



You Might Be Amazed!

- by Pat Gardiner, CSR, CRI

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

In 1996, after hearing a message entitled "Use What's In Your Hand", given by my Pastor, Pastor Dan Rogge, at New Life Church in Milton, Ontario, Canada, I started thinking that perhaps somehow there might be an opportunity to use my court reporting skills in a church. At the time I had just completed a short course on captioning, taking my court reporting skills a step further, and so I kept wondering

Well, some time later I shared what I had been thinking with my Pastor, and we 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. The challenge was great, but soon afterwards I began to notice that it was all starting to come together.

With the support and encouragement of my Pastor, family and friends, it wasn't long before I found myself sitting in the front row of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, 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, though, the dream of a captioning ministry began to unfold. It was even profiled coast to coast on a television program, "100 Huntley Street". We were all so excited! Then, about a month after our television 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 months of medical visits and tests, I realized that this could very well be a permanent mark on my profession and, even more devastating, an end to the church captioning we had started. Questioning myself and the timing of all of this 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?

Then one morning I knew exactly what had to be done. All I did was share the dream with other professionals in the workplace, and God did the rest. He hand

picked each captioner, spoke to their hearts, and fueled the passion within them. One by one, they began to commit their time and talent to the work that had been started at New Life.

Today, almost seven years later, the captioning team consists of seven people, six captioners and myself as coordinator. Denise Agard, Joanne Anderson, Phyllis Doel, Diane LeBlanc, Caroline Sebastian, and Terry Wood are the captioners, and they are the 'cream of the crop'! 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 or place of worship and 'hear' what is being said.

Our ministry has grown and now includes captioning New Life's Easter plays and then sending the captioned videos to several countries around the world. It also involves writing articles like this one, encouraging and teaching reporters how to provide CART/captioning for their churches. We have appeared on television, and have spoken as a guest speaker at various functions.

I look back over the years that we have had captioning at New Life Church, and I am in awe! I have learned many things, but one thing stands out: No matter what the challenge, don't be discouraged. Try out your skills in a church or place of worship and you might be amazed at what will happen!!

JCR Contributing Editor Pat Gardiner is from Milton, Ontario, Canada. For more information on church captioning go to www.captioningtheword.com.

CHURCH OUTLINES

- submitted by Denise Agard, CSR (A), Toronto, Ontario

archaeology ARBG/KWROLG

Pastor PA*S/R

Elijah E/HRAOEU/SKWRAU

remembrance REBS

Elisha E/HRAOEU/SHAU

Reverend REFB/REPBD

Emmanuel E/PHAPB/KWRAOUL

Ethiopia AOEGT/KWROEP/KWRAU

Evangelical E/SRAPBG/KAL

Hosea HOEZ/AU

Magdalene PHAG/HRAEPB

Omega OEPL/TKPWA