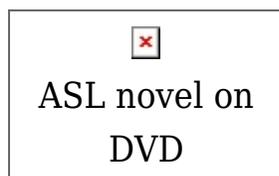


Baptist author produces novel in American Sign Language

February 3, 2011

Missouri Baptist author George Joslin of Springfield has produced what may be the first American Sign Language-only novel.



Titled *A Deaf Man's Gospel*, the novel is only available in American Sign Language (ASL) on DVD, rather than in print format. According to Joslin, his novel may be the first created just for the Deaf in ASL.

"Many stories have been recorded, but not a full-length novel like this," Joslin explained. "Many things have been translated into ASL from English, but this was created in ASL."

The biblical fiction starts with the story of the deaf man Jesus healed in Mark 7:31-35, and adding some incidents from the other gospels.

"The fiction is that the deaf man Jesus healed, named Benjamin, is added to the gospel stories. The book portrays the observations and experiences of this deaf man," he added.

"This is a book created by a deaf man — me, presented in ASL by a deaf man — Tim Bender — for deaf people. We have added voice to the DVD so hearing friends and family can enjoy this book along with the deaf," Joslin said.

The idea formed when Joslin began to ask himself questions as he read the biblical account: Who was this deaf man? Who brought him to Jesus? What

was it like to be deaf at the time Jesus was on earth? What happened to this man after he was healed?

The Bible does not provide the man's name, his hometown or the names of those who brought him to Jesus. Because the work is fiction, Joslin chose to name him Benjamin and placed him in Capernaum, near the place where Jesus healed him. Joslin decided Nicodemus and his brother, Abner, Benjamin's father, could have led Benjamin to the Lord.

The author based his assumptions about Benjamin's life on what is common in the Deaf community today and what is known about the way of life in Jesus' time. In the book, Joslin suggests the man met many of the people portrayed in the New Testament, and that he became a follower of Jesus.

Binder serves as pastor of a church for the Deaf in Louisville, Ky. Buddy Burgess, a hearing man and pastor of a Virginia Baptist Deaf church in Richmond, Va., did the voiceover.

Other Baptists also were part of the project. Southern Baptist evangelist Howard Baldwin of Multi-Media Evangelism Inc. handled technical aspects. Let's Sign, owned by Edith Booth of Jackson, Miss., is the distributor.

Joslin is the author of two other novels, *A Life After Deafness* and *A Terp on the Line*, and numerous non-fiction books on teaching American Sign Language and interpreting for the Deaf. Individuals interested in the two-DVD *A Deaf Man's Gospel* may contact Joslin at gjoslin@mchsi.com .