

A Life-Changing Experience – For The Captioner!

The following was sent to us by Valerie Almand, Captioning Ministry Team Leader, Lakewood Baptist Church, Gainesville, Georgia. Usually we hear about life-changing experiences by those who watch the captioning, but in this case – well, read all about it!

“Perhaps, like me, you find the NCRA Journal packed with interesting and helpful articles and advice, but did you know you could have a life-changing experience while reading it? I’m proof of that fact. I don’t recall what the date was in the fall of 2001 that I sat in my office, eating my sandwich and reading the Journal, but I’ll never forget that lunch break! I happened across one of Pat Gardiner’s columns, “How Shall They Hear”. As an experienced reporter who had already been working for over a year at eliminating conflicts and perfecting my realtime skills with a view toward marketing them, I had never even thought of captioning services at my church to make them accessible to the deaf and hard-of-hearing in our community. Pat’s article about captioned services at her church, New Life Pentecostal in Milton, Ontario, fascinated and inspired me. I prayed about what action to take next, then copied her column and sent it to the minister of my church, Dr. Tom Smiley, along with a letter asking what he thought about it,. He sent me a very nice note saying he thought it was an interesting concept, and if I felt led to find out more that he’d look forward to learning about church captioning.

I promptly began contacting everyone I could think of, trying to locate a church in the Atlanta area (45 miles south of us) which was captioning their services, believing that surely with the superb captioners working in Atlanta, and the large, technologically-advanced churches there, that someone would already be captioning their services. I contacted churches, religious organizations, captioners, our state court reporter’s association, reporting friends, and support groups for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. I was

unable to find anyone captioning in the entire state, and that amazed me. In the meantime, I had e-mailed Pat and we began corresponding regularly, me with my questions, and her with answers and encouragement.

A turning point for me came when John Ford sent me a lengthy e-mail. John and his wife Kathy both have hearing deficits, and are involved in the deaf ministry at New Life Church in Milton, Ontario, Canada. His letter explained what a difference the captioned services had made in their lives. I sat at my computer reading his letter with tears streaming down my face, and became more convinced than ever before that we must make this ministry a reality at our church, too.

To try to make a long story short, I contacted Dr. Smiley again, and he asked Phyllis Wiley, our lay ministry coordinator, to work with me. Phyllis is dedicated, energetic and enthusiastic, and got behind the captioning ministry 100 percent. We enlisted the help of Lloyd Pugh, our resident computer expert, Jon and Peggy McIntire, our audiovisual team, and Sammy Smith, a church member with marketing expertise, in order to build our ministry. We have had a few glitches and challenges, but within three months of beginning to work with Phyllis, we began our first captioned services at Lakewood. We're also offering a sign language course to church members and the community, and have many ideas and plans to continue to build a ministry for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in our area, such as captioning classes and other church events.

We know we're reaching people – young and old – who have hearing problems. Even those who hear well have told me that during video presentations or songs they utilize the captions to follow along. We've printed a brochure to be distributed in a five-

county area and have recently completed a TV “ad”, in order to promote this service to those who need it.

Even if we reach a dozen people or fewer with the captioning, it will be worth it. We actually envision much greater things down the line. Our ministry team feels strongly that God is going to continue to use us in a wonderful way. What He has in store for us in the long run, we probably can’t even imagine!

I would encourage any reporters who have an interest in captioning for their church to follow that dream. How rewarding to use our work skills to reach people for God’s kingdom! And thanks, Pat and team, for your articles that sparked my interest and led to a whole new way for people in north Georgia to “hear” God’s word. We’ll keep you all informed about where He leads us next!”

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2) FAQ: The most frequently asked question these days is for any advice or information we can offer. We have two suggestions: (1) check out our web pages at www.newlife-milton.org/captioning/2nd.htm; and (2) we will mail out a package of information on church captioning upon request.

3) OUTLINES:

Submitted by Michael Cornwall who captions for a church in Ajax, Ontario, Canada.

blessed - PWHRESZDZ

celebrate - SPWRAEUT

exhale - KPAULT

Galilee - TKPWAL/HRAOE

Gideon - TKPWEUD/KWROPB

Gomorrah - TKPWOPL/PHO*ER

Him - H*EUPL

hymn - HAOEPL

Holy Spirit - H-S

Holy Ghost - H-G

Jesus - SKWRAOEZ

geez - TKPWAOEZ
lyre - HRAO*EUR
liar - HRAOEUR
rain - RAEUPB
range - RAEUPBG
reign - RAEPB
Redeemer - RAOE/TKAOERPL
resurrection - REZ/REBGZ
Sodom - STKOPH