



In her own words:

When you have spent 26 years of your life sitting at a stenographer's machine, taking down what is said in courtrooms, meetings, and conventions, one wonders how or if God could ever use the talent you possess.

After hearing a message Pastor Dan spoke in 1996, entitled "Use What's In Your Hand", I wondered if somehow there could be an opportunity to use my professional court reporting skills for God's purposes. In Edmonton, taking my court reporting skills a step further, I had just completed a short course on captioning. There is no denying God's timing and how He prepares us for what the future holds.

After much procrastination, I thought I had better share with Pastor Dan what God was possibly speaking to my heart. I didn't know much about captioning, but was willing to allow God to use me in whatever way he desired.

After dreaming together, Pastor Dan and I realized that there was not one church in Canada meeting the need of reaching the deaf and hard of hearing community through captioning church services. No models, no mentors. Oh, no! The challenge was great, yet God proved so faithful and He began to open one door after another and, with Pastor Dan's support and encouragement, I walked through each one.

It wasn't long before I found myself sitting in the front row of the sanctuary on Sunday morning, desperately trying on my steno machine to keep up with the rapid pace of the sermon. Fast announcements were even more challenging, not to mention those sermons with the names of Old Testament personalities and places. I just wanted to yell out, "Slow down! And how do you spell 'Nebuchadnezzar', anyways?!"

Despite initial challenges, the dream of a captioning ministry was beginning to unfold. It was even profiled coast to coast on “100 Huntley Street”, one of Canada's flagship Christian television programs. We were all excited at what God was doing! Then, about a month after our tv appearance, I began to feel numbness in two fingers on my left hand. What was this all about? Surely it will pass.

But as time progressed and after numerous medical visits and tests, I realized that this could very well be a permanent mark on my profession, but even more devastating, an end to church captioning. Questioning God and His timing filled my days. Why me? Why now? What about those who cannot hear and need to see those sermons on the screen? If I can't do it, who will?

Once again, God came to the rescue! All I did was share the dream with other professionals in the workplace, and God did the rest. He spoke to their hearts and fueled the passion within them. One by one, captioners began to commit their time and talent to the work God had started at New Life.

Looking back, I see that God's hand was in each decision, circumstance and so called 'coincidence'. I remember specifically praying for God to lead me to the people I should include, not those I wanted, but people that He was already preparing, and those whose lives would be touched by their involvement.

Today the team consists of eight, seven captioners and myself as coordinator. We all come from different backgrounds – Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Pentecostal, and United. Religious walls have come down and, together, we are a team with a vision that all people with a hearing loss will be able to attend a church service and 'hear' what is being said.

Pat Gardiner, Founder and Coordinator of Captioning The Word