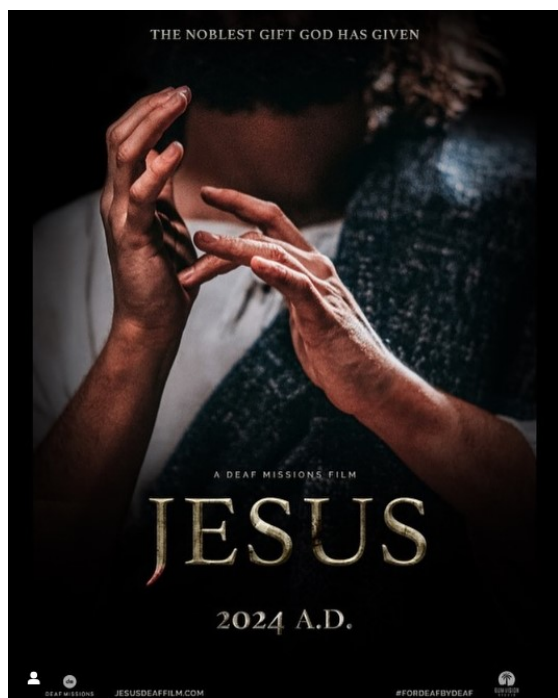


‘Jesus’ in sign language premieres in Arlington

April 5, 2024

ARLINGTON (BP)—A new version of the Jesus Film, performed in American Sign Language (ASL) by deaf actors and crew members, premiered April 4 at the Deaf Missions Conference in Arlington.

A broader release of the film portraying Jesus’ life is in the works, Deaf Missions has said, but details have not been announced.



Joseph Josselyn, producer and director of “Jesus (A Deaf Missions Film),” explained in ASL the importance of the movie in presenting the gospel to the Deaf community.

“Jesus is signing, all the actors are signing, because the cast is deaf. The Deaf community will see this and have that instant connection,” Josselyn, who is himself Deaf, signed in a [YouTube video](#) before the film’s production.

“Language isn’t a barrier anymore. They can be fully immersed into the

story. The message of the gospel can impact their lives.”

Already, the Jesus Film has been produced in 2,100 languages since its 1979 English premiere, and it holds the Guinness Book of World Records for being translated in more languages than any film.

Importance of connection

Cru Ministry partnered with Deaf Missions to produce the newest version of the Jesus Film, designed to minister to deaf individuals in the United States and other nations where ASL is used.

While there is no universal sign language, ASL is used by more than half a million deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in the United States, and also in Canada and other countries. Globally, 70 million deaf individuals use one of 300 sign languages, World Federation of the Deaf reports.

Viewing spoken language films with the speakers accompanied by a sign language interpreter provides deaf viewers a limited experience, Josselyn said.

“Deaf people, including myself, often watch movies where the actors are speaking and we have to rely on the captions. Because of this, we don’t have that same connection with the film that a hearing person would,” he said in the video.

“If the Deaf community sees a film that’s done entirely in sign language, they’re captivated, regardless of the topic of the film. There’s that natural connection of a shared language.”

The International Mission Board, which has used earlier versions of the Jesus Film in its global ministry, considers the approximately 70 million deaf people in the world an unreached people group.

Most culturally Deaf individuals, whom IMB number at 80 million globally, have almost no access to Scripture in their heart language and have never seen the name of Jesus signed in their language.

Translating more than 300 Bible stories into various sign languages, IMB shared the gospel in 2022 with 2,261 deaf individuals, garnered 122 professions of faith among deaf people, baptized 97, planted 14 new churches and trained 60 individuals for leadership in ministry to the Deaf community, according to imb.org/deaf.

Watch the official trailer for “Jesus (A Deaf Missions Film)” [here](#). Updates on an anticipated broader release, including church licensing and other viewing options, will be posted on Deaf Mission’s [social media](#) accounts.