaudet University, took courses during the spring and fall semesters and then he went to school during the summer at UVA, at the Hampton Institute[9], and so he graduated from that school in three years (1:23:13-1:23:51).

The majority of Gallaudet's White undergraduate students, by comparison, needed five years to complete their course work and graduate. How did he Foster graduate in only three years instead of five?

Foster entered Gallaudet University with a solid secondary education. By contrast, his White d/Deaf counterparts often matriculated in from their White schools for the d/Deaf which divided academics with lip readings and training. As a result, they were less scholastically prepared and needed one year of college preparation prior to their first year of undergraduate

[9] Hampton Institute was the "go to" institution for African Americans who advocated for equal access to education, employment and citizenship in the United States. Booker T. Washington was an alumni, Rosa Parks worked on campus and Martin Luther King frequently visited. Hampton, however, was not connected to the University of Virginia system (Hampton University, 2020).

courses. Foster has didn't need this, and instead constructed a fast track toward graduation. But why the rush?, couldn't Foster have taken his time at Gallaudet? According to Foster's eldest son: "He didn't see any point in taking his time. He used to say 'time is money'. Plus, since he was older than the average student, he felt he had catching up to do." (A. Foster, personal communication, June 2020). Foster caught up in a hurry. He hustled through Gallaudet by taking fall and spring semester courses (1951 and 1953) and two summer semesters (1952 and 1953) at Hampton Institute. He combined these summer semester courses (equivalent of an academic year) with three years Gallaudet courses to total up to four years of courses to graduate.

The paucity of information about Foster's background extended from his childhood, adolescence into his college years, with some exceptions. Wes Dixon was Gallaudet University's Student President for the class of 1953 (Foster's graduating class). During the *Dedication: Andrew J. Foster Auditorium* ceremony, he read an excerpt about Foster from the 1953 school yearbook: "He was quiet and studious. He loves to discuss psychology, philosophy, metaphysics and religion. He wasn't seen much on campus because of his outside activities. He envisions work in the educational and religious fields" (2004, 00:54:45-55:33). Which outside activities kept Foster off campus? According to Panara and Panara (1996), he multi-tasked a teaching internship at the Kendall Demonstration Elementary School while doing community service work with African American d/Deaf persons in Washington, D.C.'s low socio-economic status neighborhoods.

Researchers who approached Foster to learn more about his college years were met with an enigmatic response. "When asked about his most memorable experiences at Gallaudet, Foster wrote 'I just studied most the time'" (Caroll & Mather, 1997, p. 47). I couldn't directly engage

Foster about his years at Gallaudet. Instead, I re-engaged Chuck Williams to gather memorable non-academic experiences about Foster's time there.

Williams wasn't admitted into Gallaudet due to racial discrimination, but Foster gifted him with a window into campus life.

> I next ran into Foster at a d/Deaf event in Washington, D.C. He said, "Hey Chuck, come on, let's go" and off we went together to Gallaudet University. We first went to meet the President at his house. I've never forgot that…this dog came out barking at us, which really startled me, then the President refused to see us, because 'it was Sunday'" or something. Foster looked at this and was like "Come on, let's forget about all it and get out here". We next went to Foster's dormitory. I didn't go in, but Foster went upstairs to do something and…the next thing you know, he came down holding this big black rat which he found on his bed and had to throw out. I mean…Can you imagine!?
>
> Oh my God, Foster was so patient with what he had to put up with at Gallaudet. He didn't fight or complain, he just went through and after three years he graduated. He showed those White d/Deaf people that he only needed three years to accomplish what they needed five years to do (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015).

Foster's persistence and patience paid off, paving the way toward a break-through moment at Gallaudet which informed his mission education work in Africa.

Schools for the Deaf in the World

Foster (1980) and Gallaudet (2020) both trace his "discovery" about the state of d/Deaf education in Africa back to a certain satori he experienced while on campus. "In college", Foster (1980) wrote, "I came across an address book of world schools for the deaf, which listed only 12 in all of Africa. I was really moved by this vast educational and spiritual void among my people"

(p. 3). He added, “Africa, in spite of its vastness, could boast of hardly a dozen institutions for the deaf in the first half of this century” (Foster, 1965b, vii). Foster likely referred to an article which appeared in the American Annals of the Deaf entitled *Schools for the Deaf in the World* (Higgins, 1948). Foster’s reading offers a colonial equation that the absence of a mission school for the d/Deaf is equivalent to an “educational void”. In other words, there couldn’t be education for the d/Deaf without a mission school. Per my investigation about d/Deaf education in colonial Africa, I frequently returned to Foster words and found myself critiquing their validity. For example, might d/Deaf African students have been included in traditional education? This inquiry surfaced during my participant observation in West Africa, as I noticed that African societies were quite community oriented and inclusive of all persons.

Dr. Mendonsa (2002) is an anthropologist who wrote about inclusion in West Africa: “African civilization inclines toward inclusionary. Given a strong humanitarian strain, African culture leads members to include those who are strange or different” (p. 5). The said passage from Mendonsa prompted my investigation into literature about inclusion of the d/Deaf (or any persons with disabilities) in traditional African society. I came across an article from Dr. Annelies Kuster, a Deaf anthropologist, who reported that “among the Songye [in the Democratic Republic of the Congo] the disabled person is integrated into normal life in an indifferent way, without ceremonial, without a lot of medical attention, but without being hidden way (2012, p. 4). “Normal life” in African society included traditional education, so it would stand to reason that the d/Deaf participated in that too. Yet neither the *American Annals of the Deaf* nor any other literature explored if and how the d/Deaf might have been included in traditional African education. Did this mean that d/Deaf students without a mission school for the d/Deaf were lost in a vast “educational void”? Or were they included in traditional Africa

education and the counter-narratives were lost in a Western literature void? The answer to these questions might be found in methodological and theoretical differences between Africans and missionaries.

Amoako (2019), a Ghanaian d/Deaf education scholar, wrote that: “The lack of earlier written records about traditional African education or sign language for the deaf in Ghana before Foster’s arrival might have resulted from lack of written record-keeping, as some parts of Africa relied on oral history in the past” (p. 11). Indeed, much of African history is an oral history. It is largely invisible to the Western eye, therefore, remains unresearched and unwritten (Hong, 2016). Missionaries were the first informal researchers and amateur historians, documenting and disseminating their observations on all things in Africa. They often privileged what they knew–implanting their culture, religion and education system in Africa–in their documentation. Missionaries rarely took time to gather data (i.e., oral histories, participant observations) about what might have existed in that space before, or as, they arrived. Were these spaces voids? Or was there something there which Foster and other missionaries couldn’t see?

Kapuscinski (2001) was a journalist who investigated into the historical intersectional of culture, economics and geopolitics in pre and post-colonial Africa in *The Shadows of the Sun*. His observations helped to answer some of my questions about why missionaries might not have considered the possibility of traditional African education in their literature:

> [The Missionary] in Africa see only part of it, usually only the continent’s exterior coating, the frequently very interesting, and perhaps less important part of it. His vision glides over the surface, penetrating no deeper and refusing to imagine that behind everything a mystery may be hidden, and within as well. But European culture has ill

prepared us for these excursions into the depths, into the springs of other worlds and other cultures" (Kapuscinski, 2001, p. 321).

The dearth of material about mission schools for the d/Deaf in Africa prompted Foster to exclaim that these "institutions south of the Sahara are a living testimony of the works of Christian missionaries" (Foster, 1965b, p. 9). This might be true, but what about the living testimony of school for the d/Deaf which weren't products of Christian missionaries? In 1867, the New York Express News published an account about Albert Hasty, a d/Deaf graduate from American Asylum for the Deaf-Mute, who "in a few weeks…would sail to the West Coast of Africa to school for deaf-mutes in that region" ("The New York State Deaf Mute-Association", 1867). I was unable to find any further information about whether Albert Hasty (who was not a missionary) successfully founded a school for the d/Deaf in West Africa. This example demonstrates the need for more rigorous investigation about early secular d/Deaf education is Africa. Moving on, I will briefly survey the colonial era mission schools for the d/Deaf to provide a baseline understanding of the state of d/Deaf education prior to Foster's post-colonial work in Ghana.

The Historical Roots of Deaf Education in Africa

It is no surprise that Kiyaga and Moores (2003) reported that missionary educators were among the first to teach the d/Deaf in Africa. Eritrea, one of world's oldest known civilizations (Walter et al., 2000), hosted one of sub-Saharan Africa's first known school for the d/Deaf (Moges, 2015), founded at Keren in 1956 by a Swedish missionary organization called Deaf African Mission (Adepoju, 1990). The first known inclusive education for d/Deaf students on the African Continent was documented in Nigeria.

A British missionary named David Forbes used sign language to teach two d/Deaf boys at the Freed Slaves Homes in Rumasha, Nigeria in 1917 (Miles, 2004). Miles quoted Forbes: "'The deaf and dumb are not forgotten, the two boys are receiving instruction in the signs of the deaf and dumb language. Every morning a short lesson is given to all boys to enable them to communicate with the two mute lads'" (p. 537). In 1956, an association known as "Friends of the Deaf" recruited a cohort of d/Deaf Nigeria children to pilot informal learning in Lagos (Eleweke, Agboola & Guteng, 2015).

By 1957, this ad hoc arrangement was formalized, enrolling these and other d/Deaf children to establish the Wesley School for the Deaf (Adepoju,1990; Ojile, 1994), the first known school for the d/Deaf in West Africa. Though Wesley School for the Deaf began as a mission school experimenting with oral-based instruction, it was later influenced by Foster's work and adopted his sign language-based approach pedagogy (Adepoju,1990).

South Africa and the United States shared a history of racial discrimination. South Africa's unique iteration of segregation did not spare students at the schools for the d/Deaf, where separation occurred amongst "white scholars, black scholars and so called colored or mixed-race scholars" (Aarons, 1999, p. 112). South Africa's schools for the d/Deaf initially opened its doors to White students only, before belatedly admitting Black students. An example is Grimley Institute of the D/Deaf which was founded in Cape Town in 1816 (Reagan, Penn & Ogilvy, 2006), then waited more than century to admit its first Black d/Deaf pupil in 1927 (Aarons & Akach, 2002). Such as the state of d/Deaf Education in Africa, as Foster prepared to make his contribution.

Without Education, Deaf People Can't be Reached

In 1954, Foster was in his senior year at Gallaudet. He took a rare off campus trip, before graduation, to attend the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF; InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, 2020). IVCF is a triennial student missionary convention held on the University of Illinois campus in Urbana-Champaign. In recalling his participation in the forum, Foster wrote it "dispelled any lingering doubt about God wanting me to become an educator and missionary to the deaf in Africa!" (1980, p. 3). The IVCF display booths, available literature, platform talks and poster presentations seemed to re-enforce Foster's resolve to serve "his people", as he commonly referred to d/Deaf Africans. But what were the goals of Foster's mission work?

Jacobs (1982) wrote that "American missions and missionaries had two goals; the primary goal propose was evangelistic work, but the secondary goal was in areas of education" (p.24). Foster's combined a missionary's dual priorities in his approach to mission education for the d/Deaf. His mission motto became "Without education, deaf people can't be reached" (Ilabor, 2009, p. 178). I read two meaning in this; that education could reach the more general needs of the d/Deaf, while education in sign language and literacy would reach their spiritual needs through Christian literature. Foster (1957a) illustrated this motto, urging readers to:

> Consider the deaf in relation to the Great Commission to 'go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creator'…stop and think that a person born deaf or one who had acquired deafness in infancy generally has not words or language…that is he does not know that they exist...not even his own name…that he learns these for the first time when he goes to school…that where there are no special provisions for schooling, these children grew up not only in the loneliness of silence but the darkness of ignorance.

After attending IVCF, Foster decided he would make special provisions for schools for d/Deaf children in Africa. "Discarding his earlier thought about a business career, he devoted [himself] full time to education and missionary studies" (Panara & Panara, 1996, p. 96).

Foster's Transition from Gallaudet to Graduate School

Foster graduated from Gallaudet, by end of the 1954 academic year, with a Bachelor of Arts in Education (see figure 12). Ilabor (2010) surmised that "Andrew was aware that his performance would determine the chance of other black deaf persons to be admitted to the college" (p. 15). Foster's solid scholastic performance may have encouraged Gallaudet's willingness to enrollment more African American students, such as Dr. Glen Anderson. Anderson (2004) said: "Dr. Foster opened the door for many black students including those like myself" (00:24:40-24:49). Indeed, many African American students followed Foster's lead to enroll at Gallaudet.

Two weeks after graduation Foster got back into the academic saddle to pursue a graduate degree ("Deaf Missionary Worker Now Visiting West Africa," 1957). Similar to Gallaudet, Foster received a scholarship for his studies, garnering financial support from the State of Michigan to pursue a Master of Arts in Education at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) in Ypsilanti.[10] Foster returned to familiar ground in Michigan to be close to his half-brother, a sister and his uncle in Detroit (F. Haynes, personal communication, August, 2015. A year later, Foster became the first African American to graduate from his EMU program.

Before graduating from EMU, Foster committed another step toward his envisioned missionary role by applying to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Mission at Seattle

[10] While Foster attended, it would have been known as Eastern Michigan College.

Pacific University's (SPU).[11] SPU invited Foster to join their 1955 Christian cohort, but did not offer him a scholarship. Foster spent the summer of 1955 working jobs in Detroit, trying to save enough for tuition, room and board and other expenses.

By the end of the summer, Foster had earned enough to pay for everything except transportation from Detroit to Seattle. According to his daughter, he prayed until an opportunity arose to pay his way to SPU:

> 50-60 years ago, there were companies which participated in what they called "Drive Away" program. If someone needed a car out-of-sate or even across the country, they would look for drivers to transport the car. God answered Andrew's prayer through the Drive Away program. Someone needed to get a car out to Seattle, and Andrew needed to get out there. There are photos of him driving a white station wagon out west. Always the adventurer. (F. Haynes, personal communication, April 2020)

I wasn't able to find the photographs of Foster, the intrepid traveler, road tripping West in the station wagon. While I don't know where he stopped along with the way, I presume he arrived in Seattle in time for their 1955-1956 academic year. By 1956, Foster became their first Deaf African American graduate.

Audism and Racism in Higher Education

Foster's inclusion at EMU and SPU pre-dated the Individuals with Disabilities Education Action and/or the Americans with Disability Act (Skiba, et al., 2008), which mandated supports services, such as ASL interpreters and note-takers for d/Deaf students. Unlike Gallaudet, EMU and SPU were "hearing institutions" which posed linguistic and attitudinal challenges unique to d/Deaf students (C. Williams, September 2015).

[11] While Foster attended, it would have been known as Seattle Pacific College.

Foster, as a Deaf African American student at hearing institutions (EMU in 1955 and SPU in 1956), dealt with racism and audism parallel to what Anderson experienced at Northern Illinois University (NIU):

> “The obstacles I encountered at NIU were due to my race as well as my deafness...it was quite a culture shock for me when I arrived at NIU and found I was one of only 100 Black students on a campus of 15,000 students. Also, as far I knew, I was the only Deaf student enrolled in the undergraduate programs….my father and I asked for applications for the dormitories…to our surprise, we were told the dormitories were full, no space available…one of the staff gave us the address of an apartment in a nearby town called Sycamore. Once we arrived in Sycamore, we found out that the apartment was located in the ‘Black section’ of town... About one month into the semester, my adviser in the Physical Education Department became aware that I was Deaf and did not speak as clearly as the other students in the department. He requested that I meet with him. During that meeting, he suggested that I either change my major or transfer to another college”. (Anderson & Miller, 2004/2005, p. 381)

Anderson’s intersectional struggles with audism and racism was not unique to NIU. According to Foster’s eldest son, “Andrew Foster did say that going to Eastern Michigan University was problematic. There was institutional bias where black students were separated from whites” (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020). Despite the EMU’s institutional segregation, Foster crossed racial lines to befriend White hearing students (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020) who assisted him in class (Peterman, n.d.). In the absence of support services for d/Deaf students, hearing friends may have shared their class notes with Foster.

Dealing with his deafness in class, Foster likely relied on his semi-intelligible speech, as much as the good will of his professors and academic advisers. However, following lectures without an ASL interpreter would have been a daunting task because he never learned to lip read. Foster received additional speech training in Michigan (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015), but never wore a hearing aid (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020).

In the absence of aided hearing and/or continued training in oralism, Foster never had the technical support to become a proficient lip reader (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2105). But he also didn't care. Foster accepted his deafness with an Old Testament frame of reference that his hearing loss had divine purpose, and that others would have to accept and work with it (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989). "It was just a personal thing for him, many in the Deaf community are proud to be Deaf and refuse to 'fix' it" (A. Foster, personal communication, April 2020). Foster was not the type to try to "suppress" his deafness or "pass" as a hearing person. He also wasn't one be defeated by the linguistic challenges which up sprung along his journey. Instead, he crafted a number of best practices to work around them.

I found myself scouring the literature, investigating exactly where and how Foster developed strategies to overcome linguistic barriers. In one interview, Foster was asked how he facilitated communication at EMU and SPU: "I sat next to the brightest students and copied their notes. I was able to read the text, and by consulting with professors, I got through" (Peterman, n.d.). Here was a best practice which Foster piloted in his graduate studies in the United States and would later scale (and modeled for d/Deaf Africans) per his mission work in West Africa.

They Turned Me Down on Racial Grounds

Foster was determined to position himself to serve as a missionary educator for the d/Deaf in Africa almost immediately upon graduation from SPU. Ever the optimist, Foster submitted his educational and missionary Christian credentials to mission boards and awaited favorable responses. "Though he[12] was well qualified spiritually and educationally, he discovered the doors of most mission boards closed to Blacks" (Foster, n.d.-a, p. 5). Foster stood at the intersections of Christianity, race and colonialism; a place where there was no invitation for an African American missionary to serve in Africa.

Never one to discuss the hardships he endured, Foster made a rare admission that discrimination was clouding his vision:"some mission societies turned me down on racial grounds despite my college degrees" (Foster, n.d., p. 3). While Jim Crow and racial segregation laws certainly tempered White Christian support for African American missionaries, geopolitics presented even more formidable (though less overt) obstacles, as explained by Jacobs (1982) in *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa*:

> By the twentieth century, [colonial] European governments in Africa saw the presence of Afro-Americans missionaries as threatening…white mission boards in the United States and white missionaries stationed in Africa felt that the time was not right to pressure European governments into accepting black missionaries…During the forty year period between 1920 and 1960, few black American missionaries not already in Africa were assigned there by white boards. (Jacobs, 1982, p. 21-22)

As of the 1920s, White mission boards around the United States determined it was in the church's best interest to send African Americans to any place other than Africa. During this

[12] It is unclear why Foster alternates between first and third person in his literature.

period, African American missionaries were typically sent to Latin America or Asia (Jacobs, 1982). Foster (1980) fell victim to this policy, writing that “curiously, one board with a world-wide ministry offered to consider me for Japan instead of Africa!” (p. 4). Foster, like many African American Missionaries, felt a strong call of duty to serve his African homeland (Williams, 1983). He must have felt confounded by this situation, that his fellow missionaries would pressure him to turn away from his people in Africa. Foster could be a kind and humble man, but also one who wouldn’t let other persons stand in his way and hold him back (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). He had made up his mind to serve the d/Deaf in Africa and wouldn’t take “no” for answer.

The Genesis of Christian Mission for Deaf Africans

“Finding no mission that would support his call, he set out on his own” (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 2020). By the 1950’s, the United States had a proliferation of faith-based organizations serving any kind of marginalized community, but none specifically for d/Deaf people in Africa (F. Hayne, personal communication, January 2016), until Foster established one.

In the fall of 1955, Foster allied with Bro. Lyon from Bethany Tabernacle, and another evangelist named Clayton Sebring, to apply to the State of Michigan for a mission charter (Foster, 1957a). Foster was the mission’s General Director, Bro. Lyon the Home Director and Sebring the Treasurer-Secretary (Ilabor, 2009). On February 24, 1956, the State of Michigan granted Christian Mission for the Deaf Africans (CMDA) a charter. With that, the first known mission for d/Deaf people in Africa was born.

Foster founded his mission, his way, on his own terms, and proudly presented it to the Christian public. “We are really happy and thankful for this opportunity to introduce our

missionary endeavor to you", Foster wrote in the mission's opening letter, "our work concerns 'deaf-mutes'[13], so to speak, in Africa" (Foster, 1957a). The charter introduced CMDA as "undenominational in affiliation, interdenominational in spirit, fundamental in teaching, indigenous in principles, international in scope…promoting the spiritual and educational welfare of the d/Deaf in Africa" (Foster, 1957a). Reporters from the Sunday School Times (1957) perused the charter and affirmed "the mission had a comprehensive and sound 'Statement of Faith' of seventeen points, with Scripture references; Constitution and By-Laws with eleven articles".

That same year, Bethany Tabernacle elders met with Foster to review his Christian credentials, assess his faithfulness in Christian living and delivery of local, lay ministry (F. Haynes, personal communication, April 2020). By that stage, Foster had already reached out to fellowship with Detroit's Black Deaf Community and done community work with African American communities in Washington, D.C. Satisfied with what they saw, Foster was officially commended to go forth and minister the gospel. That is exactly what he did.

Foster's daughter clarified, however, that he was not ordained by the church nor was he a Reverend, as alleged by numerous researchers (Ilabor, 2006; Ojile, 1994, Ojile 1999; Nyst, 2015). "He refused to be called Reverend, he spurned it…He drilled into us children that no one should be called Reverend because only 'God is to be revered'" (Personal communication, F. Haynes, April 2020). Foster would make this a guiding tenet of his work in Ghana and sub Saharan Africa.

[13] Foster routinely advised persons to avoid use of derogatory terms like "deaf-mute", yet unsparingly used them himself. This prompted at least one of his mentee's to note that he was often "do as I say, not as I do" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020).

Reflecting on these significant steps made toward realizing his dreams, Foster (1980) wrote “Frankly, I marvel at how God opened the way for my going to Africa when the doors seemed closed” (p. 3).

Deafness Seems to Appeal the Least to Those with Funds

Foster launched his mission, then realized that getting it funded would be something altogether different. Foster wrote, in January 1957, that “in common with other evangelical faith missions, [CMDA] is dependent upon the Lord for its needs through the Christian public” (1957a). Foster used a mimeographing machine to diligently print and disseminate “prayer supporter” letters to engage the Christian public about his mission. He began with monthly letters, then segued into a quarterly newsletter format. These documents typically intersected missionizing with d/Deaf education work in sub-Saharan Africa to solicit a mix of donations; such as cash, various goods (i.e., clothes, teaching aids) and even volunteerism (invited Christians to serve alongside in Africa). Foster aimed these “asks” at the Christian public in North America, Europe and the United Kingdom. These prayer letters would become Foster’s financial lifeline. Before Foster on-boarded the Government of Ghana and private foundation to underwrite his mission’s expenses, there were leans days when he and his team subsisted from donation letter to donation letter.

Convincing members of the lay public to open their hearts, and then open their wallets, was no easy task. Foster shared as much in one his first prayer letter: “Did you realize, friends, that the deaf is the one class of handicapped people too often forgotten or neglected in both missionary evangelism and sympathetic consideration?” (1957e, April). Foster added:

> Deafness seems to appeal the least to those with funds’ is the true yet recurring problem of education and religious workers of the deaf alike. Still the policy of nearly all mission

boards is that the expenses of a missionary must be underwritten before leaving home. (1958f, December)

Foster would be held to the same standards and requirements of most missionaries in the United States, in that he would have to raise a certain amount of money at home before embarking for Africa. He therefore appealed to his prayer supporters for $5,000 to cover his passage, maintenance, supplies to make "the necessary survey and start actual work in West Africa" (Foster, January 1957b).

Aside from deafness, Foster had to contend with racial and socio-economic constructs which challenged his resource mobilization exercises. "To finance substantial missions", Roth (1982) wrote, "the black American had to either go to black brethren who had insufficient means or join up with his white brothers…the inevitable result was that only a handful of black men had successful tenures as African missionaries, despite the constant interest of black church members in such evangelical activities" (p. 35). Foster appeared to get caught up in this snare, too. For example, neither his hearing nor d/Deaf African American Christian colleagues had disposable income to donate, as evidenced at Bethany Tabernacle. Though this church strongly encouraged Foster's mission in Africa, there is no indication that they donated money to his cause Any financial overtures Foster might have made to d/Deaf American Africans for mission was a non-starter, because "in the Deaf Community", Chuck Williams explained, "We d/Deaf Black people wouldn't have had that kind of money [to donate], because most of us didn't have jobs" (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015). Roth (1982) seemed to suggest that a Black missionary couldn't waltz into a wealthy White church and ask for donations without a White missionary to network their way inside. Apparently, Foster had no choice but to alley with a White Christian to access the more affluent fellowships and their money.

Foster's North American Fund Drive Tours

Foster teamed up with Bro. Lyon (his White, hearing, sign language fluent church brother) and the two of them set out in search of Christian friends to pledge financial support to his mission. "The itinerary took 4 ½ months; covering about 12,000 miles; and crossed more than 30 states," wrote Foster, "I addressed hundreds of people in churches, schools, and other assemblies" (Foster, 1957c, February). Foster's arduous fund-raising tour netted him a modest $500 matching pledge from the Secretary of the National Baptist Foreign Missions Board, leaving him well below his financial goals. When Foster was unable to raise even $500 to access the fund match (Ilabor, 2009), he lamented that "a very small number perceived this endeavor as a much needed ministry" (Foster, 1957c, February). Indeed, this appeared an early financial set back. Foster informed his prayer supporters that he was too broke to even get the immunizations which the Liberian Embassy required to issue his visa: "I am delaying these shots for the Lord's leading and your [financial] response" (Foster, 1957c, February).

Foster didn't let poor results from his February funding effort discourage a second. By March 1957, Foster and Bro. Lyon were back on the resource mobilization trail, undertaking a second less ambition two-week fund drive. This time, they paid a courtesy call to Dr. Oswald J. Smith from Peoples Church in Toronto, and then to attend the annual National Association of Evangelicals convention in Buffalo, New York. Foster wrote that Bro. Lyon "proved quite capable, as usual, with interpreting the various addresses [into sign language]. His gesturing, however, seemed to command more attention than the speakers on the platform. To many of them, this probably was a new turn in evangelism" (Foster, 1957e, April). One can imagine the sight of these two men in front of an evangelicals' convention in Upstate New York. One of them is a Deaf African American using sign language, the other is a White interpreter voicing

words for the former. After long days of preaching, this unusual sight must have stood in sharp contrast to the more orthodox sessions at this convention. Foster's sermon, combined with Bro. Lyons ASL interpretation, successfully opened worshippers' eyes, and apparently their checkbooks! By the end of their tour, Foster had garnered enough donations to book a one-way flight from the United States to the United Kingdom.

On April 1957, Foster excitedly announced that: "We are ready to come over and help our African counterparts. Thus, the Lord's willing, your correspondent sails from New York on April 26. Our present plan calls for surveys in, broadly speaking, Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria. Prayers are requested that some definite work will be started in one of these countries" (Foster, 1957e, April). Eagerly anticipating his journey to Africa, Foster had already acquired his passport at the start of the 1957, along with a Gold Coast (now known as Ghana) visa. As of February, he had applied for his visas to Liberia and Nigeria (Foster, 1957c, February).

Foster set in motion his rendezvous with destiny on the evening of May 8, 1957. That night he leaned into his mission and boarded a flight at New York International Airport (now John F. Kennedy International Airport) bound for London Airport (now London Heathrow International Airport). Looking back a year later, Foster would write "this opened door has been marked with lots of toil and trials. It was your faithful prayers as well as constant encouragement that enabled us to endure" (1958d, August -September). Foster had endured migrating on his own from Alabama to Detroit. There he advanced himself through employment and fellowship at a church, and crafted his own education opportunities. His success in Detroit propelled him into Gallaudet University, into graduate studies and then to launch Christian Mission for Deaf Africans (CMDA). Foster would continue to lean heavily on his prayer supporters as he finally moved CMDA from ideals into action in sub-Saharan Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: AN ADDRESS FROM SOME PLACE IN WEST AFRICA

Africa is a continent so vast that all the United States, China, India, the European Union and Japan can fit into it. The African continent has over a billion people living in 53 countries with enormous historical, geographic, ethnic, cultural, economic and religious diversity. It should not come as a surprise that these African countries have some of the world's oldest and most sophisticated civilizations. Lamb (1987) is foreign correspondent who presented an analysis of pre and post-colonial African history in *The Africans*. He wrote that:

> No continent has been more mistreated, misunderstood and misreported over the years than Africa. Ask an American to mention four things he associates with Africa and the answer is likely to be 'pygmies, jungle, heat and lions'. (p. xii)

During my two decades of work in Africa, I was often perplexed by the kinds of questions Americans routinely ask me about the Continent. I have been asked if I can "speak African" and whether I've met Idi Amin[14] while serving in Uganda (Keatley, 2003). This is the caricature of the "ugly American" (Lederer & Burdick, 1999), socialized to a become the kind of cultural chauvinist that my Canadian, British and Europeans colleagues often loved to hate. I don't react harshly to these awkward inquiries about Africa from my American friends, understanding that most of them "don't know what they don't know" about the rest of the world. Foster would discover (and grabble with) similar attitudes from his d/Deaf African American friends, too.

Chuck William (C. William, personal communication, September 2015) recalled how Foster's impassioned presentations about Christian Mission for Deaf Africans (CMDA) elicited

[14] In 1971, Idi Amin successfully staged a coup in Uganda, declared himself president and ruled as brutal military dictator until he was ousted from power in 1979. Amin's name because infamous after Amnesty International widely reports that he murdered up to 500,000 people in Uganda (Keatley, 2003).

nothing but snarky remarks from his d/Deaf African American friends. Deaf people, like their hearing counterparts, seemed to have internalized false narratives about Africa as a "primitive" and "uncivilized" place (Grimm, 2013). Williams recalled that:

> Foster came to our Deaf Club to discuss his plan to go to Africa to set up schools. I noticed that in the minds of many d/Deaf Black people, they thought these [African] countries were only full of jungles like what they saw in *Tarzan* pictures. They would joke that Foster was going to Africa to look for Tarzan. Which is not true, he went to look for d/Deaf people-that's not easy. They wondered about what he would eat, where he would sleep, if he would see jungles and wild animals like elephants. Some thought that whole idea was crazy and silly, and that he wouldn't accomplish anything with it. But when he came back, we were absolutely flabbergasted by what he had done there. (C. Williams, September 2015).

James Baldwin, the renown American African author, explained how education and entertainment in American coerced Black people to dismiss Africa:

> At the time I was growing up, Negroes in this country were taught to be ashamed of Africa. They taught us it bluntly by being told, for example, that Africa had never contributed to anything in civilization. Or one was taught the same lesson more obliquely, and even more effectively, by watching nearly naked, comic-opera cannibalistic savages in the movies. (1985, p. 267)

Though Foster was cognizant that his friends misunderstood Africa, he seems to have mostly kept their disparaging opinions to himself. He did, however, share the audacity of their caricatures about the continent with his d/Deaf African brethren, such as Ilabor (2009):

> Andrew narrated a story to us later about what American media and many d/Deaf Americans were negatively saying on 'jungle Africa'. Some of them warned Andrew that if he traveled to Africa, he would be eaten by some lions, hyenas or other dangerous animals. They also told him that he would not be able to find a nice place to sleep at night as there were no hotels or motels in Africa and that he would sleep on the top of a tree. They continued that Africa had no good roads, no electricity, no good food, many naked people were seen there (p. 26-27).

Foster's d/Deaf African American friends were not alone in their futile attempts to dissuade him from his mission. Even his hearing missionary colleagues condemned CMDA as a fool's errand (Caroll & Mather, 1997).

In 2014, Gallaudet University held a symposium, entitled *The Life and Work of Andrew Foster*, where Dr. Sandra Jowers re-visited the tensions between Foster and American missionaries: "He hears it from missionaries who tell him that there are no deaf people to be a missionary to in Africa. A whole continent with nobody deaf. Fortunately, he did not listen to this" (p. 6). Foster's daughter explained how he consistently fending off misinformation from so-called "old Africa hand" missionaries who professed to know more than about the d/Deaf in African than he did. "My father's response was 'that's the problem: deafness is an invisible handicap,' you can't tell who's deaf just by looking at a person'" (F. Haynes, personal communication, January 2016). It was characteristic of Foster to confront such negativity with opportunities and possibilities, as seen in his reflections:

> First, Africa is a GIANT continent, with GIANT population. A GIANT number are presumably handicapped by the twin GIANTS of deafness and illiteracy. Their GIANT number makes our little task force of missionaries and active prayer supports look like

> grasshoppers. Africa also offers GIANT, unprecedented opportunities for reaching the deaf (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1969).

Foster's passage is indicative of his indefatigable drive and passion to turn adversities into opportunities for d/Deaf Africans, no matter what.

But what drove Foster to transcend the cynicism of d/Deaf friends and missionary colleagues with such optimism and hope, ignoring repeated (if not hyperbolic) warnings of dire consequences? Dr. Edmund Abaka is an Africana Studies historian who hosted my presentation on Foster at University of Cape Coast (Ghana). In examining Foster's enthusiasm to serve in Africa, Abaka inquired "Why in the world would he leave the comforts of the U.S. and go labor 1,000's of miles away!?" (E. Abaka, personal communication, April 2020). I will next investigate this question through by way of an exploration of Pan- Africanism.

Andrew Foster Always Had Africa on the Mind

Pan Africanism is a theory which suggests that people of African descent share common history and struggles, destiny, and processes for forming cross unity (Nantambu (1998). Levitt (2017) wrote that "Pan-Africanism was born of the effort to empower black people all over the world" (p. 303). Foster appears to lean into Pan Africanism in *Roots Out of Dry Ground* (1980),where he reflected on having "a vague longing in my boyhood to go to Africa" (Foster, 1980, p. 3). He continued this thread in *How God Saved a Deaf Youth* (n.d.-1), confiding that these childhood longings later evolved into a full brown "missionary call to the deaf in Africa" (p. 5). In *Roots Out of Dry Ground* (1980), affirmed his alliance with d/Deaf Africans, referring to them as "his people" (p. 3).

Initially, it seemed to me that Foster's sentiments were confined to Nantambu's (1998) belief that Black people share a common background and history, perhaps worthy of both

acknowledgement and exploration. But as I drilled down into Foster's literature, he appeared equally intrigued by African philosophies. For example, Foster wrote to his prayer supporters about the potential of Africanization, a philosophical approach which echoed Pan Africanism (Brizuela-Garcia, 2006). "I observed a rather common expression 'Africanization'. Generally speaking, in independent and soon-to-be independent countries, this is a demand, as regards to training and employment, to give first and foremost consideration to indigenous people" (Foster, 1958b, March-May).

To me, these words revealed Foster's awareness of race-based tensions, and yearning for self-determination, as experienced by Black people worldwide. Foster's Ghanaian colleagues concurred that Pan African ideals indeed inspired his contributes to d/Deaf education in Africa. Okyere and Addo (1999) both worked with Foster in Ghana, and reported that he chose to serve in their country because it led the way in African independence, self-determination (Okyere & Addo, 1999).

Foster had dealt with enough racial discrimination in the United States (in educational settings and with White mission boards) to identify, and likely empathize with, colonial struggles of Black people in Africa. He seemed to have honored Pan African ideals by training and hiring d/Deaf Africans to run his mission schools. Ironically, at least two post-colonial African governments took Africanization one step further by taking over his mission schools altogether. These events, however, didn't appear to dampen Foster's interest in Pan Africanism.

Not everyone a fan of this line of inquiry. His adult children were skeptical that their father's so called "longings" and "calling" to go to Africa, and about his musing about Africanization, had anything to do with Pan Africanism (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). His daughter pushed back:

> In casual conversations with our family, my father never expressed approval for the [Pan-Africanism] movement; in fact, he generally did not embrace utopian ideals. If he were more involved, his ideology would have been closer to ML King (who was not a Pan-Africanist), than to Malcom X or Black Panthers (he had his criticisms of the Malcom X and the Black Panthers; F. Haynes, personal communication, September 2017).

Foster's criticism of Malcom X and the Black Panthers seemed plausible, especially on religious grounds, as they were Muslims and members of the Nation of Islam. How closely might Foster's ideologies have aligned with those of Dr. Martin Luther King (MLK)? My research revealed they were surprisingly close. MLK appeared to have been inspired by Pan-African ideals which drew him to Ghana and commit to post-colonial collaborations. Records show that MLK participated in the Ghanaian independence celebration, in Accra in 1957, where he interfaced with Pan African leaders and absorbed the sights and sounds of African freedom. For example, Wallin (2014/2015) said that MLK cited African cries of freedom, heard at that the independence ceremony, in his celebrated *I Have a Dream* speech.

Dr. Isaac Agboola (2014), a Deaf Nigerian Foster mentee, challenged any suggestion that Foster didn't approve of Pan African philosophies. He reiterated that Foster was meta-cognizant about his tries to Africa, and that his decision to serve there was prompted by "an early curiosity about his ancestral roots" (p. 3). "Andrew Foster", Dr. Agboola concluded, "always had Africa on the mind" (p. 21). Foster was often ambiguous as to why he chose to serve in one post-colonial African nation over another, this seemed unambiguous about his choice to be in Africa.

To navigate the tensions between divergent points of view, I explored Foster's possible Pan-African inclinations with the help from a couple of d/Deaf Black contemporaries who knew him well. I re-connected with Chuck Williams, Foster's d/Deaf African American friend from

Detroit. I asked Williams “Why did Foster take such an intense interest in Africa?”. Williams thought about this for some time, then responded “Africa was his choice because he was Black and Africans were Black, they were the same. Which was a good reason” (C. Williams, personal communication, September 2015). Indeed, this seemed like a good enough reason to me. As I re-examined this question, I reached out to Dr. Seth Ocloo, a d/Deaf Ghanaian who first worked with Foster in Ghana. I asked Dr. Ocloo (himself an African) what he thought about Foster and Pan Africanism. Ocloo responded “Foster may be considered a ‘Pan-Africanist’. If not in name, then by his actions, at least” (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020). This seemed as close as I would get to “definitive answer”, so I put the matter to rest, with the hope that other scholars might pick up from where I left off.

Pan Africanism and Black Missionaries

Foster was one of many African American who trained to become a missionary and felt “called” to serve in his ancestral homeland. Williams (1982) wrote that the Pan-Africanism, colonialism and Christianity converged (and at times caused tension) in colonial Africa: “The Afro-American missionaries provided an unsettling influence on imperialism….the blacks provided tangible evidence that with education Africans could also rise to higher levels their white mentors had suggested. Such a feeling contributed to nationalism among Westernized Africans and increased their Pan-African sentiments” (Williams, 1982, p. 134).

Pan-Africanism has historically juxtaposed White missionary evangelism in Africa. Advocates of the former have accused the latter of colluding with White imperialists (or some cases behaving like White imperialist) to enable slavery in Africa (Martin, 1971), then ushering in colonialism and later neo-colonialism (Sartre, 2001). Foster seemed the antithesis of the old school White missionary who might have fit seamlessly into the colonial paradigm often

associated with Christian missions (Martin, 1971). But could Foster realistically missionize and refute colonialism, even those the two were so tightly intertwined? Or were commitments to evangelism and anti-colonialism irreconcilable?

The book of Galatian (King James Bible, 1769/2017) said that: “There is neither Jew, nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ”. Foster held fast to this theological belief in Christian egalitarianism, that all people are equal in Christ. But some Christians were more equal than others in colonial and neo-colonial Africa. The socio-economic disparities between Foster (an American missionary with financial backing from Global North[15] prayer supporters) and d/Deaf Ghanaians would open vast inequities that typically led to power imbalances and neo-colonial like interactions (Beidleman, 1981).

Dr. Kusters (2014), a Deaf Anthropologist, touched on the charitable donations Foster would bestow on his newly converted d/Deaf Ghanaian mentees. She reported that it: “Initiated a pattern that created a notion of neediness, as well as association between church attendance and access to resources” (p. 476). If anything, the Foster’s intersections with Christianity and Pan-Africanism produced a mixed track record. I would argue that Foster decolonized d/Deaf Africans minds with education, communication modalities, employment and citizenship, while other researchers suggested he colonized them via expectations of Christian conversion (Kusters, 2014). Did Foster give with one hand and then take away with the other? If so, then one could surmise that Foster had a messy relationship with sub-Saharan Africa.

“Black churchmen, through the promotion of African missions,” wrote Roth (1982) “became important agents in the transition of Africa’s image from ‘Dark Continent’ to the

[15] I use the term Global North to geographically demarcate countries in the north hemisphere, such as the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and member states of the European Union (Thompson & Reuveny, 2009).

spiritual homeland" (p. 37). At times, Foster played the role of promotional agent (or even cheerleader) for Africa, countering negative false narrative with stories of accomplishment from the Continent. To the end, the World Federation of the Deaf invited Foster to deliver a keynote address in their conference in Washington, D.C. on August 8, 1975 (Foster, 1975). Dr. Eric Malzkhuh, Foster's d/Deaf friend from Detroit, was in attendance and recalled how Foster, dressed in traditional African attire (see figure one), enthralled the audience with an engaging presentation on the achievements of his d/Deaf West African students (2014).

Foster's "Stopovers" In the United Kingdom and Europe

"I left for West Africa—not knowing whither" (Foster, 1980, p 4).

As Foster departed the United States, in May 1957, the American media ran stories about his unusual mission to West Africa. The Michigan Chronicle reported the purpose of his trip was to "make surveys and contacts for the possibility of starting educational and religious work for the deaf in these countries" ("Deaf Missionary Leaves for Africa," May 1957).

In Foster's farewell letter to his "prayer supporters", he optimistically wrote "when our prayer letter for next month rolls of the mimeographing machine, we are trusting that it will bear the address of some place in West Africa" (1957e, April). Foster, the intrepid traveler, could barely afford a one-way ticket to London. And even then, he would arrive in the United Kingdom with little money to sustain himself. Foster's letter put a brave face on this situation. But according to Agboola (2014), the truth of the matter was something altogether different:

> When he left from America, he didn't even have enough money to make it to Africa. He just had enough money to make it to Europe at that time. He couldn't afford to make it all the way to the Continent. So he went to Europe to collect funds, to be able to do his work in Africa. So basically, he took a leap of faith, an amazing one at that. (p. 22)

Foster's letters exuded unshakeable trust in the providence of his mission. He combined his faith with a resourceful "God helps those who help themselves" ethos. Foster wasn't born into privilege. To the contrary, here was a d/Deaf African American who had barely scrounged together enough money to get to the United Kingdom, with an uncertainty as to what might happen next. Yet, he was not one to sit around, feeling sorry for himself and waiting for things to happen. "His approach to everything was 'Here's a problem, here's how to resolve it and let's move forward'. He never disqualified himself for any reason, whether it was the color of his skin or whether it was his hearing loss, it didn't matter" (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). Foster, a former business student, would hustle up a socially entrepreneurial resolution to this financial impasse.

Foster understood that "it takes money to make money" so wisely invested the meager CMDA donations from the United States to undertake an ambitious three-week public speaking tour to raise funds for his journey to West Africa. "Enroute to Africa", Foster wrote, "I took advantage of the plane's stopovers in Europe and visited churches and schools for the d/Deaf in selected countries" (Foster, 1957h, May-June). Foster's resourcefulness was powered by a "waste nothing" approach to his work. If he had flight connections somewhere, why not stretch it out into a mini-working visit to seek more prayer supporters? Foster was the original social networker. He would first trial his social networking strategy in the United Kingdom, then embed this "best practice" in his work going forward.

Aside from fund raising in the United Kingdom, the Michigan Chronicle wrote that Foster was "also interested in observing the methods and materials used to instruct the deaf in their schools and churches ("Deaf Missionary Leaves for Africa," May 1957). Foster's itinerary and objectives resembled a scaled down iteration of Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet's (THG)

now famous survey of British and European d/Deaf education systems (Gallaudet, 1888). THG's survey concluded, in 1816, with sailing Clerc (the Deaf teacher recruited from France) and his manually based pedagogy back to the Colonies to found the historical roots of d/Deaf education in the United States.

There was a profound irony to all of this. THG was the church man who established the d/Deaf education and sign language system which nurtured Foster. But he also promoted American Colonization Society's (ACS's) agenda to interrupt abolition by shipping African Americans to Liberia on a supposed mission to convert their indigenous brethren. Under the ACS scheme, scholars contend that no more than 4,500 African Americans shipped out to Liberia (Ciment, 2013). Foster's family remained in the United States where he became a product of THG's work. Foster embodied and brought THG's divergent visions forward to Liberia. He would then follow THG footsteps and agenda from New York to the United Kingdom and France, enroute to Liberia, almost 140 years later.

Foster's d/Deaf education survey in the United Kingdom and France, in 1957, was a gallant effort which ranks with THG's historic 1814 tour. Only that Foster's might have been more difficult. While Dr. Cogwell and his wealth colleagues sponsored THG, Foster had to fund himself. Operating under tight financial constraints, he narrowed his scope of work to stay with his American friends and deliver fund raising presentations at selected institutions which might donate money to his mission ("Deaf Missionary Leaves for Africa," May 1957). Below is a synthesized and reconstructed Foster public speaking/fund raising tour itinerary (Ilabor, 2009).

1. May 9: Arrived in London, took a train to Liverpool, and a ferry to Belfast, Ireland.
2. May 10 to 14: Stayed with Thomas J. Riddal (CDMA International Advisory Council member), presented twice at the d/Deaf Christian Fellowship and the Mission for the d/Deaf, respectively.
3. May 15: Took a ferry from Belfast, North Ireland to Glasgow, Scotland, met Alister Kennedy, presented and visited classes at the Bible Training Institute, then took a night train to Manchester, England.
4. May 16 to 19: Visited the Mission for the School for the d/Deaf and Manchester University's d/Deaf Education Department.
5. May 19 to 22: Returned to London, visited the Church for the d/Deaf.
6. May 23: Flew from London Airport to Paris North Airport and checked into the European Bible Institute.
7. May 23 to 30: Visited the National Institute for Deaf Children and Parisian School for the d/Deaf.

A chance meeting with a Ghanaian medical student in the United Kingdom significantly affected the early course of Foster's work. While the majority of Foster's United Kingdom contacts offered cash and in-kind contributions, this Ghanaian provided something just as valuable; a connection to his father who served as a pastor at the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg, Accra. This interaction in the United Kingdom tossed Foster a lifeline in Ghana. Afterall, Foster (1980) conceded that he "left for West Africa—not knowing whither" (p 4), which meant he hadn't a clue as to where he would go or who he might look for in Ghana. As it turned out, he was gifted with a Presbyterian pastor's name and address, and instructions to look him up for assistance on arrival (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1982).

Foster concluded his three-weeks of public lecture tours in France. He received approval from Montrose Archibold Waite (CMDA International Advisory Council member) that the $700 he raised was "enough money" and departed for Liberia (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1979). On May 30, 1957 Foster boarded an Air France flight and departed from Paris North Airport (now Charles de Gaul International Airport) to Roberts Field International Airport, Liberia (Kamei, 2006). Like generations of African American missionaries who came before him, Foster chose Liberia as his first port of call in Africa.

The Love of Liberty Brought Them There

"Come to the land of liberty, where you and your children may not only be happy yourselves, but where you can assist in making Africa the praise of the whole earth"([John Day, Republic of Liberia "founding father"] Martin, 1982, p. 69).

Liberia is a country located in West Africa, off the Atlantic Ocean, and is approximately the size and shape of Ohio. The inland of Liberia is a forested plateau rising to low mountains. The country's low laying coastal plain is intersected by marshes, creeks and tidal lagoons, and bisected by nine rivers. The city of Monrovia is a peninsula jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean with a human-made (funded courtesy of American tax-payers) port.

Foster placed Liberia at the front of three country d/Deaf mission survey tour (along with Ghana and Nigeria), but didn't leave behind any clues as to why it came first. Foster's third son seemed equally perplexed. He operated his father's slide projector during fund raising presentations at American churches:

> When [my father] introduced that particular [Liberia] slide he would just say that he went out like Abraham in the Bible not knowing where he was going, but trusting that God would take him to the right place (T. Foster, October 2015).

Whether by Divine Providence or strategic envisioning and planning, it turned out that Liberia was indeed the "right place". This would not be self-evident to most Americans, because Liberia garners only the briefest mention in our senior high school history courses (Ciment, 2013). I will therefore provide a contextualized overview of the unique historical, socio-cultural and ethnic issues that both attracted and repelled Foster's mission in Liberia.

In 1816, the American Colonialization Society (ACS) convinced the United States Congress to covertly fund its deportation of Black people from America to colonize and missionize their African counterparts in Liberia. "The idea that African Americans could serve as civilizing agents in Africa greatly appealed to many Whites, especially White missionary bodies" (Killingray, 2003, p.8). Ironically, Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the architect of the North American d/Deaf education and sign language system which would teach Foster, was said to be an ACS member (Sayers, 2020).

"The Liberian Experiment", as it's referred to by Robert July (2004), approached Africa as it's a White person's laboratory in which to plant and grow a utopian Black Christian society. White mission boards were geopolitically pressured to keep African American missionaries as far away from Africa as possible, but ACS wanted to send as many to Liberia as they could find (Jacobs, 1982). After five years of recruitment, their wish came true.

The first cohort of African American missionaries and settlers (known as Americo-Liberians) stepped on to Providence Island near Monrovia in 1822. They hoisted the American flag, declared Liberia an unofficial American appendage and opened a portal through which many African Americans accessed the Continent (Ciment, 2013). Liberia became the undisputed "go to" destination for an African American missionary, such as Foster, to serve in Africa. Over the years, the United States would send hundreds of African American

missionaries across the Atlantic to missionize in Liberia. Six hundred African American missionaries served in Africa between 1900 and 1970, most went to Liberia (Killingray, 2003).

In 1822, the Americo-Liberian "founding fathers" declared independence from the ACS and coined the Republic's motto, "the love of liberty brought us here". Graham Greene, a 20th century English novelist who traveled extensively through Liberia in 1935, quipped that "the settlers found that love of their own liberty was not consistent with liberty of the native tribes" (1936, p.15). African Americans' missionizing got caught up and bogged down in these aforementioned inconsistencies, too. Ostensibly, cohort of African American missionaries went to Liberia to proselytize to the indigenous Africans. On arrival, however, they opted to interact with their own people and largely ignored the needs of indigenous Liberians. They built churches, in which to sing pious hymns and preach sermons to their fellow Americo-Liberians (Kapuscinski, 2001). Converting Africans to Christianity had been one of the keys missions behind the Liberian Experiment, but the indigenous Liberians weren't about to abandon their spiritual beliefs and convert themselves (Ciment, 2013). The first twenty years of missionary activities in Liberia, therefore, resulted in conversion of only 393 indigenous Africans (Shick, 1982). The Methodist Episcopal Church dispatched a bishop in 1853 to Monrovia to look into the matter and then "report directly on the condition of their missionary activities in Liberia" (Shick, 1982, p.55).

The report found that:

> The bishop was impressed with the Christian appearance of the settlers…with regards to the effect of the missions among the Africans, Bishop Scott was far from impressed. He reported that his inquires in the area had produced discouraging responses…these results

> were not due to any want of faithful on the part of the missionaries…but are the result of peculiar conditions of the native population. (Shick, 1982, p. 55)

Foster arrived in Liberia, more than a century after the bishop, to undertake his fact-finding mission about access to faith and education for d/Deaf Africans. His initial impressions were not dissimilar from that of the bishop, as Americo-Liberian attitudes toward the indigenous Liberians had not significantly changed.

Foster's Greetings from the Not-Too-Dark Continent!

On May 30, 1957, Foster departed from Paris on an Air France flight destined for Liberia. I tried to imagine what he might have felt and thought as he exited European air space and got his first glimpse of the African Continent 30,000 feet below. Did he look down and take in the royal blue of Mediterranean Sea? Did the ocean below give way to the soft, luxurious orange-red hues of the Saharan Desert with its sands unfolding and expanding as far as the eye can see before fading into a narrow line along the horizon? I have followed the same flight path (connecting through Europe to Liberia) many times and recall how the Saharan Deserts yields to lush tropical rainforests. The hundreds of miles of foliage gradually thin out into subsistence farming, peppered by small towns with conical roof huts, situated between rivers that flowed to the Atlantic Ocean.

I recall how my first flight taxied in, parked, and condensation instantly built up on the window because the air-conditioned plane was significantly cooler the air temperature at Roberts Field, Liberia. The cabin door flung open and humidity-laden heat rushed in, settling and hanging heavy on my skin and hair. The humidity permeated my nose with an earthly pungent aroma. "The actual smell of the tropics is somewhat different", Kapuscinksi (2001) observed, "we instantly recognize its weight, its sticky materiality. The smell makes us at once aware that

we are at that point of earth where an exuberant and indefatigable nature labors" (p.4). How did Foster feel as he descended the Air France flight stairs and planted his feet firmly onto African soil? If the sun was out, he might have been struck by the intensity of the equatorial sunlight and brightness, which contrasted with the European spring he left behind in Paris. Foster wrote:

> Greetings from the not-too-dark continent! Yes, it is not so dark in the places I've visited so far. Here in Liberia, I found the people very friendly and cooperative. And there is much evidence of material prosperity and social development. But, alas, it seems that the church has not been quite so progressive spiritually! (Foster, 1957i, May-July)

Foster entered Liberia during a period when the country was opening up to American business partnerships. "Liberia today has a harbor on the ocean at Monrovia, airfield and roads to the interior", a chipper article announced to the American business community, "with help from the United States, Liberia is marching forward" ("Progress in Liberia," 1952). Foster, as a first time visitor to Liberia, would likely have been surprised by the level of American influence evident in the country. He didn't need to change money, because Liberia used the U.S. dollar as its national currency. Foster would have seen that "policemen wear summer uniforms discarded from the New York City police department, and townships have names such as Louisiana, New Georgia and Maryland" (Lamb, 1987, p. 125). He might have noted that Liberia's national flag featured the all too familiar red and white stripes of the American flag he left in the United States. Locating the "lone star", in the blue upper left-hand corner of the Liberian flag, is the only way to differentiate it from the American flag.

American Small Small

I followed Foster's footsteps to Liberia to glean an understanding of the unusual nature of his first working environment in Africa. I planted myself as a participant observer at d/D Oscar

Romero School for the Deaf, at faith-based school for d/Deaf near Monrovia. I participated in school and church activities and staff meetings between 2016 and 2017. I followed local media, entertainment and socio-cultural events. After a few months I began observations, note taking and interviewing colleagues.

My field notes revealed that I felt surrounded by American symbols which were closing in on me on a daily basis. I highlighted my curiosity in seeing American cars with Minnesota, New York and Pennsylvania license plates which plied the roads. Then there was the surprise in meeting Liberian colleagues with American sounding names, such as my teacher counterpart- Jerry Jones. But Liberia didn't look, feel or sound like America. Beneath that American-like veneer I located cultures, languages, systems and constructs which had more in common with Ghana and Nigeria than the United States. From the Afro-beat rhythms which thumped (from dawn to dusk) out of the shops which neighbored Oscar Romero School for the Deaf, to the pepe (hot pepper) soup served to the d/Deaf students, Liberia was decidedly West African.

Even for the Americo-Liberians who ruled Liberia, being in Africa but not of it was an impossible proposition (Ciment, 2013). I concluded that the Liberians I met seemed very African to me. I put my observations to Jerry Jones one day. She demurred and said "yuh cuh, here in Liberia wi American, we spe American English. Wi tek ourseh to be American. It's true na".[16] I pointed out that even the sign language we used in class was Liberian Sign Language (not ASL) and the English she spoke sounded Liberian too. She let out a big, hearty laugh and said "mi frien". She clapped her hands together once, "heeii! Well a leas, how wi see it, wi American small small [we are small Americans]". No matter my questioning and reasoning, it

[16] I noted and transcribed this discussion in Liberian English (rather than translate it into Standard English) to most accurately preserve and present it.

seemed Liberians considered themselves inexplicably attached to the United States. Maybe they were.

America continued to have tangible ties to Liberia long after the ACS had come and gone. Even at the point of entry, Roberts Field was built by the United States Government ("Progress in Liberia", 1952) and subsequently run by Pan American World Airways. The airport is about 30 miles from Monrovia. But it can take more than 90 minutes to negotiate the partially paved road which is populated by a parade of cars, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians and livestock all crowding on to this narrow "one size fits all" artery.

The "Deaf and Dumb" in West Africa is a New Field

Foster journeyed approximately an hour from Roberts Field to stay with Raymond and Sophie de la Haye on the Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) radio station compound. ELWA, Liberia's only radio station, was situated almost half-way between Roberts Field Airport and Monrovia (see figure 13; Stoneman, 2012). The de la Hayes ran this mission radio station which broadcasted the gospel and other public service announcements across the country and into other African nations (Cassidy, 2019). The following morning ELWA announced Foster's arrival and mission in Liberia ("Deaf Missionary Worker Now Visiting West Africa," 1957). The story also ran in Liberia's national newspaper, *The Listener*:

> An American missionary and educator of the deaf is visiting Liberia this and next week. He is Andrew Foster of Detroit, Michigan. Foster is surveying the educational and religious opportunities for "deaf and dumb" people in Liberia, and is interested in providing opportunities for such people. He welcomes information, suggestions and help from people who are interested in the project ("Deaf Missionary Worker Now Visiting West Africa," 1957).

Foster moved on from ELWA to stay the next eight days at a Worldwide Evangelization Crusade owned hostel in central Monrovia. This positioned him closer to the government, media and mission offices where he could do business (Ilabor, 2009).

Foster reflected on these questions which flooded his mind at the opening of this, his first d/Deaf education mission in Liberia:

> 'How many deaf people are in Africa?' 'How do you locate deaf children in Africa?' 'What is the number of deaf schools in Africa?' 'Is there a deaf school in so-and-so country?' 'How are the schools supports?' 'Does the government take an interest in educating the deaf in Africa?' 'What is status of the deaf in society?'…Questions like these have besieged this speaker ever since first setting feet on African soil as a missionary and educator in 1957. (Foster, 1965b, p. 6)

Education in Liberia, like most of sub-Saharan Africa, was founded by missionaries. Their mission schools offered general education, to the exclusion of students with disabilities (Miles, 2004). Foster would discover that Liberia lacked a mission school for the d/Deaf. But review of mid-19th century Liberian history revealed that a hand full of d/Deaf Liberians were educated to the Global North (Brittan, 1969). Brittan (1969) wrote that two d/Deaf Liberians brothers were shipped to the United States where they attended a school for the d/Deaf. It seems that least one of the d/Deaf boys was welcomed back and amicably included in society: "everyone know him and are kind to him…he has learned the alphabet on his fingers, and one can readily make him understand what one wants" (p. 45).

Rev. Colden Hoffman, in 1857, came across another d/Deaf boy, named Harvey Peet, who was the son of a Liberian chief (Fox, 1868). Harvey studied basket-weaving three years at the Deaf and Dumb Institute in Bath, England. Hoffman hoped Harvey might return to Liberia

to teach weaving to the blind at a future "institute for Deaf-mutes" (Fox, 1865, p. 361). Harvey, died in England in 1865 before these dreams were realized (Mile, 2004).

Foster wasn't privy to this baseline data, in or indeed any information about the state of d/Deaf education in Liberia. He wasn't, however, intimidated by the unknown quantities facing him. He didn't think twice about how he'd communicate with the hearing without interpreters or how he'd chat with d/Deaf people who relied on mime and gesture. He seemed to revel in it: "with my ever-handy writing pad, I communicated with [hearing] people on all levels without too much difficulty", wrote Foster, "of course I was thrilled to meet fellow Africans face to face at last! Not surprisingly, most were illiterate. Conversation was limited to natural gestures" (Foster, 1980, p.4).

Foster came to Africa with big university degrees, but not "big man" bravado. Foster's mentees reported that he had an uncanny ability to communicate with all kinds of d/Deaf people, free of judgement. Faith Ilabor, a d/Deaf mentee who Foster taught in Nigeria and assisted to undertake graduate studies in the United States, observed that: "He would listen to anybody no matter how unintelligent or unclear the deaf person's language is. Even if the person had never seen the four walls of classroom, Andrew would understand him/her" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 189). She continued, "He never believed any deaf person is useless. He could see what one would be in the future, even when one knew next to nothing about his/her capacities" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 188). Foster came to Africa to create news systems in which d/Deaf Africans could realize their full capacities. To this end, Foster wrote "our work among the 'deaf and dumb' in West Africa is a new field" (Foster, 1958e, October-November). Foster didn't, however, write about the challenges he encountered in doing business in such a new field. I will examine initial obstacles Foster might have endured in Liberia.

First, deafness likely deprived Foster of valuable incidental learning opportunities to apply to his new work. Hauser et al. explained that "when hearing individuals talk to each other without making their conversations accessible to deaf individuals…an enormous amount of incidental learning is lost to the deaf individual, while the hearing [people] have full access to this information" (2010, p. 154). As a hearing person in Liberia, my ears quickly adjusted to Liberian-English, which enabled me to follow national events that I weave into research activities. Foster wouldn't have overheard on-going conversations (i.e., on radio, in office coordinators, out at the market, etc.) about relevant Liberian issues which might have informed his field work. This is not to "fault" Foster's deafness, but to identify and explain limiting factors.

Secondly, Foster (as he shared) was the pioneer of a brand-new field, mission d/Deaf education. This was probably exciting, but also highly challenging. There was no precedent, guide or mentoring template he could follow. He made up the model as he went. For example, I know whether his deaf education surveys were formal or informal. For all I know, Foster might have walked around with Likert-scale questionnaires and participant consent forms (one which he'd keep and copy for interviewees) on a crisp clipboard. Or he might have simply jotted names, addresses, dates and numbers on his note pad. The point is that Foster was without previous examples to follow. He was truly on his own. He designed and tested his own methods through a trial and error process.

I endeavored to find and document Foster's project design process in places like Liberia. Agboola wrote that Foster's goal was "to convince local education officials that there indeed are many deaf children in their communities and that they have a moral obligation to provide them with opportunities to attain full citizenship" (Agboola, 2014b, p. 4). In Liberia, Foster leveraged

the classic economic law of supply and demand to try to convince education official that he should start a mission school for the d/Deaf. He applied the following three steps to demonstrate d/Deaf education "demand" which he would supply.

1. Survey the number of d/Deaf Liberia and baseline access to services (i.e., education, employment).
2. Meet with governmental officials to discuss the country's supply of d/Deaf people and their demand for serves, while emphasizing the "specialized" nature of the work at hand.
3. Propose that Christian Mission for Deaf Africans (CMDA) supply the specialized knowledge, skills and experience to meet the demand of services for the d/Deaf people.

Foster's first step was to trial his d/Deaf education survey. On May 31, 1957, he set out with pen and note pad in hand to introduce himself at Liberia's Department of Education, Department of Information and Department of the Interior (Ilabor, 2010). Emmanuel Ilabor, a d/Deaf Nigerian mentee, recalled that, "Whenever [Foster] wanted to establish a school for the deaf, he would first meet the education authorities in each country to get their approval" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 195). After meeting and greeting his Government of Liberia counterparts, Foster next sought information about the whereabouts of d/Deaf Liberians from Monrovia's local media.

I was a "Boeboe"

Foster's meeting with one local newspaper uncovered intriguing information about a d/Deaf Liberian. Foster's maiden encounter with the d/Deaf in Africa, via Liberia, was a harbinger of the difficulties he would wrestle with for the next 30 years.

> The day after arriving in Monrovia my eyes caught the headline of an old newspaper. It was about three boys, one of them "dumb and mute", who were imprisoned in a room by some fisherman. The d/Deaf boy escaped and, through 'sign and gesticulations', informed police, who freed the boys and arrested the fisherman. Police suspected they were going to sacrifice the boys in order to boost their fishing luck. I secured the deaf boy's name and address from police. Later, a Canadian missionary and I looked up "Boeboe"[17] ("Bobo"). He had gone strolling in the city. However, neighbors brought us a little d/Deaf girl also named "boeboe" though not related, who lived nearby. She is bright-eyed and about seven years old. But owing to the lack of hearing or schooling, my attempts to communicate with her were nil. When the neighbors observed my efforts to converse with her, they asked the other missionary whether I was also a boeboe. Thereupon, I learned that "boeboe" refers to someone who cannot hear or talk. (Foster, 1957i, May-July)

In that moment, it appears that Foster didn't engage Liberians in a moral and ethical debate about respect terms for d/Deaf people. Perhaps he felt that to hold court on this topic, in 1957 Monrovia, would have distracted from the baseline survey and delayed delivery of his product – full attainment of citizenship for d/Deaf Liberians. Or Foster might not have been all that bothered by these labels, as he appropriated and applied them literally in his literature. At some level, however, he was cognizant that the d/Deaf probably shouldn't be called "boeboe", so addressed it the *Education of the Deaf in Africa* conference.

[17] "Boeboe" is a derogatory term, meaning "dummy, for the d/Deaf in Liberia. Similarly, "mmum" is a disparaging word for the d/Deaf in Ghana.

In 1965, Foster convened an *Education of the Deaf in Africa* conference at his mission school for the d/Deaf in Ibadan, Nigeria. Foster told attendees that he discouraged use of words like “boeboe”, “deaf and dumb”, “deaf-mute”. He said that use of the word “deaf” would avoid “misconceptions and improper classifications” (1965b, p. 10). No sooner had Foster closed this conference than he wrote a letter to his prayer supporters in which he referred to his West African mentees as “deaf and dumb” (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1966). It seemed hypocritical that Foster lectured other people about use proper terminology, but then exempted himself. After one survey interview, in Monrovia, Foster told his prayer supporters that a “boy’s grandmother told us about the large number of ‘boeboes whom she saw at a recent healing meeting” (Foster, 1957i, May-July). Yes, the grandmother might well have called the d/Deaf “boeboe”, but I was surprised how Foster felt obliged to do likewise, rather than paraphrase the message and remove the disparaging term from it (as he seemed to want others to do).

Foster’s church contacts eventually brought him to a mission school where he found a d/Deaf girl trying to comprehend written instructions for school assignments, in the absence of sign language (Foster, 1957i, May-July). After this encounter, Foster postulated that “a ‘language track’ for thoughts to travel on was needed for more abstract ideas, like witnessing. Thus, the task ahead was clearly primary schooling for their betterment” (Foster, 1980, p.4)

An Educational Program for the Deaf in Liberia

Foster’s baseline findings highlighted that d/Deaf people in Liberia lacked access to communication, education, faith, and participation in society. Liberia didn’t have schools for the d/Deaf nor support services to include them in general education. If Foster build mission school for the d/Deaf in Liberia, he speculated that “a number of ‘boeboes’ could easily turn up

perhaps" (Foster, 1957f). Foster determined he had a solid case to present to Liberia's Department of Education. History was also on his side.

The Americo-Liberians "valued education and established school in the new settlements as quickly as they could" (Ciment, 2013, p. 67). Per Liberia's unusual history, its education system was founded almost exclusively by African American missionaries (rather than White missionaries). Therefore, it would make sense for another, in a long line of African American missionaries, to expand mission education to d/Deaf Liberians. Foster was well-positioned to make his pitch, but there was one catch: communication could be a potential pitfall.

Foster had to decide how to present his proposal to Liberia's Department of Education without interpreters (there weren't any in country) and limited lip-reading abilities. According his third son, Foster and the Department of Education officials likely communicated by writing back and forth with pens and paper:

> If it was him talking to hearing people, he would just start writing. He would not let on to that he could talk. Because if he let, then people try to carry on a verbal conversations and it would be an exercise in futility [because he couldn't lip read well]. If he did sit down meetings… he would pull out his pen and paper and it was just handwriting back and forth. He would not let on that he could talk. (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015)

This approach availed Foster with verbatim meeting notes, too. According to Anne Hewitt, d/Deaf education colleague he met in Ghana, Foster held on to these written correspondences, filed them away, then applied them to follow activities as needed (A. Hewitt, personal communication, November 2018).

Aside from communication modalities, Jowers (2014) spoke about Foster's collaborative approach to his meetings. She contended that he met with African governmental officials in the spirit of partnership, rather than with a dictatorial demeanor:

> He does not go saying 'do what I tell you to do'. He goes saying 'how can I help?'. What is it we can do together, working in this country, working with individuals here to make an opportunity for deaf people who have not been educated, who have been shunned, who have not had opportunities' 'How do we make that work? (Jowers, 2014, p. 10)

Foster's presence and presentation was met with wholesale approval in Monrovia in 1957. It also induced an invitation to submit a proposal as soon as possible (Ilabor, 2009). Foster didn't dither. He quickly churned out a three-page, eight-point proposal for Liberia's Department of Education entitled *An Educational Program for the Deaf in Liberia* (Foster, 1957f, May).

An Educational Program for the Deaf in Liberia was Foster's (1957f, May) "freshman" effort, a first opportunity to translate his mission education vision into a formal, written document. The three-page blueprint outlined the structures he wanted in place, and steps he wanted to take, to construct a mission school for the d/Deaf in Africa. Foster's protype proposal, though novice, was a remarkably well thought out working document. This first draft proposal would become Foster's "go to" d/Deaf mission education template. He would revise and submit later iterations of this document to other post-colonial African governments going forward.

Foster (1957f, May) opened this proposal by stating: "the general objectives of the program will be to provide Liberian deaf children with instructions in academic, vocational and

religious subjects. And, as the work gets underway to assist in the rehabilitation of deaf adults" (p.1). Foster went on to detail exactly what the d/Deaf mission school should be:

- Managed by CMDA "specialists" in partnership with the Government of Liberia.
- Comprised of a residential school with two classrooms, a kitchen and dining room to accommodate an initial, anticipated intake of 15 to 25 persons (students and personnel).
- Provided with a farm, first for agricultural activities and later to serve as a future mission school site as enrollment expands.
- Staffed with a Christian principal, teachers, nurse, boy's and girl's dean, dietitian or cook and a maintenance supervisor.
- Resourced by CMDA fund raising in Liberia and the United States with contributions from the Government of Liberia (such as donation of land and physical facilities).
- Guided by a "Total Communication" ethos which honors both manual and oral communication. "Any avenue (i.e., sign language, speak, reading, writing) to assist d/Deaf people to access information to prepare this person to integrate within the larger cultural context" (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015).
- Permitted to set up pre and in-service mission deaf education teacher training (to "Liberianize"[18] the operation for transfer to local people).

Foster submitted the requested proposal, then make his exodus from Liberia. "We are now awaiting their reaction", Foster wrote from Accra, "will you please pray with us that we may

[18] This point offered an early nod toward decolonization and Pan African ideals.

receive a favorable response?" (Foster, 1957f, May). Foster's prayers would promptly be answered via Tubman's "Open Door Policy".

Unsatisfactory Conditions in Liberia

Liberia's President, William Tubman, initiated the "Open Door Policy" which stipulated that foreign partners who propose international cooperation receive a nimble response. According to Ilabor (2009), Foster "was not willing to spend time idly while the Liberian government was slow in considering his proposal" (p. 26). Foster's actions suggest he wasn't advised about how fast the "Open Door Policy" moved, so was genuinely surprised when the Department of Education approved his proposal. Foster's prayers were answered. The Government of Liberia welcomed Foster to commence his d/Deaf education mission work in Liberia immediately (Foster, 1957j, July-August).

Defying the naysayers, Foster's foray into mission education for d/Deaf Africans was a success. Foster substantively:

1. Overcame communication barriers with hearing and d/Deaf Liberians;
2. Identified the existence of d/Deaf Liberian in need of services;
3. Presented preliminary findings to Liberia's Department of Education;
4. Submitted a proposal to work with d/Deaf Liberians; and,
5. Obtained approval and invitation to implement his proposal with immediate effect.

Foster's brief working visit to Liberia leaves more questions than definitive answers. With everything going in his favor in Monrovia, the question remains as to why didn't he rally back and operationalize his proposal? Why did Foster leave such an enticing opportunity on the table and what changed Foster's mind about Liberia?

Dr. Seth Ocloo (1972), Foster's d/Deaf Ghanaian colleague, shed the narrowest of light on this mystery. He stated that "[Foster] said that he spent a few weeks in Liberia in an attempt to explore the possibility of opening a school for the d/Deaf there. He was, however, not completely satisfied with conditions there, so he moved on" (p. 49). Neither Ocloo nor Foster expanded on which Liberian conditions were unsatisfactory.

Emmanuel Ilabor self-published a collection of Foster's writings, mentee testimonies (including Ilabor's memoir) entitled *The Most Courageous Educator and the Most Visionary Missionary to Deaf African-Dr. Andrew Jackson Foster*. In his book, Illabor (2010) hypothesized that Foster turned away from Liberia because there weren't a critical mass of d/Deaf Liberians for a mission school and he lacked a clear rationale for being there in the first place.

I found plenty of reasons why Foster began his Africa work in Liberia. African Americans, especially missionary educators, have historically chosen Liberia as their first (and at times only) country of service in Africa. M'Bayo (2004) explained that "Liberia, because of its history as a settlement established for repatriation of free black and ex-slaves from the United States, became a significant reference point for diasporan blacks" (p. 26). Though Foster only mentioned a few encounters with d/Deaf Liberians, he later suggested that "more would turn up", which was the impetus for his proposal.

As an alternative hypothesis, I postulate that Foster opted out of doing business in Liberia because he:

1. Fostered mission education for all d/Deaf Africans, which might have run counter to the Americo-Liberian ethos;

2. Mistook their "Open Door Policy" as a "cost sharing" opportunity rather than a foreign investment scheme; and
3. Responded to President Kwame Nkrumah's open invitation to African Americans to come and contribute to newly independent Ghana (which was on next on Foster's survey list).

Americo-Liberians dreamed about founding an African homeland for African Americans. But not all African Americans, who sought an African connection, necessarily felt at home in Liberia. Many disaporans engaged with Africa via Liberia, then disengaged for a myriad of reasons. Many went in a different direction and never looked back. Foster was not alone in his decision not to business with the Americo-Liberians.

Up until 1957, Liberia was the "go to" country for Africa-American to missionize in Africa. With the coming of Africa independence, Ghana beckoned and promised to do it one better.

CHAPTER FOUR: A SAFARI FOR SOULS

Just before midnight on June 9, 1957, a Pan-American Airways flight touched down at Roberts Field in Liberia. This thrice-weekly, three day long New York to Johannesburg service made stops in Boston, Europe and Africa enroute to its final destination in South Africa (Larsson & Zekria, 2020). Foster boarded the Pan-American Airways night flight from Roberts Field with a ticket to its next destination, Accra, Ghana (Ilabor, 2010). I can imagine Foster settling into his seat and looking out at the blinking lights of Roberts Field disappearing beneath him. I can envision him forwarding to Ghana; this would be his second stop along his three-country survey.

Foster disembarked in Accra International Airport (now Kotoka International Airport) in the early morning hours of June 10. Ghana's main airport, like Robert's Field, is a World War II vestige constructed by the allied forces to buttress its North African campaign. Unlike the rurally located Robert's Field, Accra International Airport is uniquely nestled inside the city's premier commercial district (now known as Airport Residential), a short walk from the ever-busy Liberation Avenue (Accra's main thoroughfare). As Foster exited arrivals at Accra international airport, he found himself favorably positioned to do business from this central location.

Welcome to Ghana: The Center of the World

Ghana is a West Africa country located on the Gulf of Guinea. The line of median bisects Ghana at the port city of Tema and then intersects the equator a few degrees south of the country. This positions it as the country closest to the world's geographical center (Utley, 2016). Geographically speaking, Ghana is "the center of the world". Ghana is extraordinarily hot and humid. Lamb (1987) wrote that some regions of country are "so steamy-hot that it feels as though it were drizzling even when the sky is cloudless, crystal blue" (p. 284).

Modern day Ghana encompasses the following four ethnic groups: 1) the Twi speaking people (Akan and Fanti ethnic groups) who at one time amassed a land size larger than the whole of Ghana, 2) the Mole-Dagbani across the vast region of the north 3) the Ewe in and around the Volta River/Volta Lake region, 4) the Ga-Adangbe in present day Accra and Tema plains, and 5) the Guan ethnic group, and their sub groups, also integrated into all regions (Cole & DeBlij, 2007). These groups build elegant kingdoms and empires per their culture, free of Western constructs of state units and "nationhood" (Mendonsa, 2002). To this point, J.E. Casely Hayford (a Ghanaian Nationalist) pointed out that "before even the British came into relations with our people, we were a developed people, having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government" (Tanye, 2010, p. 55). The British and the European Governments had a decidedly Eurocentric view on that.

Colonialist took the absence of Western institutions in sub-Saharan African as an open to invitation to subjugate it (Ward, 1948). The British, French and Germans took and divided West Africans' land among themselves to establish African colonies ruled by "European powers". The British Government took a "share" of its West African land and cobbled together a compact, shoebox shaped entity which they name the antiquated sounding "British Crown Colony of the Gold Coast", or simply the Gold Coast. Ward (1948) said the "gold", in the Gold Coast, references to early gold trade between Europeans and the Twi speaking linguistic group. Lamb (1987) evocatively countered that "there is no great chest of gold…the term 'Gold Coast' actually refers to the money the slave traders made raiding the population" (p. 284). The British Colonial Government colonized the Gold Coast from 1874 until its independence in 1957, when it became Ghana.

Charles Arden-Clarke Lord Listowel, British Colonial Minister, announced in 1956 that "the name Ghana has been conferred on the new country in accordance with local wishes. It was the name of an ancient kingdom, in what is now French territory south of the Sahara, which has acquired great historic significance in the Gold Coast" (Ghana Independence Bill of 1956). Upon achieving independence, the Republic of Ghana, like the ancient Kingdom of Gana, would become a meeting point for Africans, inclusive of diasporans like Foster.

The Black Star of Africa

The independent nation state of Ghana was politically birthed at the stroke of midnight, March 6, 1957. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was the right man, in the right place, at the right time to lead the nation. He had lived, worked and studied ten years in the United States prior to becoming Ghana's founding President. He completed an undergraduate and graduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania. In the United States, Nkrumah became versed and politically active in Pan African philosophies. There he astutely attuned its applications to post-colonial Africa. As countries like Ghana positioned for self-determination, Africans leaders (such as Nkrumah) were able to take Pan Africanism and make it into "an ideology that promotes cultural and political independence in Africa based on an equality of rights" (Oginni & Moitui, 2015, p. 42). Nkrumah would refine these ideas in London, before returning to Ghana to apply his vision of Pan Africanism as an:

> Ideology of a New Africa, independent and absolutely free from imperialism, organized on a continental scale, founded upon the conception of one and united Africa drawing its strength from modern science and technology and from the traditional African belief that the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. (Smith, 1991, p. 31)

Nkrumah ascended to political power in Ghana, but didn't forsake these Pan African ideals. Instead "he sought to portray the newly independent Ghana as the seed from which a united Africa could spring" (Wallin, p. 41). This aspiration was reflected in Ghana's national flag:

Ghana's red, gold and green (known as the tri-colors) national flag, with a black star featured front and center, "became a symbol for Africans still under colonial rule and led the way to independence for many countries" (George, 1976, p.11). It was also relevant for diasporans who also endured racial and colonial domination in the United States, and longed for the self-determination and freedom:

> Ghana provided roots to a people torn from their ancestral culture, roots that many believed had been irrevocably destroyed during the enslavement process. Even more, Ghana offered inspiration and redemption for African Americans. As the world marched forward, the course that Ghana took, and the achievements of that nation of 4.5 million people, promised to have a dramatic influence on the status and struggle of African Americans. The watching world would have proof of black abilities. The pride of Ghana would be the pride of African Americans." (Meriwether, 2002, p. 162)

Ghana, with its tri-colored flag and Pan-Africanist leader, became a Pan African mecca in 1957. Nkrumah seized this moment, reached out to diasporans and invited them to contribute to Ghana's development. Dr. Akanlig-Pare, a professor at University of Ghana's Sign Language Program, suggested Nkrumah's invitation influenced Foster's hasty exit from Monrovia and surprise arrival in Accra.

> We know Foster came to Liberia first. That is understood because Liberia has ties with the United States…But then around that time there were so many activities going on in Africa and especially on the West Coast of Africa…So this certainly would not have been

> lost on Andrew Foster when he went to Liberia… He would have heard about what was happening in Ghana. So it would have been a motivation for him to leave Liberia to come to Ghana. (G. Akanlig-Pare, personal communication, February 2020)

Diasporans from the United States didn't ignore Nkrumah's invitation. "From the late 1950s to 1960s, scores of African Americans, including intellectuals, technicians, teachers, artists, professional, entrepreneurs, and trade unionists, left the United States for Ghana" (Gaines, 2006, p. 6).

"Returnees"[19], as they are called, almost always paid their way to Ghana. Nkrumah invited them, but the Government of Ghana didn't necessarily meet returnees' travel or personal expenses. On arrival, however, some returnees found paid employment to offset their costs, while the rest volunteered their services. Foster initially fell into the latter category, as he entered Ghana as an unpaid missionary educator, committed to serving d/Deaf Ghanaians. Paid or unpaid "each person had brought to Africa varying talents, energies, vigor, youth and terrible yearnings to be accepted" (Angelou, 1991, p. 19). America's leading civil rights activists were among the first to answer Nkrumah's invitation to contribute to Ghana's future success.

"That's What I Call Making a Real Revolution"

Foster's years in Ghana (1957-1965) intersected with those of prominent African American civil rights leaders who repatriated to Accra. It is not known if he crossed paths with them, but their significant contributions likely helped to encourage Nkrumah to recognize (and eventually back) Foster's proposals. To give context to Foster's work in Ghana, I will briefly

[19] In the context of this story, the term returnee refers to an African diasporan who voluntarily repatriates to Ghana (Essien, 2014). Liberia and other African countries similarly have their returnees too (this migration is not exclusive to Ghana).

explore trajectories of a few distinguished returnees in the country, beginning with Dr. Maya Angelou

Dr. Maya Angelou relocated to Ghana in 1962. Her three years (1962-1965) of work made a significant impact on the country's higher education (University of Ghana-Legon), media and arts. Angelou acclaimed works, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1997*)* and *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1991), poetically recounted the scholar's formative years as a returnee in Ghana. Angelou's Ghanaian sojourn overlapped with Malcolm X's working visit in Accra (Haley & Malcolm X, 1964).

Malcolm, on arrival, was briefed about Ghana's three-hundred member returnee community. It was "explained that they were trying to help the president [Nkrumah] with various levels of involvement, to which Malcolm replied, 'that's what I call making a real revolution''(Gaine, 2006, p. 191). Malcom committed himself to this "revolution" by meeting with Nkurumah, his line ministers and the press to share Pan Africans thoughts, ideas and experiences.

Mohamed Ali[20] happened to be in Ghana for a two-week nation-wide tour which mixed sports and his endorsement of Pan Africanism with an unsparing amount of media coverage. Malcom had previously fallen out with Ali in the United States. Upon serendipitously running into Ali in Accra, Malcolm was said to have called out "Brother Muhammad… I still love you, and you are still the greatest'. (Angelou, 1991, p. 158). Their brief, tender encounter in Ghana was to be their last[21].

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[20] Mohamed Ali's working visit to Ghana received official recognition from the Governments of the United States and Ghana. A photo of Ali and Nkrumah, both with beaming smiles, wearing kente African print robes, hangs in Public Affairs Section of U.S. Embassy/Accra.

[21] "Years later, Ali expressed regret for turning his back on Malcolm and described him as a 'great, great man'" (Gaine, 2006, p. 197).

Malcolm soon returned to the United States, where he was gunned down at an event in New York on February 19, 1965. Ghana, a leader in Pan Africanism, quickly responded to Malcolm's assassination in their media and political spaces. The Ghanaian media hailed him a "martyr of a living revolution…of racial equality and social justice" (Gaines, 2006, pp. 206 - 207).

The most remarkable diasporan repatriation story belongs to Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois was an early American African scholar author, cofounder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and a founding member of the Pan-African movement. At the age of 93, Du Bois' repatriated to Ghana, took up Ghanaian citizenship and worked closely with Nkrumah. He died in Accra, in 1963, and was honored with a two-day state funeral before being laid to rest next to the Christiansborg Castle (now Osu). Foster founded his protype mission school for the d/Deaf close to Du Bois' burial site and resided in Ghana in 1963, but I don't know if he attended the memorial service.

Africa Awakens

Foster arrived in Accra on June 10, 1957—just three months after independence–and immersed himself in the sights, smells and vibe of Accra, Ghana. He would later write to his prayer supporters that: "during these days we see a number of articles in contemporary affairs literature with such headlines as, 'African Awakens', 'A Giant Stretches', 'Changing Africa', and so on. How true these titles reflect the conditions of the places I visited!" (Foster, 1958b)

Foster would have noticed that Accra was a densely populated and big city, one of Africa's biggest. Angelou (1991) wrote that: "Each morning Ghana's seven-and-one-half million people seemed to crowd at once into the capital city where the broad avenues as well as the unpaved rutted lanes became gorgeous with moving pageantry" (p. 107). I can still vividly

recall my first sojourn to Accra in 2016. Liberation Avenue was demarcated by open sewers (no sidewalks) which hemmed in a steadily moving procession of traffic of cars, trucks, bicycles, motorcycles and pedestrians. Informal outdoor markets sprung up immediately beyond the sewers to entice travelers to partake in the adventures of roadside dining. There African women in colorful African print dresses and matching head scarfs cooked and sold food, like fufu in pepper soup and chicken jolef rice or fried fish. Patrons ate steaming hot plates full of food while standing. Others perched on short wooden stools. All chatted animatedly among themselves. I didn't have go to the market, because the market came to me. Street hawkers intermingled on roadways, wading into traffic to ply a bric-a-brac collection of merchandise, such as soap, candy, cooking oil, cups and plates. The hawkers haggled, coaxed and cajoled me about the merit and cost of each item.

At first light, life in Accra was raw, real, out in the open air and down at street level. Angelou (1991), observant of the distinctly different sights and sounds of humanity in Accra, wrote: "I was captured by the Ghanaian people. Theirs skins were the colors of my childhood cravings: peanut butter, licorice, chocolate, caramel. Theirs was the laughter of home, quick and without artifice" (p. 21). But life in 1957 Accra was not always easy for returnees like Angelou and Foster. Angelou confided that returnee excitement about Ghana often overshadowed its socio-economic differences with the United States. "We did not discuss the open gutters along the streets of Accra, the shacks of corrugated iron in certain neighborhoods, dirty beaches and voracious mosquitos" (Angelou, 1991, p. 19). There wasn't one monolithic returnee, all had different needs, some of which were not necessarily met in Ghana. Ghana and Liberia, both returnee destinations of choice, were not always a right fit for those who repatriated there. For this reason, not all returnees who repatriated to Ghana opted to permanently stay.

Foster was not immune to the euphoria which new returnees typically experienced on arrival in Ghana (Angelou, 1991). His first impression of Accra was decidedly upbeat. He exuberantly wrote in his "Dear Prayer Supporter Letter":

> Time and events do move by swiftly! I am now in the proud, new country of Ghana (formerly Gold Coast), having arrived here from Liberia around the middle of June–much earlier than I had anticipated….Now here in Ghana, Accra is a beautiful and bustling city. I found the situation here more beckoning than I dared to imagine. (Foster, 1957, July-August)

In the United Kingdom, a Ghanaian medical student had instructed Foster to contact a Presbyterian pastor in Christiansborg upon arrival. The Presbyterian Church, which had already championed education for the blind, would similarly take on Foster's cause. He just had to get himself to Christiansborg.

The Roots of Mission Education in Ghana

Christiansborg was a district of Accra located next to the Christiansborg Castle (known as the Castle). This district became the hub of missionary and colonial activities in Accra prior to independence. Nkrumah subsequently co-opted portions of Christiansborg to house his administration and his presidential residence. Because Ghana's education system is traced back to the Castle, Christiansborg was a historically significant and administratively pragmatic jumping off point for Foster's mission education work.

The Portuguese landed in Elima in 1471 and there constructed the first trading castle, ostensibly in "praise and glory of God" (Debruner, 1967, p. 16). These castles, however, were more about commerce than sanctity. The love of liberty brought African Americans to Liberia. The love of business brought Europeans to Ghana. European trading companies constructed

approximately 70 of their trading castles (also known as slave castles) in Ghana in a race to control trade in gold, ivory and later slaves (Cole & DeBlij, 2007). Ghana's first formal, Western schools (known as mission schools) were quartered in these castles for traders' children to "learn to advance in Christian faith" (Graham, 1971, p. 1).

The Danes established Ghana's second wave of mission school in 1722 (replicated from first in Elima) inside the Castle walls (George, 1976). The Danish governor of the Castle mobilized four Swiss-German Basel missionaries from Switzerland to come to serve at the mission school in 1828 (Martin, 1976). All Basel missionaries died at Christiansborg of health related diseases within three years (Jahoda, 1961). A second cohort of three Swiss-German Basel missionaries followed their colleagues in March 1832. The second group met the same regrettable fate, dying in Christiansborg by July. The country's low elevation and close proximity to the equator and the Atlantic Ocean exudes an unmistakably tropical ambience which European traders and missionaries labeled "unhealthy". Ward (1948) pointed out "much has been written about the unhealthiness of the [Ghana] climate. The climate itself has been rather unfairly blamed. The constant damp may weaken one's powers of resistance to disease, but the unhealthiness of West Africa is due mainly to wealth of disease-bearing parasites" (p. 31). Foster grappled with the same heat and side effects from prophylactics taken to ward off "disease bearing parasites". He wrote to his prayer supporters that "the weather thus ranges from very hot and humid to cool and windy with sudden torrential rains any time….I haven't been sleeping well since arriving on the continent, owing to the anti-malarial drug which we take regularly" (Foster, 1957f) The high mortality of White missionaries motivated them to Africanize their work as quickly as possible (Kapuscinksi, 2001).

Africanization of Ghana's Mission Schools

The Africanization of Ghana's mission schools was less about Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-African vision of self-determination (Nkrumah, 1966) and more about maximizing efficiency by training locally based "Africans to replace Europeans, who had great difficulty surviving the climate" (Gocking, 2005, p. 41). The Basel missionaries Africanized their mission school system to "run Ghana's first organized school system, from village primary [elementary] school to the Teacher's Training College" (Kamsler, 2011, p. 2). By 1898, Ghanaians missionaries operated 45 Basel mission schools that served 1,200 students (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Foster would leverage Africanization to sustain his mission schools for the d/Deaf in Ghana, too.

World War I prompted Britain to deport the German affiliated Basel missionaries from Ghana (Kamsler, 2011). At the close of World War I, however, the Basel missionaries returned to Ghana and continued their work in collaboration with the Scottish Mission. During a 1926 Synod at Abetifi, Ghana, the Basel Mission merged with the Scottish Mission and rebranded as the Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 2019). The Basel Mission Church in Christiansborg was renamed the Presbyterian Church (now known as the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church). The network of Basel Mission schools in Christiansborg was placed under Presbyterian Church jurisdiction, where they remain to this day.

Foster and Forgotten Heroes of Deaf Education in Ghana

Foster located his point of contact, the pastor at Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg, and got checked into a neighboring mission guesthouse. The pastor next arranged for Foster's introduction at the church and various Government of Ghana line ministries ("Silent Witness", 1982). Foster tried to do due diligence, prior to these meeting, by gathering baseline data on the

state of d/Deaf education in Ghana. However, he found limited information about the pre-1957 state of d/Deaf people in the country (Ocloo, 1972).

Samuel Agorgli Kwaku Fiaxe had worked with Foster and his prototype mission school for the d/Deaf before pursuing d/Deaf education studies at Gallaudet. Fiaxe (1964) observed colonial indifference and hypocrisy toward education of disabled children in Ghana: "Before independence," Fiaxe wrote, "the British Government did not leave any record of the number of handicapped persons in Ghana, although there were school for handicapped people in Britain itself" (p. 1). Despite British Colonial Government's blatant disregard for African students with disabilities, there were Ghanaians who reached out to the d/Deaf.

Ludwig Ahmere Bafo was Ghana's first d/Deaf education teacher, researcher and scholar. Bafo trained at the Presbyterian Training College in Akropong and the College of Technology in Kumasi. Bafo wrote that "I have been interested in the deaf of my country since 1949," (Gallaudet College, 1958). During his eleven years of teaching at the Anglican Mission Schools, he "experimented one year with a small deaf class of his own" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961a, p. 2). Bafo, like Foster, attempted to ground his d/Deaf education experiment in data to better guide his work. He designed and distributed a questionnaire to assess the numbers and needs of d/Deaf Ghanaians. This survey, however, ended up in the hands of The School for the Blind (Addo & Okyere, 1999).

The School for the Blind did what they could and compiled a list of 23 d/Deaf adults and children ready for enrollment. They weren't in position to add a d/Deaf education unit and Bafo already departed for Gallaudet University. In the absence of a d/Deaf education advocate, The School for the Blind forwarded the d/Deaf student list to the Government of Ghana where it languished.

But this was not the end of Bafo's involve with the d/Deaf in Ghana. He continued to have their needs on in mind. He secured funding from the African-American Institution to enroll at Gallaudet University's Graduate Department of Education in 1958 (Gallaudet College, 1958). From there he wrote :

> [The deaf] have been a class of people who have not been given the privilege of receiving formal education that shall enable them to enjoy a happier and healthier life in the communities in which they find themselves. The deaf in Ghana has been deprived of schooling because of lack of qualified personnel. (Gallaudet College, 1958)

In 1959, Bafo became the first African to graduate from Gallaudet (Dunn & Anderson, 2019). He returned to Ghana and later collaborated with the Catholic Church to open a school for the deaf in Adamorobe (S. Ocloo, November 2017). The school later closed and Bafo partnered with Foster (S. Ocloo, November 2017).

Dunn and Anderson, both Deaf scholars of color, regretted that Bafo's pioneering contributions to d/Deaf education in Ghana were overshadowed by Foster's towering achievements. "There has been minimal subsequent information about Mr. Bafo's life…though we acknowledge Dr. Andrew Foster as a revered figure in Deaf history, we understand that it is not possible for a single individual to fully represent the complexity of Black Deaf community or the full spectrum of Black Deaf History" (2019, p. 238). Bafo's impact on d/Deaf education in Ghana warrants further inquiry and recognition. As remarkable as Bafo's story may be, he was not the lone forgotten figure in Ghana who paved the way for Foster's contributions

Dr. J. B. David was hard of hearing, and an ear, nose and throat (ENT) doctor who worked at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra (Miles, 2004). Aside from being Ghana's first known ENT, he was the first public health official to take interest (perhaps because of his

hearing loss) in the number of d/Deaf people in Ghana (Addo & Okyere, 1999. In 1954, he directed his social welfare personnel to survey d/Deaf people in Ghana. "He found no less than 20 deaf children and adults. Because of the small number of deaf people uncovered by the survey, the Ministry of Health was advised that a school for the deaf was not an immediate need" (Addo & Okyere, 1999, p. 147). The matter seemed to have drifted away until Foster picked it up three years later.

Education Plan Ghana

Foster seemed unaware that Bafo and David both surveyed the d/Deaf in Ghana. Even if he had known, he wouldn't have accessed their data. Foster concluded that: "Deafness is not an obvious handicap. No one here seems to know anything about it statistics-wise" (Foster, 1957ij, July - August). Foster initiated his own baseline survey of d/Deaf people to gather "statistics". He replicated the same research activities he piloted in Liberia, with some new twists. Firstly, Foster trialed facilitation of large focus group like survey sessions in collaboration with the church and Ghana's media. Secondly, he recruited and flew in a CMDA "missionary" assistant who volunteered to be his first "sign language interpreter".

"Sister" Joyce Williams was a missionary from Bradford, England who previously served on a four-year mission with an unidentified faith organization in Nigeria (Foster, 1957j, July - August). She volunteered to serve as CMDA missionary assistant and interpreter for Foster (Ocloo, 1972). Williams used the British two-handed fingerspelling alphabet (Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018). This differs significantly from the American one-handed fingerspelling alphabet Foster learned in the United States. It's likely Foster, while in the United Kingdom, learned enough of the British two-handed fingerspelling alphabet to make use of William's services.

The Presbyterian Church introduced Foster to governmental agencies with whom to explore the future of d/Deaf education in Ghana, inclusive of: 1) Ministry of Education, 2) Ministry of Social Welfare and Community Development, 3) Accra Municipal Council and, 4) District Education Office ("Ghana's Deaf and Dumb Get a Break," 1957). Foster noted the response from Ghana's governmental officials:

> There was no school for the deaf nor visible official interest in such. A list of deaf children whose anxious parents had sought admission into a school for the blind was the only information they had about the incidence of deafness there. They observed from the list of 23 deaf applicants that the average age was 23 and therefore concluded that apparently one deaf child was born in Ghana every year- a rate too insignificant to justify their official action. (Foster, 1965b, p. 9)

Unphased, Foster (1957g, June) went ahead to draft an unsolicited proposal, entitled *Education Plan Ghana*. He submitted it to Ghana's Ministry of Education and the Accra Municipal Council in June 1957. Rather than "re-invent a wheel", however, Foster revised the d/Deaf mission education blue print he submitted in Liberia one month earlier. Per *Education Plan Ghana*, Foster made negligible modifications to items one to six; changing the country name, then increasing the anticipation enrollment numbers and requesting more school infrastructure (1957g, June). Foster, the businessman, reserved big changes until the end of proposal, where he broached the matter of finances.

In essence, the *Education Plan Ghana* (Foster, 1957g, June) document was a funding proposal; unabashedly asking the Government of Ghana to foot the bill to educate its d/Deaf citizens (on par with their hearing counterparts). Foster (1957g, June) suggested "because of the

nature and newness of this type of work, we cannot state what proportion for the school's expenses could or should be borne by the government of Ghana" (p. 4). He then boldly stated:

> However, in line with its present education policy, we do solicit the same expenditure which the government makes to mission operated schools; e.g. Teacher salaries, property, capital equipment….Whatever portion the government of Ghana would like to contribute would be gratefully received (Foster, 1957g, June, p. 4).

Foster closed by requesting 11,120 pound sterling (280,852 U.S dollars by 2020 valuation) from the Government of Ghana to launch his mission school for the d/Deaf.

This proposal significantly differed from the less realistic document Foster had submitted in Monrovia, which remained ambiguous about who would pay for what. Liberia's Department of Education probably assumed Foster would pay for his mission school, so quickly approved his plans. Foster appeared to have a learned a financial lesson in Liberia which he applied in Ghana.

Weeks later, Ghana's media picked up, and weight in, on Foster's d/Deaf education proposal. They ran a story which optimistically announced to the public that "A school for the deaf-mutes may soon be opened in Accra if proposals for running it…go through satisfactorily" ("Ghana May have Deaf-Mute School," July 1957). While the Government of Liberia rubber stamped Foster's proposal, the Government of Ghana balked at the 11,120 pound sterling price tag Foster attached to their version. They reminded him that, based on early (albeit it erroneous) surveys from the Ministry of Health and The School for the Blind, there weren't enough d/Deaf people in Ghana for a school for the d/Deaf (G. Amoah, personal communication, February 2018). Both bodies turned the proposals down and Ghana would have to wait a little longer for its mission school for the deaf.

“You’re Deaf?”

Foster and Williams inquired about d/Deaf persons in Accra, and were directed to two d/Deaf brothers who lived and worked on family property adjacent to the Presbyterian Church. Sixty year later, I went to the same Christiansborg (Osu) area and asked where I could find the Anang brothers. I was assigned a d/Deaf Ghanaian guide who led me through the narrow and congested Oxford Road, into a small bus park, then along the side of a Presbyterian school and finally into the Anang family compound.

Storm clouds gathered and churned overhead, readying to release a torrent of morning rains. A gust of wind bore down, lifting orange dust off the ground, up into the air and off into the distance. Women in the compound’s courtyard had just finished pounding the last of the fufu and were hurriedly carrying the big wooden pestle and mortar onto the veranda as wind swirled around them. My d/Deaf guide was recognized and we were motioned with a quick tilt of the head to follow inside. The Anang brothers were there. I continued to come to the Anang family compound for the next month for follow-up inquires.

After the rains passed through, I sat with the Anang brothers on plastic chairs, under a tree on their courtyard. I took out and set up my camcorder. Richard began by signing about his background:

> I never went to school. There was one American missionary man I would sit with here and he wanted to teach me to speak. I tried to make sounds like “a” and “ba-ba-ba”. He would hold a leaf in front of my mouth to measure the sounds I made, the winds blowing from lips. That was my ‘education’ (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017)

Richard lacked access to a formal, Western education, so was trained in a vocation he practiced on his family's home property. "Here in Osu My father taught me how to tailor clothes. I had my sewing machine to tailor things like coats and pants. I would also hand sew things" (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017).

Richard recalled one day, in June 1957, he met Foster.

> One day my father called me. I came and saw this man standing there. I was looking over him and then he gestured to me that he couldn't hear or say anything.
>
> He was also using sign language. I wondered to myself, "why is he signing?". Then I asked him, "why are you signing? He said, "I'm Deaf". I didn't believe him. I slowly looked him up and down and shook my head "no". "You're Deaf?".

Richard's elder brother, James, mentioned that Foster came with Williams during their first encounter on the family property:

> I was seated and Foster showed up with this White British woman [Williams]. I tried to voice a greeting the two of them, but neither responded. Foster gestured to me that he's Deaf. I responded "oh ok". I asked "why are you two here?" Foster responded that he wanted to round up d/Deaf people to go to school. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

The first portion of Foster's work was to survey as many d/Deaf people in Accra as possible. Foster and Williams solicited James Anang's help to locate d/Deaf people during their baseline survey outings:

> I was at the shop working on shoes. Foster came around again with the White woman [Williams]. Foster said they were going out to look for d/Deaf people. I dropped what I doing, closed my shop and joined them. I went with them on a boat from over here

> [pointing toward the Atlantic Ocean], you know those waves out there. (J. Anang, personal communication March 2017)

Foster might have been referring to this cooperation from the Anang brothers, when he wrote: "there was no difficulty in locating a substantial number of our 'deaf and dumb' folk" (Foster, 1957j, July-August). James continued:

> We went out on the boat and sailed over to a beach. We got out and walked over to some fisherman. We asked them, "hey where is the deaf boy? Isn't there a deaf boy around here?" They said "yes" and called him over. Foster saw him, smiled and nodded "yes, yes, yes". He tried to communicate to the d/Deaf boy. Foster said "you need to go to school…we will soon have you in school in Osu [Christiansborg]". Foster tried writing to him, but that didn't work, he didn't understand that. Foster, said, "ok, we'll come for you later". We kept going like that, looking for deaf people and recruiting them. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

At this point in the interview I wondered why Foster would tell an employed d/Deaf youth to leave his fishing job to go to his mission school. It seemed Foster was suggesting that the d/Deaf youth should give up their "days jobs" for a Western mission education. This training might lead to conversion, but wouldn't necessarily replace his lost income (unless a Western job followed). Nonetheless, Foster constructed an enrollment list, meeting and interacting with d/Deaf and hearing people alike to discuss his envisioned mission school for the d/Deaf:

> It was like an interview, interviewing them to know if they were d/Deaf and then telling them about going to school. They wanted to know "where would he have the school?", Foster would say "the Osu [Presbyterian] church". Foster urged them to come learn to read and write. Hearing persons also got curious and wanted to know what this 'deaf

work' was about. They tried to talk to Foster. He communicated to them by writing (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

Foster seemed comfortable communicating with d/Deaf and hearing Ghanaians alike during his field survey activities. Dr. Isaac Agboola, a d/Deaf Nigerian mentee, reported that "my first impression of him [Foster] was that he quite friendly and down to earth…he was approachable and sociable to everyone from the youngest to the oldest (Ilabor, 2009, p. 182). Foster's friendliness with James (roughly his age-mate) endeared him to the Anang family.

Foster's Cultural Misunderstandings

Foster started coming around the Anang family's compound and soon became a regular fixture at their household. He started teaching sign language to the hearing brothers and sisters, training them to become interpreters (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017). Things were going along well for Foster at the Anangs, until his Western sensibilities seemed to collide with Ga culture. James Anang recalled that:

> My father had his chair there, my father's chair. When my father was out, Foster came and sat on my father's chair. Well, my father came back and tell Foster not to sit there. Foster vacated the chair and went somewhere else. My father left and Foster came back and again sat on his chair. Well, my father returned, saw Foster in his chair which made him angry. Foster still stayed seated in that chair. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

Foster's third son said that his father "had an interesting way of just dismissing stuff he wasn't particularly interested in" (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). Yet, Foster's perceived dismal of a cultural norm, or inability to "go native", threatened to undermine the relationship with his host family. What Ga culture more did Foster violate?

Marjorie Serlley Naa Asharkua Mettle, is a special education teacher and from the Ga ethnic group. She explained that: “in our [Ga] culture…its believed that there is one main seat in the house that is reserved for the head of family…no one would take his seat…it would be disrespectful for anyone to else to sit there” (M. Mettle), personal communication, May 2020). Fortunately for Foster, African cultures generally forgiving of visitors (Mendosa, 2002).

The Anang family didn’t chase Foster away with scorn and harshness. Instead, they deliberated on how to proceed with the new, unorthodox member of their family. Per Ga culture, every effort is made to accommodate a foreign visitor (A. Yemoson, personal communication May 2020).

> Later, Foster went out to play football [soccer] and we discussed about what to do with him. We decided it would be best to move him over to our other family house [same compound] and give him a partitioned room where he could sleep and work. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

Richard picked up the story: “we had to first clean our place up of course, like mopping the floors….We then moved in a bed for Foster” (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017). When the room was ready, James went out, found Foster and showed him the space.

> I told him “You can sleep there”. He looked it over and thought about it, then nodded and said “alright”. He asked me “How much?”. I just stared at him. Foster again asked me “how much?”. I said, “I don’t know”, I didn’t understand the question. Foster moved in and slept there. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

Foster’s accepted the Anang family’s offer but continued to experience cultural misunderstandings. In the United States he would be expected to rent on the room, but in Ghana

(at that time) family members and friends often moved into family homes and stayed extended periods at no cost. In short, friends and family wouldn't have paid rent.

Foster moved his luggage from the nearby guesthouse into his room at the Anang family property in Christiansborg (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017). Foster's side of the room was delineated by a bed sheet hung from the ceiling. He unpacked his luggage set up a little ad hoc office and began analysis of his baseline data.

> From his room, Foster would sit, page through his books and use his typewriter. He would write letters and send them here and there, all over. I would see him putting letters into envelopes, seal and then he sent them off. (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017)

This partitioned space was Foster's first residency in Africa. Like missionaries and returnees who came before him, Foster made Christiansborg his home in Ghana.

Foster's 43 Seconds of Fame

Switched at Birth was a popular television series, aired between 2011 and 2017. This series show cased d/Deaf cast members using ASL, and often discussing Deaf Culture and Deaf Identity related issues. Audiences who turned into the first episode of the second season were treated to a 43 second "snippet" of Foster and Africa (Weiss at el., 2013, 30:35).

A d/Deaf teenage high school girl in punk rock attire confidently postured in front her presentation board during class. The board displayed boxes with colorful maps of Alabama and Africa, and photos of chipper looking African children. Each box was narrated with text, though the font was not large enough for reviewers or students to read.

The most engaging feature on the board was a handsome black and white portrait of Foster, sketched with a winning smile. The camera cut out then cut back to show another

student's presentation board about Hellen Keller. The student nonchalantly signed to her classmates and teacher:

> This dude [Foster] came from nothing, literally nothing. He went on to open all these schools in Africa…teaching children who had never been allowed in school. In some villages, deaf kids were thought to be cursed by the devil and were abandoned to be eaten by wild animals.

She caps off her presentation with a dramatic reenactment of a wild animal mercilessly chasing down, snatching up and devouring a d/Deaf African child. Paradoxically, the real "drama" of the scene was the teacher (played by Marlee Matlin) who worriedly watched a wayward student "doodling" into her notebook, oblivious to the carnage of innocent d/Deaf African children.

The audiences who paid attention to the Foster presentation received a 43 second dose of Africa as a primitive place where superstitious people mistreat the d/Deaf. This messaging would stand in stark contrast to the "civilized" look of the *Switched at Birth* American classroom, comprised of affluent (albeit lethargic) looking White d/Deaf students carefully supervised by their attentive White teacher. While this episode might have entertained American audiences, African scholars contend that the comparative component feeds into a false narrative about Africa.

Dr. Chinua Achebe, the great Nigerian author, wrote "Africa is not simple---often people want to simplify it, generalize it, stereotype its people. The world is just starting to know Africa. The last five hundred years of European contact with Africa produced a body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light" (Achebe, 2012, p.i). Achebe argued that stories about Africa must include African voices, like that of Dr. Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

Ngugi, a leading African scholar and author, pushed back against Western media's negative imagery about Africans, such the portrayals presented in *Switched at Birth*. In *A Grain of Wheat,* Ngugi celebrated his d/Deaf brother as a "handsome, strongly built, popular with other young men, who cared for his elderly mother, and spoke with his hands" (2012, pp. 6-7). Ngugi (2012) based *A Grain of Wheat* on true stories from Kenya's Mau Mau resistance (Lonsdale, 1990), which resulted in the death of his d/Deaf brother at the hands of the colonial soldiers.

Give Them a Name!

There are plenty of cases of d/Deaf people being excluded, neglected and even abandoned across the Global North as well as the Global South. Ghana was no exception. Florence Abenaa Serwaa Oteng is d/Deaf Ghanaian who wrote candidly about her struggles with deafness and discrimination in Ghana. Review of these experiences help to contextualize why Ghana's churches and government Ghana appeared to have little interest in d/Deaf education prior to Foster's advocacy.

Oteng contracted cerebrals spinal meningitis while on duty as a nursing student at a large Ministry of Health hospital in Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city. Like Foster's bout with meningitis in Alabama, the illness left Oteng deaf. She was quickly ostracized and "not only lost her job, but her husband also abandoned her and their baby Joan"(F. Haynes, personal communication, December 2017). To support herself and her baby, Oteng hustled odd jobs at the same hospital where she once served as a nurse-in-training.

The Twi speaking linguistic group, with whom Foster interacted, referred to the d/Deaf as '"mmum' a derogatory name given to all the deaf, almost amounting to the nameless" (Oteng, 1988, p.x). Oteng (1988) continued:

> The deaf were considered as slaves, misfits, unfortunate additions even to families they were born into. They deserved no better names than Akwasi Mmum, Ama Mmum and so on—such names that did not help identity one's clan...whenever a deaf child was brought to Dr. Foster…the first question he usually asked was—What is your name? The answer was as usual: Akwasi Mmum, or Akosua Mmum". Then Dr. Foster would quickly exclaim "Why Mmumu?, Oh give them a name!" (pp. iv-viii)

Foster, per his survey, interaction, and meetings, undoubtedly dealt with audism in Ghana. He took a comparatist's view about disability in Africa, referencing audism which stemmed from the New Testament:

> In general [Ghanaians] have a negative attitude toward all handicap people…like back in Bible times, people think that every person with a physical or mental defect is possessed with an evil spirit. In some places in Africa such persons are feed to crocodiles. (1957h, June 21, p. 2)

Dr. Gadagbui is a Ghanaian scholar I met at University of Education Winneba's Special Education Department (which traces its roots to Foster's work). Dr. Gadagbui concurred with Foster's observations, as detailed in her textbook entitled *Education in Ghana and Special Needs Children:*

> The inhuman treatment [of persons with disabilities] was not unique to the Greeks, Athens or Romans but was also common to other ethnic groups. Our local communities in Ghana have different names for the disabled and treated handicapped persons in similar terms in the past and sometimes even now in certain communities. (1998, p. 30)

I will next build on Dr. Gadagbui's comparative treatment of persons with disabilities by focusing on its intersections with mission education and Foster's work.

In Dr. Achebe's (1958) *Thing Falls Apart*, missionaries reach out to help persons with disabilities who were ostracized from a West African village. This did not happen in Ghana. Missionaries in Ghana, like those who Foster interacted with in the United States, largely ignored persons with disabilities. This is because Ghana's Presbyterian Church seemed just as oblivious to the needs of the d/Deaf as their American missionary counterparts.

According to Illabor (2009) "The earliest missionaries were hearing people. Nothing about the souls of the deaf was included on their agenda" (p. 203). This was true for hearing missionaries in Ghana, too. The Basel missionaries' first iteration of mission schools, which were much like the American common schools, didn't enroll students with disabilities, such as the d/Deaf. The one intriguing exception in Ghana was The School for the Blind.

In 1934, two Scottish Missionaries, Mr. F.D. Harker and Mrs. Margaret Benzie began taking in and teaching blind Ghanaian students (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). By 1945, the Presbyterian Church formally opened The School for the Blind in Akropong-Akuapim. Foster was able to piggyback some of early his initiatives on top of those from The School for the Blind. For example, he accessed a list of d/Deaf who sought enrollment at The School for the Blind (1965b).

Ghana May Have a Deaf-Mute School

By week three in Ghana, Foster scaled up from one-on-one surveys into focus groups. These expanded forums accelerated his understanding about numbers and needs of the d/Deaf in Ghana. Foster's first survey "conference" was held at the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg on June 21, 1957. Per Foster's six point agenda, he briefed attendees about the purpose of the conference: "a) To survey the deaf population in this area, and b) To establish contacts with local deaf children and adults in order to start educational and religious works for them" (1957h, June

21, p. 1.) Foster, midway through, summarized Ghana's d/Deaf education "problems". He suggested that "lack of statistics about [the] deaf population in Ghana is one reason why the Government has not been too interested [in a school for the deaf]" (Foster, 1957h, June 21, p.2). With an eye on buttressing d/Deaf education "demand", Foster astutely advised that "parents, relatives, teachers, friends should report cases of deafness to a Social Welfare agent" (Foster, 1957h, p. 2). Foster closed out on a proactive note, informing attendees that he had submitted d/Deaf education proposals to the Government of Ghana.

Foster amplified his early d/Deaf education efforts in Ghana through the media, too. It's likely that he forwarded press releases to the media, then invited reporters to interview him and survey his meetings at the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg. The *Ashanti Pioneer* was a newspaper, in daily circulation in Ghana, which responded.

An *Ashanti Pioneer* article entitled "Ghana May Have Deaf-Mute School" reported that "twenty five deaf-mutes, all illiterate, attended with their relatives and friends…the audience of 700 seemed highly amused at the demonstration of Foster talking in the sign language of the deaf" (p. 3, 1957). The tantalizing ending to the article leaves ambiguities about communication modalities in its wake. Did Foster use sign language and an interpreter throughout his presentation? Or did he use his voice and then at some point demonstrate sign language? What sign language (ASL, British two-handed fingerspelling alphabet) did Foster use? Neither Foster nor Ghana's media provided clues to these metalinguistic questions. This reveals an opportunity for linguists to more closing examine Foster's use of sign languages in his work.

Many Are Called But the Few Are Chosen

James Anang verified that Foster held well attended parental forums at the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg the late afternoons. Per my analysis, it appears Foster held these

meetings, almost once a week, from the end of June to the start of August. James recalled the details of one such meeting during our interview:

> Parents were there. [Foster] said he would select d/Deaf children to go to the school. ‘If you’re lucky we will select yours’. They thought, ‘really wow’. One mother said, ‘yes I have a d/Deaf child at home’. Foster said, ‘yes ok’. Another raised a hand and said, ‘I have a d/Deaf son over there’ pointing in the direction of his home. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

James’ description of the meeting suggested Foster dangled lottery-like enrollment in front of the parents of d/Deaf children. Foster would ultimately enroll a cohort of 13 d/Deaf children. Neither James nor Foster shed any light on how many students wanted enrollment and whether it was done by lottery or Foster’s choice. I wondered if he needed a long applicant list to launch and pilot his mission school for the d/Deaf? It’s also not clear how Foster might have culled the d/Deaf applicants who comprised the first student cohort. What was Foster’s selection criteria? Did he consider students according to age?, Their location to Christiansborg? Or the family’s Christian character?

By the July 1957, Foster had completed his survey, submitted proposals, engaged with media and met meaningfully with partnerships and stakeholders in Ghana. July could have marked the month for Foster to move on to Nigeria, which was the third and final country on his three-country survey tour. Dr. Maya Angelou, who similarly stopped into Accra on a multi-country work visit, decided to remain when a fellow returnee advised “honey, you’d better stay here…it can’t get better than Ghana but it could be a lot worse” (Angelou, 1991, p. 7). I don’t know if Foster was similarly advised to just hunker down in Accra, rather than move on to Lagos. Literature, however, suggested that he opted to stay and scale up his mission because he

"received the most encouragement in Ghana" (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1986, p. 3). Still, Foster might have also sensed that conditions in Nigeria couldn't be better than those in Ghana. If so, his inklings were right.

The CMDA Local Advisory Board

Foster came into Accra with only the clothes on his back and a couple of travel bags in his hands. He would have spent most of his donations on flights and piloting his survey in Liberia. The Government of Ghana hadn't approved his funding proposal, which added economic pressure and urgency to Foster's mission. He didn't have financial capacity to self-fund his *Ghana Education Plan* (1957g, June). The enterprising Foster, therefore, kicked off the first of his d/Deaf mission activities with locally available resources, beginning with human resources.

Foster went ahead to set up a CMDA Local Advisory Board which he would lean on for in kind support, while awaiting cash contributions to pour in from the Global North. He wanted to envelope his Local Advisory Board with Christian righteousness, imbedding fellow believers in the management body. But not just any Christian would do. He specifically sought out persons of "the highest Christian character and standards". Fair enough, but what did that mean? Foster didn't qualify this subjective phrase with any follow-on instructions (i.e., rubric, guidelines) or examples to measure such abstract attributes. Not all Christians were on the same page about what constituted appropriate Christian character and standard, especially when missionizing in Africa (Alter, 1975). It would come back to haunt him when divergent interpretations of Christian lifestyle caused arguments and animosity amongst the Christians with whom he allied.

Review of CMDA documents revealed that all 15 Members of the various CMDA governing bodies in the United States were male, mostly fellow clergymen. This wasn't unusual

in the 1950s, a decidedly pre- #metoo movement era when male-dominated boards were the norm. Foster is reported to have targeted recruitment of male Christian board members "who could provide needed services" (Aina, 2015, p. 130). Aside from cash donations, Foster needed board members to volunteer their time, expertise and even use of property to advance CMDA. Foster would call on these board members in the United States and Ghana to learn sign language to interpret for him, to introduce him to well-connected colleagues and even accommodate him.

Foster first on-boarded Rev. D.A. Konotey-Ahulu, his point of contact from the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg, consolidating the church's support. He next recruited Pastor Henry Dashinor Cobblah, who ministered at the Baptist Church and worked as a clerk in a trading firm in Accra (Ocloo, 1972). Foster taught Cobblah sign language to become his "go to" interpreter (Addo & Okyere, 1999). Konotey-Ahulu and Cobblah, once signed on as members of the Board, were unlikely to ask about financial compensation for the respective services they rendered. Unless Foster offered either a token sum for their help, he would have realized a significant savings per an in-kind contribution of housing and interpretation. Rev. F.W.K. Akuffo[22], Chief Editor from a Presbyterian Church's publication called the Christian Messenger, followed on as the third member of the Board. Its plausible that Akuffo assisted Foster to engage with the Ghana's media. But the highest profile addition was yet to come.

The Ashanti Pioneer, on July 6, confirmed that "Hon. K.A. Gbedemah, Ghana's Minister of Finance, had accepted an invitation to become an advisor of the proposed school for Ghana's deaf-mutes" ("Gbedemah Becomes Advisor to Deaf School," July 1957). Gbedemah was not a

[22] Rev. F.W.K. Akuffo is not, and has no known relation to, Lieutenant General Fredrick William Kwasi Akuffo who briefly served as Ghana's seventh head of state between 1978 and 1979.

clergyman, but he was a money man. Foster suggested that Gbedemah was selected per his sterling Christian credentials (Foster, 1957g). But that probably only tells a part of the story.

Gbedemah was one among a multitude of men who had graduated from Ghana's mission education system and included "devoted Christian" on their resume. It was Gbedemah's control of Ghana's finances which likely got Foster's attention. The Government of Ghana had turned down Foster's funding proposal, but an alliance with its Minister of Finance might help to loosen those national purse strings. Foster went forward with his local board to lay the groundwork to launch Ghana's first school for the d/Deaf.

Breaking through the Sound Barrier

By July 1957, Foster began speaking candidly to the media about his intend to expand access to education for d/Deaf Ghanaians. "'As far as I have been able to learn'" he said, "'there are no such provisions. We hope to have a small school for the deaf just as soon as possible….we hope that our efforts will help them to break through the sound barrier"' ("Ghana's Deaf and Dumb to Get a Break," July 1957). *The Ashanti Pioneer* (1957) followed up this article with an announcement that Foster would next meet with the parents and guardians of d/Deaf children, on July 9 at 7 p.m. at Presbyterian Church, to "plan together for the opening and running of the proposed school". The story informed the public that "all parents and guardians of the deaf are urged to attend. Those living too far from Accra to come are urged to send full particulars about the deaf person to Foster" ("Parents of Deaf-Mute Invited," July 1957).

Foster showed special concern for the d/Deaf who lived too far outside of Accra to attend his meetings in Christiansborg. He referred to them as "the silent people of Africa…in the wilderness and rivers and in the desert" (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1961a, p.1). By August 1957, Foster added another layer to his research template to survey the silent people in remote

places. He mobilized Cobblah to serve as his guide, administrative assistant and interpreter on his first expeditions into the rural regions outside of Accra (Addo & Okyere, 1999).

"Greetings from this point in our 'Safari for Souls'", Foster wrote, "it's been a very interesting tour, but also quite hazardous and tiring! However, we often see the hands of the Lord in our movements and work" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans 1977a, p. 1).

Foster and Cobblah set out from Accra on their safari for d/Deaf souls in August 1957. They relied on leads, tips, intuition and help from strangers along the way to look for Ghana's forgotten d/Deaf people. Long before the advent of cell phones and internet to facilitate travel and communication, there were hardcopy road maps, stopping and asking for assistance and unannounced arrivals. It was during this time that Foster and his colleagues developed a habit of showing up at outdoor markets, person's homes and villages to survey the d/Deaf and invite them to his mission school. Foster's piloted one of his first rural surveys in Adamorobe, also known as the "deaf village" (Kusters, 2014).

A Journey to Adamorobe

Adamorobe is only 30 miles from Accra, but feels significantly further. Foster wrote that the two-hour journey to Adamorobe was a difficult journey (Foster, 1957e). He would have driven north on Liberation Road, which turned into Legon Road near the University of Ghana. He then would have turned right off the main road soon after Madina, (which hosts a large outdoor market and Muslim community) and drove almost parallel with the Akwipem Ridge which loomed on his left. Lastly, Foster would have turned left at Ayikuma to take a rugged dirt road the rest of the way to Adamorobe.

Adamorobe's chiefs and elders confirmed that Adamorobe has had d/Deaf members as long as anyone can remember (Frishberg, 1987). This wouldn't be unusual, except that

Adamorobe had many d/Deaf people (Frishberg, 1987). According to Okyere and Addo (1994), two Ghanaian deaf education scholars, 15% of Adamorobe's population is deaf. This is exceptionally high when compared to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa which has a 1.9% prevalence of deafness (Mulwafu, Kuper & Ensink, 2016).[23] Adamorobe has almost eight times more d/Deaf persons than a comparable village in sub-Saharan Africa. Adamorobeans have a number of intriguing stories about their d/Deaf ancestors.

Dr. Victoria Nyst is a sign language linguist who researched Adamorobe Sign Language (AdaSL). Nyst (2008) wrote that one "explanation [for the high prevalence rate of deafness] talks about how Adamorobe was short of warriors during wartime: the deaf god Adamorobe Kiti called animals from the bush and turned them into anthropomorphic soldiers who looked like humans but could not speak" (p. 237).

Chief Nana Kwaakwa Asiampong II traced deafness in Adamorobe back to one d/Deaf man said to have settled in the village in the late 1800s (Frishberg, 1987). The "deaf gene" may have spread hereditarily amongst the first persons of Adamorobe (Friedner & Kuster, 2014). The latter origin story triangulates with Dr. J.B. David's findings. David and his colleagues reported an extremely high rate of genetically determined congenial deafness in Adamorobe (David, Eddo, Mustaffah & Hinchcliffe, 1971). Perhaps for this reason, they referred to Adamorobe as the "deaf village" (David, Eddo, Mustaffah & Hinchcliffe, 1971). The prevalence and etiology of hearing loss in the deaf village was interesting, as was its impact on communication.

Okyere and Addo (1994) noted that d/Deaf and hearing Adamorobeans used a "deaf villager sign language" to communicate (Okyere & Addo, 1994, p. 100). AdaSL, or "mumu

[23] A country in the Global north, like the United States, has a .4% prevalence rate of deafness ((Mulwafu, Kuper Ensink, 2016)

kasa" ("deaf language" in Twi), was the mother tongue language of d/Deaf Adamorobeans (Kuster, 2014). Adamorobe had a sizeable Deaf Community which communicated amongst themselves and hearing people using their own indigenous sign language (Kuster, 2012).

Dr. J.B. David, who surveyed the d/Deaf in Adamorobe, reported "the deaf adults had a remarkable way of communicating by clicks and mouthing and hand signs" (Miles, 2004, p. 537). Linguistics contended that AdSL has evolved over the course of two hundred years, making it a contemporary of ASL, French Sign Language and British Sign Language (Nyst, 2008). Like Twi and English were different languages, so were AdSL and ASL.

It would be accurate to say that Foster introduced ASL, but not signed languages, to Ghana. As witnessed in Adamorobe, a significant number of d/Deaf Africans had indigenous signs languages prior to Foster's arrival. While much of Foster's work decolonized d/Deaf Africans, he persistently presented a colonial mischaracterization of the d/Deaf in Africa as "a people lacking a language or other means of communication" (Christian Mission for Deaf African, 1961c, September-October). Foster considered sub-Saharan an "educational and spiritual void" for the d/Deaf (1980, p.3). He might have thought they also faced a "linguistic void", which he should fill in with ASL. I wondered how Foster's approach to sign language in Ghana played out in Adamorobe, so asked my d/Deaf Ghanaian colleagues if they knew a d/Deaf Adamorobean whom I might interview. Within a few weeks they introduce me to Kwaku Appidu Appidu. Appidu gracefully accorded me an opportunity to conduct a series of interviews with him.

Seated with Appidu, I began with an inquiry about Foster's interactions with Adamorobe and AdSL. Appidu, as a d/Deaf child growing up in Adamorobe, recalled the day Foster first came calling.

> I was there in Adamorobe when Foster drove up in a car late one afternoon. He jumped out and I saw was this big, handsome looking guy. Right away he was using sign language, just signing his big hands in the air with a d/Deaf person he found standing there. Children came from all directions, running to meet him. Foster stopped signing, looked at them and asked, “Are there d/Deaf children here?” They answered “Yes”. He responded, “Well, call them”. The d/Deaf adults gathered themselves together and came to see him. (K. Appidu, personal communication, February 2017)

I wondered, at this point in the story, how Foster communicated with the d/Deaf Adamorobeans. ASL and AdSL were both signed languages, but were not mutually intelligible. Dr. Annelies Kusters, a Deaf anthropologist who did an ethnography on the d/Deaf in Adamorobe, observed that “the Deaf people of Adamorobe depicted their communication with Foster as a mutual exchange: they taught him AdaSL and he taught them ASL” (2014, p. 476). I asked Appidu if this was true.

> Foster was able to understand our signs. He would ask us… ‘How do you sign ‘father’? How do you sign ‘food’? How do you sign ‘water’? We had our local signs for all of our words like ‘mother’, ‘friend’. We have signs for the days of the week, ‘Monday’, ‘Tuesday’. Foster memorized our signs. Foster had his signs too. Foster also taught us his signs, for ‘mother’, ‘water’, ‘bad.’ (K. Appidu, personal communication, February 2017)

Foster received a warm reception from the d/Deaf Adamorobeans, whom he got along with amicably (1957l, October). The visit to Adamorobe was going along swimmingly until he divulged the purpose of his mission at the “deaf village” (Foster, 1957l, October). Foster’s pitch about coming to collect “statistics” and “data” on their d/Deaf children did not go over well with

his new d/Deaf adult friends. He reported that it “provoked fear and rebellion” which he attributed to “illiteracy and isolation” (Foster,1957l, October). I would call it common sense. Here was a stranger who “crashed” their village with no announcement or invitation, with mysterious intentions and then “asks for their children”. This approach would provoke outrage in the United States, too.   Alternatively, Foster might have had a Ghanaian board member “break the ice” in Adamorobe with exploratory visits to build community relations, then introduce Foster later to do his survey. Foster didn’t seem to have patience for such “due diligence”. Instead, he applied personal charm and charisma to re-assure the d/Deaf adults of his good faith and best of intentions.

The d/Deaf Adamorobeans, hospitable like most Ghanaians, eventually acquiesced and gathered their children for Foster’s “statistics and data”. He noted that “the twenty-odd children are offsprings of deaf parents” (Foster, 1957l, October). According to Appiah, “Foster looked them over ‘hmm, hmm, hmm’. He said ‘ok’ and went away as abruptly as he arrived. Foster returned the following week and started talking to us about going to school” (K. Appiah, personal communication, February 2017). Appiah reported that many d/Deaf Adamorobean children were recruited to go with Foster to his mission school, but not all were interested in it. Foster might have thought that ASL and mission education was superior to anything the “illiterate” Adamorobeans could offer their children. But were plenty of d/Deaf children who voted with their feet, defected and returned to the Deaf Community in Adamorobe (K. Appiah, personal communication, February 2017). Foster’s GMSD didn’t relay on enroll from Adamorobe alone. The “deaf village” was just one of many rural spaces he scoured for potential d/Deaf enrollees.

Look Deaf

Between July and August 1957, scaled his unorthodox strategies to compile a list of out-of-school d/Deaf Ghanaians for potential enrollment at his mission school for the d/Deaf. Out in the field, Foster was said to possess an uncanny ability to identify d/Deaf people. He would find them, make a connection and then encourage them to go to school, at times taking them there himself. Foster was unrelenting in his search to reach the d/Deaf in Ghana. According to Foster's eldest son, anytime and anyplace was fair game for his father's d/Deaf education recruitment campaign:

> My dad would be driving through somewhere, or would stop and go to the market and…go about finding deaf people just by their body language… If you know what to look for you can always spot the person. So, he saw this guy…and went just up to him and…"Yep he's d/Deaf" so Mamadou [name of d/Deaf person] came aboard and off we went to school with him. (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015)

Foster also followed more conventions means to gather names of prospective d/Deaf students. Amoah, the Principal from the Presbyterian founded School for the Blind, shared the names of d/Deaf students who had sought enrollment there (Addo & Okyere, 1999; Foster, 1965b). Foster also pooled names of potential d/Deaf students from the one-on-one surveys, large group (conferences, special meetings) sessions, and responses to his media stories. Foster combined these sources with his field work to create a master list of 65 d/Deaf students he deemed eligible to enroll at his future mission school for the deaf. Approximately half of the d/Deaf people on the list resided in Accra (Foster, 1957j, July-August).

Ghana Mission School for the Deaf

"Meanwhile", Foster triumphantly announced to his prayer supporters that "through the courtesy and cooperation of a Presbyterian school, we are going ahead with non-residential classes on a small scale" (Foster, 1957j, July-August). Foster, after his proposal failed to get traction with the Government of Ghana, seemed willing to work with the modest offer which his non-secular partners put on his table. He still dreamed of his full-scale residential school for the d/Deaf outside of Accra, but began in a practical manner with one "after hours" class. Yet, he lamented to his prayer supporters that:

> You can imagine how it will grieve our hearts when we confront parents not living in this [Accra] area, knowing their years of efforts to educate and communicate with their deaf offspring, and that lump in the throat at the sight of this prospect. Please pray that this is a very temporary set-up and that Lord of the harvest will send…the wherewithal to purchase land and erect a residential school for all deaf Ghanaians. (Foster, 1957j, July-August).

Foster held a "special informal meeting" on August 6 to unveil detailed plans of a "small scale" non-residential class for the d/Deaf to: 1) open on September 10, 2) occupy (on a temporary basis) one classroom at the Presbyterian Middle Boys' Day School in Christiansborg, 3) hold classes in the evening and, 4) continue to look for a permanent resident location ("Parents of Deaf and Dumb Meet Today", 1957). Family members were excited by this news, but wanted to know more. They requested another audience with Foster. He obliged and met them three week later at Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg, at a 7 p.m. to iron out the final details about the mission school for the d/Deaf ("Meeting with the Parents of the Deaf and Dumb", 1957).

Foster worked diligently for two and half months in Ghana to successfully secure Ghanaian cooperation to: 1) mobilize classroom facilities, 2) assemble CMDA's Local Advisory Board, 3) garner parental support and, 4) create a d/Deaf student enrollment list. Foster miraculously achieved much with little time and almost no money. His mission d/Deaf education campaign had won over the parents of the d/Deaf, the Presbyterian Church, and the press. None of these groups offered to resource the mission school, nor had the Government of Ghana.

Nonetheless, Foster announced to the world that that he was ready to launch is mission school for the d/Deaf in Ghana. It was bold move, and one which put Foster was in a precarious position for months to come. He still didn't have a budget, classroom or a single teacher. His high risk/high reward approach brought Foster this far and he showed no signs of retreating. He deferred to the Book of Matthew which said: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mathew 21: 22, King James Bible, 1769/2017). He remained resolute that he would receive whatever he needed to make the Ghana experiment a success.

CHAPTER FIVE: ROOTS OUT OF DRY GROUND

"The school for Ghana's deaf and dumb, which has been in the making for weeks will start on Tuesday, September 10….and has been named Ghana Mission School for the Deaf", reported *Ashanti Pioneer* ("Deaf and Dumb School Opens Tuesday," 1957).

Foster referred to this early effort as "CMDA's [Christian Mission for Deaf Africa's] original beachhead" ("The Silent Witness, 1962). In a fund drive booklet entitled "Ephphatha Appeal Fund," Foster wrote "It was the first time in their lives—indeed in the history of Ghana—that a special scheme was directed at enabling them [the d/Deaf] to learn to read, write and share in religious experiences like persons whose hearing is normal" (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1957, p.1). This claim was not completely true, because Bafo had already piloted a similar special scheme, though Foster probably wasn't aware of it at the time. Foster's eldest son expanded on the experimental nature of his father's work, "You could say that Accra was kind of his laboratory…figuring out what works, what doesn't work" (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). Foster, right from the start, developed a number of strategies which got traction.

Foster formed an alliance with the Presbyterian Church, with Konotey-Ahulu as his point person, to channel in-kind contributions. He first borrowed Presbyterian Church space on a pro bono basis to meet with parents of the d/Deaf in the evenings. The church likely agreed to host Foster's parent meetings because they were held at night when property was underutilized and aligned with recent Christian outreach to children with disabilities. This began with their support of The School for the Blind in Akropong-Akwapim.

Foster's 1957 appearance in Christiansborg and his flurry of activities at the Presbyterian Church generated a three-month media buzz which bolstered their brand at no cost. Foster,

working with this momentum, struck a deal with Konotey-Ahulu to expand their alliance to the next level. He obtained rent-free use of a Presbyterian Church affiliated classroom in Christiansborg. The Presbyterian's offer suggested they didn't have a problem with hosting the d/Deaf, if Foster's students didn't encroach on hearing scholars or incur additional costs for the church. This meant that Foster, not the church, met the GMSD's meager expenses (such as monthly electric bill; Mission to the Silent," 1959).

Foster began "after hours" use of one classroom at the Presbyterian Middle School for Boys in Christiansborg with a cohort of 24 d/Deaf students (13 children, 11 adults) taught during two separate shifts (see figure 21; Foster, 1965b). Foster waited for the Presbyterian Middle School for Boys students to vacate the class at 3:30 p.m. and then brought in 13 d/Deaf children for a 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. lesson (see figure, 22; S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2017). "In answering another need, a night class for 11 deaf adults was launched too"("The Silent Witness, 1962). Foster piloted this d/Deaf adult education class that met between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. ("Mission to the Silent," 1959).

Foster appealed to Ghanaians, in *Ashanti Pioneer on September 7*, to observe a nationwide prayer for the Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (GMSD). Perhaps Ghanaians prayed for a volunteer teacher to help Foster open the mission school. If so, then the coming of Dr. Seth Lawrence Tetteh Ocloo was a Godsend.

"Hooked on the Deaf and Dumb Business": Dr. Seth Lawrence Tetteh Ocloo

Ocloo, who retired outside of Charlotte, North Carolina, proved difficult to contact. He didn't have a cell phone or a social media presence. Emails I sent to him were unanswered. No one seemed to know (or was willing to share) his mailing address. I got a break when I presented on Foster at Tetteh Ocloo State School for the Deaf (named in his honor) near Accra.

The school's nurse was Ocloo's niece. She shared my presentation with Ocloo and he contacted me the following day. He generously invited me to interview him in the future at his place near Charlotte.

Ocloo, content in the comfortable confines of his suburban Charlotte home, wore a dignified air of lifetime achievement. Our interview was conducted in his living room, watched over by portraits of three generations of family he planted in the United States: adult children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Reading literature and meeting with Ocloo, his positive influence on the lives of others was palpable. Impressed by his impact, it would be easy to overlook the long and arduous road he took to get to there.

Ocloo was born in 1936 in a small village in the Ghana's Volta Region (Foster, 1960a). Born hearing, Ocloo was a promising scholar who advanced through the formal elementary and middle school, until hearing loss obstructed his access to further education. Ocloo contracted spinal meningitis and became deaf during his ninth grade studies at The Government Secondary Technical School in Takoradi (S. Ocloo, personal communication, June 2020). He was adventitiously deaf, having acquired speech and language prior to hearing loss. Ocloo could lip read well, but without a hearing aid couldn't return to his general education school. This put his education on hold (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2017).

Ocloo sought help from traditional healers to restore his hearing (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018).

> I tried to find a cure for hearing loss. I went to many, many herbalists. They would put leaves in my ears and in my mouth. It didn't help it made it worse. One herbalist made me stand under a thatched roof at night. He had shaved my head under a thatched roof. He set up a calabash of water to drip on me all night. I visited many, many religious

groups too. I saw many hoping they would cure me. Mother took me to all these places, but they didn't help. (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018)

Ocloo's experiences reminded me of parallel accounts from the Global North, where Medieval application of the medical model[24] meant that "deaf people endured numerous experiments in the search for a cure of deafness, such the blowing of a trumpet in the ears or pouring liquids (oil, honey, vinegar, bile of rabbits or pigs, garlic juice, goat's urine, eel fat mixed with blood) into the ears (Nomeland & Nomeland, 2012, p. 11).

Ocloo was disillusioned by the herbalists and went to Accra to seek medical intervention from the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital: "I met an ENT, Dr. David, at the hospital. He told me 'Okay, you have spinal meningitis. No amount of herbalist or pouring liquid in your ear will help you, so stop going there'" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018). Ocloo and his family were shocked by this news.

Ocloo decided if he couldn't get his hearing back then he would shift the focus to employment. But even this proved to be tall order during that time. Persons with disabilities in Ghana, up through the 1950's, were considered second-class citizens. The country achieved independence in 1957, Ghanaians were free, but hearing Ghanaians didn't treat their d/Deaf counterparts as full citizens. Deaf Ghanaians weren't considered educable and/or employable. Ocloo recalled the prospect of finding a job was as difficult as restoring his hearing: "who would

[24] By Middle Ages (A.D. 400- 1400), physicians explicitly equate disability with physical malady best healed with medicine, giving rise to the medial model (Metzler, 2011). Per the medical model, "disability is seen as a problem that needed to be solved or an illness that needed to be cured" (Eyler, 2016, p. 4). The medical model offered a secular perspective about disabilities that replaced demons with pathology and miracle workers with doctors.

hire deaf and dumb man? Ghana …the people at that time, they won't hire the deaf and dumb…" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018).

Ocloo told Ghana's Department of Social Welfare about his struggle with deafness and employer discrimination. He asked him to assist him with hearing aids and to find a job: "I wrote a letter to the Department of Social Welfare. They invited me to talk to them, but I went to talk they didn't do anything. They just kept us [Ocloo and his mother] in the office waiting. We were frustrated and left" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018). Ocloo, tired of being "run around" by the Department of Social Welfare, stopped seeking their help.

The Department of Social Welfare, however, had not forgotten about Ocloo and his needs: "Much later through the Department of Social Welfare I heard about Foster coming to Ghana to start a school for the deaf. So I went to meet Foster at the Presbyterian Church" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018).

Ocloo first went looking for Foster at one of his Presbyterian Church Christiansborg meetings in July, 1957 (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1960b, May-June 1960). He recalled his first observations of Foster and his work:

> He was meeting parents of d/Deaf. All the people wanted to see what was happening. Foster said, "I'm d/Deaf. I can read and write". They had never met a d/Deaf African who could read and write. They were surprised.…. I, too, was surprised to see this man who is d/Deaf and he could read and write. I was like "What?!"… I didn't know the d/Deaf could go to school. (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018)

Foster's arrival in Accra introduced a counter-narrative that d/Deaf people can read, write, reason. Foster modeled the saying that "Deaf can do anything the hearing can do, except hear" (Adelman, 2006).

Ocloo, like the parents of the d/Deaf children, had never met an educated, empowered d/Deaf person like Foster. His forthrightness engaged Ocloo's imagination and challenged his internalize negative assumptions that d/Deaf were not equal to hearing people. Ocloo seemed most impressed by how Foster communicated unabashedly with the hearing.

> I was always afraid of the hearing. I could lip read well. It took some time for people to know I was d/Deaf. Even with hearing loss… I still could lip read, but Foster didn't use his voice. Me… I was afraid to go out. To communicate he wrote very fast, just back and forth, back and forth on paper. This man is d/Deaf is not afraid of [hearing] people? The d/Deaf don't need to be afraid of the hearing. I think I learned from Foster not to be afraid of hearing people. (Ocloo, personal communication, November 2017)

Ironically, Ocloo seemed more comfortable with hearing people than the d/Deaf. During our interviews, he preferred speech and use of terms such as "deaf and dumb". Triangulation of his interviews and literature presented a figure who didn't necessarily identify with Deaf Community (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018). Ocloo, like Foster, seemed an accomplished but complicated character.

Foster's arrival, in Ghana in 1957, fascinated Ocloo. He didn't miss his opportunity to get an in depth look at this enigmatic, unapologetic d/Deaf African American missionary educator.

> We quickly struck up an acquaintance. I was eager to know more about this unique figure as he was to get me interested in his project. In the short time we could exchange a few remarks we agreed to meet again at the Department of Social Welfare. The next day we met again and I asked Foster to help me get some job…Foster pressed his request I help educate the other deaf people. At first I was scared at the thought because I did not want to become 'hooked with this deaf and dumb business.' (Ocloo, pp. 48-49)

Ocloo was said to have responded to Foster's job offer with contempt. But Ocloo would quickly come to know that "He would not take nonsense lightly" (F. Ilabor quoted in Ilabor, 2010, p. 188). According to James Anang, Foster's attempt to cajole Ocloo into work with the d/Deaf backfired and escalated into a regrettable altercation:

> Foster asked Ocloo to teach at the school... Ocloo retorted, 'Why?', 'What for?' and spat on the ground. Foster grabbed hold of, and shook, him. I had to cool the situation down. Ocloo scowled and stormed out. He later told me that he went, talked to his mother about it and decided to come back to help teach the d/Deaf. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2017)

I don't know if this fight really happen, but I can say that Foster and Ocloo seemed the proverbial "odd bedfellows" from the very beginning.

Foster needed a d/Deaf co-worker and as much as Ocloo needed a d/Deaf friendly job. Ocloo had complained that hearing Ghanaian's wouldn't employ the d/Deaf, so he was hardly in a position to turn Foster's offer down. At the same time, Foster's keen eye for talent recognized that Ocloo could be skilled teacher and administrator. Because hearing Ghanaians looked down on the d/Deaf during that time, neither man could easily advance in Accra without the other. But their divergent views on deafness and communication modalities (sign language vs. oralism) stood in their way. One would have to acquiesce to the other's philosophical framework.

It appeared that Ocloo blinked first. He returned to reconcile with Foster, then was profoundly moved by what he saw:

> I went [to GMSD] three days later and before classes began, Foster led the 15 deaf children in singing "Jesus Loves Me," using signs [see figure 25]. I was so fascinated by

> this manual rendition of the popular tune that I promptly agreed to be part of the ‘deaf and dumb business’ after all. (Ocloo, 1972, p. 49)

In spite of his acrimonious start with Foster, Ocloo became his first teacher at GMSD (the first d/Deaf Ghanaian teacher). Together, they created a two-man teaching team until Foster convinced other d/Deaf Ghanaians to voluntarily teach alongside them (Ocloo, 1972). Ocloo would endear himself to Foster, who introduced him to others as “my right-hand man” (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1960b, May-June). This right-hand man demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the school and its students (see figure 33):

> My work…ranged from cooking meals for the school through teaching to acting as his Assistant Director. But I was as imbued with a sense of service in any capacity to these deaf kids as Foster was with his missionary zeal…thus between us any of our myriad of duties to the young school could hardly go unattended. We were up and on the run from 5 a.m. and often much earlier, and did not “hit the sack” until well after midnight. (Ocloo, 1972, p. 53)

This was a symbiotic relationship. Ocloo helped Foster launch the mission school and Foster would later help Ocloo to pursue academic studies at Gallaudet University. Ocloo would get his PhD in the United States. Here an irony pervades Foster’s and Ocloo’s collaboration. Not only did Ocloo choose to serve in the American (not Ghanaian) d/Deaf education system, but he became Assistant Principal at Louisiana School for the Deaf in 1978 (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1980a) the same year it was racially integrated. Foster, alumni of a segregated school for the deaf, had enabled a d/Deaf African to become a leader and role-model at what had been America’s last bastion of segregated education for the d/Deaf. [25]

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[25] Louisiana School for the Deaf was the last segregated to racially integrated in the United States.

Ocloo reflected on his journey with Foster and d/Deaf education in Ghana: "I was a big help to him [Foster] in Ghana. He said one reason he continued at the mission school and didn't give up, was because he met me" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018). Foster couldn't have run GMDS on his own and couldn't afford to hire an assistant. Therefore, its plausible that Foster's mission school prototype (GMSD) wouldn't have succeeded without Ocloo's volunteerism. Ocloo, like Bafo, is an unsung hero of deaf education in Ghana. There is need for further research and presentation of Ghanaians d/Deaf role models like Ocloo.

The Osu Deaf Church

I undertook my own safari for souls, 60 years after GMSD was initiated. I journeyed to Osu[26] hoping to get a glimpse of the classroom that Foster used at Presbyterian Middle Boys' Day School. Richard Anang took me by the old Presbyterian property one Sunday before d/Deaf church. The rain had offered a momentary reprieve from Accra's pulsating heat and humidity. But not sooner had it stopped then the sun popped back out and was firing up the temperature and dew point to sauna like conditions. Richard and I walked along Oxford Road as clouds of steam rose languidly off the damp pavement before evaporating into thin air.

We rounded the corner and came up on the side of the Presbyterian Middle Boys' Day School. It was enclosed by the kind of zinc fence which ringed many of Accra's "not yet completed" construction projects. Richard explained it had already been renovated once and was again closed, under construction. I could see a big concrete block multistory school building with faded red iron sheet roofs. The doors and windows were removed. Wooden scaffolds were positioned around it.

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[26] I use Osu interchangeably with Christiansborg, though it's the same location. It was known as Christiansborg during Foster's years in Accra, and now is referred to as Osu.

I looked past the scaffolds and focused on the classrooms. They were empty and dark inside. But when I looked closely and concentrated, I imagined Foster standing inside in one of them. Foster was off to the side of a black board with the alphabet written on it. One hand gestured toward the letter “B” written on the board, while the other demonstrated the same “B” in the one-handed fingerspelling alphabet. Deaf students were seated in front of him. They looked intently at Foster, then at the board and again back at Foster. The students were still, then one slowly raised up a hand and formed the letter “B”. Richard tapped lightly on my shoulder. I turned away from the classroom and toward Richard. He signed, “Hey, let’s go, it’s time to go the d/Deaf church”. I nodded to him, then looked back at the classroom but Foster and his students were gone.

Richard walked me back across Oxford Road and to the gate of the Presbyterian Cluster Primary Schools. We opened and entered onto a large school compound. The school grounds were covered with shaggy light green and yellow blades of grass still moist from the morning rain. There was a “U” shape formation of one story, white cement classroom blocks. Classrooms all had wooded doors and windows which were closed, except for one.

I noticed one open classroom where figures inside were swaying, dancing, signing to a visual rhythm. The wind rustled through the wet grass, taxi drivers blared their horns on Oxford Road, but the churchgoers in the classroom were silent. Richard brought me into the Osu Deaf Church where approximately 40 d/Deaf Ghanaians were signing church hymns.

Foster wrote:

> The time [is] Sunday morning…Dozens of youth and young adults arrive at the Christian Center. They come by bus, taxi, bicycle and foot from different parts of the city of two million residents. Dressed modernly, they ‘chat’ heartily among themselves—though not

> a word is hear….What's unusual about these young people or the meeting itself? At least two facts. All are deaf! And instead of normal sounds, everything is rendered eloquently in the sign language of the deaf, plus speech by some. Yes, here is a deaf young generation in West Africa learning and sharing….Roots out of dry ground!! (Foster, 1980, p.1)

The Osu Deaf Church was a continuation of the alliance Foster forged with the Presbyterian Church. Similar to how the d/Deaf first congregated for evening lessons at Presbyterian Middle School for Boys, they gave Foster one classroom across Oxford Road at the Presbyterian Cluster Primary Schools for Sunday worship. Since 1957, the Osu Deaf Church had met every Sunday between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., except on the first Sunday of every month when they were included at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Osu (previously known as the Presbyterian Church Christiansborg).

Pastor Marfo, a Foster mentee, led the d/Deaf worshippers through sermons and hymns in sign language. I entered and sat at the back to observe the service and the worshippers. This d/Deaf church which Foster had founded was unlike any I have seen. The sign language moved briskly and without an interpreter for hearing worshippers (a standard feature of churches for the d/Deaf). Perhaps this was because worshippers were all d/Deaf, aside from their hearing child playing on the floor. Foster had configured a church which was truly by, for and of d/Deaf Ghanaians.

Richard introduced me and my Foster research to Pastor Marfo after the service. Marfo was pleased I was documenting Foster's work and readily agreed to participate. Curious d/Deaf members gathered around, while I was signing with Marfo. Many chimed in with their own questions. "Are you d/Deaf?". "What is your name?", "Where are you from?". After briefly

interacting with the d/Deaf, Marfo and I carried two plastic chairs outside under the shade of a tree. We conducted our interviews from that location.

"Mafo Taught Us"

Marfo was the second son born to a family of cocoa farmers in rural Ghana. He was born hearing and attended a general education school near his family's home until he became sick. "I remember I got malaria. I laid down to sleep and woke up in a hospital. I stayed at that hospital for what felt like many months. When I came out, I was deaf. I was 12 years old" (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018).

Marfo, post-lingually deaf, learned to speak and read Twi well before he lost his hearing. He could still speak and read his mother language reasonably well in spite of deafness. The same was not true for the English language: "I went back to the hearing school, but it was hard for me to understand English. The teacher was speaking English, I couldn't understand him. I couldn't pronounce the words either. If people were writing [English] to me, I could understand that" (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018).

Marfo's deafness constrained his access to language and education in middle school. Discouraged, he dropped out and remained at home until a relative came to visit the family:

> One day my uncle visited. He worked as a soldier at the Military 37 Hospital in Accra. He came to our hometown to see my father and his family. He saw me reading the Bible in Twi, our mother tongue language. My uncle called me over and asked if I could write. I told him "Yes, but it's hard for me to understand English". My uncle looked at me and said "mm mm, okay". He then talked to my father. (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018)

Marfo's Uncle told his brother about Foster's initiative in Accra and offered to help Marfo attend the school:

> My uncle read in the newspaper about a d/Deaf man from America who had opened a d/Deaf school. He wanted me to go to that school. My mother and father agreed. They packed bags for me. I went with my uncle to 37 Military Hospital where he worked. (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018)

Marfo described the first time he met Foster and Ocloo and saw sign language. It expanded his access to socialization, education, religion and eventually employment:

> After two or three days we went to Osu to meet Foster. He was this young, handsome looking guy. I saw Foster standing there signing with his hands. We met and he asked me if I was d/Deaf. I said "Yes". He then asked if I could talk and write. I showed him that I could write. I remember Ocloo was there with like seven or eight d/Deaf people around. I later learned sign language at that school. We were taught different subjects like English and the Bible. (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018)

Mafo completed his education at GMSD. He was a bright student who naturally wanted to continue his education. Ghana didn't have a d/Deaf senior high school and he was again treated like a second citizen: "I graduated from Foster's school, but the government didn't make any provisions for the d/Deaf to go to secondary schools. I instead worked as a tailor" (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018).

Foster was impressed by Marfo's strong academic performance at GMSD and had bigger plans in store for him. Aina (2015) noted that Foster had "a sharp eye for spotting potential deaf leaders and talented workers who could work with him and the Deaf Community" (p.130). As Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet recruited Laurent Clerc from France to extend sign language

and deaf education in North American, Foster did likewise with Marfo between Ghana and Cameroon. Foster founded Cameroon's first school for the d/Deaf, Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf, in 1977. But the country lacked teachers for the d/Deaf and a sign language system. Foster called on Marfo to extend the roots of d/Deaf education and sign language from Ghana into neighboring Cameroon. Marfo became Cameroon's Clerc.

> Foster remembered me. He had seen my skills…that I was a quick study with the Bible… He sent me to Cameroon to help teach and administer at the mission school for the deaf he founded there. The hearing headmaster didn't know sign language and was having trouble. I flew into Doula and then took at car to Kumba. I was the first to bring sign language to that school [Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf] ….and I was Cameroon's first d/Deaf teacher. That was 1979. I helped those students to learn sign language and to understand the Bible. When Foster came the following year, he felt good about the work I had done. They understood how to welcome him, and greet him by his name, in sign language. Foster was pleasantly surprised and asked the d/Deaf children, "How did you know my name?" They said "Mafo taught us." (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018)

Mafo trained teachers in sign language and Bible instruction at Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf. Foster then rewarded him with educational opportunities. Foster pioneered basic education for Africa's d/Deaf in sign language which was their stepping-stone into higher education and positions of leadership (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1980). Mafo recalled: "In 1980 Foster took me to a Bible college in Illorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. I went to that college with five other d/Deaf students. There wasn't an interpreter, we had to write back and forth to understand" (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018). This seemed reminiscent of

Foster's graduate school experience in the United States, where he was "mainstreamed" without an interpreter or note-taker. Like Foster, Marfo successfully graduated from the college. He then continued working with Foster to replicate his models through Nigeria and into Sierra Leone. [27]

Marfo retired to Accra after Foster's death. He sought to rejuvenate the historical roots of his mentor's work at the Osu Deaf Church with the Presbyterian Church. "Foster gave me special care and attention," Marfo reflected, "Yes he taught me, but he also held and comforted me as a young boy when I was sad. Foster loved the d/Deaf people and he loved me" (T. Marfo, personal communication, February 2018). Because of Marfo's love and care for the d/Deaf in West Africa, they will remember him as tenderly as he remembers Foster. There are thousands of d/Deaf people in Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Sierra Leone can who can say "Marfo taught us". The end of this interview surprised me by revealing Foster's tender side and how it created a "ripple effect" to spread that tenderness (though his mentees) across sub-Saharan African.

Ephphatha Appeal Fund

No sooner had Foster set up GMSD than he began building a case for a larger residential school for the d/Deaf, modeled after those (like Alabama School for the Negro Deaf Blind and Gallaudet University) he attended in the United States. Foster wrote to his prayer helpers:

> Since our school is non-residential, parents must escort their small children to and from classes each day…meanwhile, a long list of other deaf children up-country must go without schooling…our obvious need therefore is a boarding school. (Foster, 1957h)

GMSD was a far cry from the beachhead mission school he envisioned. It would be generous to call this early prototype a "school" by any metric. GMSD was really no more than a

[27] Foster founded church for the d/Deaf in Sierra Leone, not a school.

borrowed classroom which offered a glimpse into what d/Deaf education might look like in Ghana. Ocloo (1972) described how his evening classes were routinely interrupted to "parade the more able ones of our students before interested visitors to show them what the educated deaf can do" (p. 50). These "Freak show" like exhibitions, d/Deaf students' signing a Christian hymn, writing out a sentence or completing an academic task, have entertained and intrigued hearing spectators for hundreds of years (Bar-Yosef, 2009).

Despite the display of these horse and pony shows, Foster probably knew deep down inside that he'd have to significantly improve this early prototype to really realize its full potential. He seemed to have decided that an American-style fundraising drive (like what he had done in the Global North) could breathe financial into GMSD. There is no indication that Foster consulted with Ghanaians to confirm if there was a precedent for this kind of fund-raising blitz in Accra. He had done due diligence to survey the educational and spiritual needs of the d/Deaf in Ghana. He might have similarly surveyed about philanthropic responses to a possible d/Deaf education fund drive. Instead, Foster seemed to have forgone a situational analysis phase and leapt right into the fund raiser itself. He was about to learn how different Ghana was from the United States.

Foster introduced the Ephphatha Appeal Fund to the Ghanaian public during a 7 p.m. public ceremony. This event was held at the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg on September 8, 1957 ("Appeal for the Deaf and Dumb School," 1957). Ephphatha, "that is be opened" from the Book of Mark (7:37, King James Bible, 1769/2017) became the fund drive's motto, and later emblematic of Foster's mission work with the d/Deaf in Africa. Rev. E.M. Dodu, the church's Moderator, urged worshippers at the public ceremony to contribute money to "erect a boarding school building for the new International School for the Deaf and Dumb…Rev. D.A. Konotey-

Ahulu the chairman of the drive…stressed the need for a boarding school to accommodate other deaf mutes scattered in Ghana" ("Appeal for Deaf and Dumb School," 1957). The fundraising drive's initial "ask" was indeed ambitious.

Foster placed a hefty 8,000 sterling pounds (valued at $201,135 in 2020) price tag on his Ephphatha projects. The plan was to: 1) purchase land for the residential site and a student farm in rural Ghana, 2) construct classrooms, dining and residential units on the land, 3) procure a school vehicle, 4) expand GMSD's services for d/Deaf youth in Accra, 5) pay re-occurring operational costs for a full year, and 6) sponsor Ocloo to do his four-year undergraduate degree at Gallaudet University (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1957).

Foster splurged and printed a four-page Ephphatha Appeal Fund (1957) "booklet" to pique the interest of Ghana's public (see figure 26). The inside of the booklet featured photos of Foster and Ocloo with the d/Deaf students, the one-handed fingerspelling alphabet chart and d/Deaf children signing *Jesus Loves Me* (see figure 25). Foster's literature sought to assure potential donors that "generous response to our EPHPHATHA appeal will also help the deaf to overcome their 'sound barrier'" (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1957, p.3). To drive home the point, the booklet highlighted preliminary results from the school:

> Encouraging results show that students who came to us with a 'blank mind', so to speak, now express themselves simply and render short hymns and prayers in sign language …we have earnestly striven to acquire a centralized boarding school so as to expanded EPHPHATHA to all deaf children in Ghana. (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1957, p. 1)

From "blank minds" to parroting Bible literature, Foster seemed convinced that he had compelling Christian story to tell, and then to sell to Ghanaians. After distributing the

Ephphatha Appeal Fund booklet in Ghana, Foster might have anticipated that financial contributions would pour in. The response was not encouraging.

Foster opined months earlier that “deafness seems to appeal the least to those with funds” (1957e, April) in the United States. The same held true for Ghanaians who turned a deaf ear, so to speak, to Foster’s appeal. Foster conceded this a month later, when he sent the same Ephphatha Appeal Fund booklet to his prayer helpers in the Global North.

Foster, usually upbeat, tempered financial expectations about the Appeal Fund: “the Christian population here is not very large and people are mostly poor, perhaps not much will be realized from this Fund Drive” (Foster, 1957l, October). The North American Christian community might have been bigger and financially “richer”, but they didn’t significantly donate either. Neither a high-profile endorsement from Ghana’s Supreme Court Justice, Mr. Nii Amaa Ollennu, nor Foster’s insistence that 8,000 sterling pounds was a “modest sum”, seemed to move Ghanaians or Americans to donate sufficiently to GMSD. Ghana’s media didn’t help matters either.

The Ashanti Pioneer had kept Foster in the public’s eye for four months (June to September 1957). This local Ghanaian newspaper published a series of articles about his frenetic in-country activities in the heady lead-up to GMSD’s establishment. The media was fascinated with the public spectacle of Foster’s presentations in “the language of signs” about the “deaf and dumb”. His hard ask to the same Ghanaian public, to fund his mission school for the d/Deaf, was decidedly less sexy. Inviting persons to attend a no cost public event were one thing, asking the them to pay for a foreigner’s school was something completely different.

The media seemed to turn off and abruptly drop coverage about Foster and d/Deaf education just as Konotey-Ahulu and Nii Amaa Ollennu implored Ghanaians to donate to the

Ephphatha Appeal Fund. The Ephphatha Appeal Fund, GMSD and Foster evaporated off the newspaper pages as quickly as they had appeared.

Ocloo (1972) had labored to put together the Ephphatha Appeal Fund booklet so was understandably disappointed that it flopped. He wrote: "in spite of our strenuous effort this proved a fiasco as what we were able to raise did not even cover the cost of printing the appeal letters" (p. 51). Foster conceded, a year after its launch, that Appeal Fund raised a "negligible" amount of money (A. Foster, December 1958). The Ephphatha Appeal Fund booklet ominously warned that "without necessary funds for these projects, EPHPHATHA for all deaf Ghanaians would be seriously threatened" (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1958, p.4). In actuality, without the necessary funds to do business in Ghana, it was Foster's own survival which would be seriously threatened.

The Banana Diet

Foster looked in his element in photos from the Ghana years (1957-1965), with the exception of one of them. I came across a picture, taken at GMSD in 1957, where Foster seems not his usual self. He's smiling and his usually athletic body looks emaciated (see figure 27). He is uncharacteristically straight faced and holding his hands in an awkward and uncomfortable looking manner. There is something going on, which is not right, in this picture. I had stared at this odd photo many, many times and wondered "What in the world was wrong with Foster?". I found initial clues in a letter.

Foster wrote an "SOS" letter to prayer supporters the same month he opened GMSD (1957k, September). In it he recited a verse from the book of Corinthians "for a great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are many adversaries" (16:9, King James Bible, 1769/2017). Foster cited lack of funds as his greatest adversary and appealed for prayers supporter to urgently

send money to meet his "current expenses" (1957k, September). Dr. Isaac Agboola (2014), a d/Deaf Nigerian mentee, said "my research [on Foster's start in Ghana] shows that there was a chronic shortage of funds" (p. 26). Financial neediness, exacerbated by the failed Ephphatha Appeal, would prove a formidable adversary to vanquish.

Ocloo (1972) recalled how GMSD's raising expenses were met with "practically no help came from Ghana" (p. 49). Ocloo's statement was not completely accurate, because Ghanaians generously contributed their labor and use of facilities. But they didn't offer any financial help. Foster and Williams would have a dust-up at Hon. Gbedemah's (Minister of Finance) office which didn't particularly endear the American d/Deaf education cause to the Ministry of Finance. This might have been one reason why the Government of Ghana refused to fund GMSD in 1957. At the same time, Foster had moved out of the Anang household to rent a room from Mr. Quist, from the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg (S. Ocloo, personal communication May 2020). This not only incurred an additional monthly cost but forced him to walk four miles between Quist's house and GMSD through Accra's scorching heat and humidity (Foster, 1957l, October).

Worse still, he did this strenuous daily hike while subsisting on a "banana diet". According to Agboola (2004), "he arrived in Ghana and didn't have money to purchase food. He just lived on bananas for 3-4 weeks and lost a lot of weight… he was not able to afford actual food to sustain himself" (p. 26). Foster would later joke about how he was "down to a banana diet" in Ghana (1965b, December). He might have dealt with this crisis through humor, but his mentees recounted how it was no laughing matter.

Emmanuel Ilabor (2009) explained that hunger and despair nearly ended Foster's mission work in Ghana before it ever started:

> Recounting Andrew's testimony of his pioneer deaf work experience in Ghana, when the fund[s] he brought along with him from America were exhausted. For some months he checked the post office for letters in which he had been expecting some money from sponsors in vain. This made him doubt about continuing his deaf ministry in Ghana while being very hungry and thinner than before for a long time. Considering negative thoughts on lack of funds, he wanted to leave Ghana for America…he gave the Lord a date deadline for His answer to his prayer request. Had the deadline for not been met, he would have flown back to America. But to his surprise, the funds arrived on the appointed date for which he already packed his baggage for air flight. (p. 33)

Perhaps feeling that Divine Intervention was on his side, Foster unpacked his travel bags and remained in Ghana (Ilabor, 2009). A jovial, confident, filled-out Foster returned to the rest of the GMSD photos from 1957 forward. Foster would never forget his infamous "banana diet" though. He would continue to reference it in his literature, including one prayer support letter he jokingly called a "banana-gram" (Foster, 1965b). Foster suffered early setbacks when aspects of his experimental went awry, but he had also learned lessons which he'd leverage to improve his model. One thing for certain was that he never went on another banana diet.

Deaf-Deaf-Same

Foster wrote "training indigenous educational and spiritual leaders among the deaf has been a foremost objective since first arriving in West Africa in 1957" (1965b, p. 8). To this end, Foster piloted his Ghana approach to eventually recruit, employ, train and empower d/Deaf Africans to run his network of 32 mission schools for the d/Deaf. This is one of the most admired hallmarks of Foster's work, widely cited by international d/Deaf education scholars (Aina, 2015; Eleweke, Agboola & Guteng, 2015; Kiyaga & Moores, 2003; Miles, 2004; Runnels, 2017).

What isn't mentioned is that Foster's preference for d/Deaf employees seemed more about alignment with the "Deaf-Deaf-Same" approach (Kusters & Friedner, 2015) than it was about altruism.

"Deaf-Deaf-Same" is an ASL term with no equivalency in the English language. To explain the concept is to explain how it is signed in ASL. The signer would establish that one person is d/Deaf and other is also d/Deaf, then point out that they are "the same". The signer can construct a sentence which positions the d/Deaf people into the first, second or third person. The positioning doesn't matter, so long as two or more are d/Deaf and identified as the same. But the sameness is less about an audiological hearing loss and more about bonding through the experience of a Deaf linguistic, identity community and cultural worldview. With Deaf-Deaf-Same, all roads essentially lead through the Deaf lived experience. A corresponding English phrase might be from something like "we're in this together" or "safety in numbers".

Gbenga Aina (2015), a d/Deaf Nigerian who wrote *Andrew Foster Touches Eternity: From Nigeria to Fiji*, explained that "'deaf-deaf-same' mechanism…is defined as an affinity or kinship arising from shared deafness" (p. 132). Aina (2015) interviewed Foster's Ghanaian mentees on this matter. Steven Boateng, a d/Deaf Ghanaian who Foster taught at GMSD, said: "Foster worked to cultivate relationships with deaf children and adults and they were based on the Deaf-same…He did not like the way hearing teachers treated deaf children. He always wanted it to be 'Deaf like me'" (Aina, 2015, p. 132).

Musa Nartey, another d/Deaf Ghanaian mentee, recalled a Deaf-Deaf-Same moment with Foster in Accra:

> [My brother] pointed to Foster, looked at me then gestured back at Foster and gestured 'he's d/Deaf'. I raised my eyebrows, looked at Foster, then back at my brother. I

> gestured at Foster "he's deaf?". My brother nodded. I look at Foster and gestured, 'are you d/Deaf?' Foster responded, "Yes. You and I are the same". From that moment I felt assured and at peace with Foster…we became friends. (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018)

Ocloo (1972) noted that, in Ghana, Foster generally got along better with d/Deaf people. Any issues he had on occasion with d/Deaf people, like Ocloo, seemed reconcilable because they were Deaf-Deaf-Same. Such was not necessarily the case with his hearing colleagues.

Dollar and Sense Decisions at the Mission School for the Deaf

Foster seemed to have applied the Deaf-Deaf-Same guiding philosophy to recruit and "hire" teachers to run this network of mission schools for the d/Deaf across Africa. I framework these hires as "dollars and sense", as well as Deaf-Deaf-Same, decisions. Donations started coming in from the United States to support GMSD, yet Ocloo reported that "funds were too meagre to employ qualified hearing workers who would hardly be expected to sacrifice their services for the education of the deaf and dumb" (Ocloo, 1972, p. 50). For example, Foster offered Ocloo $1.50 a month ($14 in 2020; S. Ocloo, personal communication, June 2020). This barely covered bus fare for his 17-mile daily (each way) between his home (near Tema) to the school in Christiansborg (Foster, 1957l, October). I don't know how much Foster compensated himself, after his disastrous banana diet episode, and whether he continued to experience comparable hardships.

It was clear that not all d/Deaf Ghanaians were prepared to serve with Foster and Ocloo on a voluntary basis. This financial situation created early challenges at GMSD. During Foster's media blitz, he received letters from d/Deaf Ghanaians eager to come and work with him (Ocloo, 1972). Because missionary activities in Ghana were often associated with money

(even if material wealth was antithetical to their message), the d/Deaf applicants likely expected at least market-rate compensation for their service.

Foster responded to this influx of interest by "hiring" three more d/Deaf Ghanaians to join him and Ocloo at GMSD. The first to come forward was James Kyeremeh. Kyeremeh, like Foster and Ocloo, was adventitiously d/Deaf, having lost his hearing in an auto accident in 1953 (Foster, 1957m, November-December). He came to GMSD and was promptly hired, but then realized he wouldn't be paid and hurriedly resigned (Ocloo, 1972). Foster knew that Kyeremeh had a wife and seven children (Foster, 1957m, November-December), so it's mystery as to why boarded him in the first place.

Florence Oteng (see figure 17) was a nursing student from Kumasi who lost hearing to spinal meningitis (like Foster and Ocloo) in "the line of duty" at Ministry of Health hospital. The nursing school removed her from the training program, and she struggled to find gainful employment. "In 1957, [Oteng] received a surprise visit from Dr. Andrew Foster who obtained her name from Ministry of Health. That led her to work in his Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, being one of his first three pupil teachers" (Oteng, 1997, p. 1).

Though Foster mostly surrounded himself with African Christian males, he was not opposed to hiring a d/Deaf African female like Oteng who professed to "already know and love Jesus Christ" (Foster, 1958a). But Oteng (1972) might not have been the most reliable choice. Ocloo reported that she suffered from hypochondria and was rarely seen at GMSD in Christiansborg. It seemed she resurfaced a few years later, when the GMSD moved out of Accra, to work at the residential hall. She went on to wrote two books about her experiences– *Give Them a Name* (1988) and *Deaf Adwoa Benewaa* (1997; see figure 18).

Last but not least came Emmanuel Sono-Omari (see figure 19). Sono (as he was known) was from Kwahu District in the Eastern Region (Ocloo, personal communication, June 2020). Unlike Foster and Ocloo, he was congenitally deaf (born without hearing; Egmond, 1955). He attended general education elementary and middle schools (without interpreters and notetakers) where he "learned" basic literacy alongside his hearing peers (Foster, 1957m, November-December). Ocloo (1972) described Sono as a "devoted conscientious helper" (p. 50). He too became a multitasker around GMSD. He assisted Foster and Ocloo with simple office administration and in time became the school's resident artist. "While Sono did not have language himself, he was adept at drawing! Sono drew pictures of the following words: cat, fish, fez, goat, jug, lamb, pan, quill, vase, cow, fox, and crow" (S. Ocloo, personal communication June 2020). Sono contributed his gifts and talents to help deliver the first iteration of GMSD. His service was also purely voluntary.

Foster quite candidly shared his mission's financial difficulties with his prayer helpers: "Our devoted teacher-trainees are faced with real hardship; none has employment nor, as yet, has received any help from us…We groan to assist them financially. Will you…seek to assist them with their livelihood?" (Foster, 1957l, October). There is no indication that prayer helpers accepted Foster's invitation to assist with reoccurring salary costs, though they did make an occasional donation which was the school's economic lifeline. And yet, Sono still stuck around, as did Ocloo (Foster, 1957l, October). Ocloo and Sono undoubtedly deserve credit and respect for the personal sacrifices each made to launch and sustain GMSD during its early, vulnerable years. An ethnography can and should be written about theses unsung d/Deaf Ghanaian heroes who laid the roots of d/Deaf education in Africa through Ghana.

Foster had a Heart for the Deaf

The d/Deaf male trio are pictured outside, in front of a classroom, with their first cohort of d/Deaf students (see figure 19). A smiling Foster is seated in the middle of younger students (three on each side of him) on a long bench. Ocloo is standing to the left of Foster, with a hand on the shoulders of two older male students. Sono is on the right, standing between Foster, with his arms folded. This is the portrait of three d/Deaf "kindred spirits" who allied to deliver the first iteration of the GMSD experiment in 1957. According to Mrs. Elizabeth Ocloo (known as Liz. Ocloo)[28], the demographics of the original GMSD team suited Foster's preference for working with d/Deaf colleagues (in addition to his tendency to work with Christian males).

Liz Ocloo, like Ocloo and Sono, mad significant sacrifices to serve as an unpaid, volunteer teachers at GMSD. Liz Ocloo (much like Foster) considered herself a servant of God, motivated by a desire to teach and missionize to the d/Deaf. Despite vehement protests from her family and friends, she responded to a Christian calling by dedicating herself to d/Deaf Ghanaian children at Foster's GMSD (L. Ocloo, September 2018). She was the school's first hearing teacher and first female. [29] As a hearing woman, Liz Ocloo's lived experiences offered a unique insight into working with Foster.

When looking at the portrait of Foster with her husband and Osono said recalled:

> Foster had a heart for the d/Deaf. The d/Deaf, they were everything to him. He really really loved them. I felt like he did not trust hearing people. I don't know if he was young and hearing people did something to him? He was a wonderful, wonderful man for

[28] Liz Lutterodt met Dr. Seth Tetteh Ocloo at GMSD. They got married in Ghana in 1966.
[29] Florence Oteng was the first female hired at GMSD, but didn't start work for a number of years due to her health.

the d/Deaf. But not for the [hearing] people who tried to help. (L. Ocloo, September 2018)

If Foster wanted to surround himself with d/Deaf colleagues and children in Ghana exclusively, then he may have reacted harshly when differences arose with hearing counterparts, as reported by Liz Ocloo.

Liz Ocloo and Foster didn't see eye to eye on whether her attire and outspokenness adhered to his understanding of "Christian character and standards". Disagreements over how a Christian woman should dress and talk seemed to have soured their working relationship from the beginning:

> My grandparents were also Presbyterian ministers. So I was brought up with some beliefs. He [Foster] had different beliefs which I didn't agree with. Like a woman should not put on lipstick. A woman should not wear shorts. I was young. I had started working at that school when I was 21. I was cute and full of life. You can't tell me "wear only long skirts". No! I want to dress the way I want to dress. I want to look good. Foster didn't like me. If you ask me why… the only thing I can say is he didn't like me because I spoke my mind. And I wouldn't let him make me do something which I didn't believe in. (L. Ocloo, September 2018)

I've noted that many residential schools for the d/Deaf have dress-codes for their personnel. Some extended this to extra-curricular activities, detailing what persons can and can't wear while on campus. I sifted through Foster's literature, but couldn't find such a protocol. Perhaps Liz Ocloo was in violation of Foster's dress code.

Liz Ocloo seemed to look back with regret about missed opportunities with Foster in Ghana: "If he had allowed us…maybe we would have done more. Because there are certain

things that would go on…which didn't even make sense" (personal communication, L. Ocloo, September 2018). One thing that didn't make sense was how Foster seemed to have handled a difficult situation with "Sister" Joyce Williams.

Foster had invited Williams from the United Kingdom to volunteer as a Christian Mission for Deaf Africans (CMDA) missionary in 1957. "She has already proved a big help in this work" Foster gushed, complimenting her "ability to work well…among the people in general" (1957j, July-August). Foster would later learn that Williams (who had worked four years in Nigeria) also had an ability to navigate Ghana's romantic landscape, where she began a relationship with a Ghanaian boyfriend soon after arrival (S. Ocloo, personal communication, September 2018). Foster may have felt such a courtship was an affront to the "Christian character and standards" he expected of his missionaries.

According to Ocloo, tensions between Foster and Williams reached a boiling point in an acrimonious scenario:

> One time I remember the three of us, Foster, myself and Williams, we were going to meet the Minister of Finance [Hon. K.A. Gbedemah]. We were seated in a room waiting outside of his office. All of a sudden, I see Foster hitting Williams. I wondered 'what?! In the Minister's office?!.' That was wrong. I was shocked. We didn't get to see the Minister and were asked to leave. I was about to get up and go, when I saw Foster waving at me, trying to get my attention. I looked over and saw him smiling and shaking hands with Williams. Apparently, they had "made up". (S. Ocloo, personal communication, September 2018)

I didn't have any way to cross-check Ocloo's account from Gbedemah's office, but it sounded similar to the struggle between Ocloo and Foster at GMSD. I wondered if this was an emerging

pattern, that Foster had a tendency to be tender and loving, but at times authoritarian and tyrannical, toward his mentees and colleagues. Foster's third son hinted at a possible a binary approach to his father's work, "It did not matter who you were, you were either on his team or in his way" (personal communication, T. Foster, October 2015). What happened who were on-board, then "were in his way?" It seemed plausible that Williams got into Foster's cross hairs and was dealt with as being a part of the problem instead of part of the solution. Foster ended Williams' missionary volunteer work with CMDA not long after their public tussle in Gbedemah's office and ordered her to leave Ghana immediately. She defied Foster's "edict" and opted to remain in country with her boyfriend (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020). Nothing more is known about Williams, other than Rev. Cobblah took on her role as Foster's sign language interpreter.

Comparatively, Cobblah seemed to have negotiated a relatively conflict free working relationship with Foster. He ascended the GMSD administrative ladder, received a scholarship to study audiology in the United Kingdom, eventually become GMSD's Headmaster, and continued to be Foster's point person in Ghana. I wondered if Cobblah had successfully advanced by closely adhering to Foster's rendition of Christian behavior, thus toeing that line and distinguishing himself as a team player. Or maybe Foster was just more comfortable around African Christian men, regardless of other factors. Whatever the case, records revealed mostly positive working relationships between Foster and Ghanaians going forward.

Enrollment at GMSD

Donations from the United States enabled Foster to stay in Ghana and not have to pull the plug on his fledgling GMSD. The school remained open, but was just treading water, because there wasn't enough money to significantly expand enrollment. Nonetheless, he wrote that "new

applications seem to come in at the average rate of three per week" (Foster, 1957l, October). Rather than let the d/Deaf applicants fall by the wayside, the indefatigable Foster created a student waiting list and enrolled new students a few at a time.

- 24 d/Deaf students, September 1957
- 31 d/Deaf students, 84 waitlisted, October,1957
- 32 d/Deaf students, 91 waitlisted, November 1957

These numbers challenged the Government of Ghana's narrative that the country lacked a critical mass number of d/Deaf students to justify a special school for the d/Deaf. But GMSD's waitlist became so long that I wondered if I was more harmful than helpful. Did it give families false hopes about impending enrollment which would never come? Or did Foster have a plan?

Maintaining even meagre enrollment to press the school's case wasn't easy. Most of d/Deaf students on Foster's waiting list didn't stay in Accra, which made GMSD inaccessible for most of them. Contrary to colonial depictions from *Switched at Birth* (Weiss et al., 2013) about African abandonment of d/Deaf children, counternarratives emerged about Ghanaians parents who went the extra mile to get their d/Deaf children to Foster's school.

Foster's d/Deaf students lived on the outskirts of Accra, which required parents to ferry between home and class. At times, this could be a tall order. Foster illustrated how "one ranking police officer drives his little boy 25 miles each way, another man walks seven miles" (Foster, 1957l, October). He also shared the harsh reality that not all parents could sustain these grueling efforts: "commuting difficulties forced three small children to withdraw until the board school materializes" (Foster, 1957m, November-December). Most d/Deaf students simply lived too far from Accra and would remain no more than "a number" on Foster's ever-expanding waitlist until he could move the mission into a residential school in a rural region. Foster's literature suggests

he was all too cognizant of, and disturbed by, this development: "Our hearts go out to our list of many would be new faces living up country who are awaiting us to acquire a boarding school" (Foster, 1958a).

What is the Language of the Signs?

In 1959, The Washington Post reported that "to most of his students, Foster is teaching…sign language, the first form of their communication they have known" ("Gallaudet University Grad Returns As African Deaf Tutor"). What sign language did he use? And how did it intersect with cultural, socio-economic issues and colonialism?

Evidence demonstrated that Foster learned and used ASL in the United States, then brought it with him to Ghana. At GMSD, Foster trained his teachers and students in ASL which evolved into the sign language eventually used by d/Deaf people in Ghana. The catch is that ASL wasn't known as ASL during this time. Foster came up through the d/Deaf education system prior to Stokoe's scholarship which acknowledged ASL as the "go to" term for the natural sign language of the d/Deaf in North America. Foster used ASL, but amorphously called it "sign language" or the "language of signs" (a term picked up and used by Ghana's *Ashanti Pioneer*).

What was the language of the signs? Foster eloquently and matter-of-factly explored this question with his prayer supporters:

> The language of the signs means what is says. Conventional signs for objects and actions have been determined by, and to a large degree are suggestive of, the shape, form, or thought which they represent. These gestures are made with use of the hands and arms. Correctly used this is a graceful portrayal of the thoughts and actions, and feelings, of

man. It is subject to the same abuses as oral speech. (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1963)

While Foster probably wrote this piece with his sign language (ASL) in mind, it aptly described the "language of the signs" of d/Deaf Ghanaians, too.

Foster wrote to his prayer supports that d/Deaf Ghanaians came to him as "blank-minds" who were "language-less" (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1957, p. 1; Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961c, September-October). Many of his mentees repeated the claim that Africa didn't have sign language before Foster. Chief Dr. Peter Okoro Mba professed that "[Foster] introduced sign language into Africa" (Mba quoted in Ilabor, 2010, p. 210). To the contrary, scholars demonstrated that d/Deaf Ghanaians used anything from basic home signs to the well-developed AdaSL and Nanabin Sign Language[30] before Foster arrived (DeVos & Nyst, 2018). Foster may not have considered indigenous sign languages to be legit, possibility dismissing them as lesser to his American "language of the signs". I reached out to a Ghanaian linguist to get a local perspective on sign languages in Ghana.

Contact Sign Languages

I met with Dr. George Pare-Akanlig, from the University of Ghana's Sign Language Program at his office on the Legon campus in Accra. There I interviewed him about the intersections of Foster's contributions and sign language in Ghana. I asked him to contextualize the state of sign language in Ghana before Foster's time in the country. Viewed through the eyes of an African languages expert, Dr. Akanlig said:

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[30] Nanabin Sign Language is used by three generations of a family whose members are d/Deaf (Brenzinger & Batibo, 2010). The d/Deaf families live in the Nanabin village, which is 90 minute drive southwest along the Ghana's Atlantic coast.

> There were sign languages here in Ghana before the arrival of Andrew Foster. We know from Deaf Studies that wherever you have two or more d/Deaf people living in the community they evolve their own language to serve their day-to-day purposes. We know there were d/Deaf people in Ghana before the arrival of Andrew Foster, therefore there were sign languages. Indeed, there is a village not far from the university [of Ghana] called Adamorobe. It has a high concentration of d/Deaf people. They have been using their own sign languages long before Foster came to Ghana. And if we are going to use that as an example then we are right to say that d/Deaf people in Ghana had their own indigenous sign languages. (G. Pare-Akanlig, personal communication, February 2020)

My interview with Dr. Akanlig made me wonder more about how Foster's use ASL in Ghana impact these indigenous sign languages.

Garrett (2008) is a linguist anthropologist who wrote that language contact "occurs whenever and wherever two or more human groups with different languages—and in most cases, different cultures and worldviews as well—encounter one another and attempt to engage in linguistic communication" (p. 48). Extended contact and interaction of this nature can create a contact language which is distinctly different from the two source languages (Sebba, 1997). Foster participated in language contact in Adamorobe, where the two parties are said to have used both ASL and AdaSL (Kuster, 2014). Foster described another occurrence of language contact which happened at GMSD: "When practical, we adopt and adapt expressions from their 'West African Sign Language' –a simple gestural pattern used by people in this region for inter-tribal communication" (1957m, November-December).

The generic "West African Sign Language" to which Foster referred was most likely AdSL, Nanabin Sign Language and/or other indigenous sign languages (not inter-tribal

communication). According to Dr. Akanlig, this so called “West African Sign Language” converged with Foster’s ASL to create a contact sign language which would dominate GMSD and its replication schools for the d/Deaf across the whole of Ghana:

> Foster came to Ghana and introduced American Sign Language to the d/Deaf people here in Ghana. He then realized that American Sign Language couldn’t cope up with the communication needs of the d/Deaf people, so encouraged them to evolve their own sign language that eventually became Ghanaian Sign Language. (G. Pare-Akanlig, personal communication, February 2020)

It seemed that ASL and Ghana’s indigenous sign languages creolized into Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) at GMSD. But what is GSL? How is it linguistically similar to, and different from, ASL? Robert Sampana (2016) is a Deaf Ghanaian who worked with the Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD). He wrote that:

> Foster used American Sign Language (ASL) to begin to teach the many deaf people he found in Ghana. Based on the same foundations as ASL, Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) contains various signs that are unique to Ghana only. Signs derived from cultural activities are what separates GSL from ASL. (2016, p.1)

I commonly confronted the myth that sign language is “international”. Hearing people seemed to think that all d/Deaf people learned and used one sign language, worldwide. I was told that my research in Ghana would be “easy” because I know ASL and d/Deaf Ghanaians do too. But ASL alone wouldn’t facilitate reliable and valid interviews with the d/Deaf in Ghana. I had to learn GSL (not rely on ASL) to communicate with d/Deaf Ghanaians. How exactly are ASL and GSL different?

From a linguistic point of view, GSL and ASL are not mutually exclusive. The reason is that the vocabulary enviably emulates from Ghanaian people, places and culture. ASL doesn't have a sign for Accra, *kenkey* (sourdough dumpling) or *harmattan* (dry, windy season). These concepts aren't present in the d/Deaf peoples' lives in North America, yet are ubiquitous to daily life in Ghana. GSL conveyed local concepts to meet the communication needs of d/Deaf Ghanaians, so because the dominant language for the d/Deaf at GSMD and across much of Ghana. Not everyone was pleased with this linguistic component of Foster's work in Ghana.

Sign Language Empires

Numerous international deaf studies scholars and linguists (Kiyaga and Moores, 2013; Moges, 2015) equated Foster's use of ASL (and later GSL) in sub Saharan Africa to the linguistic imperialism that the British visited on the Gold Coast through the English language. Linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2010) is a colonial legacy which elevated European languages (such as English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and German) to places of prestige at the expenses of mother tongue African languages (Hamel, 2005). In this regard, a language is:

> Not just a neural tool but is both embedded and supportive of social, cultural and political structures. The English language, in particular, is a key factor in the maintenance of imperialist structure by which a 'developed' British or American center dominates 'developing' Asians or Africans. (Parry, 2010, p. 330)

Language (like religion, commerce and slavery) has been considered a building block of colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa. European nations built their colonial empires with language empires. Promotion through the colonial education system was dependent upon an acquiescence of the language empire per fluency in the colonial languages. If one wanted to advance with the British in the Gold Coast, then Twi wouldn't do. In the British Empire, learning and using

English was non-negotiable. Unwillingness or inability to bow to the colonial language inhibited success in the colonial system.

While language empires linguistically subjugated hearing Africans, did the same happen to d/Deaf African with foreign sign languages? Did Foster unwittingly build a sign language empire into his d/Deaf mission education model? Academic success and social acceptance at GMSD most definitely depended on learning and using GSL. Foster adjusted his ASL to meet the linguistics needs of the d/Deaf students who used indigenous sign language (hence, becoming GSL). There is no indication, however, that he adopted an indigenous sign language as a primary or secondary language at GMSD. The more d/Deaf Ghanaians utilized GSL as steppingstones to education and employment through Foster, the more it gained prestige in relation to their indigenous sign languages. As GSL expanded at GMSD, d/Deaf Ghanaians associated it with education and a high social status, higher than the sign language of the "deaf village". GSL became more prestigious than AdaSL, Nanabin Sign Language or any other home sign languages (Mufwene, 2003). Nyst (2010) noted that:

> The attitudes toward sign languages of local and foreign origin largely parallel the attitudes toward spoken languages of local and foreign origin in West Africa…signers in West Africa tend to perceive of ASL based sign languages[31] as being superior to sign languages of local origin. (p. 23)

This perception had socio-cultural linguistic implications. It appears Foster's long-term use of ASL in West Africa caused a language shift (Fishman, 1991). This emerged in Deaf

[31] An ASL based sign language refers to a sign language which began as ASL then evolved into a national sign language. GSL is an example of an ASL based sign language, because it is based on ASL.

Communities where the d/Deaf gradually favored the more "prestigious" foreign ASL based sign languages to their indigenous sign language (Nyst, Kuster & Magassouba, 2012).

The apparent language shift prompted Kiyaga's and Moore's (2013) critique that in sub Saharan Africa: "foreign sign languages were introduced without regard to indigenous signs" (p. 19). Toby Burton (2002) is a d/Deaf Briton who surveyed d/Deaf education in Kenya, returned to the United Kingdom and indignantly announced: "Nothing is more disrespectful [than] to force African deaf schools to use American Sign Language" (p. 22).[32] In regards to Foster, neither sign language studies nor sign language linguistics were academic fields during his time. Scholarly inquiry into ASL didn't surface until the 1960s, followed by indigenous sign languages in Africa in the 1990s. Scholars wouldn't have necessarily known to research into Ghana's indigenous sign language during Foster's time in country. Foster might have pioneered the use the "language of signs" at his mission schools in sub Saharan Africa, but he didn't pioneer research and use of indigenous sign language.

With this in mind, not all scholars were as strident in their assessment of Foster's use of ASL in sub-Saharan Africa. Dr. Kamei (2006) was a sign language linguist who conducted ethnographic research on Foster, ASL and creolized sign languages in West Africa. After years of investigating these topics he determined that: "the spread of this sign language [ASL based sign language] is not a process of oppression, but rather, a creative one, constructed by African Deaf educators and communities over a span of many years" (p. 4).

During the 1950s, d/Deaf education debates about communication modalities would have examined what role--if any--sign language might play to support the oral classroom. Foster

[32] I served in U.S. Peace Corps Kenya's d/Deaf education program between 1997-2000. During this time, I didn't observe any school for the d/Deaf which used ASL instead of Kenyan Sign Language.

bucked the oral trend altogether and boldly instituted manual based-instruction in Ghana. This decision was controversial for its time. For this, GNAD proclaimed "all the 14 schools for deaf in Ghana use the same sign language begun by 'the Father of Sign Language in Ghana', Dr. Andrew Foster" (Sampana, 2016). GMSD was not the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, but it appears to be the first to teach d/Deaf children using sign language rather than speech. Foster's introduction of manual-based d/Deaf in sub Saharan Africa is one of his most enduring and meaningful achievements, even if sign language scholars disagreed about the appropriateness of ASL on the Continent. Foster's use of sign language, however, was not his lone d/Deaf education pedagogical innovation.

Foster and the Fitzgerald Key

In 1957, Ghana didn't have a school for d/Deaf, trained teachers of the deaf nor a deaf education teacher training program. Ocloo (1965) pointed out the difficulties in opening a school for the Deaf in Ghana at that time, as: "There are virtually no facilities in Africa for the training of teachers of the deaf. We have to look for foreign countries to train our teachers, a prospect that is not all that pleasant, considering the financial implication" (p. 30). If Foster wanted "teachers of the d/Deaf" then he would have to train them himself. This is what he did. Ocloo (1972) noted that "almost from the start, Foster acted more as a teacher-trainer than a teacher" (p. 50). But what did Foster's teacher training program look like?

Alex Quaynor, a d/Deaf Ghanaian who later taught at GMSD, said that:

> He conducted classes on Deaf pedagogy in the evenings and gave every volunteer the opportunity to gain firsthand experience of teaching deaf children in a self-contained classroom. Those lucky enough to get this kind of training became the vanguard…and they trained those who came after them. (Aina, 2015, p. 130)

In a "train the trainer" format, Foster trained Ocloo, who then trained waves of teacher cohorts (S. Ocloo, personal communication, June 2020). But what did this teacher training program look like? According to Liz Ocloo, Foster trained his teachers of the d/Deaf to use the Fitzgerald Key (L. Ocloo, personal communication, November 2018). Edith Fitzgerald, a d/Deaf teacher and Gallaudet University alumna, developed the Fitzgerald Key (known as "the Key") to teach d/Deaf students to construct grammatical sentences in English (Walter, 1959).[33]

Beginning in 1920s, America's schools for the d/Deaf increasingly used the Key, which became a dominant d/Deaf education pedagogy for the next 50 years (Harryman & Kresheck, 2004). An author from Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD) promoted its use to teach English, reporting that: "our teachers realize that without the skill to read, write, and comprehend the English language, no other subject can be studied and no by-day living with others can take place" (Hudson, 1979, p. 397). Foster introduced the Key at GMSD because it was most likely what he knew from Alabama School for the Negro Deaf Blind and Gallaudet University.

Foster was not above appropriating a trending American d/Deaf pedagogy, like the Key, to graft on to his mission school prototype. Schools like KSD and Gallaudet University applied the Key to teach the d/Deaf to speak and read lips in English. By contrast, Foster practiced a Bilingual-Bicultural approach, which recognized sign language as the first language (L1) of the d/Deaf and a written language (in this case English[34]) as their second language (L2). This meant he had to train the teachers in sign language, too.

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[33] Stoke's research verified that the ASL syntax differs significantly from English. Deaf students, for this reason, have a tendency to write English sentences in ASL syntax, often rendering them unintelligible to readers (Strong & Prinz, 2000). "The Key", which focuses on English syntax, was an early answer to this challenge.

[34] Foster was cognizant that his post-lingually Ghanaian students knew and used spoken mother tongue languages. But rather than bring these languages into the classroom, he designed his prototype around use of English (Ghana's official national language). He argued that the d/Deaf most needed English to access national exams, media and future employment (Foster, 1975). Ghana's general education boarding schools, with a national intake, did likewise.

You Have to Know the Signs

Liz Ocloo had studied general education at the Presbyterian Aburi Training College before volunteering to teach at GMSD. Because her background hadn't equipped her for a career in d/Deaf education, she was eager to receive additional teacher training:

> I was a trained teacher. I knew how to teach, but I didn't know the signs. The method of how to get it across to the children. The school was started and the children have no [previous formal] education, some don't even know their own names. So we are just giving them basic survival words. You have to know the signs. (L. Ocloo, September 2018)

I asked Liz Ocloo about how she and the other teachers were taught 'the signs'. She continued:

> [Foster] would teach us sign language. That was our training. We each had our card to write down words in sign to learn. We would get about 50 words a day learn and memorize them, then we would get another 50 for the next day. (L. Ocloo, September 2018)

This seemed like a lot of words to learn in one day, on a daily basis. I asked Liz Ocloo for more detailed about how Foster's trained his teachers in sign language.

She said that Foster facilitated Monday to Friday sign language sessions where he presented teachers with the aforementioned lists of vocabulary words. It seemed that he wrote words in English and then signed the correspondingly concept in ASL. Teachers made their notes, practiced and memorized each sign to develop their signing lexicon. He also introduced Deaf history topics and best strategies to communication with the d/Deaf (L. Ocloo, personal

communication, May 2020). Total Communication was another modalities which Foster promoted.

"Full freedom is provided under the concept called Total Communication", Foster proclaimed, "it embraces…child devised gestures, formal sign language, fingerspelling, speech, 'lipreading', reading and writing. It also uses hearing amplification" (Foster, 1975, p. 6). Foster authored a pamphlet entitled "A Historical Sketch of Manual Communication," which suggested that "all people of good will should continue to foster Total Communication among the deaf" (n.d.-c). But realization of that Total Communication, the modality which had a something for all d/Deaf students, would elude Foster's first few years at GMSD. If the immensity of Foster's vision ever out stripped his abilities, then this was such a case.

Foster's goal of facilitating Total Communication at GMSD was ambitious and admirable, but not altogether realistic. For one, Ghana didn't have audiologists, speech-language pathologists, nor a local stock of affordable hearing aids and audiometers to support this modality. Secondly, Foster lacked capacity to import such expensive human and technical resources. His appeal to foreign missionaries, to come donate these costly services and materials, didn't get traction (Foster, 1958b, March-May). One can't fault Foster for having and pursuing such a big dream, nor can one blame the prayers supports who didn't necessarily share (or couldn't afford to fund) this vision. While awaiting Total Communication donations and volunteers from the United States, it appears that Foster stuck to the more cost-effective option of using sign language in Ghana.

The "4 R's" and Religious Based Instruction for the Deaf

Foster wrote much about how he recruited d/Deaf students and teachers at GMSD, but was curiously reserved about what the teachers taught there. I searched through the literature but

found surprisingly little about Foster's d/Deaf education curriculum at his mission school in Ghana. He seemed only to dash in a token sentence about the students' learning when he needed to raise funds or evangelize. It was rarely a stand-alone topic. The Ephphatha Appeal Fund, as a case in point, informed potential donors that GMSD's "primary class is taught the 4 R's- reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion" (Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, 1958, p. 2). Among these "4 R's", Foster wrote most about the last.

Agboola (2014) opined that "Foster was generally recognized as a missionary first and an educator second, even though his activities and accomplishments in both areas were inseparably intertwined" (p. 2- 4). While Foster recognized that he'd have to teach the d/Deaf sign language and literacy before he could effectively missionize, his summed up his educational ethos thusly: "Education without a corresponding reverence for God can have no lasting benefit either for the individual or for society" (1975, p. 7). But how did Foster train his d/Deaf teacher, many who were not familiar with the Bible, to evangelize?

Foster didn't create his own d/Deaf mission curriculum any more than he did his own d/Deaf education pedagogy. Rather than re-create a wheel, he simply appropriated and applied readily available models to his work with the d/Deaf. In the case of missionizing to the d/Deaf Ghanaians, Foster accessed the Emmaus course materials to steep his d/Deaf West African teachers in Bible Studies (Foster, 1960a).

Established by Ed Harlow (a missionary who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), the Emmaus Bible School "provides instruction about the basic truths of the Gospel" through a series of 24 courses" (Emmaus Worldwide, 2020). These courses were underpinned by a lock step curriculum and literature for lay persons with no prior religious background to progressively learn "about Jesus Christ and His Word" (Emmaus Worldwide, 2020). Foster's

d/Deaf teachers would absorb content knowledge about Christianity, via the Emmaus Bible School, to evangelize to d/Deaf students at Foster's mission schools.

Foster told his prayer supporters that "one essential function of this Mission is to train interested African Christians the techniques of teaching and evangelizing the deaf" (Foster, 1960a). Foster seemed to frame his mission school as a space that attracted "like minded" Christians to journey with him per their free will. Foster didn't tell his prayer supporters that many Africans, unlike Americans, considered mission work their only opportunity to gain "modern" skills, material wealth and higher socio-economic status (Beidelman, p. 240). This was especially true for d/Deaf Ghanaians, like Ocloo, who were considered "unemployable" in Ghana. Educated d/Deaf Ghanaians had the "option" to convert and work (if even for meager stipend) with Foster or to languish in unemployment and obscurity. To me, the decision to train in Foster's techniques of teaching and "evangelizing the deaf" seemed a no-brainer. They may or may not have had interest in teaching or evangelizing, but simply needed a job. As the saying goes "money changes everything".

A Welcome Relief

Foster mobilized resources to facilitate the first year of his work in Ghana through hard work, ingenuity and frugality. He combined cash donations from the Global North with generous volunteerism from Ghanaians and no cost or in-kind contributions of physical infrastructure from the Presbyterian Church in Christiansborg. The genius of Foster's model was that it operationalized so much of his *Ghana Education Plan* proposal and spent so little from the Christian Mission for the Deaf Africans coffers. But the first year of trail blazing wasn't easy.

"The going has been tough," reflected Ocloo (1972), "with us having to wait sometimes for months before money came to us from the U.S." (p. 50). Neither Foster nor Ocloo seemed

eager for another year of extreme financial hardship. To avoid another episode of the "banana diet", Foster purchased a small green typewriter with which Ocloo wrote funding request letters to beseech the Government of Ghana for resources. (Ocloo, 1972). The Ministry of Education had first turned down Foster's *Ghana Education Plan* (1957g, June) on that grounds that the country didn't have enough d/Deaf students for a special school. Yet GSMD opened in January 1958 with 32 d/Deaf students enrolled and approximately 100 on the waitlist (Foster, 1958a). This got the Government of Ghana's attention.

In early 1958 the Ministry of Education re-examined Foster's mission in Ghana, against his repeated insistence that the Government of Ghana fund it (Ocloo, 1972). Roughing up "Sister" Williams in the Minister of Finance's office may have subjected Foster's character to enhanced scrutiny. According to Ocloo, this unfortunate incident alienated influential church leaders, such as Rev. Martinson from the Anglican Church and Peter Baker from the Scottish Mission (S. Ocloo, personal communications, July 2020). I imagine that these powerful clergymen wouldn't have given Foster a favorable recommendation. Fortuitously for Foster, Ghana's Ministry of Education requested a reference from the CMDA Board in the United States and received an enthusiastic response from Dr. Leonard Elstad (Ilabor, 2009).

Elstad was Gallaudet University's President between 1945 and 1969. The son of a Lutheran minister (Gannon, 2011), he was an early advocate for Foster's mission work for the d/Deaf. Foster's prayer letter revealed that Elstad agree to serve on the CMSD International Advisory Council and he kept abreast of the GMSD developments in Ghana (Foster, 1957d, March). Elstad responded glowingly to Foster's briefings: "First let me congratulate you for all that you have done this far…to see the pictures and to think that our first Negro graduate from Gallaudet has done so much for deaf children almost in another world" (Ilabor, 2009, p. 42).

While Ocloo (1972) suggested that other CMSD International Advisory Council members were non-committal about their relation to Foster and his work, Elstad seemed to have backed it and unlock much needed funding.

Elstad's positive recommendations didn't move Government of Ghana to fully fund Foster's proposal right away, but got the ball rolling with one salary for one GMSD teacher. That was better than nothing. The Ministry of Education had already set a precedent by paying salaries for all the teachers and operational expenses at the Presbyterian founded The School for the Blind (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Absorbing one teacher's salary from GMSD was a promising start. By mid 1958, the Ministry of Education offered to pay Ocloo's salary at 102 sterling pound ($3,630 in 2020) per annum (Ilabor, 2009). While hardly a princely sum, the Government of Ghana salary was comparatively generous and reliable. Ocloo commented that this move "proved to be a welcome relief" (Ocloo, 1972, p. 50). More funding would be forthcoming as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah took note of, and responded to, the needs of Ghanaians with disabilities.

Nkrumah and Ghanaians with Disabilities

Ghana's 1957 independence opened up freedom, self-determination and opportunities that the colonialists and missionaries had denied Ghanaians. Ghanaians with disabilities experienced possibilities as well. Prior to this 1957 independence, the Colonial Government had offered disabled Ghanaians next to nothing. Schmaling (2000) was an ethnographic linguist who studied the d/Deaf and indigenous sign languages in West Africa. He observed that: "It was also the general reasoning in colonial days that scarce public funding expended on education of the handicapped people was a waste, in view of the high level of illiteracy among the able-bodied population" (p. 22). Ocloo point of view concurred with Schmaling's, in that "the idea of

educating the deaf has been so late coming to Africa, in spite of the fact that it made its debut in Europe as far back as the 16th century" (1965, p. 25). The British Colonial Government expended funds, in 1943, to rehabilitate Ghanaian soldiers who had returned to Ghana after fighting for the Crown in World War II (figure 16; Killingray, 1982). But even these rehabilitation services were discontinued in 1947 and never reached the d/Deaf (Jackson, 2006).

Nkrumah's first political platform under the Convention of the People Party (CPP) promoted community development and social services, with a focus on health and education initiatives (Davidson, 2019). Nkrumah included Ghanaians with disabilities in these programs after an epiphany drew his attention to their needs.

Dr. Jeffery Grischow is an African History and Disability Studies scholar I met during my Fulbright research on Foster in Accra. Grischow had investigated the implications of Control of Beggars and Destitute Ordinance 1957, a colonial era law which banned begging on the streets of Accra (Fuseni & Daniel, 2020). He (2011b) wrote that:

> Nkrumah 'discovered' disability in Ghana when the government took over the management of destitutes and beggars from the municipal authorities through the Control of Beggars and Destitute Ordinance of 1957. As CPP officials rounded up citizens under the Ordinance, they discovered that most of 'the offenders were in fact disabled.' (p. 187).

After this startling discovery, Nkrumah reimagined community development in Ghana to create initiatives which included persons with disabilities (Grischow (2011b). I presented these findings to Dr. George Pare-Akanlig, my colleague at University of Ghana, and he assured me that such enabled Foster's work:

> Ghana was also pushing for education of its people and it was rightly thought that an educated Ghanaian community would understand the language of independence. So Foster knew he would profit from what was going on Ghana and I think it was one of the reasons why he came to Ghana to start his evangelization. And, indeed, when he came to Ghana he was accepted by Nkrumah and his government. We are aware that his work initially was facilitated by some of the people in government. To the extent that if they had not ok-ed what he was doing, he would not have gone so far. (G. Pare-Akanlig, February 2020)

Nkrumah's first significant assistance to GMSD was offered through an initiative that bore his name. The Kwame Nkrumah Fund was established in 1958 "to raise funds to aid all 'worthy voluntary organizations,' as it appeared that although these organizations pestered the public all year round with appeals for funds, they could not raise sufficient funds for their operations" (Ocloo, 1972, p. 51). The Kwame Nkrumah Fund seemed tailor-made for Foster's mission. His was definitely volunteer-based and had failed to raise local resources. Foster enthusiastically registered CMDA as a charitable organization for the disabled and promptly received a $7,000 ($62,100 in 2020) commitment from the Government of Ghana (Addo & Okyere, 1999).

With reliable human and financial resources in place to operationalize GMSD, Foster prepared to take a short furlough in the United States in May 1958. He handed over the school to Ocloo, his "right hand man", to run day-to-day activities in his absence. Foster then flew back across the Atlantic Ocean (Ocloo, 1972).

Foster wrote to his prayer supporters on arrival in the United States:

> Looking back (from States-side) over nearly a year of surveying and laboring in West Africa, I have much for which to give thanks to God. Also I feel deeply indebted to each

> of you for your faithful prayers and sacrificial gifts. Without such the things accomplished would have hardly been possible. (Foster, 1958b, March-May)

Foster had been humble and gracious, and at times autocratic and harsh, but in Ghana he became accomplished. In one year Foster had done what other missionaries and colonialists in Ghana hadn't done in almost 500 years—start a school for the deaf. His year of labor indeed bore roots out of dry ground. Still, his greatest achievement was yet to come.

CHAPTER SIX: SINCERELY YOURS FOR AFRICA'S DEAF

One Saturday morning I observed a curious mix of Ghana's working class, political/socio-economic elites and African American returnees converging at the northern edge of the Legon road which borders Greater Accra and the Eastern Region. Regardless of age, or whether they came as individuals or in organized groups, it seemed they all made the pre-dawn pilgrimage with the same intent—to do a strenuous five mile hike from the outer edge of Accra up into the cooler, drier air of the Akwapim-Togo range (also known as the Aburi Hills).

I first encountered the Saturday morning hikers as I drove to the site of Foster's first residential school for the d/Deaf.[35] I saw the hikers making their ascent, walking single file on the either side of this steep, narrow road which precariously wound up the Akwapim range, climbing from sea level (zero elevation) to almost 900 feet. They stopped periodically at lookout points to drink water and catch their breath. After walking up through layers of early morning fog, the sky opened up and hikers were rewarded with spectacular views of Accra. From atop Aburi, they looked out to see Accra stretching its urban arms all the way to a shimmering pastel blue of the Atlantic Ocean.

"The hushed hills of Aburi, draped in thick forest," wrote one travel journal, "have long been seen as a health giving haven to escape from the traffic clogged capital below" ("Ghana's hilltop escape from Accra is a breath of fresh air," 2019, p. 22). Long ago the Basel Missionaries first fled the heat and humidity of Christiansborg, Accra and made a health-conscious march to Akwapim. The story about the Basel Missionaries' relocation and expansion of operations deserves a bit more treatment so to contextualize Foster's parallel pathway.

[35] Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (GMSD) relocated to this site in Mampong-Akwapim at the end of 1958.

Mission Education on the Akwapim Ridge

By March 1832, Andreas Riis was the only Basel missionary left standing after illnesses wiped out the first two mission groups from Switzerland. In 1836, he made an exodus from steamy Accra to the cooler inland climes of Akuapim where he met Okuapehene (chief) Nana Addo Dankwah I and requested permission to proselytize to his Akan people (Smith, 1967). After ten years of negotiation and deal-making, the Okuapehene obliged, and Riis and his cohort of African diasporan missionaries converted 40 adults and 300 children in Akuapim (Agyemang, 1978).

Encouraged by these results, the Basel missionaries relocated their headquarters to Akropong-Akwapim (maintaining a lighter presence in Christiansborg) and constructed an education infrastructure (Smith, 1967). In 1843, the Basel Mission opened two boys' schools in Christiansborg (Foster would use a classroom in this school) and then a girls' school in Akropong-Akwapim (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The Basel Mission was incorporated into the Presbyterian Church, in 1936, and began including underrepresented groups, such as girls, in education. The Presbyterian Church opened a Presbyterian Women's Teacher Training College in Aburi (Foster recruited Liz Ocloo from this college) which moved to Akropong and absorbed The School for the Blind in 1946 ("Inclusion in the Presbyterian College of Education," n.d).

Foster would construct his model on the educational foundations laid by Riis, his Basel Mission and Presbyterian Church by:

- Launching Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (GMSD) classrooms at the Presbyterian Boy's School in Christiansburg;

- Recruiting and hiring female teachers (such as Liz Ocloo) from the Presbyterian Women's Teacher Training College;
- Following the pathways laid down by The School for the Blind, receiving their student waiting list and emulating their work relationships with the Government of Ghana; and
- Leveraging educational features (education of girls, a boarding school, and teacher education) which had become accepted, conventional best practices.

Foster's mission education model aligned closely with that of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana. In looking for a residential school site on the Akwapim-Togo Ridge, he brought it even closer.

Land Hunting Far and Near

Foster returned to Accra from the United States on May 30, 1958 (Foster 1958c, June-July). He immediately focused his attention on finding a solution to the same pesky obstacle which had hobbled the school's development in 1957. Foster wrote:

> I should like to reiterate and re-emphasize our pressing need for boarding facilities. While we are able to help some deaf children as well as adults in this immediate area, the majority of the children are scattered up-country. (Foster 1958c)

Foster was referring to an ever-widening urban/rural enrollment disparity that confounded his work. By May, he enrolled 32 d/Deaf students who lived in Accra, but waitlisted more than three times that number. Some 106 students registered from mostly rural regions far from Accra.

The number of d/Deaf students on the waiting list climbed to 122 by the time GMSD marked its one-year anniversary (Foster, 1958d, August-September). In announcing "the first

anniversary of Ghana's first school for the deaf," Foster shared the good news that "since last December, we have been land-hunting far and near. Praise God that a group of Brethren have been burdened to purchase the site for us when our choice is definite" (Foster, 1958d, August-September). Foster's didn't divulge who pledged money to buy land for a future residential school for the d/Deaf, yet seemed confident enough with the commitment to commence a land search at once.

By mid 1958, Foster's land survey was under way. He assembled a survey team comprised of Rev. Cobblah, Ocloo, Rev. Konotey-Ahulu and the Anang brothers, James and Richard (R. Anang, February 2018). Ocloo (1972) reported that Foster wanted land which had: 1) relatively close proximity to Accra, 2) adequate size to accommodate a residential boarding school and farm, and 3) pre-existing buildings which could be converted into residential and classroom units.

The first logical choice for a residential school for the deaf was in or near the "deaf village", Adamorobe. Foster wasn't completely satisfied with the state of Adamorobe's infrastructure, especially because their roads seemed flood prone (J. Anang personal communication, March 2018). Foster next had an opportunity which serendipitously took him from Accra up on to the Akwapim Ridge. Ocloo (1972) recalled that:

> I went along to see a large tract of land, nearly a mile square that someone had offered to give us at Akropong [Akwapim]. But Foster would not brook any idea of a combined school for the deaf and blind, not even separate institutions in the same town. (p. 52)

Foster, alumni of a combined school for the d/Deaf and blind, "said 'no'…he had seen the problem when the deaf are in the same campus as the blind… they would always fight" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, September 2018).

Foster didn't want to be near The School for the Blind in Akropong-Akwapim, but confided to his prayers that he liked the feel of Aburi, "[It] is a ridge 28 miles from Accra. It is cool and usually rainy with luxuriant green vegetation, unlike the hot and humid and almost barren coast" (Foster, 1959a). Foster and his survey team, therefore, focused their land hunt to a hand full of towns in Akwapim.

Mampong-Akwapim

James Anang recalled the day he and Foster stumbled upon land in Mampong-Akwapim. Through James' eyes, I saw Foster's immediate interest in securing this site for a residential school for the d/Deaf.

> We drove past the girls school [Aburi Girl's Senior High School], up to Mampong and surveyed that area. We were walking around and came up on a natural spring. He said, "Yes, this is place". We next went looking for the chief, who eventually came out to talk to us. The chief spoke Twi, which none us knew. We knew and used the Ga language. It was confusion at first. The chief knew a little English, so we used that. He showed us the whole piece of land. (J. Anang, personal communication, March 2018)

The land was under the stewardship of Nana Anoba Sasraku II, Mampong-Akwapim's Mamponhene [Paramount Chief; Aina, 2015). Richard Anang recounted how Foster and his team negotiated with the Mamponhene for use of the land.

> We went inside his [the Mamponhene's] house and discussed our needs with him. From there the Mamponhene showed us the rest of the forested land he owned. There was a large house embedded in that forest, surrounded by trees. Foster surveyed it, liked what he saw and told the Mamponhene he wanted to use it. They discussed the payments while Rev. Cobblah and Rev. Konotey Ahulu and I got to work, clearing that forest. That

was a big job, preparing that site for the new school. (R. Anang, personal communication, February 2017)

The house on the Mamponhene's property was unfinished and still required a significant amount of work before it would be inhabitable. Ocloo recalled that construction went on for months, even as Foster, the teachers and students transferred from their Christiansborg site to Mampong-Akwapim. Ocloo recounted that the "work on the house was not quite complete when we moved in, and for a while we had to share the place with masons and labourers who were working on it" (p. 52). Finally, with renovations complete, Foster had his residential school for the d/Deaf (see figure 30).

Because Foster's had written about intent to own land in Mampong-Akwapim, many scholars (Aina, 2015) assumed it was a donation. [36] In reviewing the literature about this site, I realized the Mamponhene agreed to lease, not donate or sell, the land and unfinished house (Ocloo, 1972). Like the missionary educators who came before him, Foster allied with a Paramount Chief to expand mission education in Ghana. I will provide an overall of this history to better understand the nature of these collaborations, as they relate to Foster's work.

Paramount Chiefs and Mission Education in Ghana

The first pupils at Ghana's first mission schools (housed in castles along the coast) were biracial children of merchants, local traders, and followed by Ghana's Paramount Chiefs who showed interest in Western mission education (George, 1976). King Poku was an early example of a Paramount Chief who enrolled 14 children. Also, King Osei Yao persuaded three Ashanti princes to attend mission schools in Ghana (Graham, 1971; McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

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[36] Foster transferred this GSMD site and the rental arrangement to Government of Ghana's Ministry of Education. The Ministry doesn't own the site so considers it "temporary". But they've been renting the "temporary" site for so long--more than 60 years--that most persons assume the Ministry owns it.

Ghanaians already had their own traditional African education, so I wondered why some Paramount Chiefs had interest in Western mission education too? Berman (1974) noted that "African reasons for attending mission schools varied, but most were related to well-defined political, social or economic consequences" (p. 527). In Ghana, chiefs hoped education would politically and economically advance their people through the British colonial system. By the 1850's, most chiefs in the southern half of Ghana saw mission education as a means to political and economic ends for their people. So much so that some chiefs offered to host a mission school at their own expense.

The development of the Basel mission's expansive education system was ultimately realized through joint ventures between missionaries and the Paramount Chiefs (Ward, 1948). Per this arrangement, European mission societies typically trained, placed and paid a missionary educator to teach at a mission school provided by the host Paramount Chief. The Paramount Chiefs donated the land and facilities (school and teacher housing) as the community's in-kind contribution. This allowed the Paramount Chiefs' people to access mission education (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

Foster might have gotten similar treatment from the Mamponhene to launch his residential school for the d/Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim. It appears, however, that the Mamponhene viewed Foster's initiative a business deal rather than charitable giving opportunity. Foster had once written "Did you realize friends, that the deaf is the one class of handicapped people too often forgotten or neglected in both missionary evangelism and sympathetic consideration?" (Foster, 1958f, December). Foster about rediscover this same old dilemma.

Foster and Mampong-Akwapim's Mamponhene

On January 31, 1959 GMSD opened with 31 d/Deaf elementary school students at its new residential site in Mampong-Akwapim (see figure 28; (1960a, January—February 1960). The d/Deaf youth and adults, along with Emmanuel Sono-Omari (Sono), remained in Christiansborg, Accra. Foster hailed this move as "a milestone, the second stage of our development in Ghana" (1960a, January—February 1960). Most of these 31 d/Deaf children were not necessarily new students. They had already enrolled at GMSD between 1957 and 1958, then journeyed with Foster from Christiansburg to the residential school in Mampong-Akwapim (Ocloo, 1972). Foster essentially welcomed "old" students it his new, rural location at the start of 1959.

Foster was pleased with the new site. He wrote that it had:

> 17 rooms not counting the baths, kiosks and other units which we intend to add. There is abundant area to this site for expansion; and we are fortunate that a large playing field, adjacent to the site, is at our disposal. (Foster, 1959a)

No sooner had Foster moved in and celebrated his "milestone" than the Mamponhene showed up to demand a full year's rent in advance (Foster, 1959a). "We were shocked…," Foster wrote indignantly, "No one here is thinking about moving out!!" (Foster, 1959a). It's a mystery as to what Foster was thinking (other than not leaving) or what he knew or didn't know about his rental arrangement. Foster's literature showed that Foster agreed to rent the Mamponhene's land and facilities for $72 a month ($634 in 2020; Foster, 1959a). Did this agreement include a written lease with the Mamponhene? Or were these two men operating on a "verbal understanding" which was open to interpretation? Clearly, something got lost in translation between Foster and the Mamponhene about use of his land for the school. It's equally

mysterious as to why the same Christian "brethren" who offered to procure school land couldn't pay this rent.

Though this didn't seem like a lot of money, it might have been much for Foster and his mission at that time. Thus, I don't understand why he decided to rent land in Mampong-Akwapim rather than accept the initial offer of donated land in nearby Akropong-Akwapim. I could see how Foster made many shrewd financial moves to acquire goods and services at no cost in Ghana. But this wasn't one of them. His decision not to accept donated land seemed to have saddled him (and later the Government of Ghana) with an unnecessary and burdensome expense.

Foster didn't have a full month's rent but also wouldn't vacate the premises. The Mamponhene agreed to give two months to come up with a full year's rent (Foster, 1959a). Responding to financial duress, Foster introduced a student boarding fee of $9 a month ($80 a month in 2020) (Addo & Okyere, 1999). But Ocloo (1972) recalled that it didn't help the situation because not all families could afford it, and d/Deaf children enrolled and remained regardless of payment. Removal of low income, rural children from GMSD would have been antithetical to Foster's mission. He worked hard to open a residential school in a rural location for rural children, so was not about to send them away for economic reasons (Ocloo, 1972).

While considering how to quickly close this financial gap, a group known as the Commonwealth Education and Welfare Trust reached out with a generous offer. They would pay two years of rent plus monthly boarding fees for the students (Ilabor, 2009). This must have been a huge relief for Foster, finally giving him breathing room to go about his work at GSMD in Akwipem-Mampong.

With finances secured, Foster moved forward and began to invite d/Deaf students from the waiting list (which had swelled to 115) to enroll (Foster, 1959a). The families of d/Deaf students in rural regions answered his call. By end of the first term “the list of deaf children from distant towns and village who attended had soared to over 50” (Addo & Okyere, 1999, p. 149). Foster must have felt vindicated by this development. He long lamented that limited space had regaled most of Ghana’s d/Deaf students to a waiting list. Even under these pressures, Foster had faith that he’d eventually enroll them.

At Mampong-Akwapim, GMSD finally had physical capacity to accommodate all the waitlisted students and then some. In principle this meant that Foster would have enrolled 115 students from the waitlist. In practice, Ocloo (1972) pointed out “we could not afford the additional manpower [to enroll more students]” (p. 53). Foster preferred to work with d/Deaf colleagues, but his nationwide media appeals and prayers elicited only two d/Deaf teachers (Ocloo and Sono). Foster lacked adequate personnel to run GMSD in 1959. He would need to on board d/Deaf teachers from neighboring English-speaking West Africans nations, too (Eleweke, Agboola & Guteng, 2015). Foster would call on the Giant of Africa for assistance.

The Giant of Africa: Nigeria

Foster’s early successes in Ghana postponed, but did not cancel, the third and final d/Deaf education survey trip he had planned. He had already surveyed the state of d/Deaf education in Liberia and Ghana, and needed to do the same in Nigeria. As early as January 1958, Foster sojourned to Nigeria “to explore the possibility of starting a school for the deaf there, too” (Ocloo, 1972, p.54). Approximately 250 miles to the east of Accra, Nigeria was uniquely different from Ghana in ways which complimented and added significant value to Foster’s d/Deaf mission education model.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is an English-speaking, West African nation comprised of approximately 250 ethnic groups who inhabit 923,768 square miles of land (Zulu, 2009). Nigeria's population stood at 43 million, in 1958, making it the world's largest and most populous Black nation. By contrast, Ghana's population was a modest 337,000—one hundredth the size of Nigeria. The British colonial officials in Nigeria referred to it as the "Giant of Africa." Its sheer size towered over regional neighbors like Ghana (Egbule, Ugwunna & Smart, 2017). The one thing Nigeria and Ghana shared in common was the experience of British colonialism.

Nigeria, like Ghana, was colonized by the British Government, in 1901, which acted according to their own interests, oblivious to the needs of West Africans. In Nigeria "it was availability of…a large population and abundant resources that propelled the colonial agents to force this very large area inhabited by different peoples with different cultures and religions into one entity called Nigeria" (Egbule, Ugwunna & Smart, 2017, p. 76).

These large and diverse ethnic groups were brought together to comprise Africa's most populous country, which subsequently contained the Continent's highest concentration of talent. Dr. Chinua Achebe (1988), in reflecting on his Nigerian homeland, wrote: "The vast human and material wealth with which she is endowed bestows on her a role in Africa and the world which no one else can assume or fulfill" (p.2). It was this vast human resource, of the d/Deaf variety, that Foster hoped to tap in to through recruitment of "the Greenhorns".

From Greenhorns to Pioneers

Foster's first working visit to Nigeria, in 1958, involved a replication of his d/Deaf education work from Ghana in the Western Region. Foster reported to his prayer helpers that he:

> Found the door open, and the field beckoning, the need great, and the people keen to the welfare of the 'deaf and dumb' in their midst. Having successfully established contacts there, we look forward to answering their 'Macedonian call'[37] as soon as the Lord shows us the way with men and the means. (Foster, 1958a)

Nigeria showed Foster an opportunity to mobilize the men (and couple of women, too) and the financial means to expand his d/Deaf education model from Ghana. An enterprising Foster approached the Nigerian Western Region's Ministry of Education to pay tuition for three d/Deaf Nigerians to participate in d/Deaf education trainings at GMSD (Ocloo, 1972; Schmaling, 2000). Ghana was an English-speaking nation which achieved its independence and advanced its educational system ahead of Nigeria. Conversely, it was not unusual around the time of independence for hearing Nigerians to pursue post-secondary training in Ghana (G. Pare-Akanlig, personal communications, February 2020). Foster's offer seemed to fit this pattern, and Nigeria's Western Region Ministry of Education readily agreed to his deal.

In 1959, Foster advertised the aforementioned in-service training opportunity for three d/Deaf Nigerians (Ilabor, 2010). He received and vetted the applications, then selected Jonathon Olojede, Moses Ariobasa and Samuel Adesina (see figure 35; Ilabor, 2010). Ocloo (1972) recounted that:

> These [d/Deaf Nigerians] arrived to join us shortly after we moved to Mampong Akwapim in 1959. For their upkeep the government of Western Nigeria provided about 114 pound sterling [$3,340 in 2020] annually per trainee. Our school provided them with

[37] The "Macedonian Call" refers to story from the Book of Acts, where Paul receives a vision to make his mission to Macedonia (16:6-10, King James Bible, 1769/2017).

> free board and lodge. Since their training was of the in-service type, they provided badly needed additional hands. (p. 54)

This innovative twist to Foster's work offered a three-fold benefit to his deaf mission education model. Not only did the deal annually add 342 pound sterling ($10,020 in 2020 valuation) to the GSMD coffers, but it resourced the school with in-service students teachers who then carried Foster's deaf education template with them back to Nigeria. Nigeria's government was paying d/Deaf Nigerians to teach at GMSD, while training on the job to run Foster's future mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria. This was a "win-win" situation for GMSD, the d/Deaf Nigerian teachers-in-teacher and the Western Region's Ministry of Education.

Ocloo wasn't completely satisfied with Foster's deal. He highlighted at least one disadvantage of inviting his d/Deaf Nigerian counterparts to GMSD.

> Although the Nigerians trainees were quite capable, I had some misgivings about the arrangement. This arose from the fact that whenever the trainees learned sufficiently to be able to teach with an acceptable skill, they were taken to Nigeria only to be replaced by other 'greenhorns'; so that our own school was serving only as a laboratory and never well-staffed.

On one hand, Ocloo had a salient point, that Foster and his "Greenhorn" Nigerian teacher were trialing their teaching and experimenting on (rather than offering quality education to) d/Deaf Ghanaians. On the other hand, these Greenhorns cost effectively powered the expansion of Foster's model in Ghana, which benefited ultimately d/Deaf Ghanaians. Foster's entrepreneurial move also ushered his d/Deaf education model into Nigeria with the same Greenhorns. Jonathan Olojeole, for example, trained at GMSD in 1959 (see figure 34), completed his training and then ran Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf (IMDS) in Nigeria in 1960 (see figure 38).

Foster didn't share Ocloo's misgivings about his Greenhorns, he would take as many as he could get. He scaled this approach by annually inviting cadres of d/Deaf Nigerians (three at a time) to train with him and Ocloo. Foster, ever the businessman, made this component a regular fixture at GMSD then later at IMDS. He later extended the invitation to Liberians, too. By the end of this exercise in Ghana, Foster had trained a total of 12 d/Deaf Nigerian and Liberia mission educators for the d/Deaf. These cadres ran the second generation of Foster's mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria, followed by a third generation in other neighboring countries. Some of his mentees even went beyond Africa.

A select number of "hot shot" mentees completed their training with Foster, cut their teeth teaching at his mission schools, and then pursued university degrees in the United States. The Nigerians from this elite d/Deaf cadre returned to Nigeria to found their own secular renditions of Foster's d/Deaf education programs (Ilabor, 2010). Chief Dr. Peter Okoro Mba, Dr. Gabriel Adepoju and Ezekiel Sambo, all trained with Foster at GMSD, shed the "Greenhorn" title to become one for the "Deaf Nigerian Pioneers" (Schmaling, 2000). Schamling (2000) coined the phrase "Deaf Nigerian Pioneers" in reference to three recruits who Foster trained at GMSD:

> "Foster was instrumental in the education of the 'Deaf Nigerian Pioneers', three Nigerians, who contributed significantly to the development of the education of the deaf in Nigeria…They were involved in establishing deaf schools but have also contributed to the welfare of other handicapped Nigerians and their education." (p. 23)

Eleweke, Agboola and Guteng (2015) are d/Deaf Nigerian scholars who concurred about the Deaf Nigerian Pioneers' achievements. Though Mba, Adepoju and Sambo have passed on, each have a legacy which lives on.

Chief Dr. Peter Okoro Mba completed his doctoral studies at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He returned to Nigeria to found the University of Ibadan's Department of Special Education and served as first the Department Chair. Mba is known by the honorific the "father of special education in Nigeria" (Ademokoya, 1998) and is still revered at University of Ibadan. He was in negotiations with Gallaudet University to publish a Foster biography, entitled *America's Best Gift to Deaf Africans*, before he died (Ilabor, 2010). According to Emmanuel llabor, a fellow d/Deaf Nigerian mentee, Mba didn't leave behind any know manuscript.

Dr. Gabriel Adepoju completed his doctoral studies at Gallaudet University (Adepoju, 1990). He went on to serve as an adjunct professor at Gallaudet, then returned to Nigeria to found the Kwara State School for the Deaf and the Blind in Ilorin (his hometown) in 1974.

Mr. Ezekiel Sambo completed graduate studies at Gallaudet University, then collaborated with Foster to run the Kaduna Mission School for the Deaf in Nigeria in 1962. Sambo went on to found Plateau State School for the Deaf in Jos and served as its first principal (Schmaling, 2000).

The Deaf Nigerian Pioneers extended the roots of d/Deaf education from Ghana into Nigeria and then across sub Saharan Africa (Ojile, 1999). Success of the Deaf Nigerian Pioneers demonstrates the profound impact Foster had on d/Deaf African colleagues. Foster brought d/Deaf Africans on board to extend his reach far beyond what he could personally do with his own hands. Foster knew that it was less about what he could do alone and more about what he would do with others. An entire ethnohistory can and should be written on the Deaf Nigerian Pioneers. Partnership is key to my story about Foster. We will next meet Foster's most important partner.

Berta Foster (Zuther)

In 1959, Foster left Ghana for (what became) his annual furlough in the United States. He built the usual multitude of working “stop-overs” into his return trip, which included one at a conference in Europe. This particular working visit provided a meaning personal breakthrough which would complement his professional achievements.

Foster attended the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)[38] Second Conference in Wiesbaden, Germany in 1959 (Foster, 1975). According to Caroll and Mather (1997), “The first person he met there was a young German woman, Berta Zuther. Like Foster, Zuther wanted to be a missionary. Like Foster, she was deaf” (p. 49).

Berta Elsa Luise Zuther was born in Berlin, Germany on April 30, 1939 (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). She was the oldest of three children born to Friedrich and Ilse Zuther (Restland, 2020). Zuther’s birth coincided with the rise of the Nazi party. This affected all aspects of German life, as recounted by Zuther’s elder son. “Then there was a lot of pressure on parents to name their kids ‘Adolf’ or ‘Adolfina’. When mother was born…there was pressure from the nurse who said, ‘oh, is this another Adolfina?’, ‘No its Bertha Elsa’ (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015).

Zuther was born hearing, then contracted German measles in 1943. She became deaf by age four (Restland, 2020). It was a precarious time for children with disabilities in Germany. Nazi Germany, like Ancient Greeks and Alexander Graham Bell[39], touted eugenics as a viable means to “rid” the nation of any perceived “imperfections” (Bieshold, 1999). Her eldest son

[38] World Federation of the Deaf (WDF) is an international non-governmental organization which promotes the human rights of d/Deaf persons world-wide (World Federation of the Deaf, 2019). It was established during the first World Deaf Conference in Rome, Italy in 1951.
[39] Alexander Graham Bell referred to the d/Deaf as a “defective race of human beings” and worked to prevent intermarriages of d/Deaf people as means to eradicate d/Deaf people (Bell, 1884).

said: “[Zuther] was lucky …there were a lot of missing kids from that generation that were handicapped…the whole eugenic things. ‘Well, they’re not pure enough’ or ‘This one’s got a defect’. My mother escaped that only by being older…had she been one or two years old…who knows” (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015). Zuther suffered a debilitating stroke, in 1989, that left her unable to interview with me about these intriguing stories from her background. Her older son rounded out her early background, sharing that she completed academic education and vocational training, and then sought employment as a tailor in Berlin (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015).

Lindsey Dunn (2004), a d/Deaf African who moderated the *Dedication: Andrew J. Foster Auditorium* ceremony, gave his rendition of how Zuther first approached Foster in 1959:

> They finally met at the World Federation of the Deaf. There was one black man in the room and there was a young German woman in the room. She saw him. She just read an article about him, that he had come to Germany. She wanted to practice her English skills... It was a big room full of people. ‘How can I contact him’ she was thinking. So she wrote a note and it was passed from person to person and it went all the way around …and it finally got to Andrew. Then he wrote back and it was passed from person to person all the way back. They wrote notes back and forth in this manner and finally they worked their way across the room and met one another. It was one of the most beautiful love stories I’ve ever heard. (1:03:46-1:04:41)

During their first encounter, Zuther told Foster she wanted to serve as a missionary with him (Ilabor, 2010). After the misadventures of hosting “Sister” Williams, Foster might have been apprehensive about inviting another White, female missionary aboard his Ghana mission. According to Ilabor, Foster responded frostily to Zuther’s overtures. “[Foster] avoided

answering her questions regarding [a] job opening…she thought he might not have understood her so again repeated her question whether she could work in his school in Africa. He, again, did not answer" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 101).

Perhaps Foster was unconvinced about her Christian credentials. Zuther had been confirmed in the Lutheran church at age 13, but had been a particularly active member (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). Foster offered Zuther a proposition: to study the Bible for a year through the Emmaus Correspondence School and then get back to him about missionizing to the d/Deaf in Ghana (Restland, 2020). Foster might have forgotten all about Zuther and their deal after he departed Germany. She hadn't forgotten and would soon get back in touch.

Foster in Africa's Year of Destiny

In 1960, Foster's work seemed to turn a corner along with much of sub-Saharan Africa. While there wasn't a single year when sub-Saharan Africa completely decolonized, no less than 16 African nations threw off the "colonial yoke" by 1960 (Nugent, 2012). These included Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria Senegal, Somalia, and Togo.

This dramatic decolonization caught the attention of the United Kingdom's Minister Harold Macmillan. During a 1960 address in Accra, he famously proclaimed that: "The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact" (Ovendale, 1995, p. 476).[40] Foster and his d/Deaf team members would ride this wind of change, replicating his d/Deaf education model (between 1960 and 1987) across most of the African nations which achieved independence in 1960.

[40] Macmillian later, and more famously, repeated this same speech in Cape Town, South Africa.

Agboola (2004) said, “When Dr. Andrew Foster went to Africa he followed his heart” (00:58:32 – 00:58:36). Foster’s heart was drawn to Africa and Pan African ideals, as evidenced in his writings. An example is seen at the opening of 1960, when Foster watched the collapse of colonialism from Accra and excitedly wrote:

> Africa is changing at a dazzling pace...one leading West African politician predicts that all of Africa will be free by 1965!...the future of the world may well lie in Africa. The year 1960 may be the most important in Africa’s history. We believe God directed the launching of this undertaking at the opening of Africa’s year of destiny. We hope to be able to make some contributions to Africa’s hour of decision. (Foster, 1960a)

Foster saw the future in Africa and wanted to contribute to its year of destiny through d/Deaf education. In a letter to his prayer supporters, he declared 1960 “to be Africa’s year” (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1960c, July-September). This wasn’t a “fund raising gimmick” which Foster would use as reason to ask for more money. This was Africa in formation at a dazzling pace, and Foster positioning himself and his d/Deaf mentees to ride the crest of that change. The second phase or his work in Ghana, beginning in 1960, would train cadres of d/Deaf West Africans to expand d/Deaf education across post-colonial Africa.

Ghana Mission School for the Deaf: Stage Two

Foster leveraged the additional human resources from the d/Deaf Nigerian teachers-in-training, rising support from the Government of Ghana, and long work hours to significantly expand GMSD’s scope of work in Mampong-Akwapim. Like the first stage of Foster’s work, the second stage leaned heavily on West African allies to elevate his work to the next level. Foster’s work ethnic impressed, inspired and ultimately encouraged his mentees to step up and match his contributions. This teamwork made Foster’s d/Deaf education model a success.

Dr. Isaac Agboola (2004) said:

> The kind of work ethic that he brought with him helped him to work with everyone. The most important thing was that he led by example, and that is the best kind of leadership. In the office he was often the first one to arrive and often the last to leave. He would sometimes work very late into the night, if he ever had a project to finish. Sometimes those of us wanted to leave early, but he would encourage us to stay until we completed whatever the work was that we had to do ("Dedication: Andrew J. Foster Auditorium," 01:01:42- 01:02:21).

Victor Ajayi (another d/Deaf Nigerian mentee) echoed Agboola's sentiments, writing that: "Dr. Foster was a tireless worker, a workaholic. He would wake up early to pray and plan his daily schedule" (Ilabor, 2010, p. 193).

What did Foster's timetable look like? Foster (who rarely committed his methodology to publication) didn't leave behind copies of a daily schedule with which to answer my question. In the absence of this information, I analyzed oral histories and writings from persons who knew Foster to reconstruct his Monday to Friday schedule.

- 4 a.m. to 5 a.m.: Wake up, do between 10 and 15 push-ups, and read the Bible.
- 5 a.m.: Confirm students are out of bed and preparing for their day.
- 6 a.m.: Hymns, prayers, and breakfast.
- 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.: Survey students' morning activities, overseeing morning prayers.
- 8 a.m.: Begin administrative workday with morning devotion (prayer circle) among colleagues.
- 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Resource mobilization activities to write, mail out and locally present fund raising letters with follow up face to face meetings as needed.

- 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.: Facilitate teacher-in-service training (sign language and deaf education pedagogy)
- 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.: Evening devotion with teachers-in-training and Bible Studies through Emmaus course.
- 6 p.m.: Survey students' evening activities, visit them in dining hall and sample food.
- 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Hymns, prayers, and dinner.
- 7 p.m. to midnight: Letter and report writing.
- Midnight: Read Bible until going to bed.

It should be noted that Foster's mentees reported that he slept in his office during his first year at GSMD (M. Nartey, January 2018). It was said that after writing at his desk, he would read the Bible until he went to his bed (on the other side of a curtain) in the same room as his office. This spartan sleeping arrangement was similar to his first with the Anang Brothers in Christiansborg/Accra. Foster's monastic existence was one piece of his mythology which appeared to ring true.

Under Foster's intensive and steady work regimen his prototype came into its own, maturing into a fuller and more advanced version of itself. By 1960, GMSD revealed features discernable in later replications of Foster's model. Foster proudly referred to this expansion at Mampong-Akwapim, in letters to his prayer supporters, as "the second stage of our development in Ghana" (Foster, 1960a). He and his d/Deaf team members had grown a variety of his prototype that would soon be ripe for replication.

Foster would duplicate a number of key components from GMSD into the next generation of his mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria. First, Foster recognized that student recruitment and retention was central to GMSD's stability and sustainability. It takes money to

make money, and it also takes students to demonstrate need to mobilize resources for a school. The more d/Deaf students Foster enrolled at GMSD, the stronger the case for support from the Government of Ghana, his prayer supporters and other donors. Foster incrementally increased enrollment to prove that GMSD was a serious player, not an anomaly, on Ghana's education scene. After three years of mission education work in Ghana, Foster's results were impressive.

- 31 enrolled, approximately 100 on the waiting list, January 1960
- 57 enrolled, June 1960
- 60 enrolled, approximately 140 on the waiting list, July 1960
- 67 enrolled, approximately 150 on the waiting list, October, 1960
- 71 enrolled, approximately 120 on the waiting list, December 1960

A review of GMSD's student numbers revealed that Foster realized more than a 50% increase in enrollment by 1960. It is not certain if Foster utilized a criteria to enroll students from the waitlist. Whether it was "first come, first service" or according to age and needs is unknown.

With an increase in d/Deaf students, Foster and Ocloo guided their teachers-in-training to increase GMSD's academic offerings. They added art and physical education, in addition to teaching writing, reading, arithmetic and religion, ("Mission to the Silent," 1959). Later Foster replaced his bric-a-brac curriculum with that used at Ghana's general education schools (Addo & Okyere, 1999). This positioned d/Deaf students with a more comprehensive academic background with which to matriculate into Ghana's burgeoning post-primary education system.

The Ministry of Education was impressed by enrollment at GSMD so suggested the school become more of a public institution in order to receive public funds (Ilabor 2010). Foster didn't waste any time in taking them up on that offer. He looked to the neighboring The School for the Blind (which had already garnered Government funding) as a model from which he could

learn. Following their pathway, Foster drafted a school constitution with had provisions for a Board of Governors. GSMD's first board consisted of the same cast of church men with whom he had previously journeyed before, Rev. Obeng (chairman), Foster (secretary), Ocloo (representative for d/Deaf students), Rev. Cobblah, and Rev. Konotey-Ahulu (Addo & Okyere, 1999).

Foster submitted the school's constitution, Board of Governors member list, and a funding proposal to the Ministry of Education and awaited their response. By May, the Ministry of Education granted GSMD operational funds for its 1960-1961 academic year (Ilabor, 2010). Three years prior, the Government of Ghana told Foster there weren't enough d/Deaf students to fund (or even start) a school for the d/Deaf. Foster and his d/Deaf team member constructed a robust mission school for the d/Deaf, between 1957 and 1960, which the same Government of Ghana recognized and agreed to fund.

Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf (Youth and Adults)

Foster developed GMDS for d/Deaf children in Mampong-Akwapim, but the d/Deaf youth and adults remained in Accra. Researchers who have delved into Foster's Ghana work rarely nuance how the 1959 move divided GMDS into two mission schools for the d/Deaf: 1) Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (children) and, 2) Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf (youth and adults; Panara & Panara, 1996). Addo & Okyere (1999) contend that d/Deaf youth and adults continued evening classes at the Presbyterian Boy's Middle School in Christiansborg, though they didn't share about the frequency. Foster's writing evidenced that Sono and Rev. Cobblah (Foster's interpreter) remained to teach the d/Deaf youth and adults, later joined by Daniel Appiah (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1960c).

Foster wrote to his prayer support: "I still make frequent trips to Accra on business and to 'nurse' our class of 20-odd deaf adults" (Foster, 1959a). In Accra in 2018, I sought out Ghana Mission Center for Deaf alumni to help me understand how Foster might have managed the two programs after they split. At the Osu Deaf Church, Pastor Marfo introduced me to Musa Nartey. Nartey agreed to an interview with me one Sunday after church. We centered our discussion around his experiences at Ghana Mission Center for Deaf.

Nartey is a d/Deaf Ghanaian who grew up with his family in Accra. His brother heard about a public service announcement on Ghana Broadcasting Corporation about the Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf. Nartey was encouraged by his family to take classes there, but he had other ambitions in mind: "I wanted to join a general education program. I didn't want to be at a school for the d/Deaf," Nartey recounted, "but my father said 'No'. He ordered me to go to Foster's adult school in Osu" (M. Nartey, January 2018).

Nartey, a d/Deaf teenager at the time, hadn't grown up around d/Deaf people or sign language. He didn't know what to expect when his brother escorted him to the Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf. Nartey remembered his disorientating first day at the school.

> The first I met Foster it was over there (pointing in the direction of Osu) in O-S-U [fingerspelled]. I remember going into class, sitting down and being welcomed by Foster… He was using sign language with the other d/Deaf students. I had never seen sign and couldn't understand it…I was just looking back and forth, in confusion, between d/Deaf people signing. I had no idea what was going on and felt lost. Foster noticed and comforted me. He said "Hey don't worry, I will teach you slowly, you will learn it." (M. Nartey, January 2018)

Nartey continued to attend the Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf. True to Foster's word, he learned sign language with the other d/Deaf youth and adults. Nartey's description of learning language reveals a teaching pedagogy parallel to those described at North Carolina School for the Negro Deaf Blind (Wright, 1999). It appears that Foster replicated the pedagogy used to teach sign language at America's segregated schools for the d/Deaf.

> [Foster] taught us the fingerspelling. He showed us the alphabet on the hands, like "A-B-C-D". We had another teacher [Sono] who drew pictures of animals and different kinds of people. [Foster] would show us a pictures, like of a hen. He then fingerspelled that word for us, "H-E-N". He next showed us the sign. We moved along like that from word to word. Slowly by slowly I learned sign language. We also had sign language exams. I took a test in sign language. Foster and the teachers marked our exams, then ranked us students according to how we did. I was the top ranked student. Foster said "Oh that's great". He gave me a box of gifts. (M. Nartey, January 2018)

Nartey demonstrated that Foster stayed engaged with youth at the Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf after moving out of Accra, but this also raised more questions, like how did Foster sustain that commute in a regular basis?

During my years in Ghana, I experienced the cumbersome nature of shuttling between Osu (Christiansborg) and Mampong-Akwapim to conduct ethnohistorical observations. Modern conventions, such traveling with ride-share (i.e., Uber), cushioned me from the more difficult conditions which Foster faced. I wondered how Foster coped up with this in 1960. He successfully cleared plenty of financial and logistical hurdles, so must have done likewise for transportation. I will next share how Foster transformed a potential adversity (such as lack of transportation) into a vehicle of opportunity for d/Deaf Ghanaians.

Prayers Answered: Foster's VW Kombi

Foster's move to Mampong-Akwapim distanced him from the d/Deaf of youth and adults in Accra, despite his intention to remain close. Foster wrestled with the consequences of this divide. In a letter to his prayer supporters, Foster suggested a curiously specific resolution to the matter:

> Another material problem drastically affects our deaf adult class down in Accra. Owing to the inadequacy of local transportation, I am able to visit the class on the average only once a week. You know this is too insufficient…and this in turn, affects the interest of the adults. Nearly two-thirds of them just stay away! Please pray for a motor vehicle, preferably a Volkswagen Kombi. (Foster, 1959b, March-April])

It occurred to me that persons probably pray for all kinds of things, so why not "motor vehicle"? And why not get specific about it? Foster prayed a VW Kombi (commonly known as a VW bus in the United States) and wouldn't take no for an answer.

He reminded his prayers supporters, a few months later, that "our lack of a motor vehicle has long been a sore need" (Foster, 1959d, November-December) and set the cost at $2,400 ($21,145 in 2020 valuation) to procure the Kombi. His next prayer support letter featured a small photo of a parked VW kombi. The caption on the photo simply read "prayers answered" (see figure 32; Foster, 1960b, May-June). It was the photo of the VW kombi which Foster and his mentees would relentlessly drive across much of West and Central Africa to establish their mission schools for the d/Deaf. Often parked in the background of Foster's field photo, the VW kombi became emblematic of his journey (see figure 38).

I glazed at this photo and imagined maybe as the proverbial "fly on the wall" bouncing along with Foster and his d/Deaf African team, journey from school to school, viewing all the

stories from the inside. While I couldn't interview Foster's VW kombi to know all its stories, I was about to interview someone who knew this vehicle from the inside out.

Paving the Road for Africa's Deaf Drivers

The Gallaudet University Alumni Association once wrote: "Foster had made a habit of choosing the less traveled road and then paving the way for others to follow" (Gallaudet College Alumni Association, 1975). I would learn from Nartey that Foster paved a road for d/Deaf African drivers to follow. Nartey sat next to me at the Osu Deaf Church as I was reviewed Foster's prayer letters. As I was paged through, he noticed and commented on the VW kombi photo. Our discussion about this photo delivered unexpected information about how Foster leveraged the VW kombi to empower d/Deaf youth.

Nartey remembered the day that Foster traveled from Mampong-Akwapim to Accra to pick up GSMD's VW kombi: "We were just there [outside of the Osu Mission for the Deaf] when this blue van pulled up and parked. I looked at it and wondered 'Who's driving this thing?' Then I saw "Oh, its Foster?!' All of us were surprised" (M. Nartey, January 2018).

Ghana didn't have a single d/Deaf driver in 1960, Foster was the first. Ghanaians couldn't conceptualize that a d/Deaf person could drive, much less read or write. Joe Kulego, a d/Deaf Ghanaian, explained that: "Prior to all of us meeting [Foster], we were treated like second class citizens…our meeting him made us see the light" (Kulego quoted in Aina, 2015, p. 132). Foster offered a shining example of what being a full citizen looked like.

Deaf Ghanaians were excited and had a lot of questions about Foster and the VW kombi:

> We asked Foster if he could drive. He said "Yes." We asked him "How can you hear a car honk?" He responded, "I can hear it." We ask him, "How?" He said "The van's mirrors are my ears." We nodded and said "Oh, ok." He said "In America many d/Deaf

> people drive." We looked at ourselves and then at him with skepticism. "Are you sure?" we asked. He nodded, "Yes." We thought about this more and asked him "Will you teach us how to drive?" He said "Yes, I will teach you."

Foster's had always aimed to identify, train and empower d/Deaf Ghanaians to become full citizens. The VW kombi was a vehicle upon which to fast track his ideals into tangible action.

Like Pastor Marfo, Foster would guide Nartey on to a trajectory he never could have imagined. Nartey graduated "best in class" from Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf and was promoted[41] to Mampong-Akwapim to work odd jobs around GMSD. At the same time, Foster began making long, arduous working visits to Nigeria in the VW kombi. He couldn't afford to employ and pay a driver, but doing the 15-hour, 450-mile trip alone was risky. Nartey started to accompany Foster on the drives to Nigeria.

During one trip to Nigeria, Nartey remembered how Foster got dangerously drowsy at the wheel. "He closed his eyes and fell asleep for a second. I noticed and shook his shoulder. Foster woke up with a start, gripped the wheel and took in a few quick, heavy breaths. I said 'That's not safe'" (Nartey, January 2018). Foster pulled over and instructed Nartey how to drive:

> He got out his pen and note pad. He made a diagram that illustrated the gears. He drew out 'first, second, third, fourth' gears, positioning them on the pad. He then pointed out each one on the van. He then showed me the break and clutch on the floor, where to position your feet. He showed me how to turn the ignition, and how to handle the brake, clutch and gears. He asked me if I understood. I said "Yes". I got into the driver's seat

[41] In Ghana, considerable status accompanies any "formal" sector employment at a school, even if the job entails manual labor.

> and practiced driving on the side of the road, then edged out onto the center. After a few tries I was doing really well. Foster said "Wow, you can drive better than I can!" I shared the driving with him as we returned to Ghana. (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018)

Foster's mentees concurred that he was gifted with an extraordinary ability to identify d/Deaf youths' skills, then create opportunities for them to achieve beyond their expectations, while encouraging them to believe in themselves (Agboola, 2014; Aina, 2015; llabor, 2009). This seems to be the process which put Nartey behind the wheel and on the road. But Foster didn't stop there. He assisted Nartey to take a giant step toward full citizenship by next becoming "street legal".

In Accra, Foster took Nartey to the Military 37 administrative office to do a road test for his Ghanaian driver's license. Foster had automatically received one earlier that year after presenting his American driver's license. This was an example of the kind of privilege Ghanaians afforded to a foreigner from the Global North. It would not be as easy for Nartey, a d/Deaf Ghanaian. Foster waited on the tarmac while Nartey drove the Kombi around a large makeshift obstacle course of cones and chalked lines (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018). A traffic officer administered the road test, observing Nartey and taking notes on a clip board. At the conclusion, Nartey passed his road test and was issued a Ghanaian driver's license (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018). Nartey was amazed and Foster overjoyed.

Nartey confidently drove Foster from the Military 37 station in Accra up to Mampong-Akwapim. Nartey recalled driving up the Legon road, near University of Ghana, where he encountered a roadblock:

> The police stopped our van. They walked over and tried to talk to us. Foster gestured "We're d/Deaf." They said "Oh mmum". [42]. They gestured that they wanted to see my driver's license. I nodded "Ok." I removed it from the glove compartment and handed it over to them. The two police officers inspected it together. They then nodded and smiled. One of the officers returned it. He seemed impressed with me. He mimed that I should join them and work with Ghana's police. Foster got out his writing pad and pen. He told them "No, he is our school driver." The officer said "Oh". He looked and saw our school name, Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, written on the side of the van. He wrote that the school had plenty of students from Mampong-Akwapim to train to drive. He wanted to recruit me to work with them. Foster refused said replied 'This my driver. He smart and strong, I need him with me.' The officer read Foster's note, nodded slowly and returned it to him. He looked at me, looked at Foster, then waved us through the check point. (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018)

This episode was indicative of the steps Foster's took to guide d/Deaf African mentees from "persona non grata" to a full citizen status to make admirable contributions to society. Agboola (2014) explained that:

> Andrew Foster… had two primary objectives as a mentor: to identify and train local leaders to whom he could entrust the management of the mission school when he moved on to establish new ones and to help promising young people to advance in their education, secure gainful employment…and in turn become leaders and mentors. He expressed much pride in the achievements of his mentees, frequently holding them up as

[42] '"mmum' a derogatory term for the d/Deaf in the Twi language (Oteng, 1988)

> models of what is possible when deaf people have opportunities to advance in their education. (2014, p. 6)

Foster's objectives allowed academically inclined d/Deaf Ghanaians (like Ocloo) to train, teach and eventually to run GSMD. But the "son of the coal miner" didn't forsake his working-class roots. Rather, he offered promising d/Deaf youth (like Nartey) technical training so they could also make contributions to his d/Deaf mission education model. My one critique of this model was that it appeared very "gendered", in that Foster focused almost predominantly on d/Deaf men for training and leadership roles to the exclusion of their female counterparts.

Nonetheless, Foster would replicate this best practice from his d/Deaf education template into other West African countries. In Nigeria, Foster taught Jonathon Erthiaganoma, another d/Deaf student, how to drive the VW kombi. Erthiaganoma's oral history corroborated Nartey's:

> [Foster] encouraged me to learn how to drive a vehicle. So I started to watch how he drove a bus whenever I was with him…. No wonder, about two weeks later, I was able to drive for the first time in my life and was indeed overwhelmed. Not long after, I drove Dr. Foster to Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana and Cameroon…what a wonderful experience…it was him who created [this] opportunity for me. (Erhiaganoma quoted in Ilabor, 2010, p. 195)

Nartey and Erhiaganoma paved the road for other d/Deaf Ghanaian drivers to follow. Marko Nyarko, my University of Ghana counterpart, was an example. He is a d/Deaf Ghanaian who owned his own car, and on occasion picked me up from Kotoka International Airport. He even drove me to interviews and observation in Adamorobe. Nartey might have been the first d/Deaf Ghanaian to get a driver's license in Ghana, but he was not the last. As simple as it might sound

on the surface, Foster paved the way for the d/Deaf to drive in sub Saharan Africa. Foster planted this seed that has continued to grow and still bears fruit today.

Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf

In 1960, Foster journeyed to (and spent time) in Nigeria's Western Region (now Oyo State) to locate a site for his second mission school for the d/Deaf. Nigeria's Western Region (a day's drive from Mampong-Akwapim) wasn't a bad option.

Ibadan was Western region's administrative headquarters and already one of sub-Saharan Africa's largest cities (a population of approximately 570,000). Statistically, Ibadan would have plenty of d/Deaf children to populate a mission school for the d/Deaf (in future it would even have two). Lagos would have been an obvious location, because it was even larger and closer to Accra. But it already had Wesley School for the Deaf (Adepoju, 1990; Ojile, 1994). Therefore, Foster by-passed Lagos to do business in the Nigeria's Western Region.

In Ibadan, Foster negotiated a plan with the Government of Nigeria's Western Region to replicate his Ghana prototype. These plans didn't involve a simplistic "cut and paste" approach, because Nigeria and Ghana had significantly different history, people, geopolitics and culture. For this reason, what worked in Ghana may not work in Nigeria. Astutely, Foster selected best practices from Ghana which might get traction in a new location, then adapted with his Nigerian mentee for local application in Ibadan.

Unlike Ghana's Ministry of Education, which took more than two years to fully fund GMSD, Nigeria's Western Region fronted Foster the funds to set up in Ibadan. Initially, they had resourced him to train a selection of their d/Deaf youth at GMSD in 1959. By 1960, they increased that funding to help Foster locate the next iteration of his prototype in the Western Region of Nigeria. He named this first replication Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf (IMSD).

On April 18, 1960, Foster announced open enrollment for IMSD (Ilabor, 2010). He wrote a prospectus on IMSD in which he said: “The aim of Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf is to provide opportunities for the d/Deaf children to became happy, useful, self-supporting citizens of Nigeria by developing his (or her) intellectual and spiritual resources” (1960f, December 17). In the same document, Foster wrote that the IMSD curriculum would cover: 1) language development [sign language], 2) reading, 3) writing, 4) arithmetic, 5) hygiene, 6) art, 7) religious instruction, 8) gardening, and 9) physical activities (1960f, December 17).

The response to the IMSD announcement was overwhelmingly positive. Foster received 90 applications, along with a “green light” from Western Region’s Ministry of Education to launch the school as soon as possible (Foster, 1960b, May-June). He didn’t need to be asked twice.

Foster opened IMSD on May 20, 1960 with 26 d/Deaf students (Foster, 1960b, May-June). Not unlike his rental facilities in Mampong-Akwapem, Foster rented a two-story, 19-room building to accommodate the school’s class and residential units in Ibadan (see figure 37). He then transferred the three Nigerian teachers in training from GMSD to IMSD. Jonathon Olojede became the school’s first “acting headteacher” while Moses Ariobasa and Samuel Adesina served as classroom teachers (see figure 34). IMSD’s development looked a lot like that of GMSD, as the school’s enrollment steadily increased during the academic year, leaping to 53 in July and then 65 by October (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1960c, July-September; Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1960d, October-November).

Beyond Ibadan, Africa’s most populous nation would need multiple mission schools for the d/Deaf to accommodate its d/Deaf students. But adding more schools would require more d/Deaf teachers and administrators to run the model. Foster would have to recruit d/Deaf teacher

recruitment from other West African countries if he hoped to open more mission schools for the d/Deaf. By July 1961, he recruited "Brother" and "Sister" Wilson Nah Dixon, husband and wife missionary team, from Liberia to train at GMSD to become the next IMSD administrators (see figure 36; "The Silent Mission," May-August 1961). Additionally, Foster and Ocloo selected three more d/Deaf Nigerians, Ezekiel Sambo, Flavian Ogugua and Boniface Okori, to train with Brother and Sister Wilson Nah Dixon (Ocloo, 1972).

Report on Education of the Deaf in Ghana

While Foster was in Nigeria to make the d/Deaf self-supporting citizens, President Kwame Nkrumah and his colleagues were considering how to do likewise for Ghanaians with Disabilities. Soon after ascension to the presidency, Nkrumah "discovered" that many of Ghana's beggars were persons with disabilities (Grischow, 2011a). According to Grischow, Nkrumah subsequently instructed his cabinet: "That action be taken urgently to promote a comprehensive Government-sponsored program of education…designed to restore economic and social independence to as many of the disabled as possible in shortest possible time"(Nkrumah quoted in Grischow, 2011b, p. 188). Nkrumah's cabinet took action to capture wide ranging data (none existed prior to 1960) about Ghanaians with disabilities.

In 1960, Nkrumah commissioned Sir John Wilson, a blind Briton, to lead a nation-wide survey on the state of Ghanaians with disabilities. Wilson was tasked to gather data with which to prepare a report about possible future programs for Ghanaians with disabilities (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). By the end of 1960, Wilson and committee would release the Wilson Report to Nkrumah's cabinet. This report would have implications for Foster's mission work with the d/Deaf.

In August 1960, the Advisory Committee on the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped and the Destitute was formed to offer local technical support to Wilson's work and eventual report (Gadagbui, 1998). The committee was populated by a selection of governmental line ministries and voluntary organizations who worked with Ghanaians with disabilities. Foster was invited to serve on this committee as the in-country d/Deaf education expert.

This appointment was a testament to how far Foster work had come in Ghana. Three years prior, he was chasing down Government of Ghana officials, inundating them with letters and knocking down their doors for support. In 1960, the same Government of Ghana not only agreed to fund GMSD, but they looked to him for d/Deaf education advice. Foster accepted the appointment with relish.

At this point, Foster had served d/Deaf Ghanaians from 1957 to 1960. No one was better positioned for this assignment than him. Foster summarized his contributions to the committee on his resume, highlighting that he was charged with "investigating and recommending on a comprehensive national rehabilitation scheme for all the handicapped in Ghana" (n.d.-b). Foster drafted report which he parsed out into eight topics: 1) Historical Background, 2) Definition, 3) Ascertainment, 4) Communication Problems, 5) Education, 6) Employment, 7) Legislation, and 8) Teacher Training (Foster, 1960e, November 23).

Under each topic, Foster (1960e, November 23) combined his American experiences with three years in the Ghanaian field to contextualize the state of education in Ghana. He offered the committee a series of rather practical sounding suggestions. I synthesized Foster's recommendations to the committee:

- Select a permanent and enlarged site for GMSD, in Mampong-Akwapim or in an alternate location in the south of Ghana, to enroll between 400 and 600 d/Deaf students.
- Open a second school for the d/Deaf in the north of Ghana (a replication of GMSD) to enroll 400 d/Deaf students.
- Outsource management of the schools for the d/Deaf to Foster's CMSD.
- Hire and train the d/Deaf, as much as possible, to the work at the schools for the d/Deaf.
- Utilize total communication (a communication of manual alphabet, "language of the signs", written language, speech) at the schools for the d/Deaf and provide hearing aids.
- Recognize the human rights of d/Deaf Ghanaians to enjoy full-citizenship (i.e., to own property, get jobs, marry, drive cars).

On November 23, 1960 Foster submitted his 25-page *Report on the Education and Rehabilitation of the Deaf* to the Chairman of the Committee. The material feed into the Wilson Report.

The Wilson Report (Wilson, 1961) was issued on December 6, 1960. The document reported the committee's findings and recommendations to the Government of Ghana. The authors estimated that there were at least 100,000 Ghanaians with disabilities, 10,000 children with disabilities and approximately 12,000 d/Deaf Ghanaians (Wilson, 1961). The Wilson report seemed to have validated Foster's early observations that deafness was indeed an invisible disability which had flown under the Government of Ghana's radar for far too long. After finding an astonishing number of disabled children, the committee recommended that the

Government of Ghana set up a special school system to accommodate its vast numbers of students with disabilities, including the d/Deaf (Grischow, 2010b).

The Wilson Report became a road map which guided Ghana's Ministry of Education foray into special education in the 1960s. This document would receive careful review and consideration from the Government of Ghana officials. In a couple years, its implementation would profoundly impact and alter Foster's d/Deaf education work in Ghana.

Foster's "Girlfriend"

Zuther had diligently completed the Emmaus course that Foster had assigned to her, a year after meeting him at the World Federation of the Deaf conference in Germany. Zuther successfully finished the Bible Study course and demonstrated follow-on spiritual growth in her written correspondence with Foster (Ilabor, 2010). A deal was deal. Foster invited Zuther to join him at GMSD in November 1960.

Zuther's timing was fortuitous. Her letter to Foster arrived around the time he submitted his report to the committee. Foster informed Nartey that they would drive to Accra International Airport the following week to pick up Zuther from her flight. Foster to told Nartey that "The white woman, my friend, she's going to come from Germany" (M. Nartey, personal communication January 2018).

Nartey recounted Zuther's arrival in Africa:

> We drove out at 8 p.m. We went all way to down into Accra and to the airport. At about 10 p.m. an airplane came in and landed. We stood there at arrivals waiting for her. Foster scanned the crowds but couldn't see her. I gave him a hard time. "You can't remember what she looked like. You forgot!" I told Foster. "I know, I know" he insisted. "No, you forgot, you won't be able to find her!" I joked. Foster laughed, then

playfully shoved my head and we wrestled while waiting for Zuther to come out. Finally, through the crowds, Foster recognized Zuther. He saw her and his eyes lit up. He got excited and waved. We helped her with her luggage. We all sat in front seat of the van, with luggage in the back. We then drove up that windy road from Accra to Mampong-Akwapim. (M. Nartey, personal communication January 2018)

Nartey often teased Foster about "his girlfriend", but Zuther was there as a missionary (A. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). Foster didn't have marriage in mind when he invited her to serve with him (Ilabor, 2010). To this point, Ilabor wrote that:

> Going by the non-availability of records showing Andrew's relationship with the opposite sex gender, one can conclude that starting a family was the last of his priorities. He was preoccupied with his dream of bringing the light of education and the gospel to Africa. God, however, had a plan for him. (Ilabor, 2010, p. 100)

According to Nartey, Zuther and Foster didn't share a bed or bedroom. They slept in separate quarters, on either side of the children's dormitories (M. Nartey, personal communication January 2018). This would be expected of missionaries then and now.

Zither's eldest son said that her job description, at GMSD, included providing administrative support (typing) and offering vocational training such as seam stressing and tailoring for older students (A. Foster, personal communication, June 2020). In exchange, she got room and board, and learned sign language from Foster and his students. Zuther didn't know sign language because she been raised with oral-based instruction in Germany (which was known for its emphasis in speech reading and aided hearing).[43]

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[43] Germany has held a policy of exclusively oral instruction for the d/Deaf for much of its educational history. Zuther would not have had opportunity to learn sign language in Germany during that time (Lundmark, 1978)

I can imagine that the more Zuther was at GMSD, the more Foster liked what he saw. From the start, Foster's friends from the World Federation of the Deaf conference described her as someone who was "pious" and took no interest in men (Ilabor, 2010). Once in Ghana, she opted out of Liz Ocloo's social outings into Mampong-Akwapim's commercial district to stay put on the GMSD campus (L. Ocloo, personal communication, September 2018). It must have become evident to Foster that Zuther was his kind of Christian, a woman who adhered to his definition of appropriate Christian virtues and behavior. Illabor said that "As time went on they found that they understood each other quite well and they became convinced that the Lord led them to each other" (2010, p. 101).

A month after Zuther's arrival, Foster asked Nartey to drive them to Ibadan, Nigeria. After three week's preparation there, Foster and Zuther had a wedding (see figure 39; Nartey, personal communication January 2018). Foster and Zuther (who became known as Mrs. Foster) were united in holy matrimony at the Agbeni Methodist church in Ibadan, Nigeria on January 1961 (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961a). By December 1961, they had their first born child, Andrew Foster Jr., followed by four more children. Mr. and Mrs. Foster would continue to expand their family and work together as d/Deaf husband and wife missionary team (Ilabor, 2010).

The Next Milestones

Foster's literature, from 1961, revealed an introspective mood when he and his new bride returned from Nigeria to GMSD. Looking backward and then looking forward, Foster reflected with his prayer supporters on the impressive (if not improbable) arc of his work to date:

> 1961 marks the 5th anniversary of Christian Mission for Deaf Africans…organized in the latter half of 1955...as we review our activities over the last five years…God be the glory,

> for our triumphs as well as trails. How we recall the struggle to leave home; the setbacks in establishing our first school; unfortunate necessity of turning away so many deaf prospective students…to reach the next milestone, as did the first, our motto will yet be: 'Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer' (Rom. 12:12). (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961a)

Foster's next defining milestones included innovations which would become staple features of an expanded version of his d/Deaf mission education model, such as the auditory training program.

In early 1961, Foster launched GMSD's auditory training program (see figure 41; Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961). First, he secured a Commonwealth Society Scholarship for Rev. Cobblah (Foster's sign language interpreter) to study audiology at Manchester University in the United Kingdom in 1960 (Adoo & Okyere, 1999). Foster then imported an audiometer to administer hearing tests at GMSD. He hired Ludwig Bafo, a Ghanaian graduate from Gallaudet University, to pilot the audiology training program a step ahead of Cobblah's arrival from the Manchester University trainings. Bafo offered "speech training" to selected d/Deaf students and led portions of the in-service teacher training (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961a). Once Cobblah and Bafo established the audiology trainings program at GMSD, Foster scaled it at IMSD, too (see figure 41).

Foster's African Airlift

Howard (1982), In *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa,* wrote: "Among the least recognized but most lasting consequences of the black American missionary presence in Africa is the inspiration it provided generations of young Africans to seek higher education in the United States" (1982, p. 95). Nowhere in sub Saharan Africa was this truer than in Ghana. A number of Ghana's earliest and most influential figures, such as Dr. Kwame

Nkrumah, graduated from Ghana's mission schools (Jacob, 1996). American missionaries from these schools fostered Ghanaians' pursue of post-secondary education in the United States. Nkurmah was as example, as he studied in the United States and then returned to Ghana to serve as a Head of State. Foster was a role model of higher education for d/Deaf Africans, too. He mentored d/Deaf Ghanaians, such as Alexander Quaynor, to advance through senior high school and into university education. Quaynor recalled:

> I was only 17 years old when I first met Foster; the fact that I didn't have a secondary education, he made me believe that I was capable of being successful. He instilled in me that I should never say, "I can't"…He inspired me to aspire to excel. My association with Foster gave me confidence to pursue and earn two degrees as he had done. Most of the deaf people in Ghana and Nigeria who had met Foster wanted to be like him. Most of us were so impressed that a deaf man could go to college and earn advance degrees. (Quaynor quoted in Aina, 2015, p. 131-132)

Foster's academic achievements also made a lasting impression on Ocloo. Nartey observed that these two men were often at odds over use of sign language in class and the intersections of Deaf identify with their mission (M. Nartey, personal communication, January 2018). But Ocloo didn't argue with Foster about value of pursuing post-secondary education in the United States.

In 1959, Foster made appeals to his prayer supporters to sponsor Ocloo's bachelor's degree at Gallaudet University (Foster's alma mater). "Operation: Higher Training", aimed to enroll Ocloo at Gallaudet by August 1960 (Foster, 1960b, May-June). The appeal didn't raise enough money and was deferred to the following year, with the same result. In the end it was Dr. Leonard Elstad's advocacy for Ocloo's case which actualized Operation: Higher Education.

In 1961, Gallaudet University offered Ocloo tuition and board, and the Government of Ghana contributed for books and a spending stipend (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020).

Ocloo would remain in "hooked on the deaf and dumb business", but his collaboration with Foster came to an end by August 1961. Foster's "right hand man" had selflessly served four years to make GSMD, and Foster's work, an enduring success. Foster asked Rev Cobblah to complete his studies at Manchester University and return to take Ocloo's place as GMSD's administer (Ocloo, 1972).

Ocloo arrived at Gallaudet University on August 26, 1961 (1972). He followed Foster's example and expedited his undergraduate degree. "In the summers when all the students were gone home", said Ocloo, "Dr. Leonard Elstad [University President] found me money from his Rotary Club to attend summer school at American University" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020). Like Foster, Ocloo graduated ahead of schedule: "Working hard and studying during the summer months, I completed the undergraduate studies that normally took deaf students four to five years. I received my Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 1964" (1972, p. 57).

But Ocloo wasn't done with education, he intended to continue into graduate studies. Foster's offer to fund his Christian Mission studies at Seattle Pacific University didn't materialize (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020), so that he remained at Graduate School and completed his Master's degree in Education in 1965 (Ocloo, 1972).

Ocloo was the first of Foster's mentees to graduate from Gallaudet, but certainly not the last. He was followed by Mrs. Adelaide Omodele Oyesola, a hearing Nigerian from ISD, that same year (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1961d, November-December). A picture (see

figure 44) shows Ocloo and Oyesola proudly standing next to Elstad in 1961. Next to go was Mr. Oswald Henry Addico, a GMSD teacher who enrolled in January 1963.

A selection of Foster's mentees significantly impacted the American d/Deaf education system, yet received almost no mention in the literature. Ocloo was amongst a distinguished group of Foster mentees who not only graduated from Gallaudet but remained to work there. At Gallaudet, Dr. Gabriel Adepoju was an Adjunct Professor, Dr. Isaac Agboola was Dean of the School of Education, Business, and Human Services, and Mr. Alexandar Quaynor was a Senior Education Tutor. Ocloo would go on to get his Ph.D. in special education at Southern Illinois University in 1972 and also teach at Gallaudet. Counterintuitively, the d/Deaf West Africans granted opportunities to study in the United States gave back by contributing to America's d/Deaf education system, as well West Africa's.

Foster's contributions to d/Deaf education in Africa and to the United States eventually drew the attention of his alma mater. In 1970, Gallaudet University invited Foster to its commencement ceremony to receive an honorary doctorate. There, Foster was lionized as:

> The first black deaf person to receive the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. [Gallaudet] took great pride in citing Foster as a role model for Africans, deaf and hard of hearing, who had studied at Gallaudet and later returned to their homeland to assist in the education…of the deaf". (Panara & Panara, 1996, p. 97)

After 1970, Foster became known as Dr. Foster, a title he and his mentees cherished.

Ghana School Taken Over

Foster's bold experiment in d/Deaf education in Ghana converged with surprising, unexpected developments which buttressed his work. One was President Nkrumah's interest in special education (Gadagbui, 1998). By 1962, sub-Saharan African nations were emerging from

colonialism and taking stock of their education infrastructures. Only Ghana, Nigeria and Eritrea had a mission school for the d/Deaf at that time (Miles, 2004). It's well known that Nkrumah was a Pan Africanist who wanted to position Ghana as a leader in post-colonial Africa. I think he might have seized on special education as a unique and under looked social cause he could advance and then model for his neighbors. Ghana already had one mission school for the d/Deaf, but it seemed Nkrumah had bigger things in mind.

The Wilson Report (1961), which Foster helped author, estimated that up to 12,000 d/Deaf Ghanaians were in urgent need of government services, such as special education (Wilson, 1961). Foster's (1960e, November 23) key recommendations to the committee included scaling GMSD, opening a second mission school for the d/Deaf in Ghana's north, and outsourcing management of both to CMDA.[44]

The Wilson Report mentioned Foster's first two key recommendations, but was silent about the third (Wilson, 1961). In its place, Wilson suggested that the Ministry of Education create and manage its own national systems of special schools (Gadagbui, 1998). There was no suggestion that the Government of Ghana should invite a foreign entity, like CMDA, to run its special schools on their behalf. The notion that an American body would administer Ghanaian institutions was antithetical to Africanization. Foster was a committee member and undoubtedly had access to this report, but its unknown if he read through all of it and thought through possible ramification for GMSD. The Government of Ghana's officials did and then made a decisive move on Foster's "brainchild".

[44] There are examples of developing nations where governments outsource d/Deaf education to Christian missions. The Government of Jamaica outsources d/Deaf education to one Christian organization and one non-governmental organization. Foster pitched such an offer to the Government of Ghana.

The headline in Foster's prayer support newsletters said it all, "Ghana school taken over" (Christian, Mission for Deaf Africans, 1962, May-June 1962). It continued "The Ghana Mission School for the Deaf…was placed under a local Board of Governors on May 11, 1962. The Government of Ghana renamed it 'The School for the Deaf [see figure 40]; also Andrew Foster, its founder and director, was retained as Headmaster and Manager" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1962, May-June 1962). The Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf[45] (youth and adults) was placed under the Ghana Society for the Deaf, a Government of Ghana parastatal (Christian Mission for the Deaf Africans, 1966).

Foster was visionary who saw Government of Ghana's "take over" as a giant step forward, not backward. He had long and laboriously advocated for sub-Saharan African governments (like Ghana) to include its d/Deaf people in equal opportunities, such as education (Foster, 1975). Foster had successfully embedded his work into the Ministry of Education's system. This was the epitome of sustainability, ensuring that d/Deaf education and use of sign language was built into permanent institutional structures, and no longer reliant on him alone.

Curiously, Foster was remarkably void of such explanations, commentary or analysis about the "take over". After laboring five years on his d/Deaf education prototype, he just seemed content to offer his contributions to Africa via Ghana: "The Christian Mission for Deaf Africans is proud of its role in 'starting the ball rolling' and successfully arousing local interest in the educational and spiritual welfare of the previously neglected 'deaf and dumb'" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1962, May-June). If anything, literature suggests that Foster felt a sense of achievement, that he had accomplished his mission in Ghana and it was time to move

[45] The Ghana Mission Center for the Deaf continued to serve d/Deaf youth and adult, along with d/Deaf children, until it eventually closed. While there is no longer any trace of this institution, Osu Deaf Church continues.

on. Articulated by Ocloo: “Actually Foster wanted to be relieved of responsibility of the Mampong School [GMSD] so he could go to Ibadan [Nigeria] permanently” (S. Ocloo, personal communication, July 2020).

After briefing the prayer supporters about this monumental development, Foster got back to business. He assured his prayer supporters that he would seamlessly transfer his d/Deaf education model to Ghana’s Ministry of Education. Prior to the hand-over he had: 1) enrolled 85 d/Deaf students and added an additional 250 on the waiting list, 2) hired Rev. Cobblah to replace Ocloo as his administrative assistant, and 3) recruited Miss Felicia Adenmosun (the second and final female teacher in training he sponsored), Mr. Peter Mba, Mr. Theophilus Nwankpa and Mr. Louis Tom from Nigeria to teach and train for a year.

Foster’s Transition from Ghana to Nigeria

Foster was the school’s first “Headmaster and Manager”, but he essentially handed over to Rev. Cobblah to focus on other things. Day-to-day operations were primarily overseen by Rev. Cobblah, while Foster increasingly juggled duties at School for the Deaf with expanding his mission work in Nigeria. There was more multitasking to come. Mr. and Mrs. Foster continued to grow their family, having their second son John (1963), followed by their first daughter Faith (1965).

With his hands full, Foster appeared less and less frequently at The School for the Deaf. He continued to check in to assist with portions of the teacher-in-service trainings and other administrative matters, thus making a case to remain on the government payroll. He used his

salary from The School for the Deaf and a Government of Ghana grant[46] to fund the launch of two more mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria (Ilabor, 2010; Ocloo 1972).

This is not to say that Foster forsook The School for the Deaf during this time. He wasn't always there, but remained committed to the school. Between 1962 and 1965, Foster reviewed, revised and offered new innovations to his Ghana prototype, which still have considerable room for improve. Critics of Foster's in-service teacher training, for example, pointed out that "many of the teachers at Foster's school were not qualified to teach the deaf" (Adoo & Okyere, 1999, p. 58). In 1959, Foster launched sub Saharan Africa's first known in-service d/Deaf education teacher training program on an experimental basis. Even by 1962, this program was decidedly "ad hoc" and informal, lacking qualified teacher trainers, a curriculum, educational resources or any kind of completion certificate (i.e., diploma, degree, etc.). Ghanaians complained that the DIY nature of Foster's so-called training didn't transfer adequate pedagogical skills to the "teachers", who in turn didn't have capacity to impart knowledge to the students (Markides, 1972). Ocloo (1972) had leveled a similar critique, wondering what students could learn from the d/Deaf high school graduates who Foster recruited from Nigeria and dropped in front of a class to "teach". They may have had a point.

Foster recognized and sought to rectify this issue in 1965. He helped the Ministry of Education to formalize and combine his d/Deaf education teacher training and auditory programs into what became the Deaf Education Specialist Teacher Training College (Addo & Okyere, 1999). This college was placed on its own campus Mampong-Akwapim, then given a demonstration school, known as Demonstration School for the Deaf (McWilliam & Kwamena-

[46] It seemed this grant (like the VW kombi) was earmarked for Ghana. Foster, unbeknownst to the Government of Ghana, spread these resources across three mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria.

Poh, 1975). This model was not unlike Gallaudet University, which had the Kendall Elementary Demonstration School on its campus. The Deaf Education Specialist Teacher Training College was later transferred from Mampong-Akwapim into the University of Education in Winneba, becoming their College of Special Education. The Demonstration School for the Deaf remained on its campus in Mampong-Akuapem, as did the "original" School for the Deaf, which became the Secondary Technical School for the Deaf (one of Africa's only high schools for the d/Deaf).

By October, 1965 Foster opted not to renew his contract at The School for the Deaf. Ilabor (2010) said Foster ended "his work with the government for the sake of expanding his education and gospel work in other countries". Evidence supports this assentation, but with the goals in reverse order. Foster's third son said "Number one was his driving desire to spread the gospel" (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). As Agboola (2014) had said, Foster identified as a missionary first and an educator second. There was no "vice versa" to that.

In 1965, Foster seemed to have found his moment to make a clean break from Ghana and commit his undivided attention to Nigeria. "Foster relates that in Ghana in 1965, three totally deaf youth were converted and baptized and began evangelizing. This permitted Foster to move on" (Peterman, n.d.). Per Foster's objectives, handing over d/Deaf evangelism to a cadre of d/Deaf Ghanaian Christians may have satisfactorily completed and closed out his work in Ghana. In October 1965 Foster officially moved the CMDA "West Africa Headquarters" from Ghana to Nigeria (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1966).

Review of achieves reveals Foster parted ways with The School for the Deaf, in 1965, after enrolling 130 d/Deaf students and placing 350 students on a waiting list (Ocloo, 1972). Three years later, The School for the Deaf was inundated with a nation-wide demand for d/Deaf

education. Foster built it, they had come and Ghana's Ministry of Education would have to figure out what to do next.

Open Another School for the Deaf

Samuel Fiaxe had trained with Foster, studied at Gallaudet University and later became the Headmaster at The School for the Deaf. On June 7 1967, he alerted the Ministry of Education that 1,375 d/Deaf children, from all regions, had landed on the school's waiting list. "In view of the daily swelling of our waitlist and the coming of teachers out of our [Deaf Teacher Specialist] College," Fiaxe (1967) wrote, "I suggest the Ministry of Education does all it can to open another school for the deaf". The Ministry of Education obliged and honored Fiaxe's suggestion. Between 1966 and 1996 it replicated The School for the Deaf on an unprecedented nation-wide scale, creating thirteen more schools for the d/Deaf (see figure 53):

1. Tetteh Ocloo State School for the Deaf, 1966
2. Demonstration School for the Deaf, 1967
3. Wa School for the Deaf, 1968
4. Becham School for the Deaf, 1969
5. Cape Coast School for the Deaf, 1970
6. Sekondi School for the Deaf, 1971
7. Volta School for the Deaf, 1971
8. Koforidua School for the Deaf, 1975
9. Kibi School for the Deaf, 1975
10. Ashanti School for the Deaf, 1977
11. Savelugu School for the Deaf, 1978
12. Salvation Army School for the Deaf, 1995

13. Gbeogo School for the Deaf, 1996

I was surprised that none of these schools for the d/Deaf were named after Foster. Afterall, wasn't Foster the "father of d/Deaf education in Africa"? Founding fathers, like Thomas Hopkin Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc, have institutions named after them. I put my observation to Foster's third son, who replied: "My father genuinely does not care to make a name for himself.... He would frequently say after my death no one should name any school or church or anything after my name" (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). Not anyone was of this mindset.

Liz Ocloo shared that she had lobbied Ghana's Ministry of Education to name one of their school's for the d/Deaf after Dr. Seth Tetteh Ocloo (L. Ocloo, personal communication, September 2018). They granted this wish at Tetteh Ocloo State School for the Deaf, which opened in 1966 near his family's home between Accra and Tema. It remains a mystery as to what Foster might thought about the Government naming a school after his mentee. My thoughts are that this was an opportunity for Foster's work to give credit where credit was due, to the d/Deaf Ghanaian pioneers who opened the way for his journey. This is first and foremost Foster's story, but it's their story too.

Almost 40 years after Foster first piloted GMSD, the Government of Ghana appropriated and replicated his d/Deaf education template, making each school residential, using sign language and hiring d/Deaf teachers. Some even tried to include his audiology program. Foster began with 13 d/Deaf children in Christiansborg, then elevated enrollment to 130. Building on Foster's foundational work, the Ministry of Education developed a robust d/Deaf education infrastructure which enrolled thousands of d/Deaf students each year.

He Really Accomplished an Awful Lot: Foster's Best Practices

Foster's third son reflected that "So if I told people about stories about my father, about the things he did, they would stand back in complete amazement thinking 'Well he really accomplished an awful lot'. And to me it was just what he did. I didn't have a context on which to frame that" (T. Foster, personal communication, October 2015). Foster's story provides a context in which to frame his accomplishments and contributions. His work role modeled interlocking best practices we can learn, teach and apply to expand access to services for marginalized communities everywhere.

First, Foster involved marginalized communities in the stewardship of the service delivery schema he created. This is a "nothing for us without us" ethos. Foster brought and modeled a vision about full citizenship for d/Deaf Africans. He established a d/Deaf mission education prototype to move these ideals into action. He then identified, trained and ultimately empowered d/Deaf West Africans to run this service delivery schema with him, then in his absence. Foster's success is apparent in what he did with marginalized persons, more so than what he did for them. Many of Foster's mentee, such as Emmanuel Ilabor, continue to run his mission schools for the d/Deaf to this day.

Secondly, Foster leverage local resources to facilitate the service delivery schema. This is a "work with what you have while waiting for what you want" ethos. Foster arrived in Accra with no more than the luggage in his hands and the clothes on his back. He didn't have a budget for his project. There was no World Bank, United Nations or United State Agency of International Development to come to his rescue. He was the ultimate social networker and entrepreneur who allied with a church to use their "after hours" classroom to launch his school.

He didn't whine or complain about this situation, he hustled hard to make that one classroom a success. This impressed the Government of Ghana enough to fund an expansion of his mission school. Foster's astutely accepted the Government of Ghana offer to absorb GMSD and teacher training program in their educational system. Both programs are still alive and well in Ghana today.

Lastly, Foster established a symbiotic relationship with project partners. This is a "make it a win-win" ethos. There are power differentials within service delivery schema which challenge this best practice. Foster was a foreigner with confidence, purpose, education and university degrees. He had more power than his d/Deaf and hearing colleagues, such as Ocloo. Nonetheless, he found ways to share a degree a degree power which benefited them, him and ultimately mission. For example, Foster didn't have to teach Nartey to drive, but it helped Nartey, Foster and his schools.

This isn't to say that Foster was a saint. Rev. Thomas Gallaudet and Alexander Graham Bell each had significant short comings, and so did Foster. This made him a "fractured", fascinating human being like the rest of us. It also made studying him that much more educational. I often learn the most from my mistakes and those of others. There are lessons I learned from Foster's short comings in Ghana.

First, Foster apparent application of colonial and Americentric (Smith, 2013) approaches proved counterproductive to his mission. Foster might have been one of many Americans who had "an air of arrogance and a supercilious sense of superiority over surrounding nations in terms of power, technology and most notably education" (Smith, 2013, p. 1). At times he exhibited an inability to appreciate, and adapt to, Ghana's socio-economic and cultural nuances. Foster needed to observe how Ghanaian norms and mores differed significantly from those in America

and adjust accordingly. He would have surveyed about resource mobilization in Ghana, to know if and how an American fund drive might work in country. He would have heeded his friend's advice to not break cultural taboos (sitting on his host's chair). As a first-time visitor to Adamorobe, Foster would have taken time to get to know the d/Deaf before "out of the blue" asking them to "bring their children". Foster could have spared himself and Ghanaians considerable tension by instituting a less Americentric, and more "Ghanaian friendly", modus operandi.

Secondly, Foster seemed challenges in working with a diversity of people. Foster seemed to prefer to work with d/Deaf African Christian males and was generally reported to have more difficulties working with anyone outside of this group. With that said, the 1950s and 1960s are recognized as a time when some Christian men typically limited working relationships to fellow Christian men. If Foster was one of those men, then it would be unfair to judge against today's #me too movement era. Judgments aside, this approach limited the scope of Foster's recruitment, training and collaboration. For example, one female teacher affirmed that her Christian faith had inspired her to voluntarily serve with Foster (even without pay), yet she felt could have done more if Foster was comfortable with her on campus. Working with local community requires flexibility on board other players, within reason.

Lastly, inconsistency undermined portions of Foster's messaging and overall mission. Foster was the first known individual to demand first class citizenship for the d/Deaf in Ghana. To this end, his literature instructed people not to use the term "deaf and dumb" or "deaf mute", and with good reason: these are considered derogatory terms that the d/Deaf don't like. But he was not above pragmatic appropriation and deployment of these same terms to invoke pity, then ask for charity. He often urged hearing people, for example, to donate to the "deaf and dumb"

(see figure 42). In other forums he'd state they're not "deaf and dumb" and are equal to their hearing counterparts. This contradiction prompted Ocloo to remark that "with Foster it was often 'do as I say, not as I do'" (S. Ocloo, personal communication, June 2020).

Foster may have learned from these mistakes made in Ghana, then infused the lessons learned going forward into Nigeria and across sub Saharan Africa. Or he might have continued more of the same. More research is needed to verify how Foster might have changed and re-arranged his approach between 1965 and 1987.

In this story was first and foremost about Foster. Therefore, I will leave final word to him. A year after launching his prototype mission school for the d/Deaf, Foster (1958e, October-November) wrote:

> Here in Ghana, we are still in the process of 'planting"—both spiritually and in a material sense. We praise God that our students are able to follow simple Bible talks, fingerspell Bible verses, also 'parrot' several hymns and prayers. But it will take some time for these concepts to become real and meaningful to them…if not me, someone else will do the 'watering'. And it may be another person—or perhaps generation—who will witness a true harvest of deaf souls here en masse.
>
> Sincerely yours for Africa's Deaf,
>
> Andrew Foster
>
> Director

EPILOGUE – PREMONITIONS

My story about Foster traced his childhood, employment and education in the United States, then the formative years used to develop his d/Deaf mission education model in Ghana (1957 – 1965). This demonstrated that his contributions in Ghana laid the roots of d/Deaf education in sub Saharan Africa (see table one).

I end my detailed ethnohistorical treatment of Foster's story at point, but this is not the end of Foster's story. In this epilogue, I will share Foster's frenetic final year, his death, and how he was remembered in West Africa and the United States.

In 1987, Foster wrote to his prayer supporters: "30 years ago, God sent us to Africa to sort of change the picture. He opened the way for our starting two schools, along with Gospel work, in Ghana. Since then He had used us to pioneer 32 schools" (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1987a). This astonishing number, 32 mission schools for the d/Deaf , is widely cited as Foster's crowning achievement. Researchers, however, failed to drill down into this number to offer further analysis and interpreter.

I collected, triangulated and synthesized information Foster's 32 mission schools, which span 13 countries in sub Saharan Africa (see table one and figure 57). After compiling information all on 32, I next contextualized them inside Foster's story to identify closing salient points. The most telling observations wasn't what I found in the list of schools, it was what I didn't find.

Like Foster's work in Ghana, none of his mission schools in neighboring sub Saharan African countries bore his name. This was intentional. Foster refused to name any of his schools after himself in Ghana, and he replicated that practice Continent-wide. Mission schools founded during 1950s and 1960s were named "mission school". Between the 1970s and 1980s,

Foster named them "Ephphatha schools". Gallaudet University was named after Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. None of Foster's 32 schools had an equivalency.[47]

Table 1. Foster's 32 Mission Schools for the Deaf.

#	Founding name	Year	Location
1	Ghana Mission School for the Deaf	1957	Accra, moved Mampong
2	Christen Deaf Mission Centre (Adults)	1957	Accra, Ghana
3	Ibadan Mission School for Deaf	1960	Nigeria, Ibadan
4	Enugu Mission School for the Deaf	1962	Engugu-Nsukka, Nigeria,
5	Kaduna Mission School for the Deaf	1962	Nigeria, Kaduna
6	Ecole Chritenne Ivoiriene Pour Les Sourds	1972	Abidjan, Ivory Coast,
7	Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds du Togo	1976	Lome, Togo
8	Ecole Ephphata Tchadienne Pour Sourds de N'Djamena	1976	Chad, Moved from N'Djamena to Moundou
9	Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds du Senegal	1977	Senegal, Dakar
10	Ecole Beninois Pour les Sourds	1977	Cotonou, Benin
11	Ephphata Institute for the Deaf	1977	Kumba, Cameroon
12	Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds	1977	Bangui, CAR
13	Institute Pour Les Sourds Muets De Kinshasa	1979	Kinshasa, DRC
14	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	1980	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
15	Ephphata School for the Deaf	1980	Burundi, Bujumbura,
16	Ecole Nationale Pour Enfants Deficients Audifs	1982	Libreville, Gabon
17	Ecole Ephphatha pour les sourds de Nyankunde	1982	Bunia-Nyankunde, DRC
18	Ecole Ephatha pour les sourds de Lubumbashi	1983	Lubumbashi, DRC
19	Kalemie, DRC	1983	Kalemie, DRC
20	Ecole Ephphatha pour les sourds-muets	1983	Bobo Dioulassa, Burkina Faso
21	Ecole Ephahpatha pour sourds de Bukavu	1984	Bukavu, DRC
22	Ecole Ephphatha pour les de Likasi	1985	Likasi, DRC
23	Ecole Ephphatha pour les Sourds de Goma	1985	Goma, DRC
24	Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds de Kolwezi	1985	Kolwezi, DRC
25	Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds de Kamina	1985	Kamina, DRC
26	Ecole des sourds de Mbujimayi	1985	Mbuji-Mayi, DRC
27	Matadi, DRC	1986	Matadi, DRC
28	Ecole Primaire spécialisée des Enfants Sourds	1986	N'Djamena, Chad
29	Institute Pour Les Souds Muets de Kinshasa	1987	Kisangani, DRC
30	Ecole Ephphata pour les sourds de Sarh	1987	Sarh, Chad
31	Ecole des Sourds de Gemena	1987	Gemena, DRC
32	Ecole Ephphata pour les sourds N djamena	1987	N djamena Chad

[47] Emmanual Ilabor was d/Deaf Nigerian mentee who established an Andrew Foster Memorial College, a senior high school unit on the Christian Mission School for the Deaf campus in Ibadan, Nigeria (Ilabor, 2009).

Surprisingly, Foster never returned to Liberia, his first (1957) port of call in Africa, to found a mission school for the d/Deaf. Foster left the Ministry of Education's invitation on their table and worked around the country, but never in it. Why this happened remains a mystery. Bro. Wilson Nah Dixon, a Liberian who trained at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf (GMSD), approached Foster for help to establish Liberia's first school for the d/Deaf. Foster responded that "We wish him well in his venture…but struggling financially, CMDA cannot assume any new commitments at this time" (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1962, May-June). But Foster's answer seemed disingenuous, because the next year he financially committed to two more mission schools for the d/Deaf in Nigeria, rather than assist Dixon to create one in Liberia.

On June 6, 1964, Dixon founded the Liberia School for the Deaf. Emulating Foster's entrepreneurial ways, he launched the school by combining funds from the Government of Liberia and the Don Steward Church (J. Jones, personal communication, June 2020). There is no evidence that Foster contributed any human, technical or financial resources to Dixon's efforts. Nonetheless, Foster (n.d.-a) had no problem with crediting himself with "indirectly" founding and supporting the school (p. 5). He almost seemed to forego recognition as his own mission schools while demanding acknowledgement at his mentees' schools.[48]

Emmnaul Ilabor (2009), a d/Deaf Nigerian mentee, once wrote that:

> Although Andrew left Ghana to establish more schools in Nigeria and other countries, it is of paramount importance to recognize the fact that Ghana served as the starting point of Andrew's work and served as a testing ground for the various theories and methods he had propounded before coming to Africa for use. (p. 42)

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[48] Liz. Ocloo recalled hosting an event at a school for the d/Deaf in Accra, in the 1970's, which Foster "crashed" and then asked to be an introduced as a "school founder" (though he had not played such a role).

Since leaving Ghana 22 years prior, Foster rebranded IMSD into Christian Mission School for the Deaf (CMSD). At CMSD, Foster expanded the d/Deaf education experiments he began at GMSD. Most notably, he launched a Pan African d/Deaf education training program that recruited the d/Deaf from all corners of the Continent; French speaking West and Central Africa, and East and Southern Africa (Titus, 1994). One wonders if he might have envisioned such a training center in Mampong-Akwapem before the Ministry of Education took over the site.

Foster's next generation of Pan-African d/Deaf teacher trained at CMSD and provided the human resources to run the 31 d/Deaf mission schools (minus GMSD) he founded in 12 African countries (minus Ghana). Foster's d/Deaf education model exceeded everyone's expectations and his work gained notoriety. Remarkably, he did all this while raising a family with five children; Andrew Junior (1961), John (1963), Faith (1965), Tim (1976), and Dan (1969).

In September 1987, Foster returned to Accra for a week to celebrate GSMD's 30th year anniversary. Foster gave credit where credit was due and returned to recognize the country, and the people, that started it all. Foster's "30 years homecoming" entailed a reception at the Ministry of Education, re-engagement with Ghana's media and of course missionizing to the d/Deaf (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1987b, October-December). He nostalgically wrote to his prayer supports that: "It was a privilege to preach the Word of God to 102 deaf brethren and friends. They still meet in almost the same borrowed classroom where both the school and assembly began in 1957" (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1987b, October-December). But plenty of things had changed for d/Deaf Ghanaians Ghana since Foster's 1957 arrival.

Foster work had profound long-term impact on d/Deaf Ghanaians who previously lacked a social focal point and lingua franca (Okyere & Addo, 1989). "Until formal education for deaf children was introduced in Ghana, deaf people were scattered all over the country, without any possibility of meeting each other and thus establishing their own culture and community" (Okyere & Addo, 1989, p. 97). Foster's GMSD set in motion the ethnogenesis (Bibly, 1996) of Ghana's Deaf Community. Many of Foster's Ghanaian mentees would self-identity as Deaf, proclaim Ghana Sign Language (GSL) their mother tongue language and found the Ghana National Association of the Deaf (see figure 56; G. Amenumey, personal communication, January 2018).

Another advancement was the number of schools for the d/Deaf in Ghana. Foster wrote with astonishment how the Ministry of Education had established ten more schools for the d/Deaf (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1987b, October-December).[49] The startling success of his d/Deaf education experiment surpassed anything that he, his Board members and prayer supporters ever could have imagined.

Foster's informed his prayer supporters that the one week stop-over in Accra was part of his six-month African tour to spot check a selection of CMDA's 32 mission schools for the d/Deaf (Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1987b, October-December). After Accra, Foster journeyed onward to Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic and finally the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC; Christian Mission for the Deaf, 1987b, October-December). I had spent close to three years in Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia following Foster story. But I didn't expand my research into Central Africa because the region

[49] Ghana's Ministry of Education had actually scaled up Foster's d/Deaf education model to establish 12 more elementary/middle schools for the d/Deaf, and two senior high schools (one in the south at the original GMSD site in Mampong-Akwapim, then one in the north which also enrolled hearing students).

we less accessible by road and commercial airlines. Foster, ever the adventurer and dedicated missionary, was more intrepid than me. But there was a trade-off to that intrepidness.

Foster's Africa tours increasingly relied on negotiating his own way on to small twin props planes, flown by Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF), to visit mission schools for the d/Deaf in hard to reach places. MAF made their name in the world of faith-based organizations by offering to fly missionaries to serve marginalized communities in especially remote locations (Missionary Aviation Fellowship, n.d.). An aviation enthusiast, Foster might have enjoyed these flights over the African terrain, such as that of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Dale Hamilton was a MAF pilot and an American missionary who had served with Foster in the DRC. Foster's daughter put me in touch with Hamilton, who agreed to interview about MAF's planes and flying in that region. Hamilton recalled that guiding their small twin-engine planes through the mountainous eastern DRC was notoriously treacherous (D. Hamilton, personal communication, October 2015). Foster became a frequent flyer in the DRC, taking "short hop" flights between the 13 mission schools for the d/Deaf he had sprinkled around that vast country (the DRC is bigger than the whole the European Union). But even the unflappable Foster might have registered (if even unconsciously) the risky nature of repeated exposure to this travel. His eldest son recalled a dream his father had shared with him:

> There was this premonition…it was right after my dad came back from Africa and was telling me about a dream…he said 'I was flying in a twin engine airplane…I was flying along, the plane hit a wire or hit something, then was spinning around and around and became the spinning wheel of the VW bus driving down the road.' It's like 'Okay so you're going to die in a plane crash one day'. That was our understanding. (A. Foster, personal communication, August 2015)

Whatever their understanding, it remained between the two of them, because accounts of this dream didn't appear anywhere else. Information I gathered about Foster didn't suggested he believed in mysticism and religious ecstasies. He never presented himself as a "mystic" who retrieved hidden meanings from altered states of being. And yet Foster's story is populated with premonitions about his final days.

Ilabor wrote that: "Andrew often spoke to his students and staff about the unavoidable death which can appear unexpectedly" (2010, p. 110). This passage particularly intrigued me. I wanted to know more about what Foster might have said or done to prepare his mentees for an "unavoidable death", which turned out to be his own.

In 2015, I sojourned to CMSD in Ibadan, Nigeria to examine this and other gaps in Foster's story. There I found the school exclusively run by Foster's d/Deaf mentees. I volunteered to serve a few days with them on campus, while getting to know the mentees who knew Foster. After familiarizing with Foster's people and their Nigerian Sign Language, I approached a selection of the older mentees for interviews. They generously provided oral histories about Foster's time with them, including his final days at the school before departing on his 1987 African tour.

I will focus on an interview I had with Juliana Ashade, a d/Deaf Ghanaian from Foster's first 1957 GMSD cohort (Ocloo, personal communication, May 2020). She had completed middle school and vocational training in Ghana, then teach sewing and tailoring at CMSD (Ashade, personal communication, December 2015). Ocloo (1972) observed that "Foster was too authoritarian to have really shared the administrative authority of his mission" (p. 52). But Foster significantly changed this behavior during his last week at CMSD. According to Ashade:

[Foster] gathered together this group of us [d/Deaf teachers and administrators] to show us where he kept information on each of the schools. He told us about each school and his projects there. He showed us letters he had written for them. He handed the letters to a teacher and asked him to mail them. Foster had never done the before. This seemed strange. We wondered what was going on." (J. Ashade, personal communication, December 2015)

What prompted Foster to share privileged information about his mission school system and delegate responsibilities in 1987? The information I had gathered and analyzed suggested that this was uncharacteristic of him. Did Foster anticipate that his 1987 African tour would be his last?

I traced the path of Foster's 1987 Africa tour from Nigeria through West and Central Africa, up to the Eastern DRC, along with the border with Rwanda. According to Foster's daughter, he spent the last week of November at Ecole Ephahpatha Pour Sourds de Bukavu.[50] According to his daughter, it was there that a d/Deaf student approached her father to warn him not fly from Goma, DRC to Nairobi, Kenya (F. Haynes November 2015). "She was quite emotional in retelling it", Foster's daughter said (F. Haynes November 2015). I looked for further information about this encounter, but there was none. Foster moved on to his next and last working visit in the DRC at Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds de Goma.[51] On December 2, 1987 Foster completed his working visit at Ecole Ephphatha Pour les Sourds de Goma. He decided to fly from Goma, DRC to Nairobi, Kenya the following day. Foster's decision to take that flight from Goma, DRC to Nairobi was fateful.

[50] Ephphatha School for the Deaf in Bukavu
[51] Ephphatha School for the Deaf in Goma

On December 4, 1987, Foster's tried and failed to fly standby on a commercial fight between Goma and Nairobi (Ilabor, 2010). Foster didn't want to wait another day in Goma, so explored other options. He discovered that a twin-engine Cessna 404, belonging to Cooper Skybird Air of Nairobi, had been chartered to fly to Nairobi that day same (Sanders, 1987). A Kenyan pilot was scheduled to fly 12 Americans from Goma to Nairobi, Kenya with a stop in Kisumu, Kenya (Sanders, 1987). *The Washington Post* would report that Foster accepted an empty seat on this flight ("East African Plane Crash Kills 14," 1987).[52]

"When I had heard about this," Hamilton said with pain in his voice, "I wondered why my friend Andrew Foster would have been even been flying on this airplane". Hamilton paused, and continued after a long silence. "He could have been flying on Missionary Aviation Airplane or…. he would have flown with me" (D. Hamilton, personal communication, October 2015). But this isn't what happened.

Aviation officials reported to *the Washington Post* that the flight took off from the tarmac in Goma, but then failed to get gain altitude ("East African Plane Crash Kill 14", 1987). By ten minutes into the flight, it was said that the pilot was struggling to clear Rwanda's mountains ("Plane Crash in Africa Kills 14," 1987). "Most of us would fly that part over Lake Kivu," recalled Hamilton, "because mechanical failure in those hills, especially with a twin engine, is deadly" (D. Hamilton, personal communication, October 2015). I wondered how familiar the pilot had been with the terrain of the Virunga Mountain and Lake Kivu? Had he been trained, or at least advised, to take the plane out over the lake in the case of engine failure?

> Observers said that when the plane entered Rwandan airspace it was already out of control. The passengers were seen waving their hands in despair and could be heard

[52] The Washington Post incorrectly titled this article. There were 13 victims, not 14.

screaming. The passengers even threw some of their effects out of the windows, such as briefcases containing documents in order to facilitate identification. Rwanda's government-owned radio quoted witnesses as saying the plane struck a tree where it exploded into flames. 'There are no survivors' said an official at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali, the Rwandan capital.' (Sander, 1987, A11)

I've never known what it's like to have death descending upon me. I don't know how it feels to realize that those final moments are nigh?, to be within inches of one's life? What thought goes would cycle through my mind? How do we spend those precious last minutes of life? I can only imagine that Foster, a man of God and unshakeable faith, was somewhere in silent prayer at the end.

Legend has it that one item miraculously survived the plane accident. Kamei (2006) wrote that "According to Berta [Foster], [Foster's] body and all belongings were consumed by fire and she was not able to receive anything. However, there has been one legend that exists. It is said that only his Bible remained without being consumed" (p. 129). Foster's adult daughter confirmed that the said Bible was retrieved from the accident site in Rwanda and send to her mother. Mrs. Berta Foster was said to have kept it at her bedside until her death (F. Haynes, personal communication, July 2020).

By December 5, the American news outlets had picked up and covered "the 1987 Rwandan air accident", as it became known. *The Washington Post* (1987) ran this story and named the American academics who died, but made no mention of Foster. Even in death, Foster was an overlooked, obscure figure. Other newspapers talked about the American scholars on the flight and lamented that "bodies were unidentifiable, including the body of a Kenyan missionary who hitched a ride on the fatal flight" (Phelan, 1987, p. A1). It seemed that the so-called

“Kenyan missionary” was Foster. Only *The Flint Journal* (1987) got it right and correctly identified Foster as an accident victim, followed by the evening news. Pastor Ken Hampton, who fellowshipped with Foster in Detroit, recalled seeing the news about 1987 Rwandan plane accident on the local TV news. “Those of us who saw the story on the TV news that night were just crushed” (K. Hampton, personal communication, September 2015).

While American media aired stories about the 1987 Rwandan air accident, the victims were being remembered simultaneously thousands of miles away. Due to Rwanda’s heat, humidity and lack of refrigeration, local law stipulated that a body must be buried no more than 24 hours after death (Phelan, 1987). The memorial service and burial couldn’t wait for loved one to come to pay their final respect.

December 5, 1987 at 4:00 p.m. a local funeral took place for Foster and the12 other Rwandan air accident victims, according to the U.S. Embassy in Rwanda (de Wilde, 1987). It was hurriedly organized and held on the side of a green hill overlooking Lake Kivu. The service was led by Rev. Deighton Douglin (an American Baptist missionary) and Father Denys Ndangamira (a Rwandan Roman Catholic priest). The U.S. Embassy in Rwanda reported that over 100 persons attended the funeral, including the local chief, U.S. Embassy personnel and, Government of Rwanda officials and missionaries. The U.S. Embassy’s letter to Mrs. Foster sought to reassure her that: “Certainly the U.S. Embassy and local Rwanda official did everything they could in the knowledge that in the absence of family and friends, we had a special obligation in this regard” (de Wilde, 1987).

The U.S. Embassy in Rwanda purchased land, outside of Gisenyi, to bury the 13 victims of the 1987 Rwandan air accident. After the service, the U.S. Embassy in Kigali arranged for the remains of the 13 bodies[53] to be transported and buried at the site.

In 2018, I communicated with personnel at the same U.S. Embassy in Rwanda to inquire about how I might find their burial site for the 1987 Rwandan air accident victims. Not only were they unable to find any records or information about the burial site, they had no idea what I was talking about. If I wanted to know more, they suggested I come to find out myself. Thirty years after the burial, I went to Rwanda to locate Foster's final resting place.

Alan Neece, a Deaf U.S. Peace Corps colleague, had previously scouted out and made notes on the burial site. He generously shared detailed directions and descriptions to help me find it. I flew into the capital Kigali, and then took a two-hour bus ride to Gisenyi. Once in Gisenyi, I set out on foot. I followed Neece's map and walked a couple of miles from the outskirts of Gisenyi toward the DRC border. I got into the general vicinity of the burial site and then got lost. I utilized the Swahili I had remembered from my own U.S. Peace Corps service to ask a Rwandan for help.

Initially one hospitable Rwandan offered to guide me. As we walked, my guide saw and called out to his friends to join us. They enthusiastically obliged and invited their friends to come on board, too. These friends of course had their friends who couldn't be left out. As more and more Rwandans joined my walk, I recalled how Dr. Mendonsa (2002) contextualized Africa: "What are the ideas and modes of living that make African culture distinct from the European way of life? One key proposition to African culture is that human beings derive their identity

[53] Media reported that the bodies were unidentifiable (Phelan, 1987).

and worth from being part of a group" (p. 4). The more we walked, the more this group seemed to grow, and I met more and more new friends, as per their culture.

The trek to the burial site took on the air of a festive community event, with persons of all ages along for the ride. In the United States, I would have been the rugged individual journeying alone with my smart phone's global positioning system (GPS). If I stopped to ask for directions at home, I'd confirm I have the correct address, and perhaps a landmark, for my GPS. In Rwanda, community members are the human GPS.

It must have been quite a site when I finally rocked up at Foster's burial site with 20 new friends. Surely, this was the communal spirit Foster would have loved. A number of my 20 or so guides pointed to the location of Foster's burial site. Without them I wouldn't have known it was the right place. The burial site was inside an unmarked, non-descript compound, which been walled in and secured with a locked metal gate (see figure 51). There was no sign on the outside to distinguish it from other similar looking walled in compounds. There was an indented, empty, faded rectangle space where a plaque had once hung.

As I stood in front of the locked gate, my group asked the neighbors about how I could enter. After a wait, a man came to unlock and open the gate, and we proceeded inside. In front of me I saw a four-feet high, cement marker (see figure 48). The stone plaque on the top of this marker read "IN MEMORY OF THE RWANDAN AIR CRASH VICTIMS, DEC. 3, 1987". Below were 12 names, which included Andrew J. Foster. Lastly, it said, "In our Prayers Always, Their Families" (see figure 49).

I looked beyond the marker to see a rectangular garden (see figure 50). One quarter was planted with abundantly sprouting onions. Another quarter was newly tilled soil which awaited planting. In between the tilled land, straight down the middle, was a mass grave.

The grave was comprised of rocks which outlined 13 distinctive mounds. Presumably the remains of the 13 bodies had been buried beneath the 13 mounds. One body per mound. But there was no way to identify which rock formation marked Foster's final resting place.

Foster was born in obscurity and buried there, too. But as Dale Hamilton opined "Some of God's most effective servants, who had the greatest impact, lived in the greatest obscurity during their lifetime" (D. Hamilton, October 2015). Not only was Foster's burial site difficult to find, but I couldn't locate his final resting place inside of the site. There was no "grave side" to stand or kneel beside. This bothered the "researcher" in me. It wouldn't have bothered Foster, though. "He was very humble man, "Agboola had written, "he saw himself as called by God to a mission" (p. 16). If the mission led him to an unmarked, mass grave in rural Rwanda, then so be it. I later discovered it didn't necessarily have to be this way.

Foster's body could have to been returned to the United States from Rwanda for a price. The State Department telegrammed the victims' family members, on December 4, 1987, offering to return the bodies for $10,000 each (Phelan, 1987). "Otherwise, the families could have the bodies buried in a mass grave for $1,000 each" (Phelan, 1987, A1). Foster's family choose for the State Department's "mass grave" option. "Why not bring your father's body 'home'?" I had asked his third son. "Because there is a poetic appropriateness that his body was buried in the place that he loved" (T. Foster, October 2015). The American in me wrestled with this idea. Shouldn't Foster, the unsung d/Deaf African American hero, have been returned to the United States? Yet his son's response to my question challenged my assumptions about "home" and about Foster's relationship sub-Saharan Africa.

In remembering Foster, his mentees (Agboola, 2014; Ilabor, 2010) often marveled that he forfeited the "good", comfortable life in the United States to "suffer" alongside them in

"undeveloped" Africa. Media encouraged these opinions by circulating false narratives on either side of the Atlantic, that the United States had everything and Africa had nothing. An article in *The Listener* (Liberian newspaper) was indictive of this view: "Instead of reaping the harvest of years of study [in the United States], Mr. Foster wishes to plow it back among the deaf of Africa", ("Deaf Missionary Work Now Visiting West Africa", 1957). These stories overlooked the fact that many American African reaped more bountiful harvests in Africa than the United States. Dr. Mendonsa (2002) wrote:

> In all my travels I have not found any people or region with more gracious people, with a culture I would rather be around…West Africa greatly impacted my consciousness…through the years I have been drawn back, again and again, not only by the opportunity to learn more about this fascinating region of the world, but also by the civility of its people, a warmth of friendship and relationship I have come to value of one of my prized experiences. (p. xxiii)

Foster's writing and actions evidenced similar sentiments; that he valued the relationships he developed in Africa more than America's material wealth.

A number of Foster's mentees picked up on his final wishes, too. I asked Juliana Ashade why Foster hadn't been buried in the United States. She relayed "Foster used to say he wished to die and be buried in Africa, not in America. I asked him 'Why wouldn't you prefer to die in your home country?' He said, 'No, I love Africa.'" (J. Ashabe, personal communication, December 2015).

This was not an uncommon request from African Americans who repatriated to Africa. In Ghana, for example, African American returnees often asked to be buried there. Land was acquired and loved ones were invited from the United States for a memorial service (known as a

remembrance in Ghana) and burial. Sometimes family came over from the United States and other times they didn't. But there were rarely discussions about these American African returnees "going home" because they were home. Foster was home, too.

Foster died at age 62. He was still relatively "young" and his death was too abrupt. No one could have expected, or had foreseen, that his end of life was imminent. He didn't have a serious medical condition that prompted people to prepare for his passing on. Rather, he was taken quickly and it sent shock waves through Deaf Communities across sub-Saharan African and into the United States. In response, memorial services take place between West Africa and the America, including:

- Bethany Pembroke Chapel, Detroit Michigan, December 12, 1987
- Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C., January 26, 1988
- Osu Ebenezer Presbyterian Church (formerly Presbyterian Church Christiansborg, Accra, Ghana, April 17, 1988 (see figure 52) and;
- Christian Mission School for the Deaf, Ibadan, Nigeria (date unknown)

At 4 p.m. on January 26, 1988 Foster's mentees and colleagues filled the pews at Gallaudet's Chapel Hall for his memorial service. [54] One by one, they came forward to mourn the loss of a founding father, a hero, a visionary and offer poignant testimonies. Foster's mentees, like Marcus Titus, paid tribute through stories about how he changed their lives. Titus was a d/Deaf child who first received mission education from Foster in Benin. He later pursued a post-secondary education and a d/Deaf education career in the United States. In his testimony about Foster, Titus said:

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[54] Foster's family members attended the memorial service in Detroit but not in Washington, D.C. (A. Foster, personal communication, July 2020). Gallaudet University invited Mrs. Berta Foster and Foster's five adult children to the service, but the invitations apparently got lost in the mail (Kamei, 2006).

> If I'm able to communicate with my hands today I owe that to Dr. Foster. It was his opinion that a deaf person living in Africa who cannot read or write, was a piece of gold lost in the far remote mine down in rural Africa. That piece of gold had to be taken out and polished. Which means you have to go out and look in the rural areas for the people who do not have the benefits of the educational or social opportunities in the cities and train them. ("Man of the People," 00:55- 01:40)

Titus's story spoke to how Foster prioritized the empowerment of d/Deaf youth caught up and often languishing in rural Africa.

Dr. Gabriel Adepoju was the next mentee to eulogize Foster. He recalled an emotive first encounter with Foster:

> I remember very well now as it was yesterday…in Nigeria 1960… I read in the paper that they had opened a school for deaf children. I said, 'Wow what's that? A school for deaf children? Where? Who? What?' It was Andrew Foster. He wrote a letter asking me to come to see him. I went in after three days. I traveled to meet him and said 'It is me Gabriel Adepoju.' He pantomimed that he was deaf and that I was deaf. Tried to talk with other people standing with him. I said 'Tell him that my name is...' They stopped me and gestured he is deaf and we are deaf. I said 'What you are all deaf?' I thought I was only person the world was deaf! I want to paraphrase one of the best Bible quotes. Always let's remember that Andrew Foster planted seeds. We Africans will water them. We will let God give the increase. ("Man of the People," 02:44-03:55)

Dr. Adepoju went on to suggest that Foster was the Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (THG) and the Laurent Clerc for d/Deaf people in sub Saharan Africa (Moores & Panara, 1996). But Foster's contributions to d/Deaf education substantially outweighed and far surpassed that of THG and

Clerc. Foster's founded 32 mission schools for the d/Deaf in Africa, while THG and Clerc founded one school between the two of them in the United States.

Who gets to decide which contributions justify memorialization? THG and Clerc were the White founding father celebrated with statues and buildings in their name across the Gallaudet campus and at schools for the d/Deaf across the United States. Foster, a Deaf founding father of color, remained obscure after the 1988 memorial service.

The history of marginalized persons remained marginalized. Yet marginalize people understand that monuments are inextricably intertwined with power and shape our historical narratives. Memorialization of heroes of color can introduce counternarratives. The d/Deaf would call on Gallaudet to do significantly more to acknowledge Foster, beginning with his wife.

Mrs. Foster was in the United States, at the time of her husband's death, raising their five children and recovering from cancer. She was not positioned to do full time public relations and fund raising necessary to support CMDA's mission school for the d/Deaf. With that said, Mrs. Foster continued to do what she could to raise awareness and money to assist CMDA's "neediest" mission schools. This might have prompted her to reengage with Gallaudet ten years after they hosted Foster's memorial service.

On February 20, 1998 Mrs. Foster presented at a Gallaudet event aptly entitled *Remembering Andrew Foster: A Deaf American Hero*. Linsey Dunn (2004), a d/Deaf African Gallaudet administrator, recalled this event: "When Berta came to Gallaudet many people here were touched" (00:10:10-00:10:14). After Mrs. Foster's presentation, they deliberated about how to better commemorate Foster's contributions to d/Deaf education. Dunn (2004) explained, "Over the past years we made several attempts to honor Dr. Foster in a variety of different ways" (00:09:23-00:09:33). According to Dunn (2004), Gallaudet's administration had considered

renaming the College of Education, and even a lecture series, after Foster. Finally, they settled on naming the campus auditorium in his honor.

Unbeknownst to Gallaudet's administration, the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) had also noticed the curious absence of Foster's name on Gallaudet's monuments, statues or buildings (Ilabor, 2010). They envisioned creation of a Foster bust, to be located at Gallaudet at a future date (National Black Deaf Advocates, n.d). In 1998, NBDA contracted Virginia Cox, an African American sculptor, to craft a bronze bust of Foster (Ilabor, 2010). Dr. Irving King Jordan, Gallaudet's President, got word of the bust and collaborated with NBDA to expedite it's completion for placement at Gallaudet. Finally, a decision was made to locate the Foster bust at the foyer of the newly renamed and dedicated Andrew J. Foster Auditorium.

On October 22, 2004 Gallaudet held their Andrew J. Foster Auditorium dedication ceremony. President Jordan oversaw the event and spoke at great length (through ASL and speech), expounding on its significance to the audience:

> Andrew Foster was a great man. He did many things in Africa until he was taken from us at an early age while he was carrying out his life's work.…it's fitting that we name this auditorium for Andrew Foster. This auditorium will be used by many, many different groups of people from all different walks of life. The auditorium is used by our students, leaders of tomorrow. From today when students gather here they will learn of the legacy of Dr. Foster. They will learn what it means truly to be a leader of man and women. The bust is located in the lobby, a really perfect location because the lobby's front glass; it's all glass, very open and clear. We've arranged that light will shine on the bust twenty-four hours a day, every day, all the time. That means anyone who walks past this building will see Dr. Foster's image all the time, night, day, rain or shine. Dr. Foster was

> a beacon of hope to many people. Although he is no longer with us, the light that shines on his bust will continue to carry his message and the light that he put in the hearts and souls of so many people will never die. (2004, 15:28- 20:06)

After this speech, Foster's wife, adult children and three generations of mentees looked on as President Jordan ceremoniously unveiled the bust and officially opened the Andrew J. Foster Auditorium to the general public (see figure 56). With that, the son of an Alabama coal miner had changed the landscape at Gallaudet. He cemented a counternarrative about what the founding fathers, visionaries and heroes of d/Deaf education could look like, where they can come from, and who they might be.

"What are some results of your ministry?" Foster inquired in *Roots Out of Dry Ground* (1980, p. 10). "Eternity alone will reveal that fully!" he answered (1980, p.10). The events of this story demonstrated to me that Foster was a man who lived and died in silence, and whose impact is for an eternity. He can see the tens of thousands of lives he changed from where he is, but how can we see it from where we stand? What does the eternity of Foster's work look like from Ghana?

These lingering questions crowded my mind during my closing days in Ghana in 2020. During one particularly hot and humid day I decided to do what the Basel missionaries and Foster had done and sought a reprieve from Accra's urban intensity in the serenity of the Akwapim Ridge. I aimed to visit Demonstration School for the Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim. There I could get a breath of fresh air and give Foster's story further thought. I got an Uber and journeyed up the narrow, windy road to Mampong-Akwapim.

As we climbed the road up the ridge, the humidity lifted, the temperature lowered and Accra dropped down and spread out below us. Near the top of the ridge I looked over my right

shoulder to get a view of the distant Atlantic Ocean. I turned back toward the driver to say something then caught a fleeting glimpse of an old blue VW kombi. It quickly barreled past, going down the hill in opposite direction. In an instant, it was gone. That old kombi looked like Foster's, I thought to myself. Where was it coming from? And where was it going to?

I closed my eyes and mediated on this. I saw Foster and other d/Deaf Africans together in their blue VW kombi. In my mind's eye I positioned myself there, in the backseat. We moved together across space and time, through Ghana, Nigeria and then into other West and Central African countries. During the road trip they excitedly signed to each other about the day's events.

The sun set and it got darker in the van. I reflected on our sojourn. I remembered all those "heady" years I had spent with a host of old and new friends, chasing Foster's story from the United States to Ghana, across West Africa and into Rwanda. I recalled the first time I came to research about Foster in Nigeria and nervously exited Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, doubtful that his mentees would actually drive two hours to from Ibadan pick up me (a stranger), only to find them faithfully waiting for me with the CMSD van. Why I would have questioned their commitment? I recalled how I had created and presented a Foster photo exhibition for the d/Deaf middle school students at a school for the d/Deaf in Northern Ghana, and before I could remove the posters they quickly waved in the d/Deaf elementary school students (who had been watching through the windows) and proceeded to walk them through the display while telling Foster's story better than I had! The elementary school children were spell-bound watching the middle school children, and I was spell-bound watching the elementary school children's' reactions. It's hard to understate the profound impact which Foster's story had on the d/Deaf in Africa.

Foster self-depreciatingly casted himself as a grasshopper in comparison to the enormity of his mission in Africa (Christian Mission for Deaf Africans, 1969). But even with all his complications, short-comings and human faults, Foster was more than equal to the task. In the end, he stood as a giant of d/Deaf education in sub-Saharan Africa. There were days when I looked up to him and felt intimidated, overshadowed by this colossus and achievements. All of sudden, I became the grasshopper. "How can I be as good as Foster?, " I wondered. "What if his family, his mentees and d/Deaf persons of color don't like what I had written about him?," I despaired. I wrestled with imposter syndrome, as fears of rejection and reprimand surrounded and closed in around me. And yet my bigger fear had always been that I wouldn't be able to tell Foster's story, that I'd never get it done.

This is Foster's story, it's the story of d/Deaf Africans who stepped up and answered the call to serve, and it's my story too. I had labored more than two decades to locate, curate and preserve stories about how Foster and his mentees created a service delivery schema to empower marginalized persons to achieve full citizenship and participate in society. All journeys have a start, a middle, and a finish. The blue VW kombi slowly faded away, until it was gone, and I reached the end of the road.

I opened my eyes and found I had been dropped off at the entrance to the Demonstration School for Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim. Foster and the Ministry of Education transferred his d/Deaf education teacher and audiology training program to this site in 1965. It had since moved to University of Education Winneba, but the demonstration elementary residential school for the d/Deaf remained. I could see d/Deaf children walking toward me from their residential hall. Some were already signing to me from a distance "Good afternoon, good afternoon". I walked

through the school gates to go to them, but then noticed the school sign board on right. I stopped to examine it.

The school's name was on the top of the sign, followed by the school's location, then the school's emblem. Located at the top of the emblem read EPHPHATHA – THAT IS, BE OPENED. I slowly ran the open palm of my hand along the words, letting one emerge after another as I silently read these words. I stopped at the end and stood staring at EPHPHATHA. I felt the soft touch of a child's hand on my arm, looked down and saw I was surrounded by d/Deaf school children watching me. Foster overcame intersectional adversities to fulfill a boyhood dream to come to Africa. In Ghana, between 1957 and 1965, he realized a man's vision to manifest an opening for his people--d/Deaf Africans. Foster was gone, but that opening remained and now belonged to all of them.

Figure 2. Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Foster, Andrew Foster's parents.
Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3: Foster with his mother Veilline (on the left) and younger sister Blanche, (on the right). Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

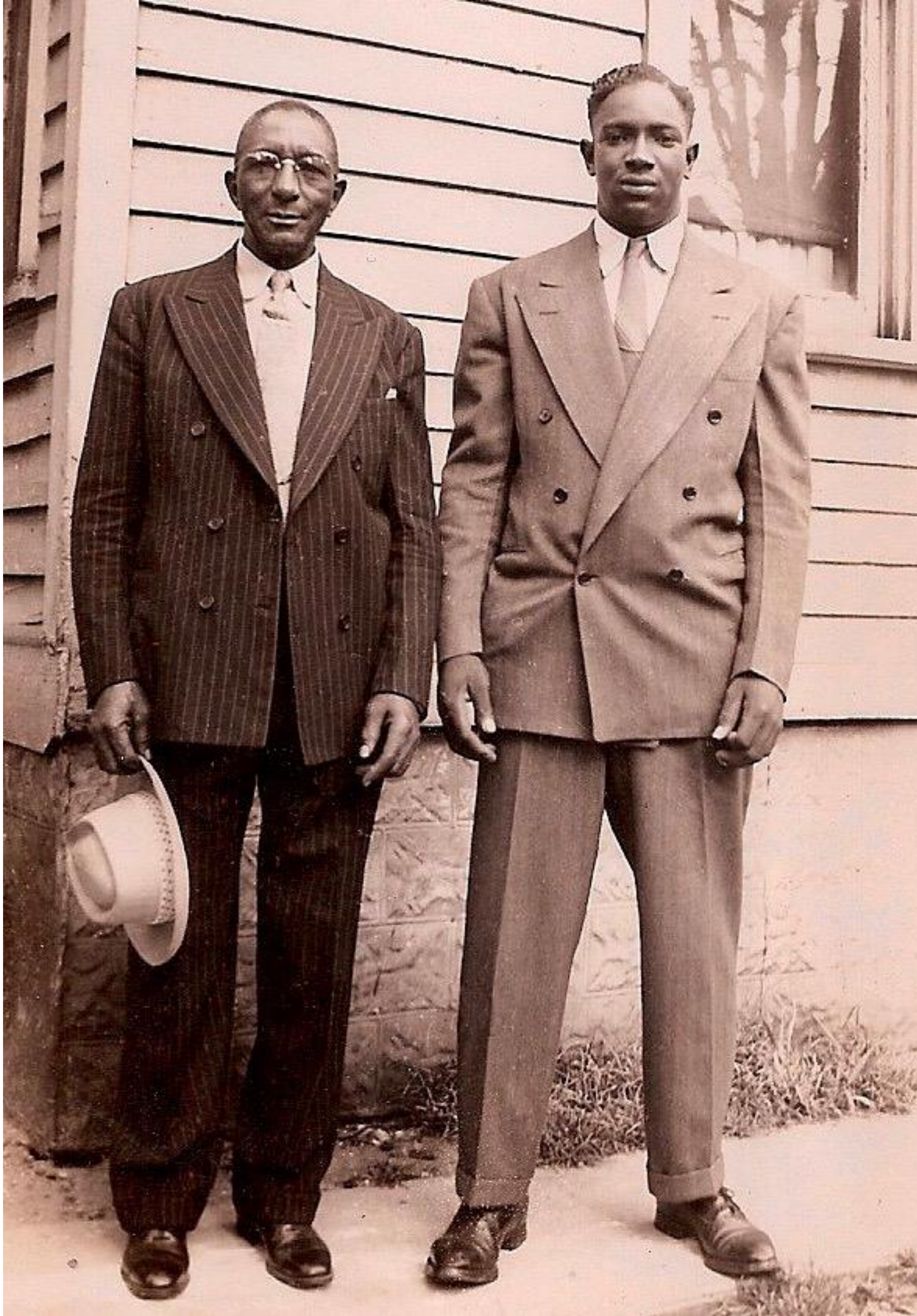

Figure 4: Foster, the son of an Alabama coal miner, with his father Wiley. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 5: Foster learned sign language and received basic religious based education at Alabama School for the Negro Deaf-Mute and Blind. Courtesy of Alabama Institute of the Deaf and Blind. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 6. A portrait of Foster at age 19. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 7: Foster standing on the outside of Bethany Tabernacle in Detroit, Michigan. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 8: Walter J. Lyon ("Bro Lion") delivering sermon in sign language at Bethany Tabernacle. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 9: Foster used his voice to preach to hearing congregations Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 10*:* Foster trained to fly small planes. This photo was taken in Detroit in 1951. Courtesy of Grace Bible Chapel. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 11: Foster attending night classes at Detroit Institute of Commerce between 1947 and 1950. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 12: Foster graduated from Gallaudet University in 1954. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

An early ELWA postcard

Figure 13: Foster arrived in Liberia, on May 30, 1957. Mr. and Mrs. de la Hayes hosted Foster's first night in Africa. They ran the Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) radio station and stayed next to the compound. Courtesy of the ELWA Ministries. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 14*:* Foster's arrived in Accra, Ghana on June 10, 1957. Three months after, he allied and mobilized resources to launch the country's first school for the d/Deaf. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 15: By 1957, Accra was a bustling and vibrant city. It was an ideal laboratory for Foster's d/Deaf education experiment. He remained in Accra, rather than move on to Nigeria. Courtesy of Public Records and Archives Administration. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 16: The British Colonial Government trialed rehabilitation for Ghanaians soldiers who fought for the Crown in World War II. Neither colonialists nor missionaries offered services to the d/Deaf. Courtesy of Public Records and Archives Administration. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 17: Florence Serwaa Oteng was a d/Deaf Ghanaian. Foster hired her to work at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Christiansborg, but she didn't fully come on board until it moved to Mampong-Akwapim. Courtesy of the Oteng family. Reprinted with permission.

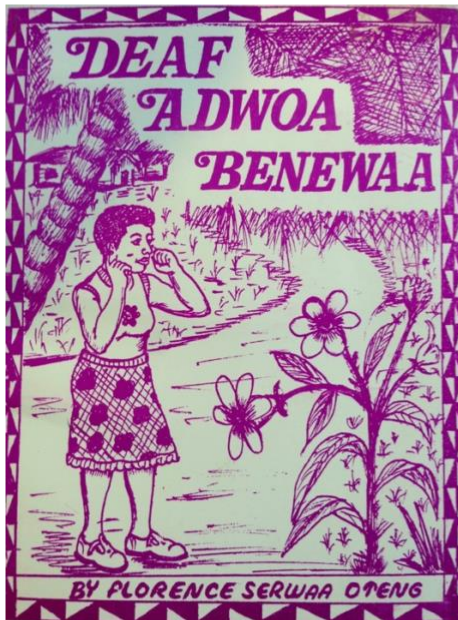

Figure 18: Oteng, a d/Deaf Ghanaian, worked with Foster at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim. Per her experiences with Foster, she wrote two books, *Deaf Adwoa Benewaa* and *Give Them A Name*. Courtesy of the Oteng family. Reprinted with permission.

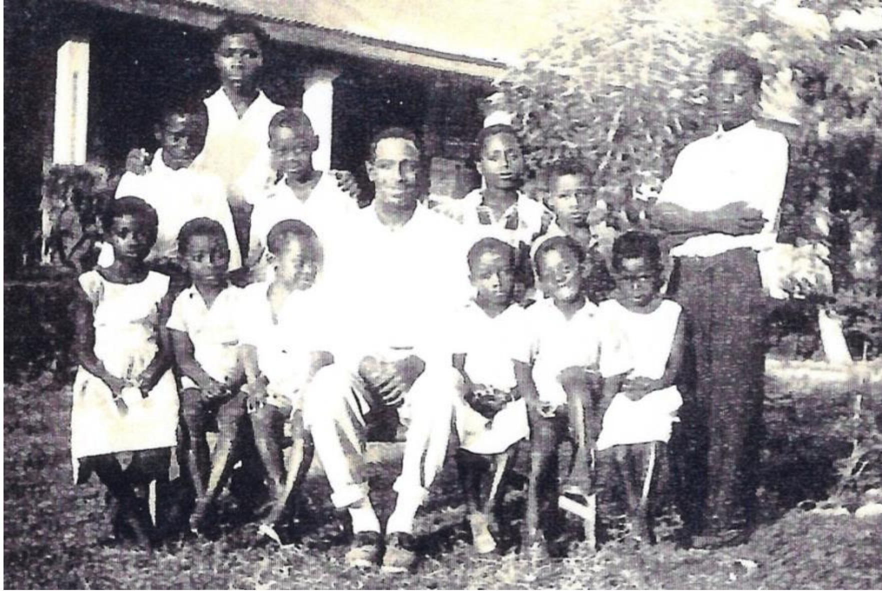

Figure 19: Foster (middle) with Seth Ocloo (left), Sono (right), and first cohort of d/Deaf students at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Accra on September 10, 1957. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 20*:* Foster with d/Deaf adults and youth students at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Accra in 1957. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

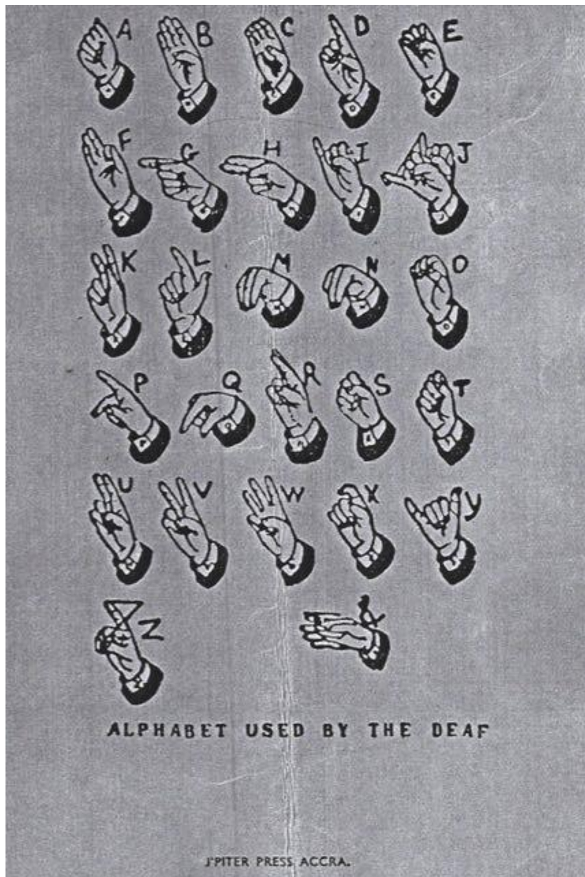

Figure 21*:* Foster printed, distributed, and used the fingerspelling alphabet for his work with the d/Deaf in Ghana. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

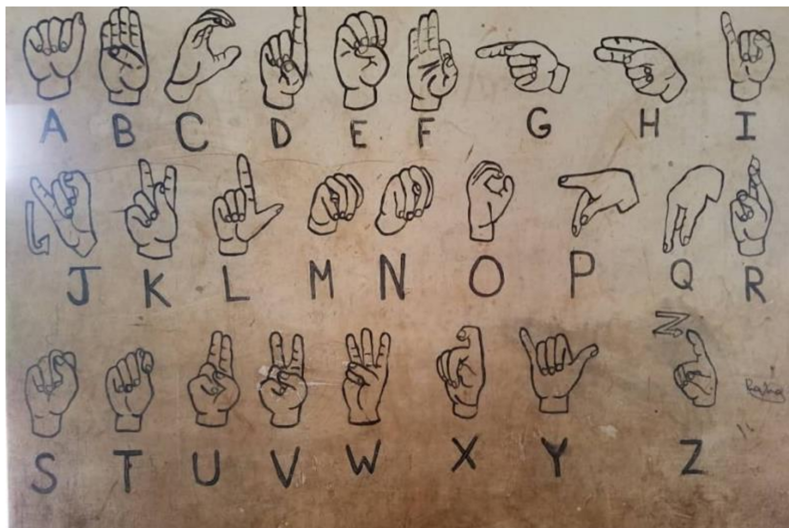

Figure 22: Ghana's Ministry of Education applied the sign language and fingerspelling which Foster brought as seen at Savelugu School for the Deaf, Ghana. Photography by author. Taken and printed with permission from Ghana Education Service.

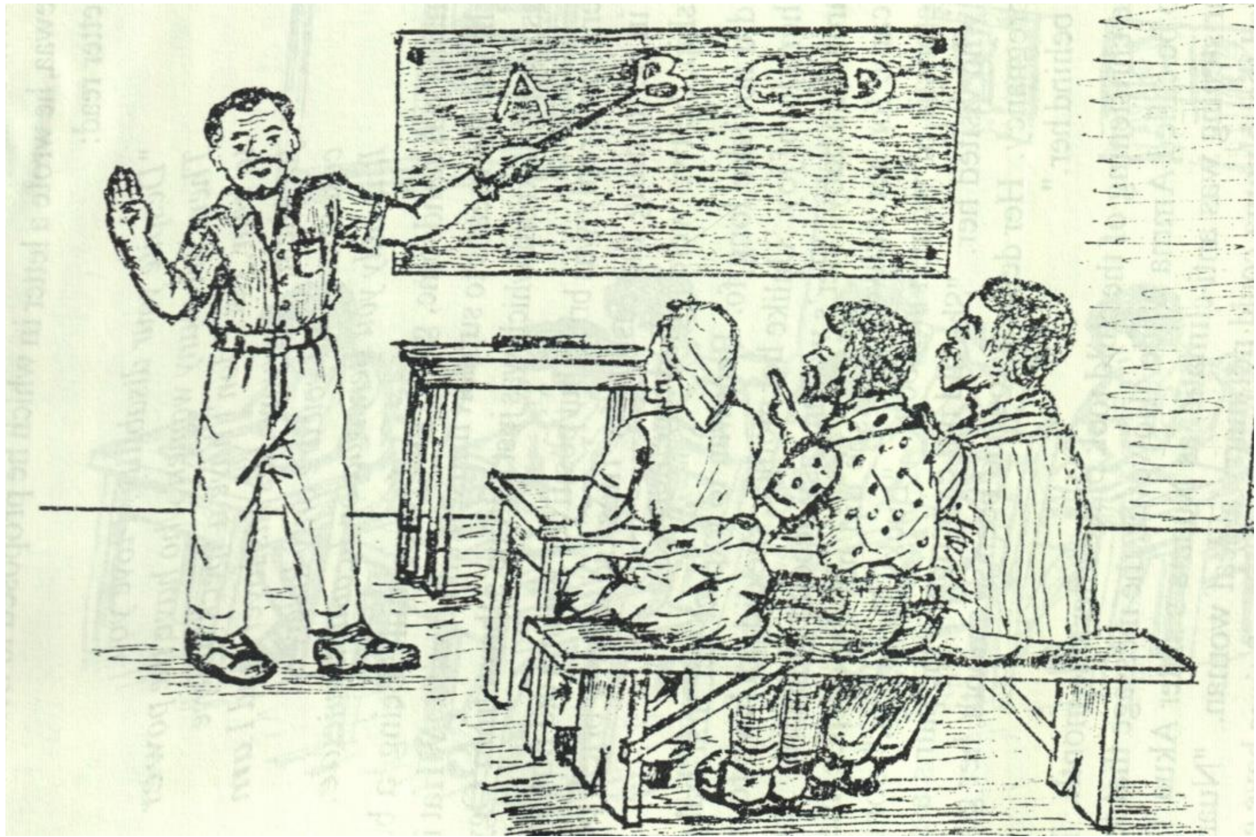

Figure 23: Foster teaching fingerspelling alphabet to the d/Deaf adults at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Accra. Illustration by Kwaku Appidu. Reprinted with artist's permission.

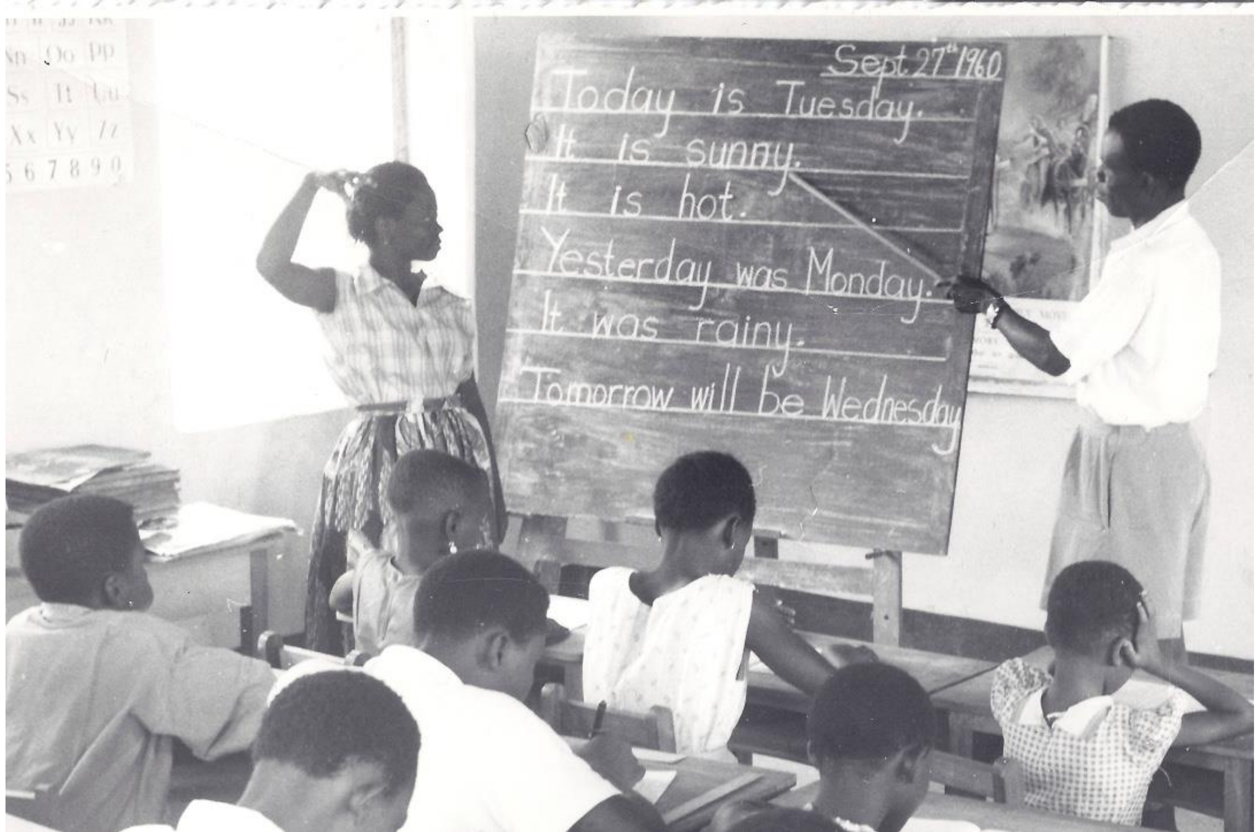

Figure 24: Foster trained his teachers to use sign language, which they used as their mode of instruction and communication in class. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

HOW WE TALK

"Jesus . . . loves . . . me . . ."

Helping deaf children to overcome their communication problem is of real significance; it is also the basic human aid in evangelising them. Humanitarian educators therefore use every known method and every available means of instruction. These include the Sign Language, the Manual Alphabet, Written Language, Lip-reading, Speech and Hearing aids.

Figure 25: Foster came to Ghana to evangelize to the d/Deaf. That was his primary motivation, which intersected with communication and education. Courtesy of James Annang. EPHPHATA Appeal Fund booklet. Reprinted with permission.

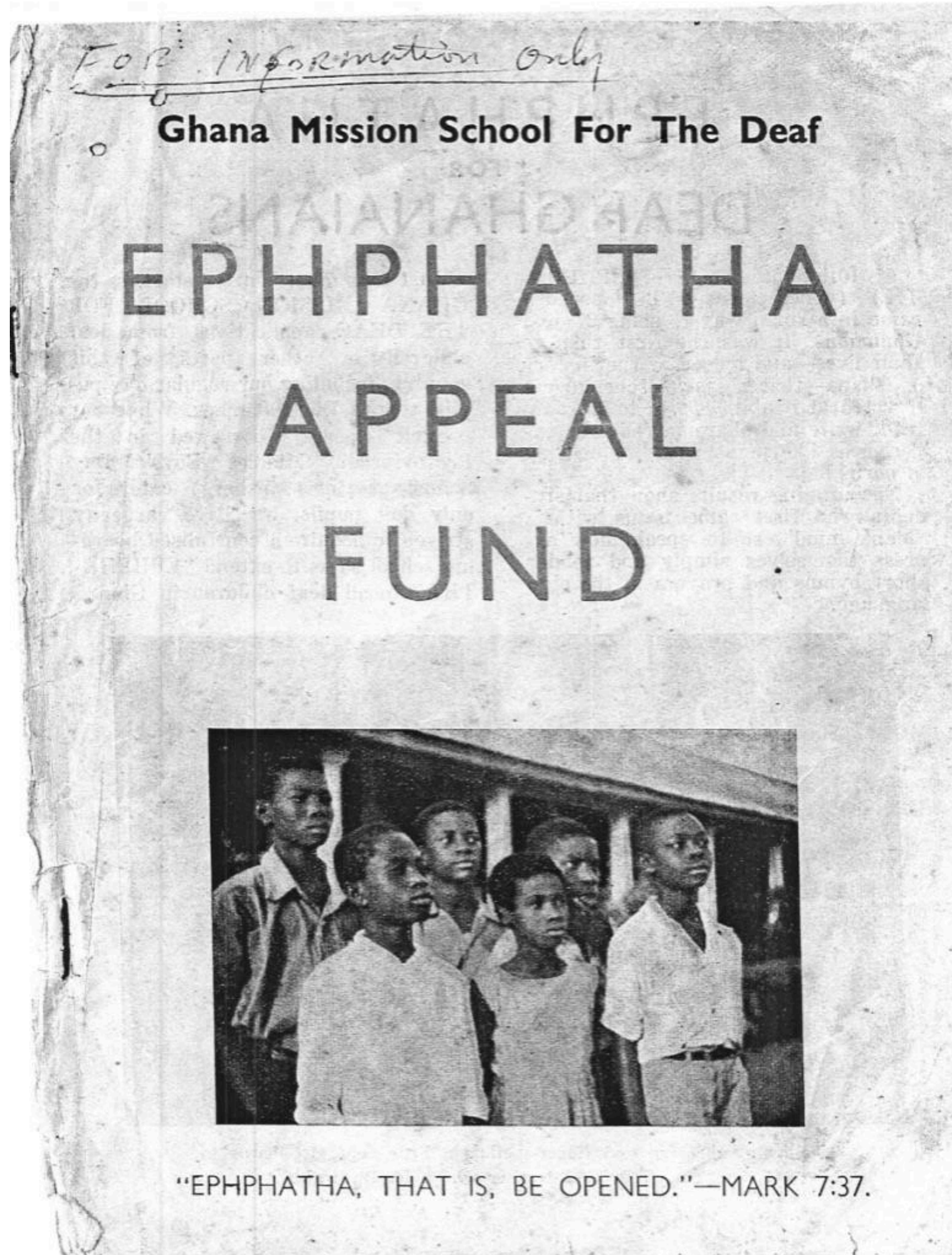

Figure: 26: The EPHPHATA Appeal Fund, launched to fund Ghana Mission for the Deaf, lost more money than it made. This led to even greater financial hardship for Foster. EPHPHATA Appeal Fund booklet. Courtesy of James Annang. Reprinted with permission.

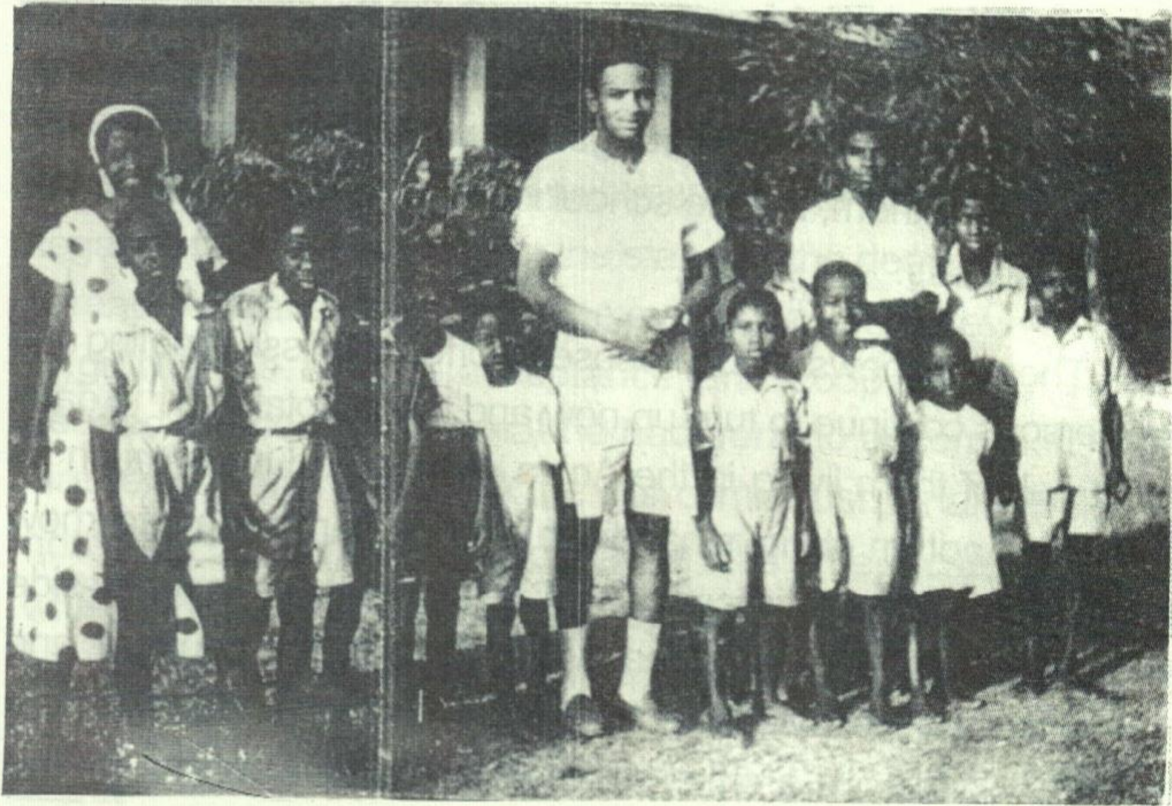

Figure 27: The EPHPHATA Appeal Fund failed to raise resources. Foster had to go on a "banana diet". He subsisted on bananas and water for two weeks, until money arrived from the United States to bail him out. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 28: In late 1958, Foster made a deal to rent the Mamponhene's (paramount chief's) house and land to accommodate Ghana Mission School for the Deaf. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 29: By January 1959, Foster moved his mission school from Accra to the Mamponhene's land. The school (now the Secondary Technical School for the Deaf) has remained at this "temporary" rental site ever since. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure: 30*:* Foster (far left) and Ocloo (right of Foster) with students and teachers at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in Mampong-Akwapim. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

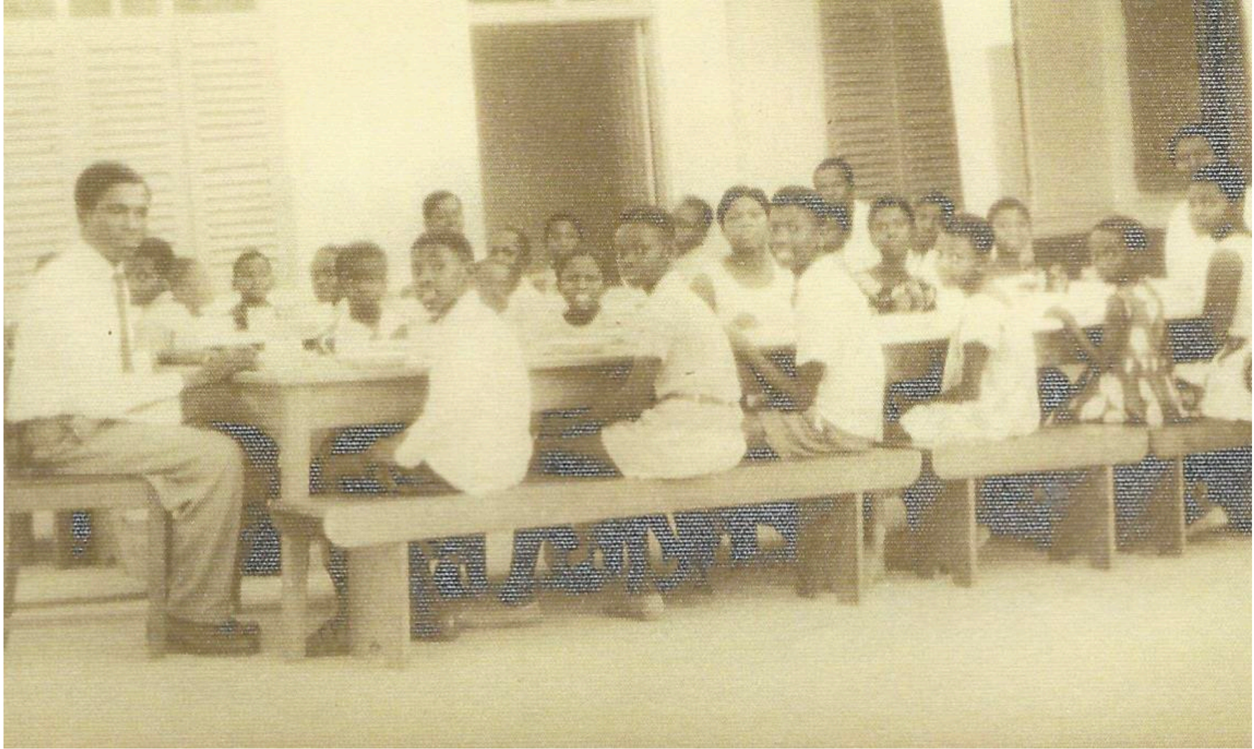

Figure 31: Dr. Seth Tetteh Ocloo was Foster's "right hand man" at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf between 1957 and 1961. He administered the school and "taught" the teachers-in training while Foster mobilized its resources in the Ghana and the United States. Ocloo is a d/Deaf Ghanaian unsung hero. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 32: Foster drove this VW kombi across West and Central Africa to establish mission schools for the d/Deaf. It became a symbol of his field work, often appearing in the background of photos from mission school visits. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission

Figure 33: Foster is driving his VW van, but he also taught and empowered d/Deaf West Africans to drive. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

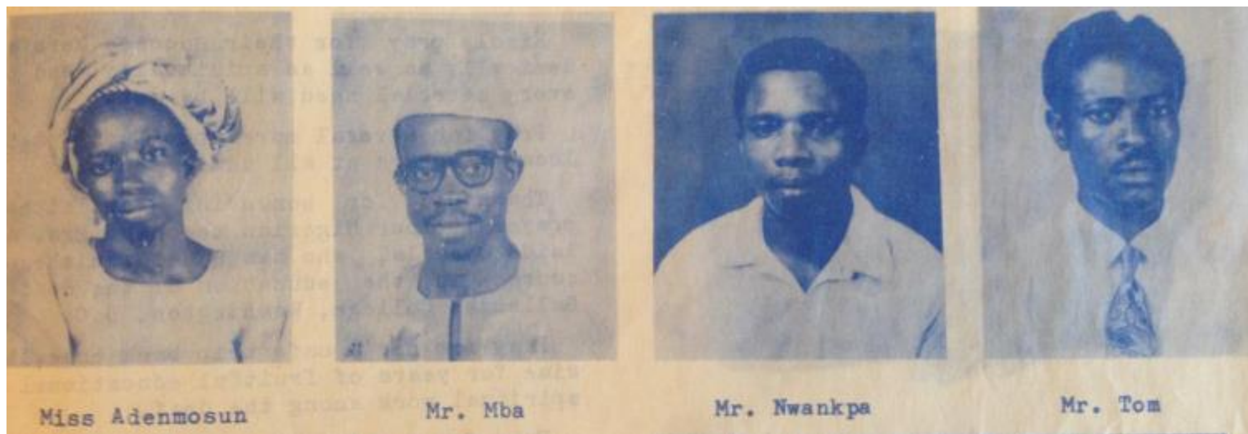

Figure 34: Foster recruited the “Greenhorns” (d/Deaf Nigerians) from Nigeria to teach and train at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, then returned to run his replication schools in Nigeria. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

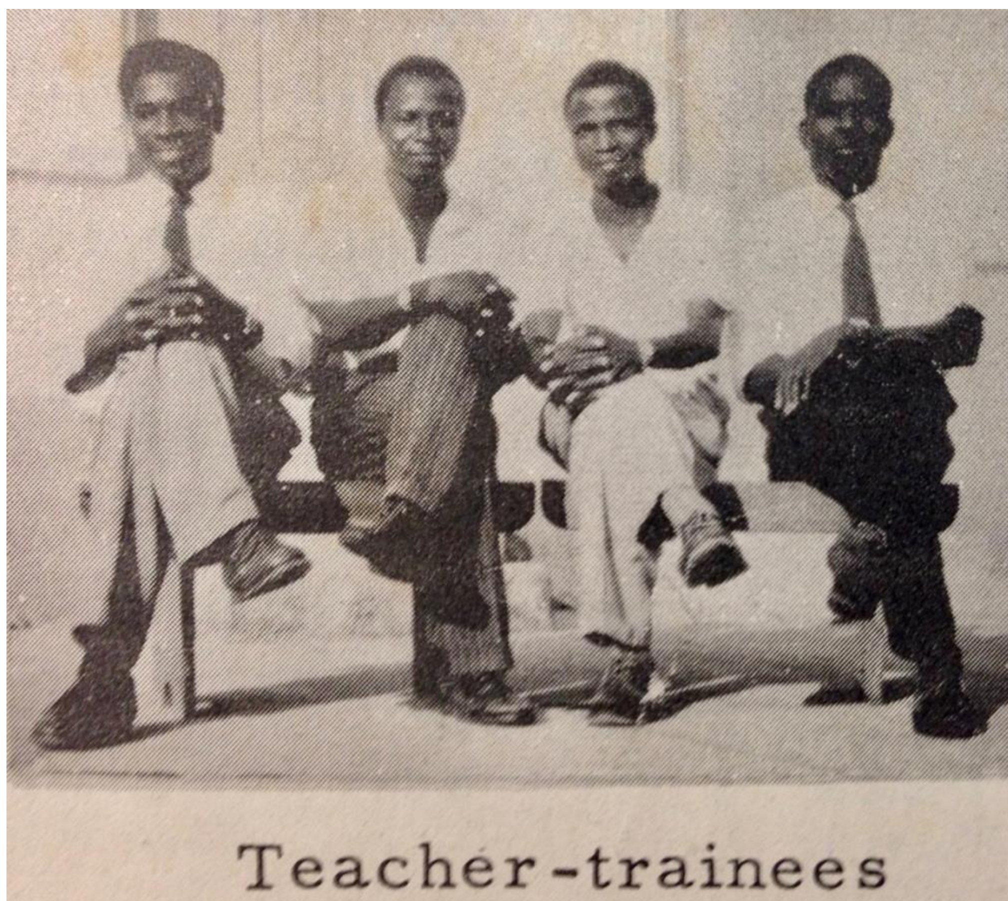

Figure 35: Foster trained Ocloo (left), who then trained this cadres of “Greenhorns” (Boniface Okorie, Jonathan Olojeole, Moses Ariobasa). Critics complained this system didn’t adequately prepare them to teach the d/Deaf. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

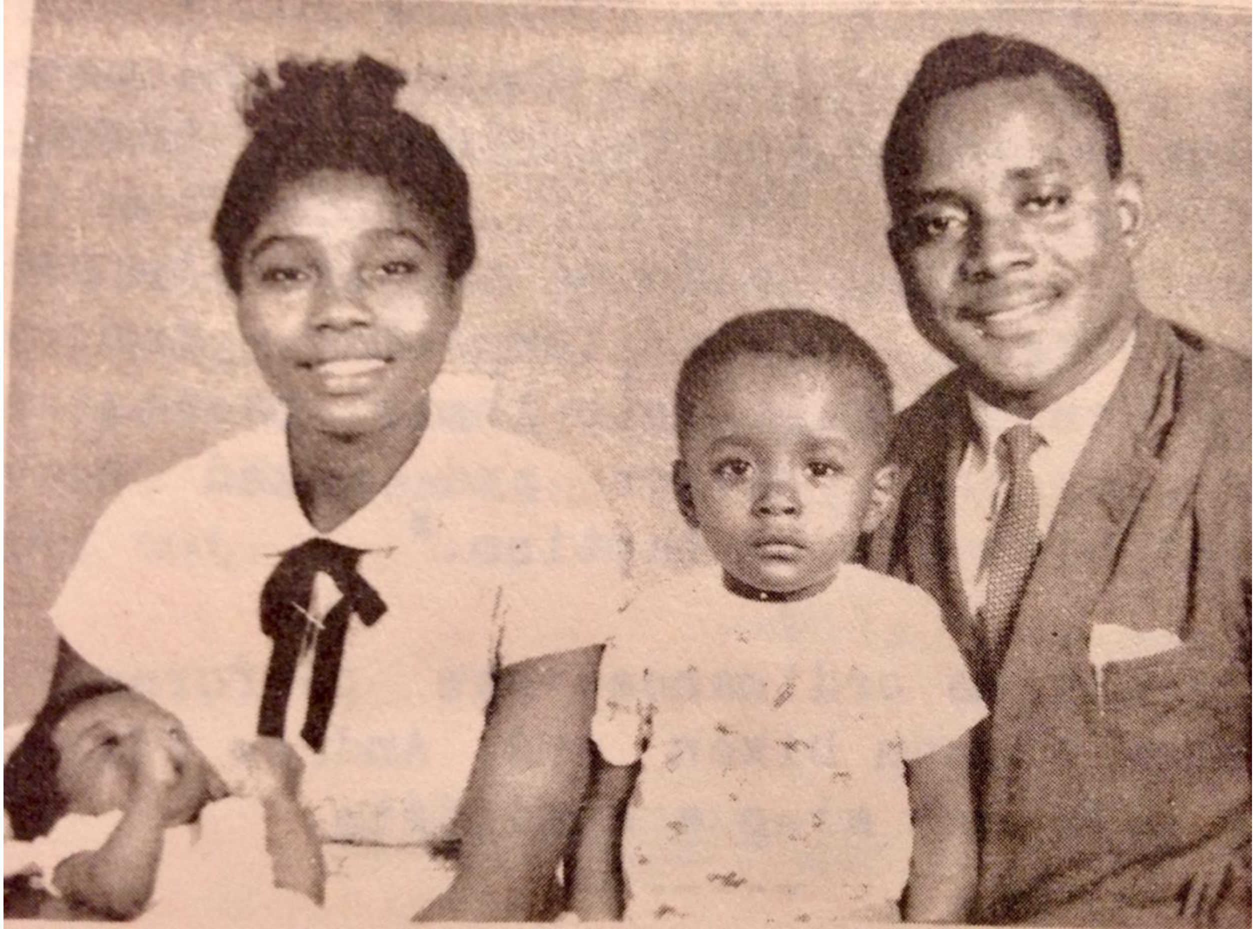

Figure 36: “Brother” and “Sister” Wilson Nah Dixon, from Liberia, trained at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf in 1960. Bro. Dixon was the Principal at Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf between 1961 and 1962. He then returned to Liberia to replicate Foster’s model. He founded Liberia School for the Deaf in 1964. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 37: In 1960, Foster (far right, middle roll) received funding from Government of Nigeria to replicate his Ghana prototype in the Western Region. He launched Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf in this large rental property. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

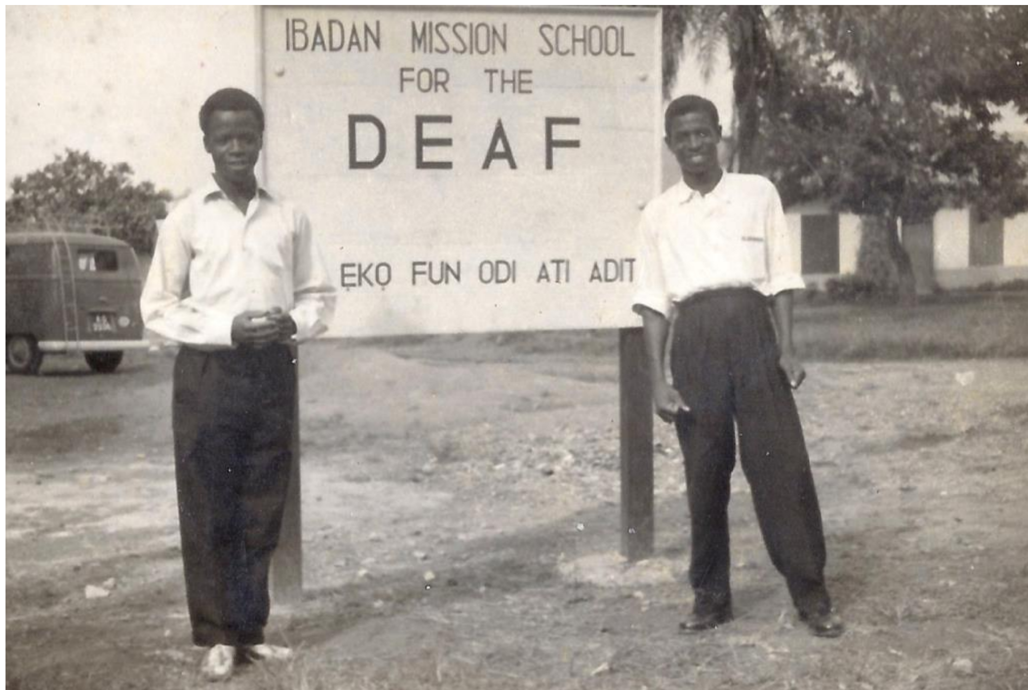

Figure 38*:* Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf launched with Jonathan Olojeole as the first Principal. Foster moved his "headquarters" from Ghana to Ibadan. Note his trademark VW kombi in the background. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 39*:* Foster married Berta Zuther, a d/Deaf German missionary. They held their wedding in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1961. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

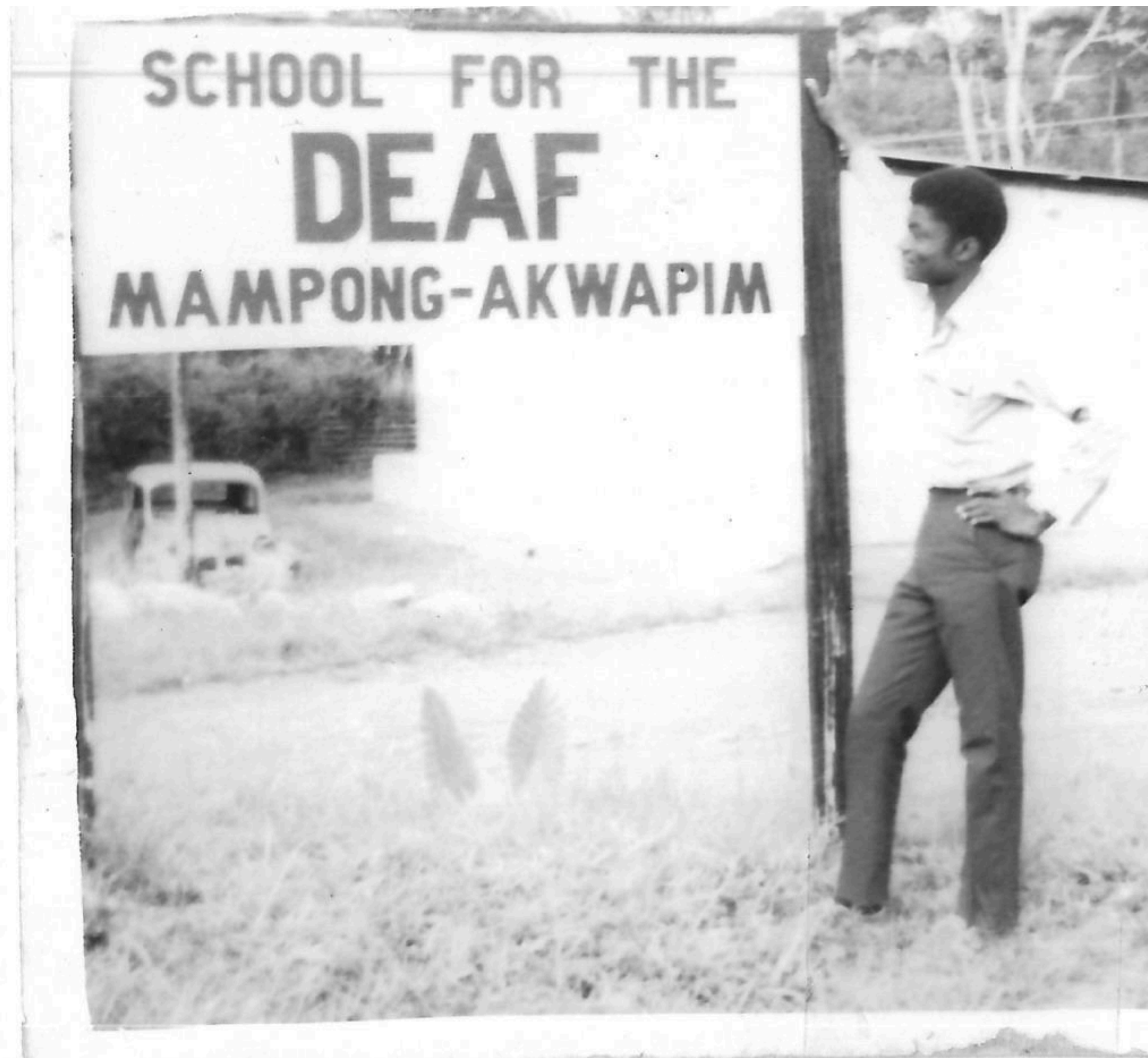

Figure 40: Ghana's Ministry of Education took Foster's school in 1962. They generically renamed it The School for the Deaf. Foster was retained as the headmaster, but increasingly focused on expanding his prototype in Nigeria. Courtesy of the Godwin Amenumey. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 41: Foster piloted an audiology training program at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, which was later expanded at Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf. This program, in combination with his in-service teacher program, became the Deaf Teacher Specialist Training College in 1965. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

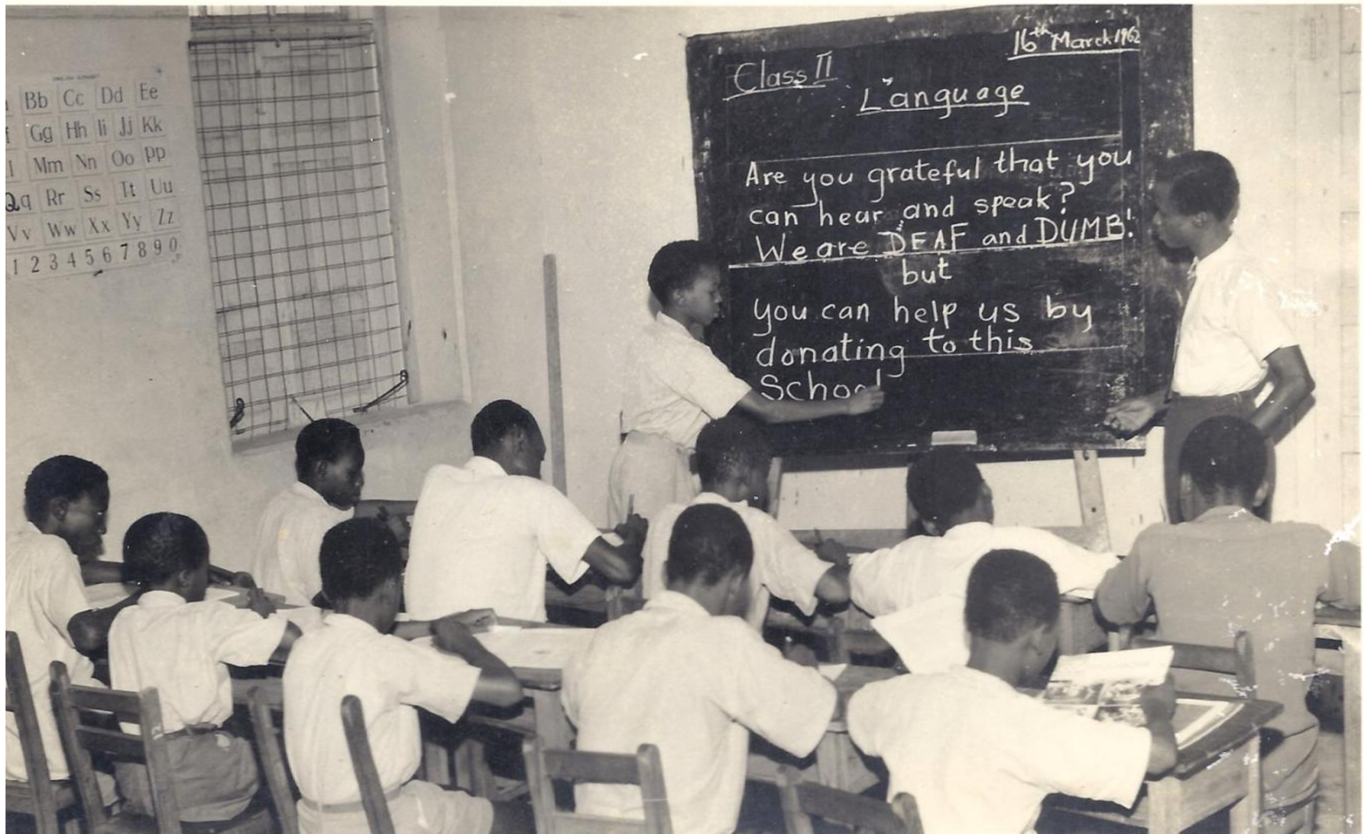

Figure 42: Foster asked people to avoid using the derogatory term “deaf and dumb”. Evidence suggests that he appropriated and propagated this term when it suited him, such as during fund drives. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 43*:* Foster (right) opened opportunity for Gabriel Adepoju (left) and James Agazie (center), d/Deaf Nigerians who taught at Ghana Mission School for the Deaf, to pursue degrees from Gallaudet University. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

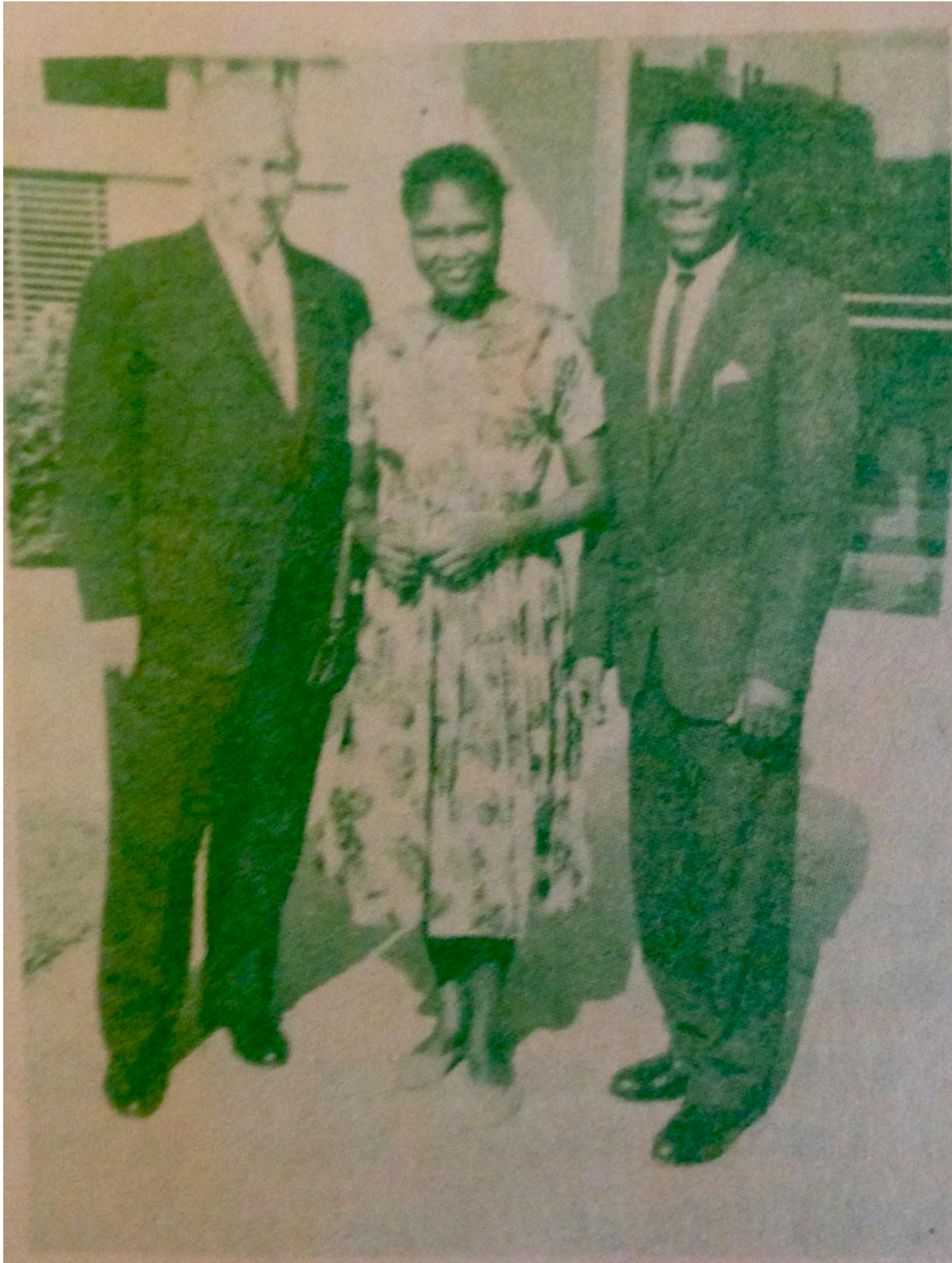

Figure 44: Dr. Elstad, (left) Gallaudet University's President, was a CMSD board member and supported Foster's mission education for the deaf in Ghana. He helped establish scholarships for Foster's mentees, such as Mrs. Oyesola (middle) and Ocloo (right) to study at Gallaudet. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 45: Foster replicated his d/Deaf education across much of West and Central Africa. He refused to name schools after himself (none of his 32 carry his name). In the 1970s and 1980s he named called them “EPHPHATHA”. This EPHPATHA Pour Les Sourds (school for the deaf) was in Senegal. Courtesy of the Foster family. Reprinted with permission.

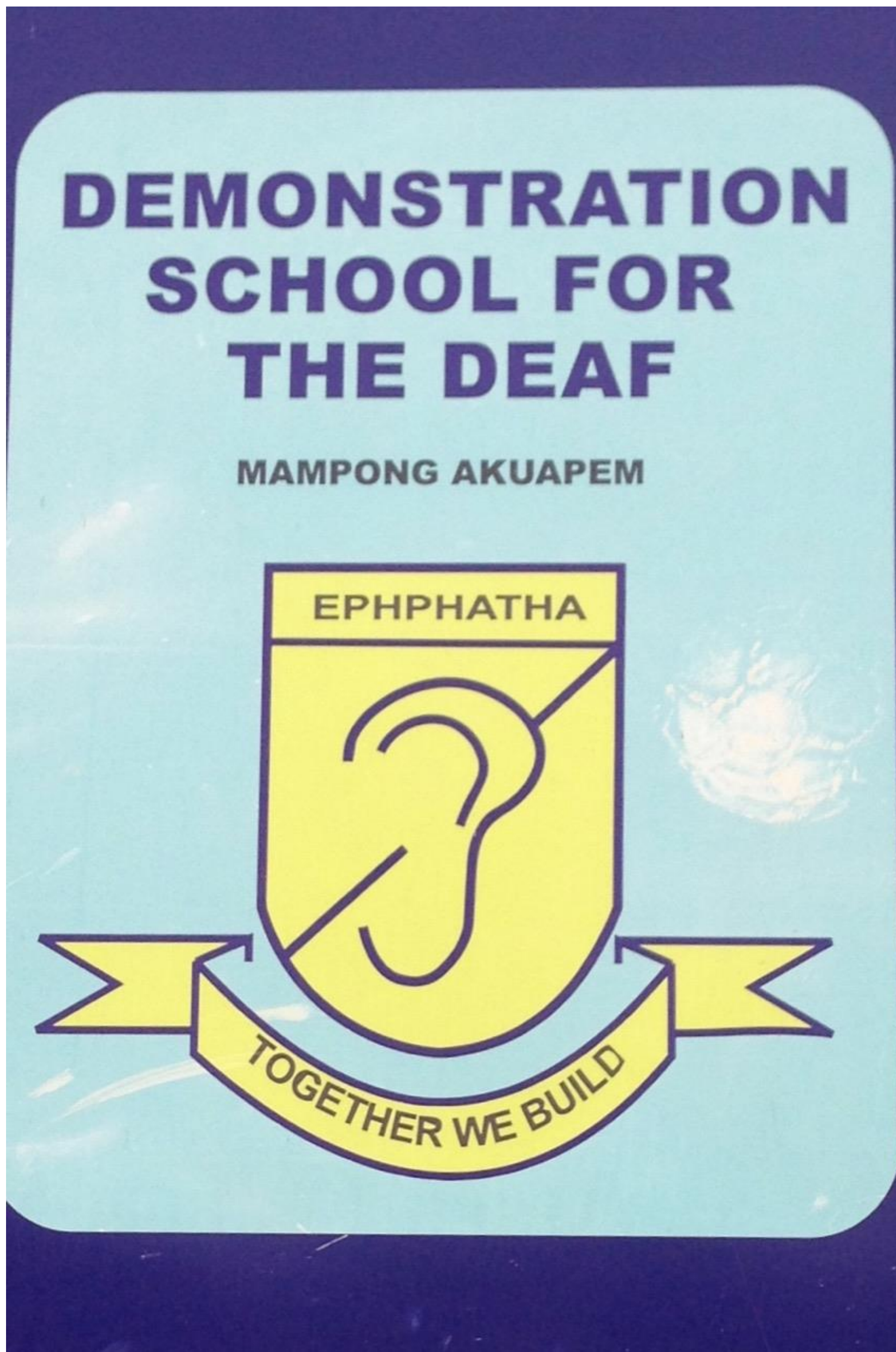

Figure 46: Foster died in 1987. His legacy lives on in the education, sign language, and symbols such as "EPHAPHATA" which he planted at his schools in Ghana. Photography by author. Taken and printed with permission from Ghana Education Service.

Figure 47: Foster founded 32 school of Africa's first school for the d/Deaf across 13 African nations. He died in the 1987 Rwanda plane accident. Graphic designed by Dr. Eric Moore. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 48: Memorial marker for 1987 Rwandan air accident. Photography by author.

Figure 49: Thirteen Rwandan air accident victims named. Photography by author.

Figure 50: Inside mass grave for victims of 1987 Rwandan air accident. Photography by author.

Figure 51*:* Outside mass grave for victims of 1987 Rwandan air accident. Photography by author.

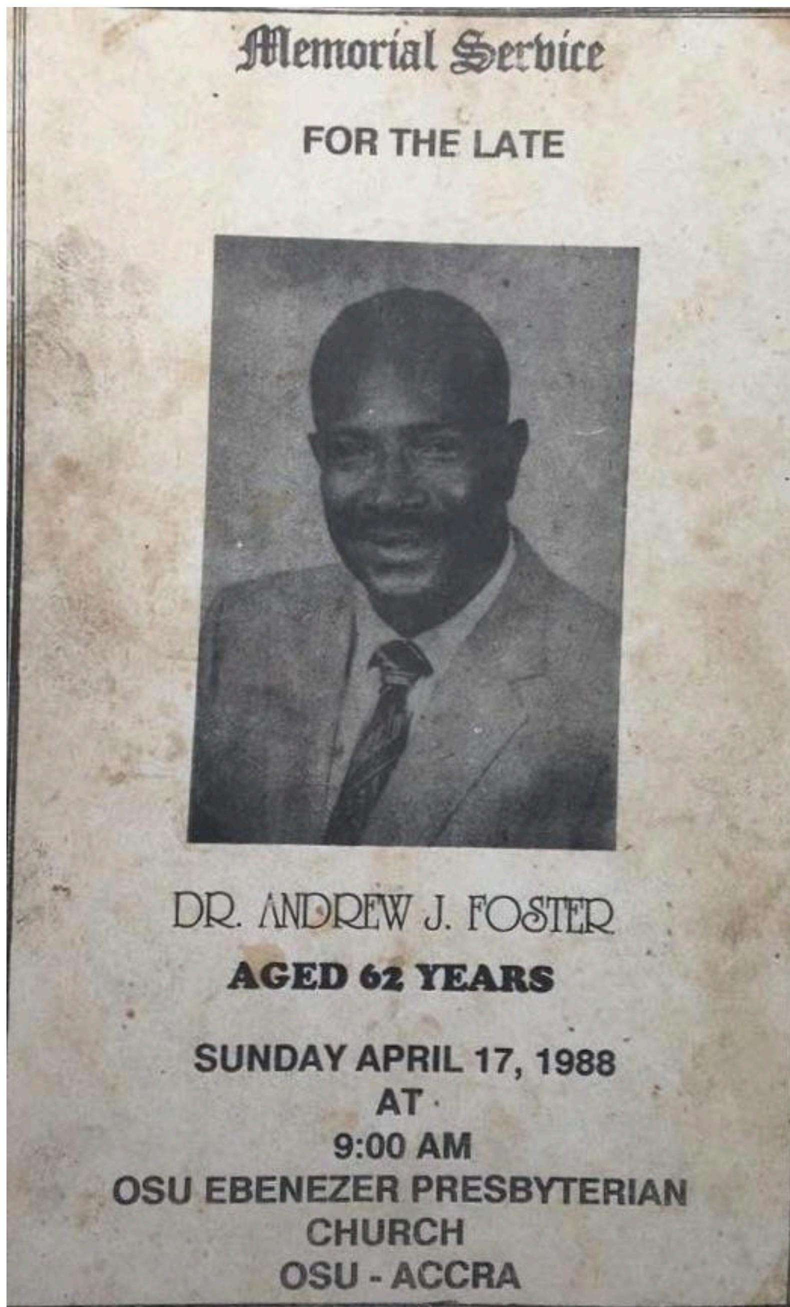

Figure 52: Ghanaians paid their final respects to Foster at the church where he began his work 31 years prior. Courtesy of Marco Nyako. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 53: Ghana's Ministry of Education replicated Foster's prototype mission school for the d/Deaf model, establishing a nation-wide d/Deaf system. Graphic designed by Dr. Eric Moore. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 54: Foster is remembered at many of the mission schools for the d/Deaf he founded across West and Central Africa, as seen in the DRC. Photography by author. Taken and printed with I.S.M.K. permission.

Figure 55: On October 22, 2004, Gallaudet University opened the Andrew J. Foster Auditorium. An African American sculptor created Foster's bust and a Foster mentee authored the narrative plaque. Both are positioned at the auditorium's foray. Photography by author.

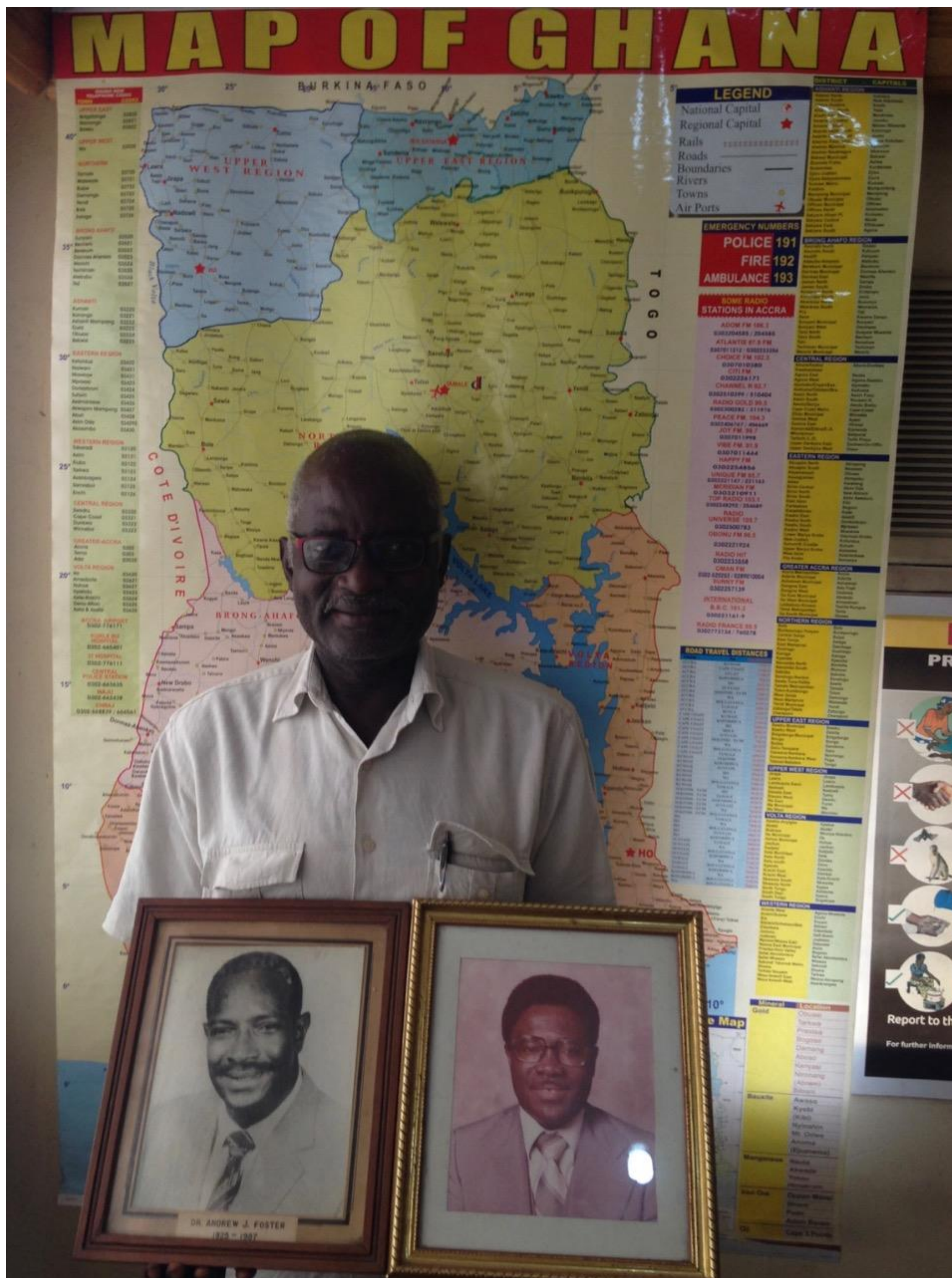

Figure 56: Foster and Ocloo are honored in Ghana. Godwin Amenumey, a Foster mentee, holds their portraits which hang on the wall at Ghana National Association of the Deaf in Accra. Foster's portrait also features on a corridor wall at U.S. Embassy Ghana. Photography by author.

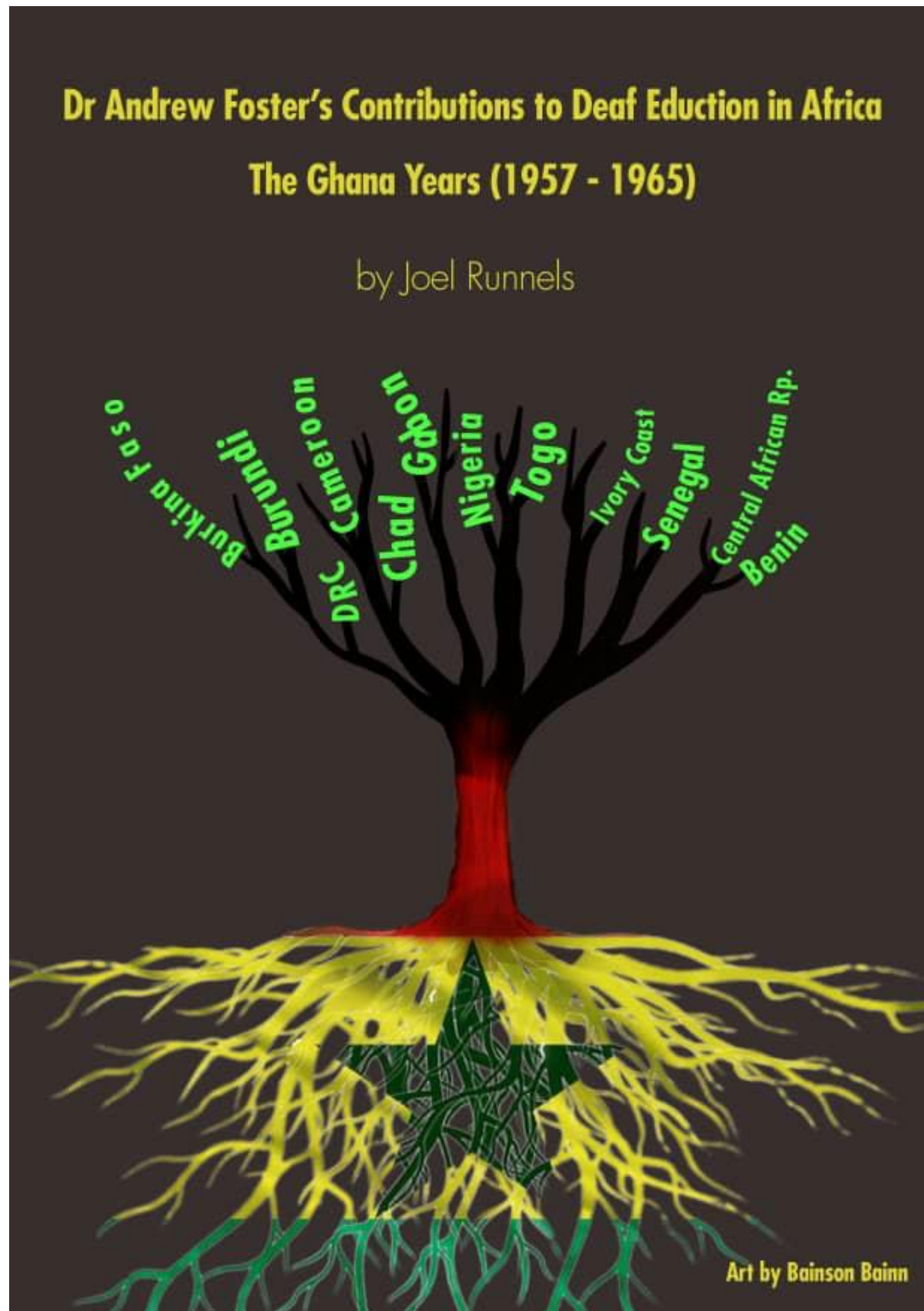

Figure 57: Foster's work in Ghana (1957-1965) laid the roots of d/Deaf education in sub-Saharan Africa. Art by Bainson Bainn. Reprinted with permission.

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