

Deaf Liberation Theology and Deaf Teología Indígena

Paper presented to the Symposium "Deaf and Other Lives. Living in Multiple Cultures", Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands, 25 September 2008

Marcel Broesterhuizen

ICF Teaching Chair for Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
Research Unit Pastoral Studies
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Belgium

A Hearing God

Charlie Hollywood was a hard-of-hearing chaplain to the Deaf in Manchester, England. He was esteemed by Deaf people because of his fluent skill in British Sign Language. Charlie cooperated closely with two Deaf priests, sons of Deaf parents, and in contact with them, he had often observed that they signed with him in a different way than with each other: slower, clearer, more deliberate, less spontaneous. Once he asked them about this, and they recognized that phenomenon immediately: this was the way they signed to hearing people with good Sign Language skill. They were used to make communication easier for hearing people. Then, Charlie asked how they communicated when they prayed, and their answer was that they used Sign Language, of course, but in the same way as with a hearing person.¹ For Charlie Hollywood, this was a confirmation of the impression he had always had, that many deaf people imagine God as a hearing person.² Two American pastoral ministers with the Deaf, Broniak and Luberti, asked Deaf people, ASL users, which language they used in prayer. Many Deaf people showed to use English when they prayed. When Broniak and Luberti asked why, the most frequent answer was that that was the proper way of praying.³

Hannah Lewis, Deaf and priest in the Church of England, describes in her doctoral dissertation about Deaf Liberation Theology, that from about 1820 on, the Churches in Scotland and England started with worshiping services for the Deaf. From the first beginning on, hearing people involved in this ministry were reluctant to acknowledge that Sign Language was a fit language in which to address God. God could only be addressed properly and adequately in English. The aim of worship specifically for the Deaf was preparation for integration with the wider hearing Church.⁴

These authors state that in many Churches, Deaf people do not pray and celebrate liturgy in their own Sign Language, but often in Sign supported spoken language or in Sign systems that are largely based on the language of dominant culture. This practice has a hidden message: God's official language is the language of dominant hearing culture. It is not surprising, that many deaf people perceive Church and religion as typical for hearing people. Their typical statement is (quote in glosses):

FEW DEAF-PEOPLE INTEREST COME TO THE CHURCH BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT DEAF⁵

The American pastor with the Deaf Bob Ayres states that we stand at the precipice of a completely secularized Deaf culture, since the Deaf generations born in the 60s and the 70s have simply decided that God is a "hearing God".⁶ And in a presentation on Deafway II, the Deaf philosopher Darren Russel stated that metaphysics and religion are alien to Deaf culture.⁷

God's Gift to the Deaf

This alienation between religion and the Deaf has not always and everywhere been the case. Kent Olney, in a sociological study of the pastoral ministry with the Deaf in the

Chicago area, states that religion played a central role in the formation of the Deaf community.⁸ After the beginning of deaf education in the nineteenth century deaf persons started to gather for worship, and these deaf congregations became the gathering places of the Deaf community and the breeding-grounds of Deaf leadership. Soon, American protestant Churches started to ordain deaf men.⁹ These men were insiders in the Deaf community and knew the language and values of the people they ministered to. They were men of authority and leadership in the Deaf community, also outside their own Church community. The only Deaf person present at the conference of Milan and one of the two persons who voted against the abolition of Sign Language was a Deaf pastor. When, at the end of the nineteenth century, Darwinism and eugenics arose and as a consequence Sign Language was abolished in deaf education in favour of Oralism, Sign Language survived in these Deaf worshipping communities and Deaf people in these communities got to see Sign Language as God's special gift to the Deaf. In those days, George Veditz, one of the leaders of the USA Deaf community said in what is one of the oldest filmed registrations of American Sign Language:

'A new race of pharaohs that knew not Joseph' are taking over the land and many of our American schools. They do not understand signs, for they cannot sign. They proclaim that signs are worthless and of no help to the Deaf. Enemies of the Deaf, they are enemies of the true welfare of the Deaf ... As long as we have Deaf people on earth, we will have signs ... It is my hope that we all will love and guard our beautiful sign language as the noblest gift God has given to Deaf people.¹⁰

And Oliver Sacks states about this the period in which Sign Language was banned from the schools:

Priests and pastors did not forget Deaf people's souls: many of them learned Signs, ... and continued to celebrate liturgy in Sign Language long after the Oralists had expelled this form of communication out of secular schools. Already in the 18th century, Abbé de L'Épée's work had been inspired by spiritual motives. This interest in Deaf people's natural language had not been shaken by two centuries of method controversies.¹¹

So, religion played an important role in an enduring emancipation of Deaf people and Sign Language. Yet, modern literature about deafness does not mention this role of religion in Deaf emancipation. When from the sixties of the last century on, emancipation of Deaf culture and Sign Language took place, the study of deafness was no longer left to medicine, audiology, psychology, and special education, but it was taken over by history, sociology, linguistic and cultural anthropology. Olney¹² observes that these sciences did not pay attention to the role of religion in the Deaf community. Even specific religious literature related to the Deaf community is scarce. In Olney's opinion this general lack of attention to the subject of religion is peculiar, since cultural anthropological and sociological literature points to the role of religion as an essential element in the understanding of the life of minority groups.¹³

Beth Lockard, a Deaf Lutheran priest, the first Deaf and the first woman priest in her Church, states that in spite of its early start with Deaf ministers, the Church as a whole did not meet the needs of the Deaf community. Deaf ministers were few and hearing pastors struggled with the language and culture of the Deaf community and they are more concerned with the rules of their Church than with the development of an own Deaf way of believing and worshipping. Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf became a one-way street of hearing pastors moving towards the Deaf, which continued to be seen and to be patronized as poor deafies, prevented from giving their gifts to the Church. Lockard states:

The Deaf Community, caught between their spiritual needs and the often unintentional oppression of the Church, frequently elects to flee the Church rather than advocate their needs.¹⁴

Spiritual *Conquista*

In a research study in a group of 94 Catholic Deaf adults in the USA it was found that many interviewees had difficulty making connections between their own life experiences and Christian tradition.¹⁵ For Deaf people, Christian tradition was so full of a hearing world view, that it simply could not be for them the basis of a personal faith or a philosophy of life. Hannah Lewis¹⁶ points to the fact that traditional Christian theology had constructed a view on deaf people as naturally immoral (impulsive, egocentric), and of disability as a consequence of sin. Too often, the words of the apostle Paul, “Faith comes by hearing” were taken literally. In his book *I See a Voice*, the Deaf author Jonathan Rée describes that Western culture tends to overrate the human voice and hearing,¹⁷ and he indicates this phenomenon as *phonocentrism*. In my opinion, phonocentrism has deep roots in Western religious tradition, touching sometimes the core of Jewish-Christian religious tradition that attributes metaphysical power to words, voice, and speech, and that tends to depreciate visual representation.¹⁸

With its healing stories, its image of deafness as unwillingness to listen, the remnants of outdated theologies that link “disability” to a need of salvation, and its depreciation of the visual sense, Christian tradition is inaccessible for Deaf people who meet in the Deaf community a world view that is able to explain their experiences and that tells them that they are OK. That world view, which is secularist and does not feel any need of metaphysics, has substituted religion for many Deaf people who grew up in a religious environment.¹⁹

The fact is that Christian tradition was transmitted to Deaf people by hearing pastors that were also involved in education in institutions for the deaf. In the era of Oralism, these persons saw deafness as a defect and education of the deaf as a work of charity. These

hearing people were often not conscious of the hearing context of their message, their faith and their traditions, or they confused that hearing context with the essence of the message. They did not go into dialogue with Deaf people about the typically hearing aspects of their message and the differences with a Deaf world view. In the same period of time, in the Churches, especially the Catholic Church, priests had a leading position, and lay people, i.e. ordinary people were the lowest stratum in the Church; they were merely spectators.

The model that was used implicitly in pastoral ministry in the past, had striking similarities with the way in which Christian missionaries brought the Christian message to Latin America, from the 16th century on, the era of *conquista*. Christian message was confounded with Spanish culture. Becoming a Christian meant also talking Spanish and behave like a Spaniard. By consequence, the rich local cultures were oppressed, and continued to survive only below the surface. Analogously, this form of pastoral ministry could be described as spiritual colonisation. Hannah Lewis²⁰ describes colonialism as a process of physical subjugation, imposition of an alien language, culture and mores and the regulation of education on behalf of colonial goals. She refers to Harlan Lane's comparison of Deaf people's experience with the experience of the people of Burundi when it was taken over by the Belgians. The Burundian society was seen as medieval and primitive, Burundians were seen as children in need of guidance, and schools started to teach French.

Liberation and Theology and Indigenous Deaf Churches

The consequence of colonisation policy in Latin America was a large gap in society between the higher classes and the lower classes, a large difference between rich and

poor. In the second half of the 20th century, theologians and other Church people felt the need to contribute to the solution of this severe social problem. This gave rise to the so called Liberation Theology. In 1969 Gustavo Gutiérrez²¹ stated that poverty can be eradicated only if the poor were free to make their own decisions, to have the opportunity to be agents of their own destiny, and to be voices of their own experiences. Gutiérrez spoke about poor people in general, but later on it was understood, that within minorities there are many different life experiences and life worlds. These daily life experiences of minorities and their indigenous culture have to be the starting point of theological analysis. So, within the communities of the oppressed *campesinos* in Mexico and Colombia, the concept of *teología indígena*, indigenous theology was born.

Ideas from liberation theology and indigenous theology were applied with success also to oppressed minorities in rich countries, such as women, black and Hispanic people in the United States, and people with disabilities.²² A central point in these theological approaches is that they have as goal to learn from people, to be taught by them, instead of teaching them.²³ These people themselves know best what it is to be woman, to be black, to be disabled. And of course: Deaf people know best what Deafness is about. This epistemological privilege is not based on a supposed intellectual superiority of the oppressed. It does not mean that they are better or more intelligent. No, this epistemological principle is based on

the possibility the oppressed have to see and to understand what the rich and the powerful cannot see nor understand. It is not that their sight is perfect, it is the place where they are which makes the difference. Power and richness have a distortionary effect – they freeze our view or reality.²⁴

In the same way, Deaf people see and understand things that hearing people do not see nor understand. Hearing people may have a distorted and partial view on deafness that

keeps Deaf people submitted to power structures in hearing society: audism, as it is called by Harlan Lane and H-Dirksen Bauman.²⁵

These ideas have been applied with success by Deaf pastoral ministers with the Deaf.

When until thirty years ago, pastoral ministry with the Deaf was largely led by hearing pastors, Deaf people had to be reached in spite of their deafness, and deafness was seen merely as a problem. The effect of this approach was, that the core of Deaf experience, where hearing persons coming from a hearing culture seldom arrive, remained outside the realm of pastoral ministry: the Deaf-Deaf communication, life within Deaf families, the hidden culture and social mechanisms of the Deaf community, Deafhood²⁶ itself.

When the Deaf emancipation movement became more influential, more and more Deaf people themselves were actively involved in pastoral ministry, and this led to an irreversible paradigm shift. Instead of obstacle, deafness became a springboard; instead of impairment it became strength. The concept of Deaf Liberation Theology was born. In the United States, a working group was formed, called Christians for the Liberation of the Deaf Community,²⁷ which formulated the co-called Claggett Statement. This Claggett Statement states that

Many deaf people reject the Church because its representatives have been as oppressive as their teachers and therapists. 'Religion' has become one more place where deaf people feel they are told to stop being 'deaf' and try to be 'hearing'. They must try to fit into hearing forms of worship with its heavy emphasis on music, its wordy English liturgies, and its love for ancient phrases – all through an interpreter they frequently cannot understand.

(...)

We view deafness as a gift of God, which has led to the creation of a unique language and culture, worthy of respect and affirmation.

We believe that it is necessary to stop trying to communicate the Gospel through hearing people's eyes, through their interpretation and understanding of the Bible,

and through their methods. Deaf people have a right to know the Gospel in their own language, and relevant to their own context.

(...)

We stand in solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world. We believe that God empowers the oppressed to become free. By the act of attaining their freedom, the oppressed can also help to liberate those who have oppressed them.²⁸

Christians for Liberation of the Deaf Community stimulated Bible translation into American Sign Language, Deaf leadership trainings, and formation of Deaf people for pastoral ministry. In many places, especially in the United States, Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, and various countries of Latin America, this movement led to Deaf-led pastoral ministry with the Deaf, in which hearing people could be part of the ministry, but must take a back seat to the opinions, needs, and wants of Deaf leadership. They spoke of Deaf indigenous Churches, with their own Deaf forms, no longer focused on sermons and hymns, but on drama. No longer hearing people's artificial contact languages such as Total Communication²⁹ and Manual Coded English were used, but true Sign Language. The focus was on Deaf identity, Deaf rights, and Deaf culture.

I have had several occasions to be present in events organized by Deaf people from a Liberation Theology perspective. An excellent meeting took place in 2003 in Mexico City, with participants from Latin America, United States, and some European people. Mexico City has a lively and strong Catholic Deaf community, which organizes its own pastoral services and social work, and which is also taking over the administration of a school for the Deaf. Participants from different countries in Central and Latin America told how they built up the Catholic Deaf community, mostly with scarce means and without the support of Church leadership. They decided not to wait, but to take things in their own hands. I visited the conference together with Deaf persons from the

Netherlands. For them, it was the first time to see a complete integration of Deaf and Catholic culture, whereas both cultures are completely separated in Western Europe, because Catholic schools for the Deaf in Western Europe in the past were strictly oral. Another event took place in Rome, in June 2008. 1500 Deaf people from various countries met and exchanged their experiences. It became clear from reports from various countries, that pastoral ministry from a Deaf culture perspective and by Deaf persons themselves, was far more effective than pastoral ministry done by hearing people.

Hannah Lewis³⁰ states that Deaf Liberation has reached the Churches and she asks how the Church of the future will look like and how Deaf Liberation Theology will work out in practice. Will there be a Deaf Church, separated from the hearing Church? Will it be an integrated Deaf/hearing Church, or a hearing Church with interpreters? In her opinion, what she calls a liberating-shaped Church should at first continue to have a Deaf space. The hearing world can be still a hostile place for Deaf people, a place where it is hard to relax, a place where making yourself vulnerable to meet God is too great a risk. So, there should be a place, where hearing people are not banned from, but where Deafhood is the norm. Since story telling is an important aspect of Deaf culture, this Deaf space should also be a story telling space, not only the stories of the Bible and Christian tradition, but also the stories of Deaf people, in order to remind Deaf people of the story of a strong and resolute people, who were determined to set up their own social clubs, their own Churches.³¹ And, as a third prerequisite, there should also be a creative space, where people are encouraged to create, to reflect on their faith in whatever medium they can. By this way, Deaf people can create their own religious culture, and Christianity can be expressed in a Deaf way. In Catholic theology, such a process would be called

enculturation. A central point in enculturation theology is that Christianity is not about abstract persons, but about concrete human persons in their daily existence and within the community in which they participate.³² Enculturation does not mean only adaptation of faith proclamation and liturgy, nor is it a maneuver to make Christianity marketable. It is the search for the positive and unique aspects of a culture that may be taken up and enrich the community at large. Enculturation into Deaf culture might mean that the positive aspects of Deaf culture – such as the visual orientation, the sense of community and collectivism, the acceptance of difference, action orientedness, concreteness, the directness and sense of quality of communication – may become a part of Christian tradition and enrich the community at large.

Deaf Diaspora?

The raise of Deaf Liberation Theology was in a period of time in which the Deaf emancipation movement was strong. From 2000s on, pastoral ministers with the Deaf in the United States state that radical changes are taking place in the Deaf community. The advent of mainstreaming had led to the closure of residential schools for the deaf, which had been crucial for the continuity of the Deaf community. In the United States, there is a clear decline of Deaf clubs; in some parts of Europe this decline seems to be less dramatic, but Deaf clubs are increasingly populated by the older generations.³³ These developments have created a tremendous scattering of deaf students who have lost not only a sense of connection but also identification with cultural Deafness. The Deaf community is now facing an unprecedented crisis largely as a result of this dispersion, which is called by Bob Ayres a Diaspora situation:

Diaspora usually implies a scattering against the will of the community such as experienced by conquered people. This dispersion is the result of decisions made by the dominant hearing community. The reality is this Deaf Diaspora has brought about a crisis of culture, language, relationships and faith.³⁴

More and more deaf young people do not derivate their identity from a residential school, but have contact with other deaf people only outside school. An increasing number of deaf children receive a cochlear implant at an early age and are mainstreamed into regular schools, without ever seeing other deaf people, because their parents are made to believe that they will be able to integrate fully into the hearing world. Because of the high percentage of deaf children with cochlear implantation, schools for the deaf fall back from Sign Language into sign supported spoken language, Simultaneous Communication which is incomprehensible mix of two totally different modalities. The fruits of Deaf emancipation and Deaf Liberation seem to get lost. But in this very Diaspora situation, pastoral ministers observe that two striking aspects of Deaf experience remain: at first, the experience that communication with hearing people, especially in groups, is never as one would like to have it, whereas communication with other Deaf people is smooth, and secondly, the experience of being an outsider in groups with hearing people and to be with one's own people when in contact with the Deaf. Experiences in Flanders, where neonatal hearing screening, cochlear implantation, and mainstreaming are strong, show that adolescents and young adults who had never had contact with the Deaf community, get to feel at home in the Deaf community and want to learn Sign Language. Some of them became strong advocates of Deaf culture. As Annelies Kusters in her thesis about Deaf culture in Surinam states:

It is a paradox: people who want to have a firm harbor from which they can depart, are often seen as people who are less able to sail than those whom a harbor was denied from early age on. A number of these young people find, after a school period mainstreamed in regular schools, their way back to the local Deaf

community, to a harbor, they learn a Sign Language and they conclude that they had lacked something. This is what Grushkin (2003) calls alternative enculturations. Such higher educated Deaf people who come back or deafened people are often those whose protest is loudest.³⁵

Young Deaf people pass hours and hours with MSN, Hyves, Oovoo. There, they find a virtual Deaf community, which might be judged as not real by people of elder generations, but in which they have an experience of belonging. Pastoral ministers refer jokingly to a “Deaf Fatigue Syndrome” for those who work all day, chat all night on the internet, and become physically exhausted.³⁶ By consequence, at the same time Deaf people, especially young Deaf people, are more scattered, but through electronic means they have frequent contact with other Deaf people, sometimes in distant places, so that Deaf people are more interconnected in an increasingly technologically sophisticated world. Deaf communities are becoming more and more virtual communities, in which Deaf young people make appointments to meet each other in a certain place, often a place where a large event for young people is taking place. In the realm of pastoral ministry and Church communities, Deaf people in very different countries communicate with each other in this virtual Deaf community, and they make appointments to meet each other at international events. Communication is in Sign Language, with acceptance of other communication styles, since for some of them Sign Language is a recent discovery. Bob Ayres states that this change in Deaf culture leads also to a change in pastoral ministry with the Deaf: the priority is no longer on Deaf culture and Sign Language – these are self-evident, since the emancipation has become a an accepted fact -, but on personal relationships and an experience of belonging. As Ayres calls it: fun, friendship, fellowship and faith.³⁷ Like all young people, young Deaf people want to be happy, which means having friends and fun. But they have also the more profound needs for a

place where they can express their deepest emotional feelings without communication barriers and awkwardness in communication, which is fellowship. And some of them have a need of a fundamental understanding of their place in the world as a beautiful and wanted creation in the image of God,³⁸ which is faith.

Enculturation into actual Deaf culture means to accept the reality of Deaf Diaspora as a fact, and to become a part of the virtual Deaf community, as an alley towards contacts with other Deaf people in real life. In this way, it means also continuing to offer to Deaf people what no technological development will ever offer: coming home in a community and a visual world in which smooth communication and belonging can be experienced.

As Ben Bahan states:

The desire and the drive to create signs is deeply rooted in our fundamental human need for communication. The truth is “we cannot be truly human apart from communication ... to impede communication is to reduce people to the status of things.” Deaf people, being of a human variety, have refused to be reduced to the status of things and have found ways to communicate visually and developed visual languages. That is the essence of their being.³⁹

End Notes

¹ Charles Hollywood, "Visual Dimensions of Prayer and Liturgy," in *Seeing - is believing!* Proceedings from the Fourth International Conference of the International Catholic Foundation for the Service of Deaf People (Manchester: International Catholic Foundation for the Services of Deaf Persons, 1998), 51-62, 52.

² Hollywood, "Visual Dimensions of Prayer and Liturgy," 54.

³ Len Broniak and Rich Luberti, "Teach Us to Pray: Deaf Prayer and Deaf Celebrations," in *On Eagles Wings: Experiencing Deaf Prayer*, Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of the International Catholic Foundation for the Service of Deaf People (Manchester: International Catholic Foundation for the Services of Deaf Persons, 1998), 57-65, 57.

⁴ Hannah Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 160.

⁵ Anthony Maciocha, "Psalm 151 for the Deaf Community", quoted by Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, 133.

⁶ Bob Ayres, *Deaf Diaspora: The Third Wave Deaf Ministry* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2004), 35.

⁷ Darren Russell, "The Religious Nature of Deaf Culture," Paper presented at *Deafway II held in Washington DC, August 7, 2002..*

⁸ Kent R. Olney, "Religion and the American Deaf Community : A Sociological Analysis of the Chicago Mission for the Deaf, 1890-1941" (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Department of Sociology and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon, 1999)., 56; Harlan L. Lane, *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf* (New York: Random House, 1984).

⁹ Olney, "Religion and the American Deaf Community," 231.

¹⁰ George Veditz, *Preservation of Sign Language* (Film), 1913, passages translated by Carol Padden in Carol A. Padden and Tom Humphries, *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 33-36.

¹¹ Oliver Sacks, *Des yeux pour entendre* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 232-233.

¹² Olney, "Religion and the American Deaf Community," 114.

¹³ Olney, "Religion and the American Deaf Community," 115.

¹⁴ Beth Lockard, "Biblical Foundations for Deaf Ministry from a Liberation Theology Viewpoint," in *The Gospel Preached by the Deaf* ed. Marcel Broesterhuizen, *Annua Nuntia Lovaniensia* LII (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 69-79, 72.

¹⁵ William Key et al. *Eye Centered: A Study on Spirituality of Deaf People with Implications for Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring: National Catholic Office of the Deaf, 1992), 15.

¹⁶ Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, 61-63.

¹⁷ Jonathan Rée, *I See a Voice : A Philosophical History of Language, Deafness and the Senses* (London: Flamingo, 1999), 368.

¹⁸ Rée, *I See a Voice*, 368.

¹⁹ Cfr. Russell, "The Religious Nature of Deaf Culture".

²⁰ Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, 32.

²¹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1977).

²² Cfr. Nancy L. Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Abingdon Press, 1994).

²³ Ada M. Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Theology's Methods: A Liberative Praxis," in *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry, revised edition* ed. James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead (Lanham - Chicago - New York - Oxford: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 123-132, 126.

²⁴ Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Theology's Methods," 130-131.

²⁵ Harlan L. Lane, *The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 43; H-Dirksen L. Bauman, "Audism: Exploring the Metaphysics of Oppression," *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 9, no. 2 (2004): 239.

²⁶ For the concept of Deafhood, see: Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* (Clevedon - Buffalo - Toronto - Sidney: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2003).

²⁷ Lockard, "Biblical Foundations for Deaf Ministry," 73.

²⁸ Charlotte Baker-Shenk, "Breaking the Shackles: Liberation Theology and the Deaf Community," *Sojourners* (1985): 30-32. Reprinted with permission from Sojourners in Marcel Broesterhuizen, *The Gospel Preached by the Deaf: Proceedings of a Conference on Deaf Liberation Theology held at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), May 19th, 2003*, *Annua Nuntia Lovaniensia LII* (Leuven - Paris - Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 103-109.

²⁹ The use of SimCom by Deaf people themselves is called by Genie Gertz a form of *dysconscious audism*, i.e. a tacit acceptance of dominant hearing norms and privileges (Genie Gertz, "Dysconscious Audism: A Theoretical Proposition," in *Open Your Eyes: Deaf Studies Talking* ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman (Minnesota - London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 219-234, 225). Used by hearing people, it comes forth from phonocentrism and the illusion that hearing oneself to speak is communication: "The differences between speech and sign are also magnified through the practice of Simultaneous Communication (referred to as SimCom) where one speaks and signs at the same time. This popular educational practice is akin to producing divergent languages, say Navajo and English, simultaneously. Clearly, the accuracy and integrity of each language is nearly impossible to maintain, and given the heavy presence of the voice in the phonocentric loop of hearing oneself speak, the speaker is often under the illusion that she is communicating. SimCom, more often than not, produces signs that are misshapen, misplaced, or missing altogether. These communication practices, which may have been developed with the most benevolent intentions, often result in diminished communication between teachers and students" (H-Dirksen L. Bauman, "Introduction: Listening to Deaf Studies," in *Open Your Eyes: Deaf Studies Talking* ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman (Minneapolis - London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2008), 1-32, 17.

³⁰ Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, 179.

³¹ Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, 181.

³² *Redemptor Hominis* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979).

³³ Carol A. Padden, "The Decline of the Deaf Clubs in the United States: A Treatise on the Problem of Space," in *Open Your Eyes: Deaf Studies Talking* ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman (Minnesota - London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 169-176, 170.

³⁴ Ayres, *Deaf Diaspora*, 4.

³⁵ Annelies Kusters, "Zeil je voor het eerst: een historisch en etnografisch onderzoek naar Dovencultuur in Paramaribo, Suriname" (Licentiaat Sociale en Culturele Antropologie, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006), 87.

³⁶ Ayres, *Deaf Diaspora*, 31.

³⁷ Ayres, *Deaf Diaspora*, 129

³⁸ Cfr. Paddy Ladd, "Colonialism and Resistance: A Brief History of Deafhood," in *Open Your Eyes: Deaf Studies Talking* ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman (Minnesota - London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 42-59, 44: 'Berthier and those like him were clear about their ontological status: The language of Deaf-mutes, that sublime universal language given to us by Nature. The Nature trope is vital because the group's concept of "the Supreme Being" stressed that Nature was in effect a manifestation of that Being in all its forms. Thus, all that was "natural" existed because it was intended to exist.' And Ladd, "Colonialism and Resistance," 45: 'Deaf people were intentionally created on earth to manifest these qualities, and the value of their existence should not be called into question.'

³⁹ Benjamin J. Bahan, "Upon the Formation of a Visual Variety of the Human Race," in *Open Your Eyes: Deaf Studies Talking* ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman (Minnesota - London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 83-99, 84.