

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

- by Pat Gardiner

Ever thought of honouring the people you provide CART/captioning for on a Sunday morning, and letting them know how special they are to your church? And, while you are doing that, why not give the congregation even just a hint of what it would be like to have a hearing loss?

On a very special Sunday morning on October 14th, 2007, in the two morning services, we honoured the people we caption for and, in so doing, brought to the attention of the congregation how difficult it truly is for people with loss of hearing.

The church service that morning started out pretty much in the usual way and then, after the worship songs, our pastor began explaining to everyone how this particular Sunday morning we were going to transition from our well-known hearing world into a world that most of us did not know very much about. A video began playing as we heard Pastor Dan say, "Catch this video. What is it like to be in a deaf or hard-of-hearing world?"

To back up a bit, in the weeks leading up to this church service, our technical person, Martin Gardiner, with the help of John Ford, who is one of the people we caption for, put together a video clip ... short and to the point. And what an impact it had!

When first thinking about how to make this clip, it was decided to use a song. As we wondered about which song, we thought back to the previous Easter play our church had put on, "Eyes of Faith", and Father Mark Curtis, also known as Canada's singing priest, had sung a song, "You Thought of Us". As we thought about who is "Us", we realized this would be the perfect song to use. So we got Father Mark's permission and his blessing and, by editing parts of this song, in two minutes we were able to convey a very meaningful message.

Once we chose the song, then we needed to figure out the audio. So we consulted with John, who has a profound hearing loss and is considered deaf, and his wife, Kathy Kortright, who has a medium hearing loss and is considered hard-of-hearing, and we asked for their advice because we really had no clue at all as to how the clip should sound.

John and Kathy, for years, have wanted to put together a hearing loss simulation video. They very patiently explained to us that the goal in making this video is so that the audience can hear the sound, but not understand many, if not all the words. They told us that usually it is very difficult to enable people to understand what a hearing loss person actually does hear. When making the video, you don't ever want complete silence because that is not really what deafness is like, John tells us. He said that so many people think that simply by turning up the

volume, that that will enable a person with a hearing loss to be able to hear what is being said. Sometimes yes, but most of the time this does not help. Kathy told us that deafness is more like you hear a little something, perhaps you can identify whether the speaker is male or female, but you just can't, for the life of you, figure out what they are saying.

John said that what he had envisioned for the hearing loss simulation was starting the clip at normal audio and then modify the sound, removing enough of the consonants to make speech confusing and, after a few moments of that, then bring in the captions so everyone can see the words.

So, Martin started work on the video and gives the details: "Since the goal of the video was to give our hearing audience a sense of what it was like to be hard-of-hearing, we needed to do some creative editing to pull it off effectively. We used Adobe Premiere Pro, but you can use whatever editing software you have available. First off, we cut the middle portion of the song entirely out so that we could have a nice beginning and an end to our video and, by removing a couple of the choruses, we achieved a short two-minute music video.

"We split the video into four main parts about 30 seconds each, the beginning where the sound was normal and the second quarter was where we gave our audience their first sense of hearing loss by cutting up the audio a little chunk at first and longer chunks after that. We applied 'High Pass' and 'Low Pass' audio effects to the sound and adjusted the intensity more and more as the video continued to play with some portions remaining unaffected. By doing this, we let the audience hear the difference between normal sound and manipulated sound which gave them the feeling that something was wrong as well as a sense of frustration of only being able to hear portions of the song.

"By the third quarter of the video, the audio effect was at full force allowing our audience to only be able to hear a strong bass boom every few seconds, but no sense of knowing if it was voice or music track. At this point, everyone watching was 'hard-of-hearing' and needed something to make sense of what they were watching and listening to. So, after hearing this drone for a while, we began putting the captions up on the screen so that the audience could once again follow along with the music video. The captions provided them with the words that the singer was projecting and gave them a sense of unity with each other and the singer all connecting in the moment of the song."

The clip turned out to be even more effective than we had originally hoped, and John still tells the story of when he first heard it, he reached to adjust his hearing aid and then realized the video was a hearing simulation. We knew then it was exactly what we needed!

So ... back to the church service. As soon as the video finished playing, we asked John to speak to the congregation. "That's an interesting little video clip,"

he started off. "We created a hearing loss for each one of you that have normal hearing, just a minor loss. We wanted you to know why people with hearing loss give up going to church." Then John explained, "They can hear it, but they can't make it out. Over half a million Canadians have a hearing loss like this video displayed. Where are they? Many are not in our churches because their need is not being met."

John continued, "Look at the last line of that song, 'You thought of us', how important that is. Who is 'us'? Every one of us, hearing and non-hearing alike. How can we help? Put godly compassion into action by meeting real needs of people." One suggestion, put CART/captioning into our churches.

The number of hearing disabled people has grown dramatically over the past ten years. In Canada, it won't be long before almost 25 percent of our population will be over 65. Further, one-third of those individuals over 65 have a hearing loss, their hearing loss increasing with age.

Following John's talk, the church service continued that morning with several people whom we caption for giving their stories of what it is like to either have loss of hearing or having someone in their family who is deaf.

We were delighted that the pastor of our Deaf church, Rev. John Graham, was able to attend this service, along with his interpreter, and we are thankful to Rev. David Shepherd, Western Ontario District Superintendent, PAOC, who attended. As David spoke to the congregation, he quoted Romans 10:14 -- "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Rev. Shepherd continued that we can add a little phrase in there: Not only do you need to send the preacher and the preacher needs to preach and the Truth needs to be conveyed, but the technology of texting the message on the screen is a key piece in helping some people to hear the message. It's dear to the heart of God that everyone, ALL would be able to hear.

Yes, that Sunday had something for everyone. For the hearing people, we were able to transport them into a world they learned a lot about that morning and, the dear people we caption for? Well, we were able to express how much we love, admire, and respect each one of them.

Luke HRAOUBG
Luther HR*UT/-R
Lutheran HR*UT/RAPB
Lycaonia HREUBG/OEPB/KWRA
Lycaonian HREUBG/OEPB/KWRAPB

Lydia HREUD/KWRA
lyre HRAO*EUR
lyric HREUR/EUBG
Maccabees PHABG/PWAOES
Macedonia PHAS/TKOPB/KWRA

Macedonian		magnificent	PHAG/TPHEUF/SEPBT
	PHAS/TKOPB/KWRAPB	Malachi	PHAL/KAOEU
Magdala	PHAG/TKAL/A	manger	PHAEUPBG/-R
Magdalene	PHAG/TKA/HRAOEPB	manna	PHAPB/TPHA
Magi	PHAEU/SKWRAOEU	mansion	PHAPBGS
magnify	PHAG/TPAOEU		

*JCR Contributing Editor Pat Gardiner is from Milton, Ontario, Canada.
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www.captioningtheword.com.*