

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.
Speak out, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

—Proverbs 31:8-9



When I read this passage, I am reminded of a carpenter—not the one you are probably thinking of, but John Awozo, a man whose life and work reflects Christ. Otherwise known as the headmaster, John runs a vocational carpentry school for men with disabilities in a small village in northern Ghana.

In many countries, including Ghana, it is customary for families to hide away the disabled because they are seen as social stigmas. Many times, they are deemed “cursed” and are hidden away for a lifetime. Deaf himself, John goes from hut to hut recruiting and freeing the disabled from lives of solitude and shame.

With the support of Episcopal Relief & Development and its partner, the Anglican Diocesan Development & Relief Organization, John is not only able to house and feed his students but train them in carpentry skills as well. John teaches them a trade while teaching them how to lead meaningful lives. Such an education opens otherwise closed doors, allowing his students the opportunity to create their own businesses and livelihoods.

John Awazo speaks out, passionately and eloquently, for the disabled. He is a sign of God’s unconditional love and God’s call that we be Christ’s hands, feet, and yes, voice, for those in need.

—**Mary Stuart Smart**