

Spring 6-15-2018

# Called to service and finding a purpose: A mixed-method study of signed language interpreters volunteering in church and religious settings

Jennifer Kinnamon

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Called to Service and Finding a Purpose:  
A Mixed-Method Study of Signed Language Interpreters  
Volunteering in Church and Religious Settings

By

Jennifer Kinnamon

A thesis submitted to

Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

April 2018



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**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF  
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

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- ☒ Thesis
- ☐ Field Study
- ☐ Professional Project

Titled:

Called to Service and Finding a Purpose

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*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is a result of a two-year journey that could not have been complete without many amazing people in my life! First of all, the faculty at WOU, Elisa Maroney, Vicki Darden for challenging me, and a special thanks to Amanda Smith, my Committee Chair, who gave me the freedom to go on my own journey and who continuously imparts wisdom to trust the process and dig deeper, even when it's uncomfortable. Thank you to my amazing editor, Joann Olson; my paper wouldn't read as smoothly without you!

My Fabulous Cohort of ladies, we had many video conferences, texts, and WhatsApp messages, equipped with bitmojis and helium videos that kept me on track and brought a sense of joy to the graduate studying process. When I set out on this journey, I put my social life on hold, only to discover you all were my social outlet and encouraging community, near and far (but mostly far, like across the country). Ann (you, encouraged me to power through at the end), Angie, Amelia, Brenda, Colleen, Cyndi, Jenna, Royce, and Sheridan, we really did it!! You each inspire me in exceptional ways.

I especially appreciate Ken, my husband, for saying yes, missing out on a cruise, carrying the responsibility of loving on our Baby Bear, all while I went to graduate school and locked myself in a room to research. Baby Bear, you came to us in the middle of this crazy ride. Some challenged me, saying I couldn't be a mama and a grad student. I would never change the one-handed 3:00 a.m. discussion posts on my iPad while holding you those first few months, because I have you and my MA degree as a result of the balancing act. That's only one of many miracles God has done since you came into our lives!

Thank you to my parents, David and Kathy Arnett, for their example of balancing family and working on an education no matter how early or late in life. Mom, we were working on our Master's degrees together, and we did it!

Mike Myers, you were probably my biggest cheerleader! Thank you for helping me recognize the magnitude of this journey! Congratulations to you too!

Thank you to my God, who gives me the strength to go further than I ever thought possible, and do more than I ever would have imagined. My faith has grown during this journey, and God has said, "Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). This journey is not over!

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## ABSTRACT

### Called to Service and Finding a Purpose: A Mixed-Method Study of Signed Language Interpreters Volunteering in Church and Religious Settings

By

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Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

Western Oregon University

April 2018

Many non-professional interpreters volunteer their services in church and religious settings to give Deaf congregants access to the message. Church interpreting has been a unique way many interpreters have gained interest into the profession and entered the interpreting field. Although they continue to volunteer in religious settings on a regular basis out of a sense of calling and act of service (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010; Hokkanen, 2014), according to the literature, interpreters in their first 10 years of work choose benevolence as their number one value for entering the interpreting field (Ramirez-Loudenback, 2015). Often that desire to help and provide a service precedes the knowledge and skills to provide the services of interpreting, which leads to a problem

of “church interpreters” having a negative stigma within professional certified interpreting circles (James, 1998). There is interpreting work to be done in religious environments; this need creates a setting in which novice interpreters can gain practice. In this study, I collected quantitative and qualitative data to provide an accurate depiction of the professional interpreters who are working in these settings, their church environments, their stories of pursuing professionalism, the reasons for their pursuit, their experiences with professional interpreters, and their motivation for continuing to work in religious settings. These data could help the interpreting profession develop a greater awareness of the connection and mentorship gap between certified interpreters and volunteer interpreters working in religious settings and discover ways to partner in creating a cohesive environment to facilitate professional development.

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

As a young middle-school girl sitting in church, I loved watching the ASL interpreter in the front of the sanctuary during service. This same interpreter offered sign language lessons on a weekly basis and began a sign choir; I joined in both before moving away a few years later. This experience had an impact on my college major choice. When I attended Central Bible College and had to pick a major, I chose to study Deaf ministry. Personally, I never sensed a calling; it felt more like a career choice. Years later, while interpreting in educational and religious settings, I experienced enjoyment and a sense of purpose. Unfortunately, not every moment in the interpreting field inspired such feelings of purpose and satisfaction. My own experience led me to research the experiences of other interpreters who may have discovered the interpreting field and practice by way of the church and explore more about the interpreters currently doing this work and their motivations.

Environments such as educational settings, work or professional spaces, and religious settings—where hearing members see interpreting regularly—may be the first exposure to American Sign Language (ASL) or the concept of interpreting for many. This experience could spark an interest in learning ASL or even the desire to become an interpreter. In the same environments, hearing individuals have the benefit of interacting with and befriending Deaf individuals, and the schools, businesses, or churches may even offer ASL classes. All of these are viable options for a person to become bilingual and

gain interest in the interpreting field. Even the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) acknowledges that “some interpreters enter the field by working in a religious venue” (RID, 2007). The focus of this study is solely on Christian church environments.

## **Background**

Interpreters have been interpreting for Deaf friends and people long before the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf began offering certification of comprehensive skills in 1972 (Ball, 2013). Even though laws and regulations for interpreters progressed, covering all areas of the interpreting field, there are still no certification requirements for interpreters who practice in religious settings. The RID does provide a Standard Practice Paper (RID, 2007) for interpreting in religious settings, and it strongly encourages interpreters entering the field with a spiritual calling to work with a mentor to enhance their skills before expanding their practice beyond church settings. Often, however, non-certified, bilingual individuals who have no connection to or knowledge of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf would be unlikely to have access to these standards or guidelines, nor would they know how to find a seasoned interpreter mentor unless one were already working in their church.

The RID recognizes that some among the interpreting community enter the field by way of religious or church interpreting. What does this experience look like? How does one enter the interpreting field by these means? An interpreter named Lottie Riekehof, who had a significant impact on the interpreting field, taught the first official ASL and interpreting courses for hearing students in the United States at Central Bible Institute in 1948 (Ball, 2013). Her introduction to ASL and the Deaf community began in her church where she met a Deaf woman, which sparked a desire to interpret church

services for the woman—but first she had to learn ASL. Prior to this she transcribed the services for her Deaf friend until challenged to learn sign language. Riekehof faced some opposition in her first attempt to take sign language at Gallaudet, but she persisted, successfully learned, and became an interpreter and interpreting educator. As a result, six decades later, I personally benefitted from her determination and the program she helped establish at Central Bible College (formerly Central Bible Institute).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In a situation where hearing people begin learning American Sign Language and are attending a church where it is encouraged to serve in some capacity, interpreting church services seems like a viable option. It is easy to see how beginning ASL learners would end up interpreting at church even without credentials or professional training. Some novice interpreters use this as an opportunity to develop their skills, practicing freely. However, this situation creates the potential of an interpreting work lacking the professionalism and skill learned through formal training and professional development. Another problem is that like educational settings, religious settings are crucial areas where Deaf individuals should be provided the best services, but, ironically, these settings are often where the interpreters just starting out, begin their practice when more developed interpreters pass on these jobs (Grindrod, 1998). Humphrey and Alcorn (2007) communicated multiple limitations on interpreters who work in religious settings: having limited access to professional development, getting little to no feedback from experienced interpreting mentors, and receiving little to no compensation for what they do. James (1998) claimed there is an evident gap between certified interpreters and those who are labeled as “church interpreters.” Because of this negative stigma, those signers

who interpret in religious settings do not often comeingle, because they are intimidated and ostracized rather than embraced and mentored. It is unclear whether this stigma has been legitimately earned due to the insufficient skills of a significant amount of “church interpreters” or if the stigma could have been attributed to a smaller group who are earning the reputation for all who do church interpreting. As Ott (2012) indicated, “Stereotypes cannot be applicable to each member of a group, but the phenomena continue” (as cited by Hewlett, 2013, p. 96). For the past two decades, the typical church interpreter has been portrayed as non-professional, lacking in skill, insufficiently trained, and insufficiently skilled. Geiger and Antonacopoulou (2009) drew attention to the “process of replication.” When a community retells a story again and again, intentional or not, it produces a “regime of truth” over time, accepted by the group as a whole. The question has been lingering for 20 years; does this story remain an accurate depiction of the interpreters working in church and religious environments?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify interpreters who work in Christian churches and religious settings, their pursuit to professionalism, process to becoming certified, motivation for interpreting as a career and motivation for volunteering in religious settings. In this study, I explore their experiences with mentorship, their interactions with professional interpreters as they sought formal training to pursue certification or any professional development, and the current environments in which they volunteer and work professionally.



## **Theoretical Framework**

The framework for this study includes interpreting as a social practice (Diriker, 2008) and macro-sociological approach of Bourdieu's theory of social theory (as cited by Pöchhacker, 2015). With this lens, I explore the habits of interpreters within the social context, the environments and community involvement that led to their practices in religious settings—relevant in the field of interpreting—as well as discrimination, injustice or horizontal violence (Ott, 2012) due to social practices that happen among the greater interpreting community. The Theory of Narrative Identity (Polkinghorne, 1996) will be applied, as I collect the stories of interpreters who transitioned in their practice from non-professional to professional career work and the narratives of interpreters who currently work in religious settings. Lastly, grounded theory will be used as the data is weighed heavily to find common themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

## **Strengths and Limitations**

This study has strengths and limitations, like any research project, but the findings will add to the understanding of the current interpreters working in church and religious environments. These findings will also add understanding of the role that church environments, and Deaf communities within those environments, have on encouraging interpreters to pursue the interpreting profession. Unfortunately, the amount of data collected cannot all be examined in this one study.

Distribution of the survey also created some limitations and strengths. The survey was distributed through snowball sampling. I sent it to my contacts who were encouraged to spread to their colleagues; however, I am unaware if respondents shared the survey with interpreters working in the same church as themselves limiting the

amount of environments, or if their contacts were also distant. A strength in the distribution, adding to a widespread representation, is that the survey was also sent through unsolicited emails to churches across the country listed as having ASL-interpreted services or Deaf ministries, including all but three states in the United States. Responses were also elicited from the United Kingdom. Therefore, a larger region and variety of denominations are represented than what my contacts could supply.

Every researcher has an impact on the research (Hale & Napier, 2013). Being aware of this fact, I sought to conduct open coding as objectively as possible. However, this still adds a limitation to the study, since it was done through my interpretation of participants' narrative data. The survey was completed on a voluntary basis, limiting the sampling to those who were willing to share their stories and experiences.

There were 112 respondents to the survey. While that is a sampling of the population of focused in this study, it is not large enough to support generalizations. No question inquired about the specific state or region in which the participants resided, limiting the knowledge of whether their experiences are associated with the region of the country where they work. The type of trainings participants attended was not specified in the survey, limiting knowledge of their experiences with professional interpreters. Given this, I was unable to determine whether the type of trainings have an impact on the interactions among the interpreting community. Although participants selected and identified negative emotions they experienced during interactions, the survey did not include questions about the details of these encounters to determine whether it was marginalization explicitly because they are religious interpreters or if their negative

experiences were due to general horizontal violence that occurs in the interpreting field (Ott, 2012).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Church/Religious interpreting:* Interpreting that occurs in settings that are spiritual in nature (RID, 2007), within a church environment or services.

*Deaf Ministry:* Umbrella term for any ministry in nature with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, late-deafened, Deaf-blind individuals and their families (Yates, 2015). For the purposes of this study, this would include anything beyond offering ASL-interpreted services including Deaf Bible studies, small groups, or outreaches where the service or event is conducted in ASL.

*Non-professional interpreting:* Interpreting that is a voluntary service, unpaid, and is done by an untrained bilingual individual, or this could also include volunteer services done by a professional, expert interpreter (Mikkelson & Jourdenais, 2015).

*Professional interpreter:* Someone who has earned credentials, holding a license or certification, possesses specific knowledge in a range of practice, and who adheres to standards of practice or ethical codes (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007). In this study, the certifications involve national certification with the NAD or RID, state certification, or EIPA credentials.

*Signed language interpreter:* A person who conveys meaning between two languages, interpreting between signed language and spoken language, taking into account linguistic and cultural information (Cokely, 1992)

## CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

The role of a church interpreter is complex, especially if the interpreter is both a member of the church and an interpreter and not just a contracted freelancer. There are three roles in which an interpreter in a religious setting will operate: (1) in the professional ethical role of interpreter, (2) as a friend, because in churches people build relationships, and (3) a religious or spiritual individual who is also building their own faith (Warford, 2000). Knowing which hat to wear or which function to step into (and when) is a weighty responsibility and requires wisdom from the individual. A religious interpreter also must know Biblical concepts, spiritual and religious terms, metaphors, and language to give an accurate interpretation, as well as maneuver between music, personal narratives, lectures, scripture reading, and any spontaneous communication that may happen, as well as be the voice for the Deaf person when called upon to pray or share. These interpreters are also constantly teaching the church people to direct their questions to the Deaf member and facilitate conversation long after the service is over. Literature specific to signed language interpreters in church is minimal. I could only find literature pertaining to the ASL/English Interpreting community that is twenty years old, however, more research has been done related to spoken language interpreters within the church and will be included in this review.

Peremota (2017) studied Russian interpreters in evangelical churches. When listing ideal interpreter traits, 93% of users, interpreters, audience members, and pastors/speakers share the perspective that an interpreter working in an evangelical

church should be a Christian themselves. One obvious reason would be for the sake of possessing knowledge of the Bible, doctrine, terminology, and background information an interpreter would bring to their work. Another reason, Peremota (2017) found from her respondents, is that the interpreter takes part in creating the sacred atmosphere. No matter how skilled and professional the interpreter, the audience will ultimately discern if an interpreter is experiencing a constant internal battle or disbelief in the teachings they are interpreting. In contrast, simply having the background knowledge, being a part of the church or religious organization, and being willing does not mean the person has developed the skills to interpret.

Although Peremota's research focused on Russian language interpreters, the strong belief by users of the service that the interpreter should be a Christian themselves (if interpreting in an evangelical church) could help explain why many people interacting with Deaf members at their own church are asked to interpret. This type of interpreting situation often becomes a friend interpreting for friends. When ethical questions arise—such as how does one maintain confidentiality as an interpreter, friend, and fellow church member—they are just another burden for the interpreter to carry. As Warford (2000) stated, “Interpreting in religious settings is a continual and dynamic mix of art of humanity and technical expertise; generous interpreters who continually give their service, without thought of payment, should be appreciated and applauded” (p. 13). However, in the ASL/English interpreting communities “church interpreters” often have a negative stigma (James, 1998) and a bad reputation (Grindrod, 1998) among professionally certified interpreters. That stigma is associated with the definition of

someone who primarily interprets in church and is not usually skilled or trained. This stigma could be a reason many certified interpreters avoid religious work.

### **Call to Religious Interpreting**

When a person thinks of a Christian religious setting the first image is generally that of a church. James (1998) stated that the concept of church interpreting and even events that happen within the walls of a church (e.g., weddings, baptisms, funerals, christening, holy days, and revivals) are only a small portion of what comprises religious interpreting. He goes on to say that several interpreters do willingly work jobs such as events, seminars, and retreats hosted by religious organizations such as Focus on the Family, Promise Keepers; baby dedications, building, or ground-breaking ceremonies; camp meetings; board or committee meetings; and even entertainment with religious themes. Ultimately, some certified interpreters are involved in interpreting work in religious settings that are not typically viewed as church interpreting. Interpreters may find themselves working with other interpreters in those settings or others, as some deaf members of a congregation may ask their interpreter friend from church to interpret an assignment or appointment. In this interaction, often these “church interpreters” may find their skills are not up to par with the trained interpreter and become intimidated. As James (1998) stated:

Church interpreters, feeling intimidated, tend to be ostracized and do not mingle with interpreters holding national credentials. However, that will not stop the church interpreter from doing what they do. The reason is that many, if not all, feel that what they do is in response to a “calling” or a “burden” meaning a divine responsibility towards their duty in service to God.” (p. 16)

According to Berg, Grant, and Johnson (2010), in the 16th century Martin Luther's interpretation of the New Testament strongly encouraged believers to follow their occupational, God-given calling with diligence so as to achieve a high honor. This ideology spread and carried through to modern times. Although today the sense of calling is also used in secular settings today as way to describe one's purpose in work that benefits the common good, the term "calling" is still used by many as its religious origin and involves the moral responsibility to follow God's leading (Berg et al., 2010).

Dik and Duffy defined a calling as having three components:

(a) a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, (b) to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness, and that (c) holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation. (as cited by Haney-Loehlein et al., 2015, p. 17)

In the religious definition, the "summons" is God drawing a person to a specific work for the greater common good. As Berg et al. (2010) stated, "Occupational callings are often associated with feelings of passion-strong emotional inclinations toward work-related activities that individuals find interesting, important, and worthy of their time and energy" (p. 973). Considering the population of this study—those who work in religious settings—the sense of calling will best be described as a strong impression to do the important work God is guiding them to do to benefit the population they serve.

Pursuing a calling could be a legitimate motivator for an interpreter to volunteer; however, a sense of calling could be a reason a bilingual person who volunteers to interpret would pursue interpreting as a career. Berg et al. (2010) studied people and

their missed and unanswered callings. They found ways in which people who feel a sense of calling to do something other than their career or job end up pursuing their calling through other avenues, including the use of their leisure time. Participants explained that volunteering their time and leisure crafting brought them enjoyment and meaningful experiences associated with pursuing what they feel called to do. Church members who take ASL classes offered at the church—simply using their leisure time to learn a new skill—may end up finding enjoyment from what they thought to be a hobby. These same people may volunteer to interpret in church meetings where they feel they have content knowledge, enjoy it, and realize a calling to a meaningful career.

Unfortunately, volunteer interpreters who begin pursuing professional development may find their journey stressful. There can be difficulty pursuing one's unanswered calling, and Berg et al. (2010) described the frustrations of participants in their study, as they faced obstacles chasing their career calling. One obstacle was resistance from others. Allocating time, energy, and effort to this pursuit while holding down a formal job may be preventing them from achieving their goals; this could be why some bilingual volunteer interpreters never complete training and become certified. Another reason could be resistance from others already working in the field. The interpreting field is a female-dominated practice profession with oppression-related conditions such as "subjugated professional status, limited decision-latitude and role stress" (Ott, 2012, p. 38). This environment leads to low social supports, which breeds a culture of horizontal violence where it inducts new members in harmful ways, and they are met with behaviors such as gossiping, criticism, intimidation, passive aggression, withholding information, insubordination, and verbal or emotional aggression (Ott,



2012). If a volunteer church interpreter begins to pursue their career calling through training and skill development, integrating with professional interpreters could cause transitional shock or oppression due to strong professional hierarchies among the profession.

### **Act of Service**

This concept of interpreters volunteering to provide interpretation as an act of service seems to be a theme for many interpreters who work in religious settings. In Hokkanen's (2012) research of interpreting in church, she highlights the work as an act of service. Someone who is a part of a congregation who also has bilingual skills is encouraged to serve the church and people in the best way possible. Church interpreting is an act of service; volunteering in the church is encouraged—and almost expected, Hokkanen remarked—for those who have a way to contribute or serve. Every interpreter has a reason at the foundation of why they do what they do. Ramirez-Loudenback (2015) studied interpreters' values for joining this career and the top answer for interpreters with 10 years of experience or less was benevolence reasons. Due to this helping mentality, beginner interpreters might engage in this work within a church setting not fully understanding all aspects of the responsibilities until furthering their education. Church interpreters, who are interpreting for Deaf friends of family with no professional training and who have no connection to the RID or interpreting community at large, tend to fall into the old “helper model” of interpreting, which was accepted before there were established professional organizations for the interpreting field (Valero-Garces & Martin, 2008). Historically, the helper model occurred when untrained, volunteer interpreters would become more like assistants, overly involved in situations, advising, crossing

appropriate boundaries, and causing an imbalance of decision-making power (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007). This is where professional training and education become critical for career development and learning best practices.

Career decisions are determined through a variety of avenues, including environmental conditions and events in a person's life (Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976) such as job and training opportunities or family, neighborhood and community influences. In the experience of a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults), the influence of their family and environment could have a significant impact on their future career. Growing up with ASL as their first language but becoming fluent in the majority language or English, CODAs often experience language brokering, because as a child they likely acted as a mediator of language and culture between their parents and English speakers in the community (Williamson, 2016). In a study conducted by Williamson of Deaf-parented children, she found that 79.8% of CODAs say they fell into the interpreting career, and only 20.2% say they pursued interpreting as a career choice. For hearing people, not raised by deaf adults, pursuing interpreting as a career choice may look very different depending on the individual's story. As Krumboltz et al. (1976) found a person's surroundings factor into their life choices and outcomes, so in the interpreters' lives, their family and neighborhood environments, church communities, training opportunities, Deaf community involvement, and experiences have a strong influence over their career paths.

### **Bridging the Gap**

Another term for this act of volunteer service of interpreting is non-professional interpreting (Antonini, Cirillo, Rossato, & Torresi, 2017). This type of interpreting

happens on a daily basis with bilinguals, such as when a child helps their immigrant parents communicate with their teachers, with friends out at a restaurant, at doctor's offices, at church services, in taxi cabs, and in any other places communication needs to be facilitated. The term non-professional interpreting has been an evolution of defining the concept of interpreting that is a voluntary service, unpaid, and done by an untrained bilingual, or this could also include volunteer services done by a professional, expert interpreter (Mikkelsen & Jourdenais, 2015). The *Routledge Handbook of Interpreting* (Pöchhacker, 2015) provides a look into the scant research done about non-professional interpreters. The researchers highlighted the importance of further research and suggested that "turning the blind eye on realities that we as scholars, practitioners, trainers or trainees might disagree with, limits our current view of the field and may ultimately slow down scientific progress" (p. 428). Non-professional interpreting is worth examining more closely to understand the logistics of the work that is done and discover how interpreters who began working non-professionally transitioned to professional interpreting. Is there a common support system for these interpreters? Were they mentored and welcomed into the interpreting community and encouraged to develop their skills?

James (1998) appealed to certified RID interpreters to:

Accept the challenge. Bridge the gap. Recognize and respect each others' talents. Work together. After all, our common goal is to provide the best interpretation services possible to persons who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing regardless of the setting. (p. 17)

Meadows (2013) found that 75% of the interpreters in her study had done some form of interpreting prior to completing their interpreting training. Grindrod (1998) stated that religious interpreting is serious and that frequently people first starting out in interpreting begin with interpreting in these settings to improve their skills. This sheds some light on the need for more opportunities for interpreters to develop their skills. Grindrod (1998) also found it ironic that two of the most crucial settings for deaf individuals are the two places interpreters just starting out get their practice: education and religious settings. He argued that as religious settings involve dealing with believers' souls, they deserve the most qualified, ethical, professional interpreters. Unfortunately, Humphrey and Alcorn (2006) communicated multiple limitations related to interpreters who work in religious settings including limited access for professional development, insufficient feedback from experienced interpreting mentors, and little to no compensation for what they do. The RID practice standards for interpreting in religious settings provide a great tool, but those in need of tools such as workshops and mentorship relationship do not have access. As Tynjala (2008) emphasized, "Interaction between novices and experts is of crucial importance in workplace learning" (p. 135). When novice interpreters become educated, learning from a more experienced mentor to model best practice, they learn about the various models of interpreting and the appropriate usage. This will result in a shift from the "helper" model to utilizing a range of more empowering models such as a Bilingual-Bicultural or an Ally model members of profession strive to achieve (Janzen & Korpinski, 2005). In order for non-professional interpreters to become educated there must be a partnership with seasoned interpreters willing to mentor and provide guidance on next steps to skill development. These types of professional relationships are

significant in helping support the mentee socially and mentally, to help the mentee preparing for the career; this encouragement builds trust within the interpreting community (Carpenter, 2017). It is a benefit to the interpreting profession for encouraging, seasoned interpreters invest into “church interpreters” through mentor relationships.

## CHAPTER 3: Methodology

### **Design**

The data collection instrument was an online survey created using Google forms. The survey included multiple choice and open-ended items and was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about the narratives of interpreters who have or are currently interpreting in churches and religious settings. The instrument was divided into three main sections. The first section focused on the participant's current work within religious and other settings, as well as involvement and services offered at their church or religious organization where they provide interpreting services. The second section focused on the participant's previous work and past experiences, such as when they first began interpreting in church or religious settings and their pursuit of professional development. The last section focused on the participant's demographic information.

### **Participants**

Participants were required to be 18 years of age and either currently working or previously engaged as an interpreter in a church or religious setting. The survey began with participants marking yes if they were 18 years of age or older. Each participant was informed of the criteria required and the potential risk of discomfort in discussing experiences of interpreting, the process of seeking professional development, and as a beginner interpreter their interactions with certified interpreters. All participation was completely voluntary and could be discontinued by closing the internet browser. This would ensure the answers would not be submitted for data collection.

To ensure participants all met the criteria of being an interpreter who does work in church or religious settings, on the first page of the survey, the participants were asked, “How often do you accept work in religious settings?” The options ranged from “all of my work” to “never.” If never was the answer, the person was directed to the end of the survey where they were thanked for their time and encouraged to share the survey with other colleagues. Any other answer chosen that indicated the participant does or has worked in churches or religious settings (i.e., all of my work, weekly, monthly, often, occasionally, or not currently) would direct the participant to continue on to the three sections of the survey.

### **Data Collection**

Participants could access the survey with a link made available on January 17, 2018. The link was posted on social media in various interpreter group pages and user pages, emailed to contacts, and emailed to a list of churches of all denominations across the United States listed as having a Deaf Ministry or offering ASL-interpreting services. The distribution of the survey was done through snowball sampling (Hale & Napier, 2013); those who received the link could then share it with their contacts who fit the criteria to participate. Responses were collected until February 2, 2018 when the survey closed.

All of the data were stored in Google drive and downloaded to a personal iCloud account; both locations were password protected. Since the survey responses included contact information for any participant willing to do a follow-up interview, this information was removed and stored in a separate file with the original downloaded responses to be referred back to if follow-up was needed.

All data were exported to an Excel spreadsheet then assigned a number for each participant's set of responses. A total of 114 responses were collected. Two responses were eliminated; one was a duplicate, and the other was submitted blank. Consequently, 112 responses were used for data analysis. The remaining data were then coded in order to insert into pivot charts. Then pivot charts were used to make comparisons between multiple data and create tables and graph for analysis.



## CHAPTER 4: Results and Discussion

### Participant Demographic Information

A total of 112 participants responded to the survey. All participants met the minimum age requirement of 18 years old and ranged in age from 18 through 70+. The years of experience working as a professional interpreter ranged from less than a year to 40 years. As shown in Table 1, each respondent indicated being the required 18 years of age or older. Of those participants, 111 self-selected ages ranging from 18-70+.

Table 1

#### *Gender and Age Demographics*

<u>Gender</u>	<u>18-24</u>	<u>25-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>50-59</u>	<u>60-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>Total</u>
Female	4	13	27	21	25	11	2	103
Male	1	2		2	2	1		8
Total	5	15	27	23	27	12	2	111

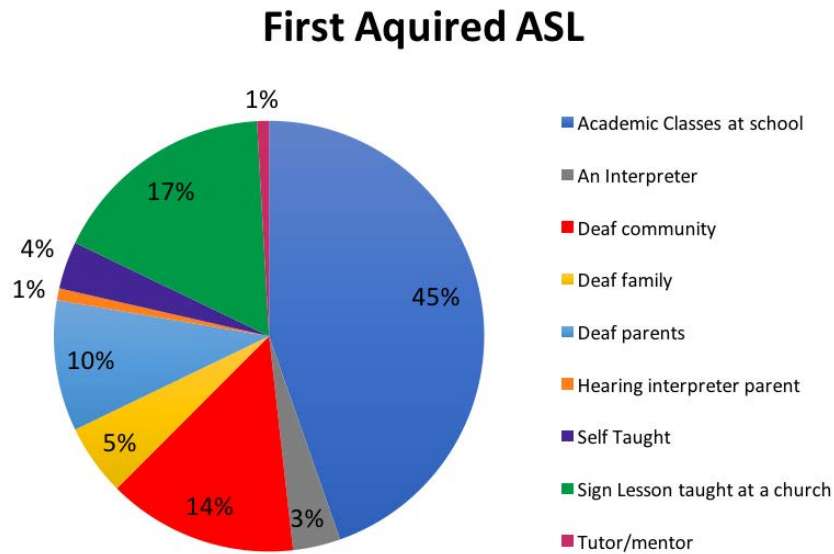
Table 2 displays the ethnic identity and first language acquired by participants. Although four different ethnicities and three different first languages were identified, the majority of participants were White/Caucasian whose first language is English.

Table 2

#### *Ethnicity and First Language Acquired*

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>ASL</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Total</u>
Asian or Pacific Islander		1		1
Black or African American		7		7
Hispanic or Latino		5	3	8
Prefer not to answer	1	8		9
White/Caucasian	11	76		87
Total	12	97	3	112

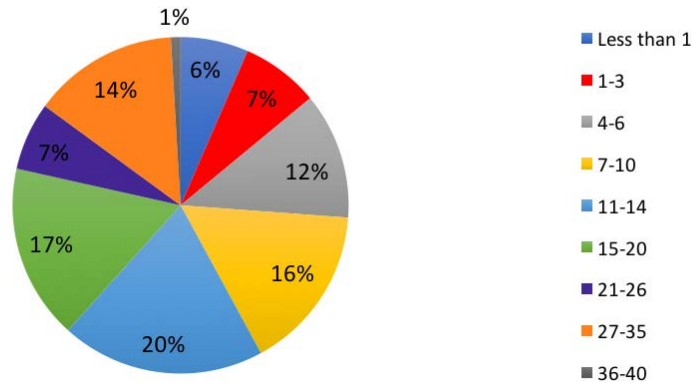
**Acquisition of ASL language skills.** “Academic Classes” was the setting where the most interpreters in this study began acquiring their ASL language skills (45%; see Figure 1). These interpreters also began learning ASL through “sign language lessons specifically at church” (17%) and from the “Deaf community” (14%). Other responses indicated that many were self-taught “from a book” or “online via Bill Vicars YouTube.” Another response was “with deaf people at church,” which was coded as “Deaf community.”



*Figure 1.* First Acquired ASL

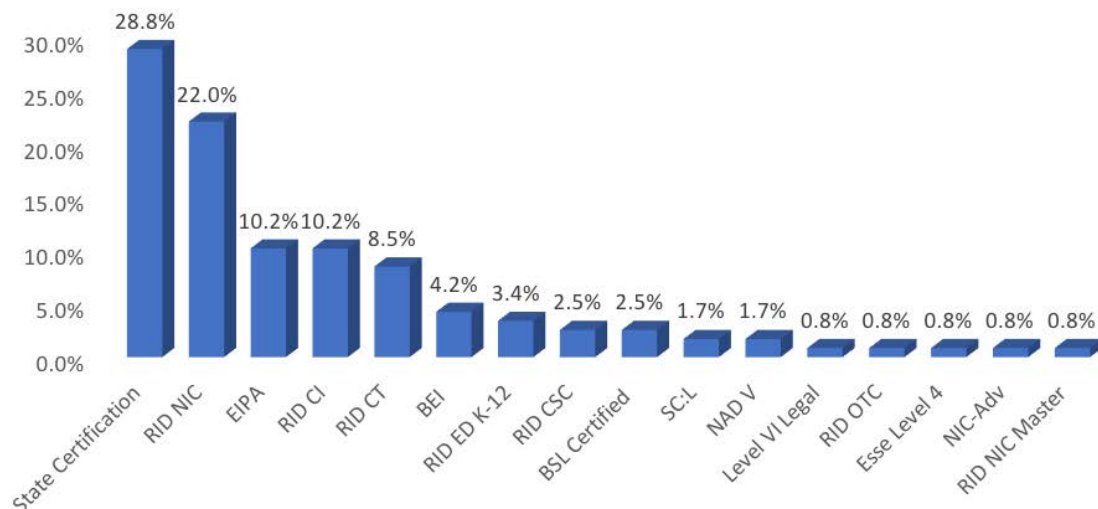
**Years of experience.** Figure 2 shows that 108 participants indicated the years of experience they have as a professional interpreter. Most of the participants have between 7 and 20 years of professional experience.

**Years of Professional Experience**



*Figure 2. Years of Professional Experience*

**Certifications and licenses.** The survey offered a list of certifications and participants were asked to select all of the certification they had obtained. Certifications listed were RID CI, RID CT, RID CSC, RID NIC, RID ED K-12, SC:L, State Certification, EIPA, and other. In total, 84 respondents identified the certifications they currently hold; 118 different certifications are held by the 84 professional interpreters, as shown in Figure 3.



*Figure 3. Current Certification Held by Participants*

**Education levels and current certification.** Participants were asked about their highest level of education. Of the participants, 65% have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher; 75% hold certification, meaning they are nationally certified, state certified or have an EIPA certification. Five percent (5%) indicated they do not hold any certification currently, and 20% did not respond in selecting any certification but also did not mark “none.” The majority of this sample are certified interpreters and have earned an Associate degree or higher. Other results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

*Highest Level of Education and Current Certification*

<u>Highest Level of Education</u>	<u>Currently Certified</u>	<u>Currently Non-Certified</u>	<u>Non- Responsive</u>	<u>Total</u>
High school diploma or GED	0	0	3	3
Some college coursework	4	1	5	10
Associate degree or 2 years	19	2	5	26
Bachelor’s degree	41	0	7	48
Master’s degree	17	3	2	22
Doctoral degree	3	0	0	3
Total	84	6	22	112

**Work settings.** Participants were given options to select all the settings where they do interpreting work most regularly and were provided a place to write in other areas. Multiple options could be selected from the following: K-12, Community, Medical, Court, Conference, VRS, and other. Of the participants, 103 responded and the top three settings were community (31%), medical (18%), and K-12 (16%; see Figure 4).

### Current Non-Church Setting Work

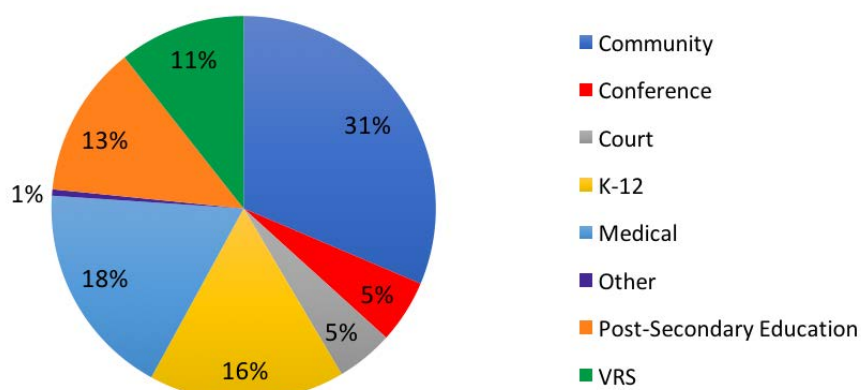


Figure 4. Current Non-Church Setting Work

### Current Work

**Motivation for religious interpreting.** One section of the survey focused on the interpreter's current work as it pertains to church and religious interpreting, compensation, motivation, membership and religious affiliations. Participants were asked, "What keeps you interpreting as a volunteer?" They were asked to select all that apply to their motivation. The item was multiple choice and participants could select all that apply or add their own words under "other." Options listed were "obligation," "it's my way to give back," "act of service," "there is a need and I have the skill," "sense a calling," "everyone is encouraged to contribute their skills," and "other." There were 110 responses and the top three selected motives are to "fulfill a need" (23%), "an act of service" (22%), and "sense of calling" (21%), as shown in Figure 5.

## Motivation for Religious Work

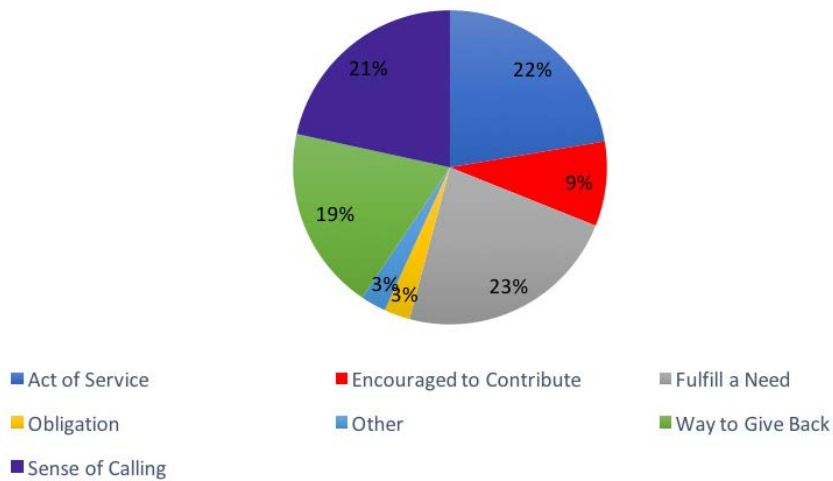


Figure 5. Motivation for Religious Work

**Frequency of religious interpreting work.** Participants were asked about the frequency in which they interpret in church and religious settings by selecting from the options of “weekly”, “monthly”, “occasionally”, “often”, “not currently”, and “all of my work”. Most of the 112 respondents (53%) interpret on a weekly basis in a church meeting or religious service. The top answers from those who do work on a weekly basis as to why they continue to do so is due to a “sense of calling” (26%), “an act of service” (22%), and “fulfilling a need” (21%). All other results can be seen in Figure 6.

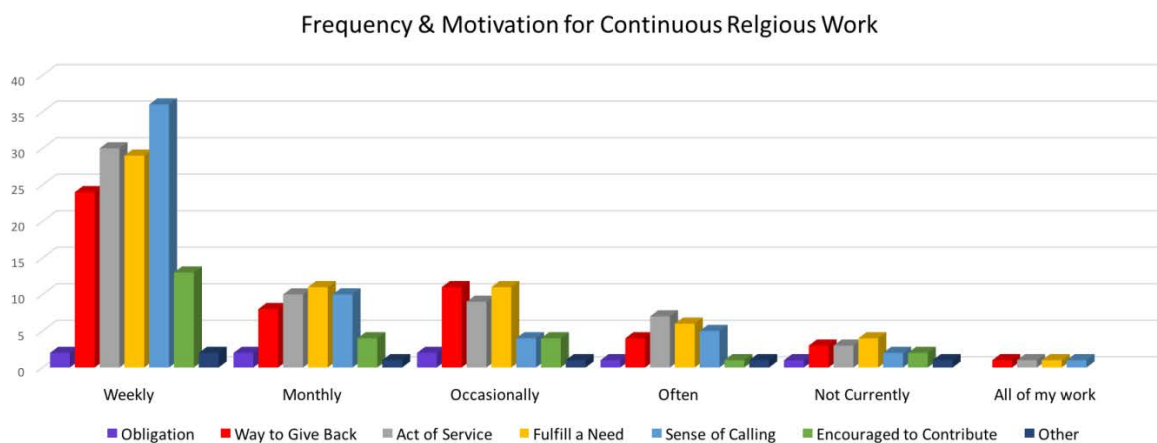
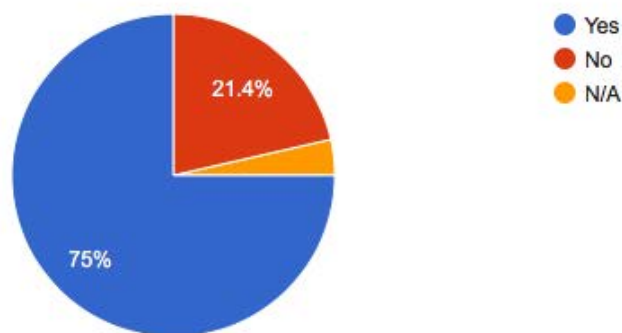


Figure 6. Frequency and Motivation for Continuing Religious Work

**Affiliation with religious organizations.** All 112 indicated their affiliation with the church or religious organization where they provide interpreting services; in this case “affiliation” means they are a member or regular attendee themselves. The majority (75%) of the interpreters are members or regular attendees at the religious institution where they interpret for Deaf congregants. Only 21.4% interpret in other religious setting they are not associated with themselves. Of the respondents, 3.6% chose N/A (“not applicable”), because they are not currently working in religious settings.

**Currently do you volunteer interpret at a religious institution in which you are a member or regular attendee?**

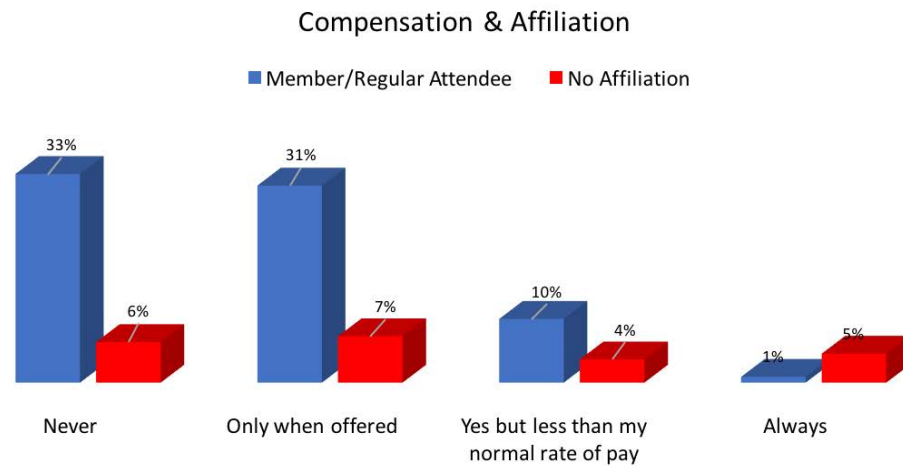
112 responses



*Figure 7. Church or Religious Organization Affiliation*

**Compensation and affiliation.** “Non-professional” interpreting indicates no compensation is given. The survey included a question about whether the interpreter accepts compensation for work in religious settings. Four options were provided to choose from: never; only when offered; yes, but less than my normal rate of pay; and always. With 110 responses, the two highest answers were 40.9% answering “only when offered” and 40% answering “never,” as shown in Figure 8. The majority of the interpreters are working in churches or religious organizations in which they themselves

are affiliated (84 of the 112 respondents). The interpreters who do have affiliation (33%) said they never receive compensation, and 31% accept it only when offered.



*Figure 8. Compensation and Affiliation*

**Affiliation and motivation.** As the majority of interpreters are working in churches where they are personally affiliated, I looked at the motivation for interpreters continuing to do this type of work. The top motivating reasons for doing religious work for the interpreters affiliated with their church were a “sense of calling” (19%), then “fulfilling a need” (18%), and “an act of service” (17%). Three percent (3%) of the group affiliated with their church selected that they interpret there out of obligation, but the group with no affiliation has 0% obligation for accepting the work they do in religious settings (see Figure 9).



## Organization Affiliation & Motive for Church Interpreting Work

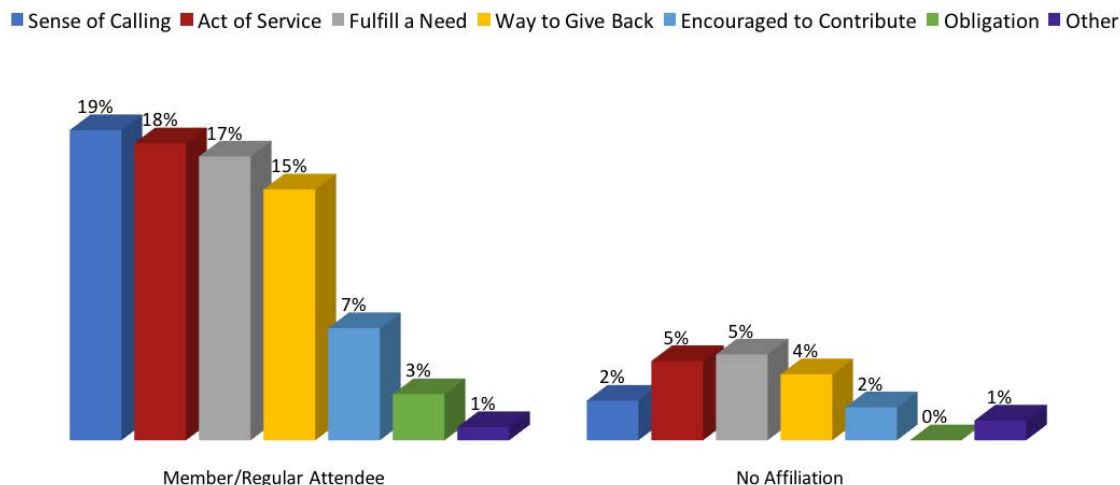


Figure 9. Affiliation and Motive

**Working in teams.** The majority of interpreters (62%) indicated they do have interpreters who work with them regularly in their church; 16% answered occasionally; 22% said they have no other interpreters who team or work alongside them in religious settings (see Figure 10). Participants were asked to select all that applied from a list of descriptors of the other interpreters who work with them in their churches. The options were “certified interpreters”, “recent interpreter student graduates”, “students training to become professional interpreters”, “church attendees who are learning ASL”, “volunteers who are ASL/English bilinguals”, “CODAs” and “other”, which gave the option to list other applicable descriptions. The majority who have a team of interpreters work with certified interpreters. Current certified interpreters work with other certified interpreters the most, then recent interpreter training program graduates, and church attendees learning ASL. Under “other,” participants wrote that the type of team they had were “Deaf members lead the songs,” “hearing parent of a deaf adult,” “Deaf (CI) does the music,” “Deaf do relay,” and “Deaf Interpreters.”

### Team & Current Certification

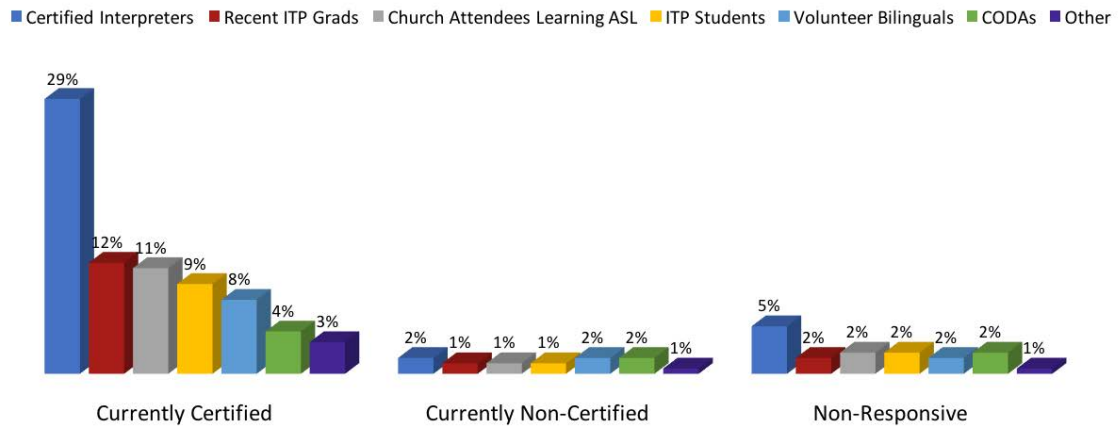


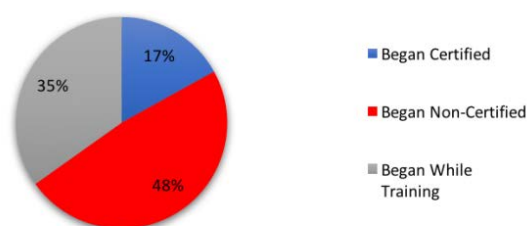
Figure 10. Team and Current Certification Status

**ASL lessons offered.** Out of the responses, 19 said their church or religious organization offers ASL lessons; 25 said occasionally classes are offered. Forty-eight said no. Three are planning or are in the process of making ASL classes available; three were offering ASL but stopped because consistent attendance was lacking or deaf leadership was not available, and one responded ASL is currently being offered.

### Certification Status

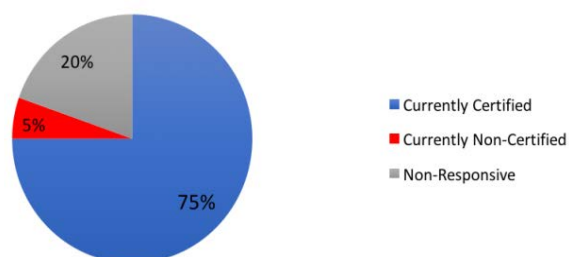
Participants were asked whether or not they were certified or licensed when they first began interpreting in religious settings. All 112 participant answers were then coded into three categories: “began certified,” “began non-certified,” or “began while training” (see Figures 11 and 12). The results were 17% “began certified,” 48% “began non-certified,” and 35% “began while training”. Participants were asked to select all their current certifications, write in ones not listed, or select none. These answers were then coded into three categories: currently certified, currently non-certified, and non-responsive (meaning this group did not indicate certification but also did not select none). Of all 112 participants, 75% are “currently certified”, 20% were “non-responsive”, and 5% “currently non-certified” (see Figure 14).

**Certification Status Beginning Church Interpreting**



*Figure 11. Prior Certification Status*

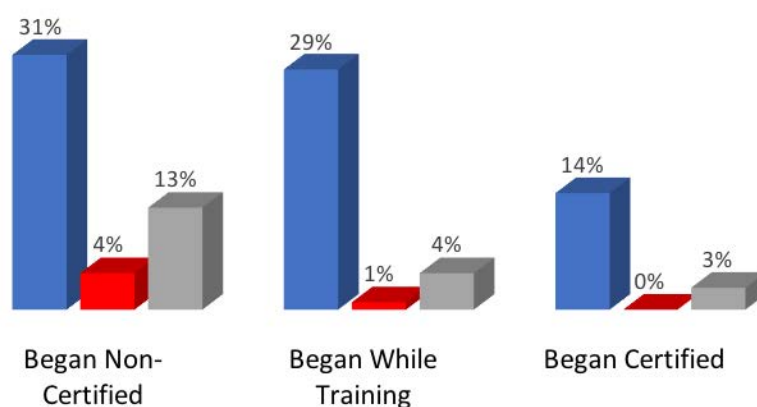
**Current Certification Status**



*Figure 12. Current Certification Status*

### Prior to Church Work and Current Certification

■ Currently Certified ■ Currently Non-Certified ■ Non-Responsive

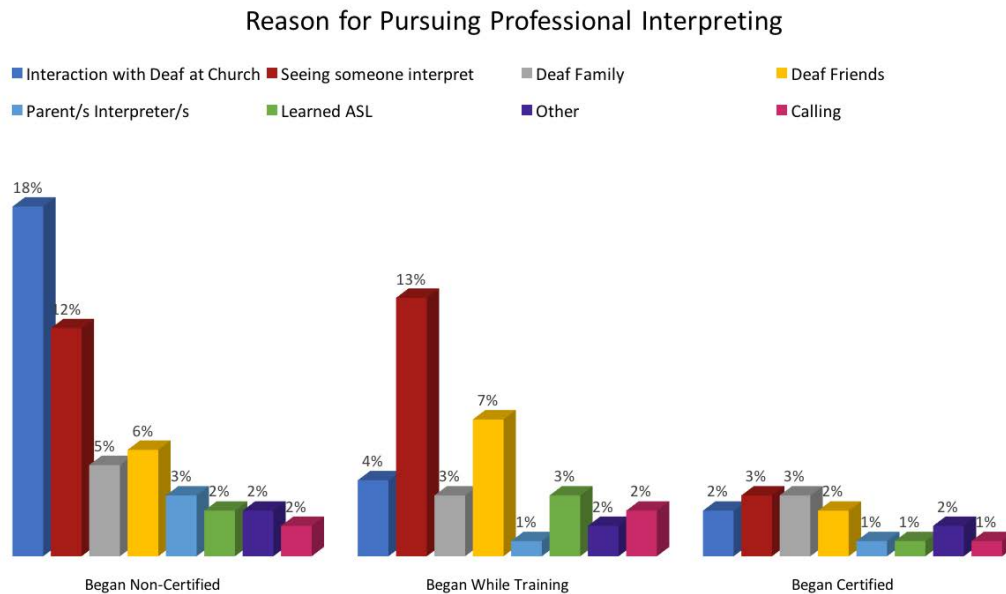


*Figure 13. Compare Certification Prior to Church Work and Current Certification*

Nearly half (48%) of the participants were not certified prior to working (see Figure 13), 31% have since acquired certification. Thirty-five percent began while training to become a professional interpreter; 29% are now currently certified. Of the 112 participants, 17% began their church or religious setting interpreting with certification; of those, 14% remain certified.

## Previous Experience

**Pursuing professional training.** Within the data, 110 participants responded and indicated their inspiration for pursuing professional training to become an interpreter by selecting one more of the following: integrating with Deaf members at church, seeing someone interpret, I have Deaf family and friends, one or both of my parents are/were interpreters, and the option to add another reason. Once the data were collected, the option “Deaf family and friends” was split into “Deaf family” and “Deaf friends,” depending on the information from where the respondent first learned ASL, as indicated in open-ended questions where they stated they had deaf parents or family. During data analysis another category was added—Learned ASL—based on the number of open-ended answers given in conjunction to respondents stating they pursued interpreting after learning and loving ASL.



*Figure 14.* Reason for Pursuing Professionalism

The results are seen in Figure 14. For those who began non-certified, the highest rated reason for pursuing professional interpreting was their interaction with Deaf

individuals at church and then seeing someone interpret. Those who began while training selected seeing someone interpret as their main reason for deciding to pursue a professional interpreting career.

While 110 participants responded to the multiple choice inquiring about their inspiration for pursuing professional training, only 99 responded to the open-ended question about how they became an interpreter and started working in church and religious settings. Their responses were then coded using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), finding common key themes that arose within their narratives under two sections divided into “reason for church interpreting” and “reason for pursuing professional interpreting.” Each respondent was only assigned what appeared to be their top factor as indicated by their story told in a few short sentences, in consideration of the closed-ended questions they also answered. Information was coded into “reason for pursuing professional training,” which was only coded for those who responded to this particular question, along with evidence they are still in the process of pursuing certification or are currently certification holders. That resulted in 77 respondents. The seven key themes that appeared in these narratives were ASL or interpreting exposure, calling, career choice, CODA, Deaf community, Deaf family & friends, Deaf ministry & church association, and gain qualification. Although, the respondents’ narratives could fit into several of the categories, each response was assigned only one category based on the most distinct initial purpose for pursuing professional interpreting training.

### **Becoming an Interpreter: Open Coding Categories and Examples**

During the open coding process categories were developed based on responses from participants. In this section, I will describe each category that was developed using

an overview of subcategories that emerged while analyzing the data. Following the description will be examples of responses that led to the developed category.

**ASL or interpreting exposure.** Learned some sign language as a child, witnessed a conversation in ASL, been involved in a sign choir, learned a song in ASL, took an ASL class in high school, attended a class, church or an event with interpreting, or briefly met a Deaf person at some point in their life. Examples: “Signing choir at church as a middle school student,” “A family in my church adopted a Deaf son when I was young. I slowly learned ASL and SEE and began taking part of the Deaf community,” “I had to take a foreign language in high school,” “I saw interpreting when I was young and was enthralled by the language,” “I attended a ladies conference that had interpreters,” “learned some sign as a child decided to go to school to be an interpreter,” “Action songs in BSL (British Sign Language) signs, interpreters in my home church and conferences.”

**Calling.** Summons, felt a call, God leading, sense of purpose. Examples: “I felt a call to learn ASL, and interpreting in religious settings was a big part of my education,” “took a sign class in college, and God led me to a need that I could fill,” “God’s leading to be a community interpreter & to serve in my church as an interpreter,” “local deaf church close to the college I attended and took intro ASL classes. I sensed a call there to become an interpreter.”

**Career Choice.** Attended an interpreting training program, decided to become an interpreter. Examples: “I decided to become an interpreter,” “the first ITP I attended was at a Bible College,” “College offered interpreting, changed major,” “college training. No Deaf world exposure prior.”

**CODA.** Child of a Deaf adult, first language was ASL. Example: “Asked to interpret as a child (90% of my family was deaf). No other interpreters,” “My entire family is deaf, so I have been used as an interpreter since I was about 3-4 years old,” “I interpreted for my parents,” “I have a Deaf parents, which is where I started to become involved,” “As a CODA, I always wanted my Mom to be able to participate fully in church.”

**Deaf family and friends.** Learned ASL for Deaf family, met Deaf friends which led to pursue interpreting. Examples: “Some in my family are Deaf grew up signing also grew up in the church,” “sibling is deaf,” “Learned to be able to interpret for my friend’s Deaf son when he was old enough to understand,” “Deaf brother. Oral home ... Knew from my brother’s experience that an interpreter was needed,” “My best friend found out her son was Deaf so we started with parent ASL classes to communicate. I quickly went on to the interpreting program so I could use it in church settings.”

**Deaf ministry and church association.** Studied deaf ministry, involvement in deaf Bible study or deaf mission led to pursuing interpreting training, solely based on the church the participant attended that had interpreting services, deaf ministry and deaf congregants is how they became involved in the Deaf community and interpreting field. Examples: “church offered free sign class they encourage me to continue in college to become an interpreter,” “free class was offered at the church I was attending by the interpreter. I attended that free class for about 2 years and had small interpreting opportunities to volunteer there. I sought out continuing education classes at the local college and began looking for workshops,” “I served a mission to the deaf,” “Deaf ministry program in college.”

**Gain qualification.** The need for professionalism, need to qualify skills, desire to become credentialed out of respect for the Deaf, and to be taken seriously. Examples: “The more I got involved and developed relationships in the Deaf Community the more I saw a need for good hearted qualified interpreters so I started to pursue certification,” “When I took ASL for my foreign language requirement, I then decided to pursue certification out of respect for the Deaf community and to interpret at church,” and “I felt inferior because religious interpreting is viewed as something you do because you’re not good enough to be a real interpreter.”

The group who began religious interpreting certified made up 18% of the 77 respondents who have become certified or are currently pursuing it. The key reasons for initially pursuing professional training for this group of the overall respondents: Career choice and Deaf family and friends. The group who began religious interpreting non-certified made up 42% of the 77 respondents who have become certified or are currently pursuing it. Those who began religious interpreting non-certified pursued professional interpreting mainly as a result of ASL or Interpreting exposure, CODA and to gain qualification. The group who began religious interpreting while training made up 40% of the 77 respondents who have become certified or are currently pursuing it. The group who began while training for professional practice contributes “Deaf family and friends”, “ASL or Interpreting exposure”, “career choice”, and “Deaf ministry or church association” (see Figure 15).



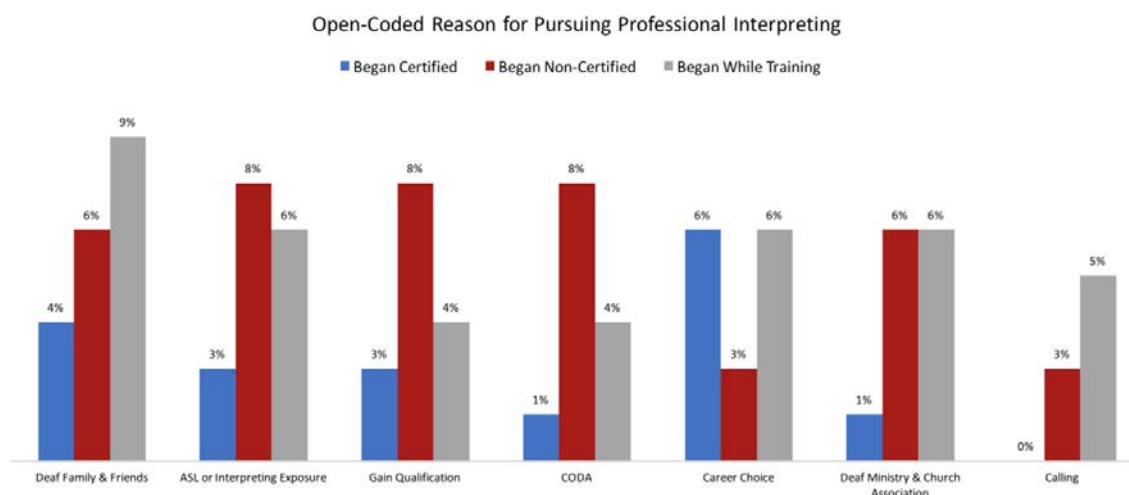


Figure 15. Open-Coded Reason for Pursuing Professionalism

The coded data from the open-response question where participants shared how they became an interpreter were then compared to the current certification status; only one participant of the 77 is actively still in pursuit of professionalism. The breakdown of all those who are currently certified and their initial reason for pursuing professional training can be seen in Figure 17.

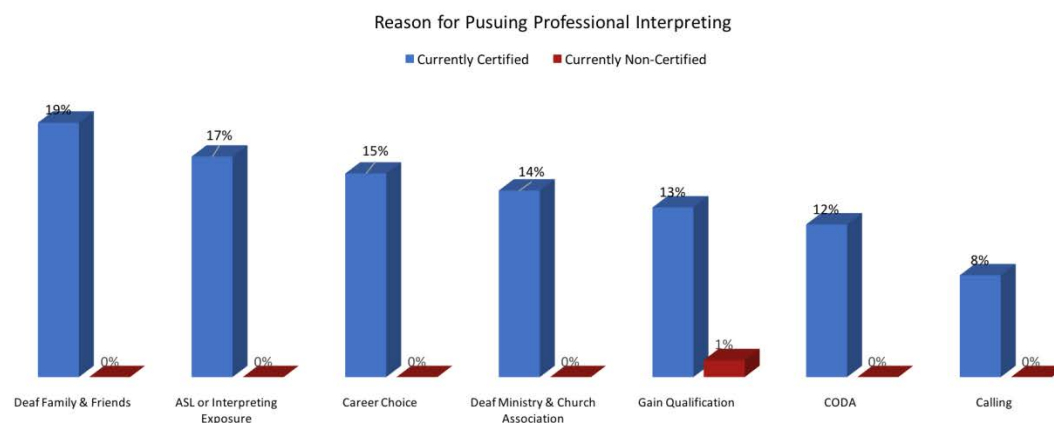


Figure 16. Compare Reason for Pursuing Professionalism and Current Certification

### Becoming a Religious Interpreter: Open Coding Categories and Examples

An open-ended question asked how a participant became an interpreter and how they got involved in religious interpreting; responses to this question were used to

analyze and to code the reasons for religious interpreting. All 99 of the narrative responses were then coded by common key themes that arose in their stories. It should be noted that the reason given for doing church interpreting may have some overlap with the reason for the same interpreter pursuing professional training, but often it was distinctly different. The categories are “association request”, “called”, “church association”, “CODA”, “Deaf ministry”, “mentor support”, and “volunteered services”. Each response was coded by the distinct reason for becoming involved interpreting in church, although some could fit into several categories.

**Association request.** By connection the interpreter was invited to provide services either by the Deaf attendee, friend or church, invited to help current interpreting team: a need arose and someone asked or requested services of the respondent because they knew ASL or had the interpreting skills. Examples: “I was an interpreter, invited to church by another interpreter. They were already interpreters there and one day they needed extra help and I was there,” “The Deaf asked me to interpret for them in church,” “I was asked by my dear friend to take over her position because she was retiring,” “The first ITP I attended was at a Bible College but I did not get involved in church interpreting until years later though those connections.”

**Called.** Sense a summons by God, felt purposeful. Examples: “Attended the church, my husband needed an interpreter, so I interpreted and felt the church had a need and I felt led to fill it. We live in a city that has a large Deaf population,” “I was called to interpret as a part of worship,” “a calling, being energized participating in providing access for marginalized people.”

**Church association.** Involvement with the Deaf community, realization of interpreting as a profession happened solely based on the church the participant attended, which had interpreting services, deaf ministry, and deaf congregants. Examples: “Attending my church, I would sit near the Deaf ministry and find myself watching the interpreter over my pastor. I then started to learn myself followed by going to school,” “got my B.S. in interpreting. Afterwards I came home and was looking for a church with a deaf community. I didn’t intend on interpreting there, but God had other plans,” “Saw interpreters at church, took a sign class in college, and God led me to a need that I could fill,” “Deaf ministry in my church, Deaf friends, & a desire to communicate,” “Got my Bachelor’s degree in ASL Studies and Interpreting. My husband is a youth pastor and we have Deaf members at our church so I volunteer interpret when there is a need.”

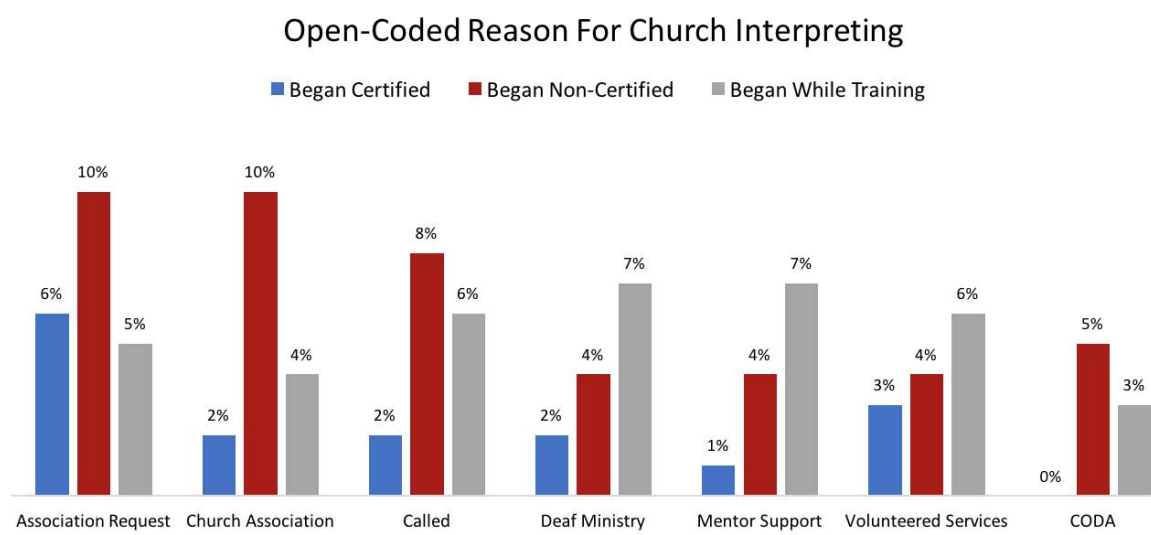
**CODA.** Child of a Deaf adult. Examples: “I’m a CODA. Started interpreting at church for my Deaf grandmother as a teen,” “My parents are deaf.”

**Deaf ministry.** Studied deaf ministry, involvement in deaf Bible study or deaf mission led to interpreting or they interpret in church as part of a Deaf ministry. Examples: “As a young Christian that knew ASL, I first started working as a signing camp counselor at a Christian camp that was starting a pilot program for Deaf children. I often interpreted the short sermons preached to the children. After I attended an ITP and became a certified I still volunteered my services at my church when deaf were present,” “I began by learning Sign Language in order to teach a Deaf Bible Study. Interpreting evolved out of that. I never intended to become an interpreter, but now do it regularly,” and a CODA who grew up interpreting for family said they read deaf ministry and

interpreting books, formed a Deaf church, became an Assistant Pastor, but later acquired National interpreting certification said, “Religious Interpreting is where my heart is.”

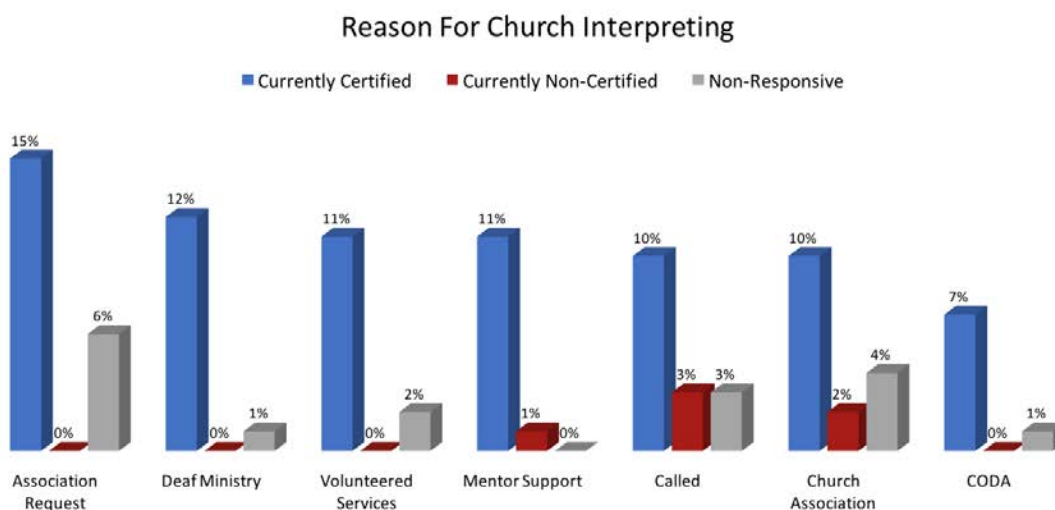
**Mentor support.** Participant was invested in, coached specifically by another interpreter who does work within the church. Examples: “I was invited to a church by friends when they were new believers but I was not. I finally agreed to go to a service, and once I was there, was enthralled with the interpreter I saw down front. Fast forward a year – I’m taking beginning ASL classes at that church, and a few years later that interpreter I first saw became one of my closest friends and mentor and pointed the way to become a trained, professional interpreter,” “My mentor was a church interpreter. My ITP assigned me to her,” “We had an interpreter at our church and I told I wanted to learn sign language ... [he directed the participant to the college courses] ... He was a CODA, and mentored me along with the 30 deaf at our church.”

**Volunteered services.** Offered to interpret for the need, to help current interpreting team or desire to establish consistent interpreting services. Examples: “I regularly go to church and have Deaf friends and family I wanted to invite to church to share the experience so I volunteered to interpret for them,” “Began attending a church where interpreters were provided weekly, and asked if I could volunteer,” “I grew up in a deaf family and deaf church. It was natural to step into interpreting roles at church when the need arose or to relief other interpreters,” “Already attended a church with a Deaf Ministry, so I started attending during ASL classes, committed to Deaf Bible study attendance during interpreting training, started volunteering towards the end of my education.”



*Figure 17.* Open-Coded Reason for Church Interpreting and Beginning Certification Status

As shown in Figure 17, the group who started church interpreting as certified professionals did so mainly due to association request or volunteering their services. Those who began non-certified interpreting in church did so mainly as a result of association request, church association, or feeling called. The top four reasons interpreters who were training at the time they began their church interpreting was a result of mentor support, Deaf ministry involvement, feeling called, or volunteering their services (see Figure 18).



*Figure 18.* Compare Reason for Church Work and Current Certification

Using the same data of key motives for becoming involved in church and religious interpreting, I compared that data with current certification status. Currently certified interpreters now make up 77% of the 99 participants represented, and their highest reasons for initial involvement are 15% association request, 12% Deaf ministry, 11% mentor support and 11% volunteered services.

### **Emotions While Becoming an Interpreter: Open Coding Categories and Examples**

Participants were asked to select all the feelings they experienced as a beginner church or religious interpreter first attending trainings with certified professional interpreters. The emotions listed were included, equal, respected, supported, encouraged, inspired, excluded, disrespected, inferior, discouraged, N/A, and other gave them the option to write in their own feelings not listed. Multiple options could be selected, and those who responded with N/A means they did not start out as a labeled church or religious interpreter. Of the participants, 106 responded choosing one or multiple emotions they experienced attending professional trainings and interacting with certified interpreters; 296 emotions were marked by participants. Three percent (3%) wrote in other emotions. Examples are as follows: “I felt VERY marginalized. I still do not talk about my religious work with anyone outside of church. People assume negative things about me,” “I’m a CODA and feelings towards CODAs vary widely,” another CODA wrote, “attended a new church, had 2 interpreters that were jealous and didn’t want me there.” “Inspired to make future interpreters feel respected and encouraged,” “horizontal violence,” “not taken seriously,” and “ignored.” Another participant said, “Many years ago, church interpreters were thought very little of in this area.”

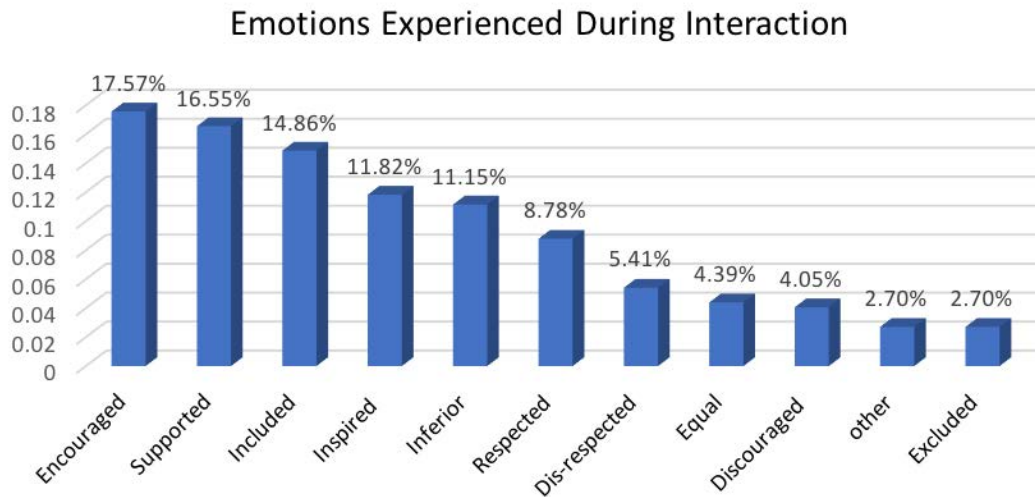


Figure 19. Emotions Experienced

From the answers given, all feelings were sorted by whether they were positive or negative. Then these were placed into three different groups: negative feelings only, positive feelings only, and both negative and positive feelings, which were experienced by the interpreter (see Figure 20). More than half of the interpreters experienced only positive emotions when interacting with certified interpreters at professional trainings.

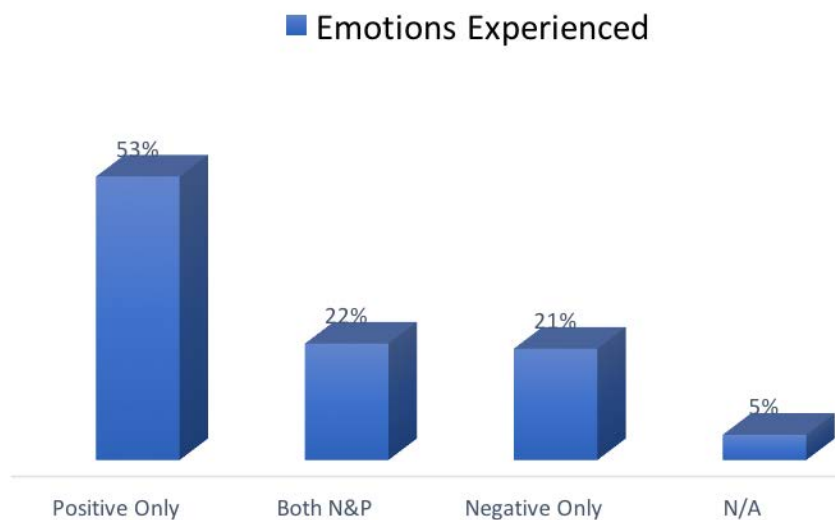
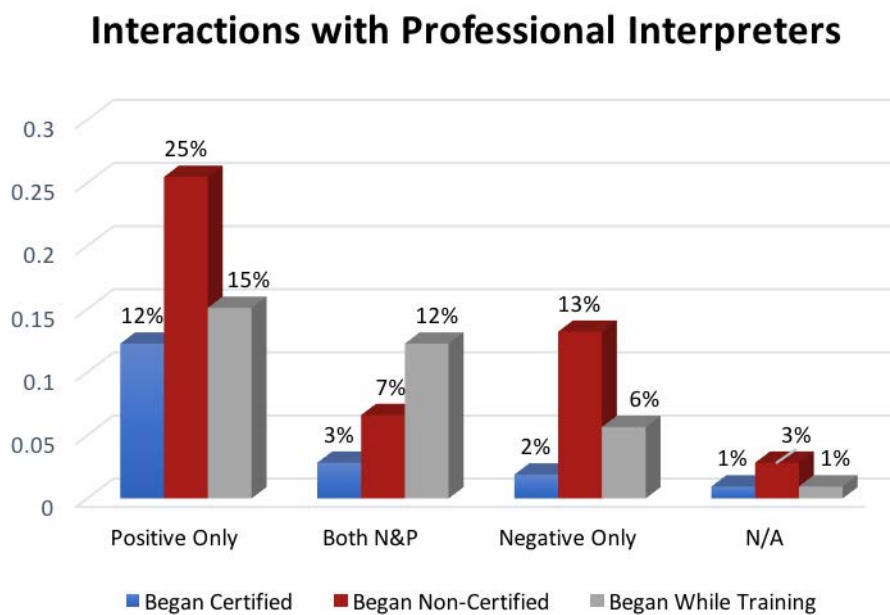


Figure 20. Coded Emotions

I then analyzed whether the certification status of the interpreter before beginning their work in church or as a religious interpreter made an impact on the emotions

experienced when interacting with certified interpreters at professional trainings. Of the 106 respondents who began church interpreting, 19 began certified, 51 began non-certified, and 36 began while training (see Figure 21). Interpreters who began certified were more likely to experience only positive emotions, and those who began while training were more likely to select both positive and negative emotions. Although, one-fourth of those who began non-certified selected they experienced only positive emotions, they were also the highest group in the negative only emotions.



*Figure 21.* Compare Emotions and Prior Certification Status

As shown in Figure 22, the group who chose both negative and positive emotions experienced when interacting with professionally certified interpreters at trainings selected “seeing someone interpret” (26%) as their top inspiration for pursuing professional interpreting. This group’s second-most selected inspiration or motivation for pursuing interpreting professionally was “deaf family” at 22%, then “interacting with



Deaf at church” (19%), and “Deaf friends” (15%).

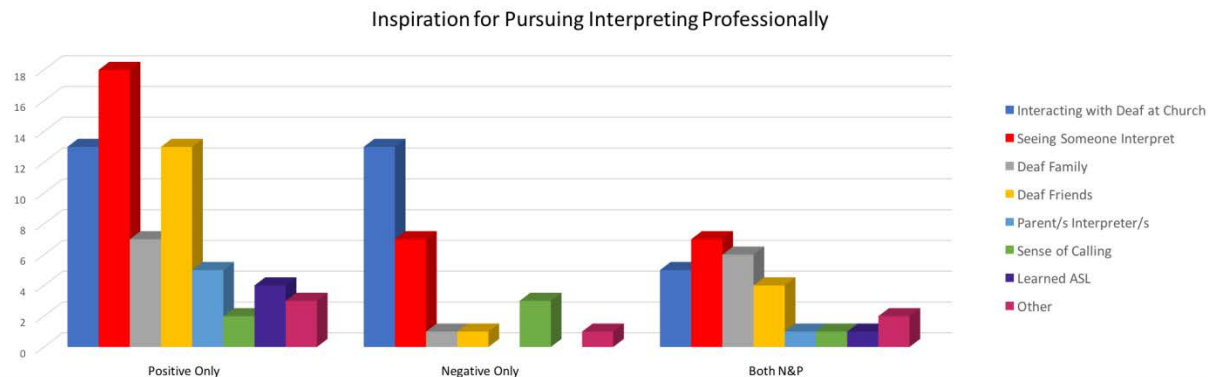


Figure 22. Inspiration for Professionalism and Emotions

Among the group who marked only negative emotions experienced when interacting with certified interpreters at trainings, 50% said interaction with Deaf members or attendees at church was their top motivation for pursuing interpreting as a profession. The next two answers were “seeing someone interpret” (27%), and “calling” (12%).

The group who marked only positive emotions experienced when interacting with certified interpreters at trainings, listed their number one motivation for pursuing interpreting as a profession was “seeing someone interpret” (28%) and then “interacting with Deaf at church” (20%) was equal with “Deaf friends” (20%), followed by “Deaf family” (11%).

Mentorship and emotions experienced were compared to determine whether or not the interpreter being mentored by a professional interpreter within the church had an effect on their interaction with certified interpreters at trainings (see Figure 23). Results are fairly distributed and rather inconclusive.

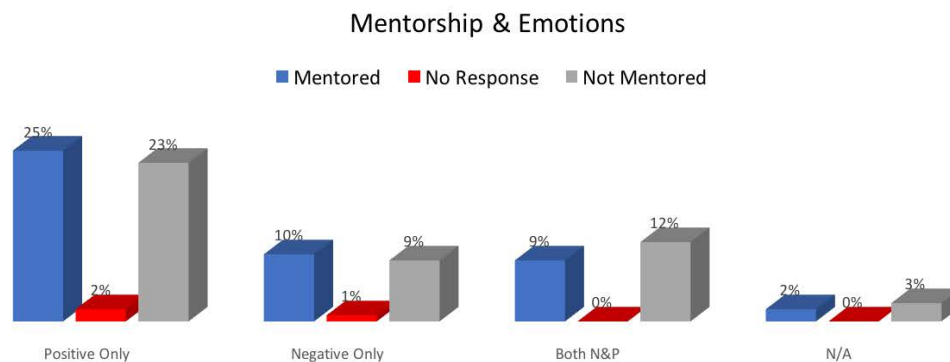


Figure 23. Mentorship and Emotions

**Years of experience and emotions.** The years of experience was compared to the emotions experienced to determine if it had an effect. Although, the results were mainly inconclusive (see Figure 24), there is a significant number of interpreters who entered the field 11-14 years ago who experienced only positive emotions in their interactions with professional interpreters.

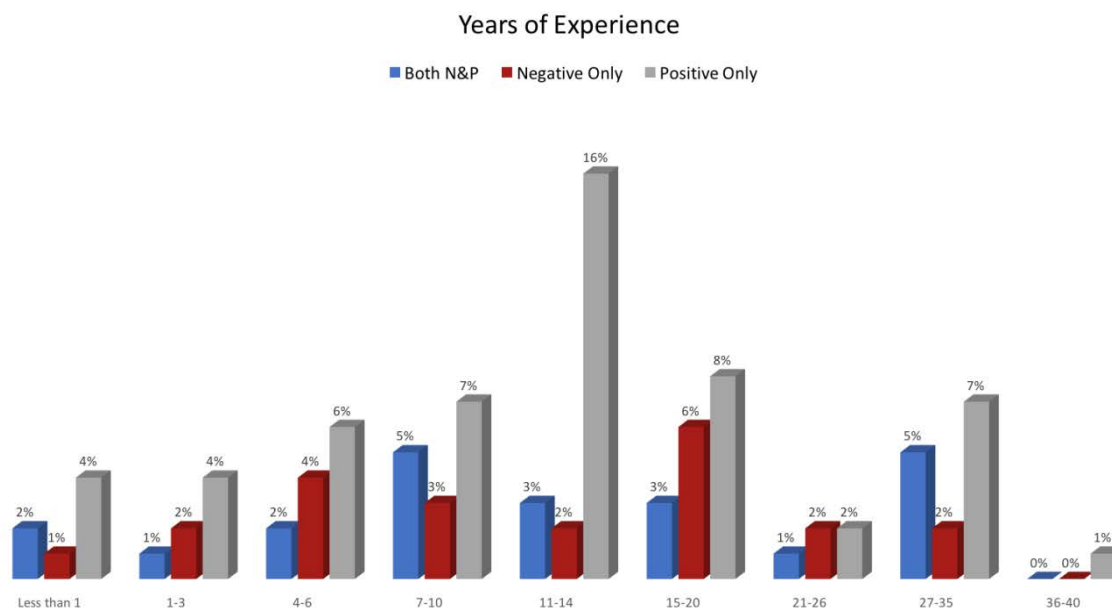
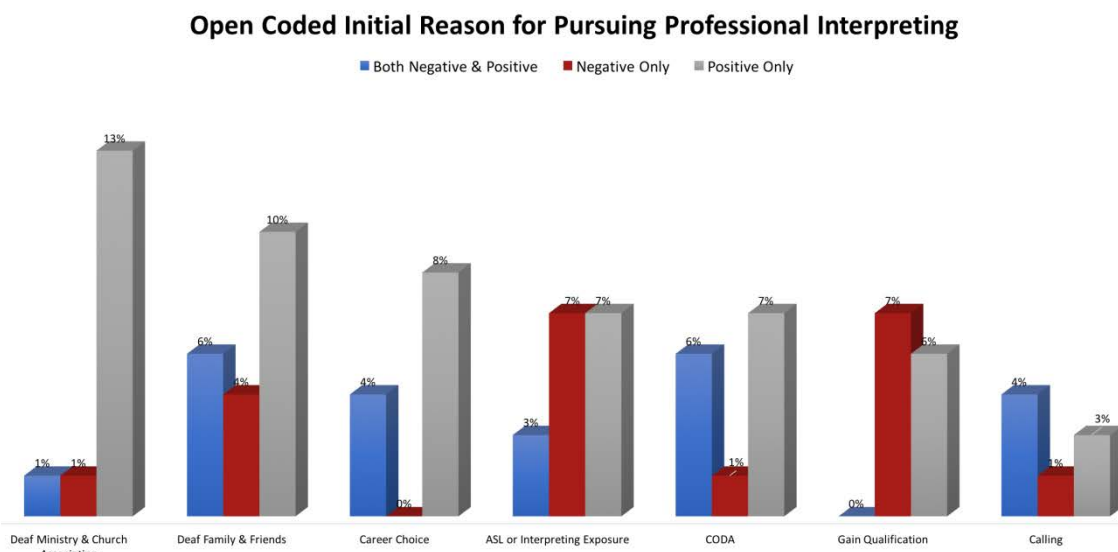


Figure 24. Years of Experience and Emotions

**Emotions and initial involvement in religious interpreting.** The responses to the open-ended question inquiring how participants became involved in church and

religious interpreting was compared to the emotions they experienced while interacting with professional, certified interpreters at trainings and workshops. Positive-only emotions were experienced most by those pursuing professional interpreting due to “Deaf ministry and church association”, “Deaf family and friends”, and “career choice”. Both negative and positive emotions were experienced most by those pursuing professional interpreting inspired by “Deaf family and friends” and “CODA”. Negative-only emotions were experienced by those pursuing professionalism inspired by “ASL or interpreting exposure” or to “gain qualification”.



*Figure 25. Open-Coded Reason for Professional Interpreting and Emotions*

## Discussion

My research was focused on who church interpreters are: their qualifications, motivations, and previous experience with the interpreting community while pursuing the profession. The majority are qualified certified interpreters who team with other certified interpreters, but also work with many who are training to become interpreters. This indicates a level of mentorship is happening among church interpreters. The amount of positive emotions experienced during interactions with professional interpreters when the

novice church interpreters were pursuing professional development was far higher than anticipated. Due to the negative stigma about church interpreter and the view of them being inferior, I expected that a larger number would have listed more negative emotions than positive.

For 20 years, the interpreting field has been left with the idea that interpreters who do work in churches are non-professional, under-qualified individuals. Due to a lack of current literature about this population, it was my desire to determine if the current population doing church interpreting continues to fit the stereotype. Could it be that the previous literature was used by the church interpreting population as a challenge to pursue education and professional development? Although only 17% began interpreting in church as “certified interpreters”, 75% are “currently certified”. This suggests that these interpreters pursued professional development to the point of certification. It could be that necessary qualifications are more widely known across the interpreting field, and more training opportunities are available than 20 years ago.

Based on this data, it appears one can be a professional, certified interpreter and also be a “church interpreter.” Seventeen percent learned ASL through lessons at their church and, prior to pursuing professional training. That 17% could have started out like the 14% of church attendees learning ASL that team interpret with certified interpreters in their church. For many, the motivation for pursuing an interpreting career professionally was the interaction they had with Deaf at church or seeing someone interpret. Between that time and certification, interpreting skill development took place, because the majority of participants are also currently working in other arenas of interpreting. Although, these interpreters expanded their practice, they continue to do

work in (most often) churches they are affiliated with, with calling as a main motivating factor. I believe that is the reason so many do the work in the church for little to no compensation. Although this often means they are labeled as non-professional (Antonini et al., 2017), 75% are still certified working professionals, making them professional church interpreters.

### **Professional Church Interpreters**

It has long been assumed that “church interpreters” are inferior. As one respondent stated: “Religious interpreting is something you do because you’re not good enough to be a real interpreter.” One participant, who is doing church interpreting, said, “Often unqualified signers are moonlighting as interpreters ... putting a bad taste in the mouths of the deaf community at large.” Another participant admitted they didn’t know their skills were lacking until moving to the city. They hadn’t realized the perspective that non-Christian interpreters have towards church interpreters:

Sometimes that bad reputation has been rightfully earned, sometimes it has not. It is definitely a stereotype. I can honestly say that in the area I live now many of us who are believers have improved our skills and are not only trained but are credentialed!

James and Grindrod’s studies were both published in 1998, pointing out the negative stigma assumed by the ASL/English Interpreting community about interpreters working in churches and religious settings; in this current study, I sought to learn who these “church interpreters” are now and what has improved or remained in the last two decades. Overall, the majority of the 112 participants were White/Caucasian females between the ages of 30-59 whose first language is English, who have earned a bachelor’s

degree, who have 11-14 years of professional interpreting experience, and who work full-time in mainly community interpreting settings. Of the participants, 75% are currently certified, primarily holding state certifications. The majority interpret in religious settings on a weekly basis in a church or organization where they themselves are affiliated, as a member or regular attendee, only accept compensation when it is offered, and do work with other mainly certified interpreters in these settings. From the churches or religious organizations in which the interpreter is involved, the majority have a Deaf ministry with mainly an interpreter leading or co-leading the ministry and 1-3 regular deaf attendees.

The fact that 3/4 of the interpreters in this study are currently affiliated with the church where they are providing services correlates with Peremota's (2017) findings that 93% of Russian interpreting users deem the interpreter providing services in Evangelical churches to be a Christian themselves of utmost importance. Although, the survey questions did not require participants to indicate their views on whether the interpreter should be a part of the religious organization where they provide services, the 75% affiliation rate could indicate it is a value for the interpreter, deaf consumers, or churches represented in this study. In addition, 95% receive little to no compensation for the work they do in their own church. The majority of these interpreters are volunteering their services while balancing all of the roles that Warford (2000) discussed—professional interpreter, friend, and church member—which means being able to provide accurate interpretations, knowing background information, advocating, maneuvering ethical decisions, building relationships, and building their own faith. Knowing the reality of what all is involved in being a part of the church, being an interpreter and knowing the

negative stigma from the professional field of a “church interpreter” (James, 1998), the question remains: What is the motivation behind the efforts these interpreters invest most on a weekly basis?

Most of the church interpreters represented in this study volunteer on a weekly basis in these settings, never receive compensation, and are personally affiliated with the church or organization. Their highest-ranked motivation for continuing to do this work was a sense of calling. The second largest group of interpreters represented also affiliated with their church or organization only receive compensation when offered, their highest motivating factors for continuing their work is to fulfill a need and an act of service. It should be noted that the 6% who always receive compensation and have no affiliation with the church or organization where they interpret never do their work out of obligation.

The current religious environments within which these interpreters are working are primarily churches with deaf ministries that have approximately 1-3 Deaf members or regular attendees. In these areas, 63% of the interpreters do work in teams with mostly other certified interpreters. The interpreters do work with teams regularly, but they are more likely to have teams if they hold certification. The teams are made up of mainly other certified interpreters, those who have professional interpreter training (i.e., recent ITP graduates or current students), but there were also a similar number of people in the church who are learning ASL who are a part of the team.

### **Pursuit of Professionalism**

Each interpreter had their own journey to pursuing professional interpreting; some sought training, some have achieved certification, others are in the process still, and some

remain non-certified. In this study, I looked for common themes in their narratives. The majority of the interpreters began their work as a church interpreter, non-certified or training to become a professional interpreter, and 70% of those are now certified professional working interpreters. These interpreters attribute their inspiration for their pursuit of professionalism to interactions with Deaf members or attendees at church, exposure to ASL or seeing someone interpret, and being a CODA. As for the CODAs who began non-certified interpreting, 90% are now certified and only 20% included more information that indicated they pursued interpreting by choice rather than falling into interpreting, which is consistent with Williams's (2016) findings.

The particular group who began interpreting in church as non-certified, are not CODAs, and do not have Deaf family essentially began as outsiders to the Deaf community. Of this group, 60% attribute their inspirations for pursuing professional training to interacting with the Deaf at their church or seeing someone interpret. This indicates the discovery of interpreting as a profession may have come through the individual attending a church with a deaf ministry, Deaf congregants or interpreted services and their exposure motivated them to pursue training in a new field of work. Those who began their work in church as non-certified had a 65% result of acquiring certification. For some this might be a career change later in their lifetime; Berg et al. (2010) referred to this as pursuing their missed or unanswered calling. However, sense of calling was only 5% of the contributing inspiration for all participants deciding to pursue professional training. However, when asked about their current work in religious settings, the interpreters attribute 21% to sense of calling as a motive for continuing their work.



When pursuing professional training, an astonishing 53% of the church interpreters experienced only positive emotions of support, encouragement, inclusion, respect, and inspiration. Certainly, that provides a more enjoyable experience to a professional field. However, 43% still experienced negative emotions of inferiority, disrespect, discouragement, exclusion, and marginalization. The experiences interpreters have interacting with professional certified interpreters during their training certainly have an impact on their future work in the field. If they are met with resistance, it may discourage them from pursuing certification, but they may still continue to do the work in an encouraging environment, where their services are welcomed. For those who have achieved certification despite the opposition or low support from colleagues, there is a risk of a continued cycle of horizontal violence (Ott, 2012). However, it could have a reverse effect. For example, one respondent selected all negative emotions, but then wrote that they felt “inspired to make future interpreters feel respected and encouraged.” Unfortunately, there is limited knowledge of these experiences and why the interpreters felt these emotions, but some information can lend understanding. This topic warrants additional research.

The exclusively negative emotions were more likely to be experienced by those who began interpreting in church without certification, were outsiders pursuing the interpreting profession due to intrigue by some exposure to ASL or seeing an interpreter in action, after meeting Deaf acquaintances often from church, or those who desired to gain qualification in addition to the interpreting practice within the church. The interpreters who indicated the desire to gain certification to become qualified seemed to either be included or excluded. This was the only category where there was no mix of

emotions; it was either distinctly positive or negative. Mentorship and years of experience did not have a significant impact swaying the emotional experiences in any direction; those two factors were inconclusive in providing an understanding of interpreter's experiences at professional trainings.

### **Church Interpreting**

When an interpreter encounters a new colleague and learns the individual is a “church interpreter,” the findings from this study should be considered before all the assumed stereotypes and preconceived ideas color their view of their new colleague. The negative impressions that have been reiterated and assumed for all these years about who interprets for the Deaf community within the church do not reflect the story found in these data. In spite of the stigma, church interpreters are working professionals who feel a sense of calling to take on non-professional or volunteer work within a church where they are involved on a weekly basis, often for their own friends in the Deaf community. Most are also aware of the perceived notion about “church interpreters” or, when made aware, they work hard to become qualified through professional training and certification. Although church interpreters frequently start out non-certified, three out of four go on to pursue credentials, so their efforts to gain qualification cannot be discounted. It is to the benefit of the interpreting profession to invest in these individuals who have the heart, teachable spirit, and sense of calling as they find purpose in the practice they are doing within the church, through mentorship. Their efforts should be encouraged in order to welcome them into the interpreting community, offering twice as many mentorship opportunities for the non-professionals before they expand their practice. The interpreting community can build the bridge in a collaborative effort to

provide every Deaf consumer quality access in every environment they desire to be involved.

## CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

Interpreters enter the field in a variety of ways, but one unique introduction into the field of interpreting is by practicing in a church prior to any formal training. Certainly, not all interpreters who volunteer in religious settings got their start interpreting this way, but many have, and this will continue to be the story for many, due to the dynamic of church environments with Deaf ministries and those who provide interpreting services.

This study was conducted to collect quantitative and qualitative data about the narratives of interpreters who do work in church and religious settings. The purpose was to gain an understanding and form an accurate depiction of the interpreters who volunteer in churches, as well as to offer a challenge to the negative stigma that has been reiterated over many years among the interpreting community. Based on these findings, I challenge seasoned interpreters to re-evaluate their own attitudes toward this particular group and novice interpreters in general.

All data were collected through an online survey by voluntary participation over the course of two weeks. Data were collected from 112 participants who described who they are, their current work environments, and their previous experience. The data were analyzed through grounded theory and the narratives were analyzed by open coding.

As few as 17% of participants began interpreting in church as certified professionals. However, many pursued certification, increasing the amount of certified professional interpreters who accept work or volunteer in church to 75%. These certified

interpreters volunteer for little or no compensation in churches where they have personal affiliation, they do this work on a weekly basis, and their motivation is a sense of calling and act of service. They began church interpreting prior to training for three main reasons: a request was made by a Deaf individual or another interpreter, they felt called, or they found opportunities to serve at church. The reasons they began the work are different from their motivations for continuing current practice. This sense of calling is finding purpose and meaning in the work and act of service, although it may be sacrificial it is done out of enjoyment and with a heart to serve. More than half of the interpreters have teams they work with on a regular basis within the churches. These teams were specified as being trained ITP students or graduates, people in the church learning ASL, and (primarily) other certified interpreters.

Motivations for pursuing professional interpreting vary, but the main two factors that contributed to their interest was interaction with Deaf at church and seeing someone interpret. The top three open-coded reasons for interpreters pursuing professional training are having Deaf family and friends, ASL or interpreting exposure at some point in their life, and career choice.

Just over half of the church interpreters pursuing professional training experienced positive emotions of support, encouragement, inclusion, and inspiration as they integrated with certified interpreters. This was a much higher percentage than anticipated at the beginning of data collection. Although this is an encouraging figure, it is important to recognize that the other half of participants experienced negative emotions through horizontal violence still happening among the interpreting field.

A notable finding is that interpreters who pursued professional training for the purpose of gaining qualification indicated their experience was either negative or positive; this was the only category where there was no mixture of emotions. Once aware of limited skills and the need for professional development, these interpreters were either encouraged or met with a sense of inferiority from the certified interpreters.

### **For Further Research**

Interpreting in church once a week may not be an ideal way to begin an interpreting practice, but “You don’t have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great” (Zig Ziglar, as cited by Micheli, 2012, p. 1). Many participants in this study indicated they began their church interpreting at the request of Deaf friends, family, or congregants. I would recommend research be done from the consumer perspective regarding the Deaf consumers’ expectations and ideal traits of the interpreters who provide communication access in the churches they attend.

More research and study should be given to the specific occurrences in the interactions between the interpreters at professional trainings to understand the experiences in hopes to shed light on the fact that some pursue professional training but do not achieve certification due to lack of support when faced with opposition. Other research should focus on the interpreter who starts in church and the impact of any healthy mentorship relationships on the rate of successful professional certification. In relation to mentorship, how could the interpreting community seek out church interpreters working alone—who are not certified or connected to professional support—to explore options and partnerships to develop their skills, if they want to continue practicing but may not want to become a career interpreter? In addition, further research

should focus on the years of experience an interpreter has in the field. This could provide information on whether or not the decade or time frame an interpreter entered the field contributes to the positive or negative emotions they experience integrating into the career field among their colleagues.

Churches encouraging members to serve may actually be developing a heart of service toward career skills development. Therefore, I would recommend more research be done related to churches' awareness of providing quality interpreters for the Deaf community and how to educate clergy. In addition, more study should be done on the impact church leadership has in developing career paths for young people based on the various ministries within the church such as Deaf ministry, their exposure to new cultures, and the encouragement to get involved.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf memberships held among church interpreters is another focus for more research. Since RID membership provides access to resources for interpreters, does it also lead to these church interpreters holding current certification along with their RID membership? Along with membership, would these interpreters be more likely to team with other interpreters in the church settings rather than working alone?

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## APPENDIX A: Informed Consent and Survey

### **Interpreting in Church, Religious Settings & Beyond**

If you are an ASL/ English interpreter who has ever experienced working or volunteering in religious settings, you are invited to take part in this research study.

The purpose of this study is to gather information for my research and thesis development through Western Oregon University. This study is being conducted to learn about experiences of interpreters who have or currently work in religious settings. This data is being collected to broaden the understanding of ASL/English interpreters' motivation for working in religious settings prior to or after becoming credentialed, and if religious organizations encourage interpreters to become involved in professional development. The data is being gathered about interpreters' experience as volunteer interpreters, seeking formal training, their certification process, and who is currently working as licensed professional interpreters in various environments beyond religious settings.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time by simply closing the browser. If you are willing to participate, you can be a benefit to research that hopes to enhance the knowledge of the interpreting field. At the end of the survey if you would be willing to participate in a follow up interview please provide your email address.

Your answers to the survey will remain anonymous, unless you decide to provide your name and email for a follow-up interview. Your responses will remain confidential by removing names and any identifying information from the record. The only foreseeable risk could be discomfort in discussing your experiences of interpreting, the process of seeking professional development, and interacting with other interpreters.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher Jennifer Kinnamon by email at [jkinnamon16@wou.edu](mailto:jkinnamon16@wou.edu) or the Graduate Thesis Advisor Amanda Smith [arsmith@wou.edu](mailto:arsmith@wou.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (503) 838-9200 or [irb@wou.edu](mailto:irb@wou.edu).

Thank you for your willingness to participate! Jen Kinnamon, Western Oregon University

\* Required

1. Yes, I am 18 or older and agree to participate in this research. \* *Mark only one.*  
Yes

2. How often do you accept work in religious settings? *Mark only one.*

All of my work

Weekly

Monthly

Often

Occasionally

Not Currently

Never (Skip to "Thanks for your participation! Please Share...")

### **Current Work**

3. Currently do you accept compensation for work in religious settings? *Mark only one.*

Never

Only when offered

Yes but less than my normal rate of pay

Always

4. Currently do you volunteer interpret at a religious institution in which you are a member or regular attendee? *Mark only one.*

Yes

No

N/A

5. How often do you interpret? *Mark only one.*

Occasionally

Monthly

Weekly

Every time an interpreter is requested

6. What keeps you interpreting as a volunteer? *Check all that apply.*

Obligation

It's my way to giveback

Act of Service

There is a need and I have the skill

Sense a Calling to interpret for the Deaf

Everyone is encouraged to contribute their skills

Other:

7. On Average how often do you interpret in other settings (ie. community, K-12, court, medical settings) per week: *Mark only one.*

Never

Rarely

I accept jobs as I'm available

Part-time

Full-time

8. In what other settings do you most often interpret: *Check all that apply.*

K-12

Community

Medical  
Court  
Conference  
VRS  
Post-Secondary Education  
Other:

9. Are ASL lessons offered at the church or religious organization where you interpret regularly? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes (Skip to question 11.)  
No (Skip to question 11.)  
Occasionally  
Other:

### **Currently**

10. Who teaches ASL at your religious organization? *Check all that apply.*

Me  
Deaf Congregant  
Certified ASL teacher  
Another interpreter  
Other:

### **Current Work**

11. Hearing people in my religious community are encouraged to learn ASL for the following reasons: *Check all that apply.*

To help with the weekly interpreting  
To help with the music and song portion of the services  
To sign special songs  
To substitute interpreter when regular interpreter is absent  
To communicate with Deaf members

12. How many deaf individuals attend services you interpret regularly? *Mark only one.*

0  
1-3  
4-6  
7-10  
11-15  
16-20  
21 or more

13. Please select all sign systems and languages that are used throughout the service including any songs *Check all that apply.*

ASL  
PSE  
SEE  
MCE

14. If you choose more than one, please list what portion of the service the sign system is used to interpret.

15. Do you currently have interpreters who work with you regularly in these settings?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Occasionally

Other:

16. Select which best describes the interpreters who work alongside you now. *Check all that apply.*

Certified Interpreters

Recent interpreter student graduates

Students training to become professional interpreters

Church attendees who are learning ASL

Volunteers who are ASL/English Bilinguals

CODAs

Other:

17. Does your church or religious organization currently have a Deaf ministry? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Maybe

Other:

18. Who is the leader or leaders for the Deaf ministry? *Check all that apply.*

Deaf Pastor/Priest

Deaf Lay Leader

Interpreter

Hearing Pastor/Priest

Other:

19. What denomination is your church or organization? (example: Catholic, Lutheran, Mormon)

### **Previous Work & Past Experiences**

20. Were you certified or licensed when you first began interpreting in religious settings?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Was training to become an interpreter at the time

Other:

21. Were you mentored by an interpreter in your church community before becoming certified? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

22. In your beginning experience as an interpreter, did the church or organization provide you with notes or lesson plans ahead of time? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Sometimes, when I requested the materials

Other:

23. Has the church or organization provided you with training or professional development opportunities? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes, training in the religious content that is taught

Yes, training in interpreting skills

No, but they encourage it

None offered

Other:

24. Has the church or religious organization ever paid for you to attend professional interpreting development opportunities? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Partially

25. Did you seek out professional development opportunities on your own? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

**Other:**

26. Prior to any formal interpreting education did you feel you had direction on where to go to develop your interpreting skills? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

27. What inspired you to pursue professional interpreting training? *Check all that apply.*

Integrating with Deaf members at church

Seeing someone interpret

I have Deaf family and friends

One or Both of my parents are/were interpreters

Other:

28. As a beginner religious or church interpreter first attending trainings with certified professional interpreters, you experienced which of the following feelings, check all that apply: *Check all that apply.*

Included

Equal

Respected

Supported



Encouraged  
Inspired  
Excluded  
Dis-respected  
Inferior  
Discouraged  
Other:

29. Please share briefly how you became an interpreter or got involved with interpreting in religious settings and other areas.

30. Is there any other information you would like to contribute to this research project, anonymously?

### **Biographic Information**

31. Gender *Mark only one.*

Male  
Female  
Other:

32. Ethnicity *Mark only one.*

Asian or Pacific Islander  
Black or African American  
Hispanic or Latino  
White/Caucasian  
Prefer not to answer  
Other, please specify

33. Age Range *Mark only one.*

18-24  
25-29  
30-39  
40-49  
50-59  
60-69  
70+

34. What is your first Language *Mark only one.*

English  
ASL  
Other:

35. Where did you first learn to Sign? *Mark only one.*

Deaf parents  
Deaf family  
Deaf community  
An Interpreter  
Sign Lesson taught at a church  
Academic Classes at school

Tutor/mentor  
Other:

36. How many years have you been a Professional Interpreter? *Mark only one.*

Less than 1  
1-3  
4-6  
7-10  
11-14  
15-20  
21-26  
27-35  
36-40  
41-50  
51+  
Retired

37. What is the highest level of education you have completed? *Mark only one.*

High school diploma or equivalent, GED  
Some college coursework  
College level certificate, 1 year program  
Associate degree or 2 years  
Bachelor's degree  
Master's degree  
Doctoral Degree  
Other:

38. Certification(s) Held: Check all that apply *Check all that apply.*

RID CI  
RID CT  
RID CSC  
RID NIC  
RID ED K-12  
SC:L  
State Certification  
Other: (Skip to question)

**Thanks for your participation! Please Share.**

Thank you for your participation! Please share this survey with other interpreters you know who have or do work in religious settings.

*Stop filling out this form.*

**Thank you for your time and contribution to this research!**

If you would like to participate in a follow-up interview, please provide your name and email address.

## APPENDIX B: Denominations Represented

There are 21 different denominations represented in this study, where interpreters are currently providing interpreting. Seven respondents said this was not applicable to their situation responding with N/A, as they are not currently doing work in religious settings.

Table 4

<i>Denominations Represented in the Survey</i>	
<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Count of Code Denomination</u>
Non-Denominational	35
Baptist	22
Assemblies of God	11
Church of Christ	5
Missionary Alliance	4
Southern Baptist	4
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon)	4
Presbyterian	3
Methodist	3
Protestant	2
Episcopal	2
Roman Catholic	1
Baptist (British)	1
Church of England (Anglican)	1
Church of God	1
Apostolic	1
Nazarene	1
SDA	1
Christian Anglican	1
Pentecostal	1
Lutheran	1
Total	105

## APPENDIX C: Number of Deaf Individuals Attending Services

In order to learn more about the current church environments this sample of interpreters are currently working in, the survey asked how many deaf individuals attend the services they interpret regularly. Of the participants, 108 responded. Among those, 36% have 1-3 deaf individuals they provide interpreting services regularly; 19% have 4-6; 13% have 7-10; 5% have 11-15; 6% have 16-20; 12% have 21 or more, and 9% have 0 individuals.

### How many deaf individuals attend services you interpret regularly?

108 responses

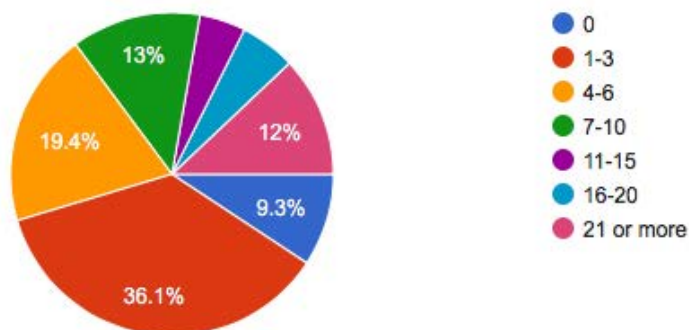
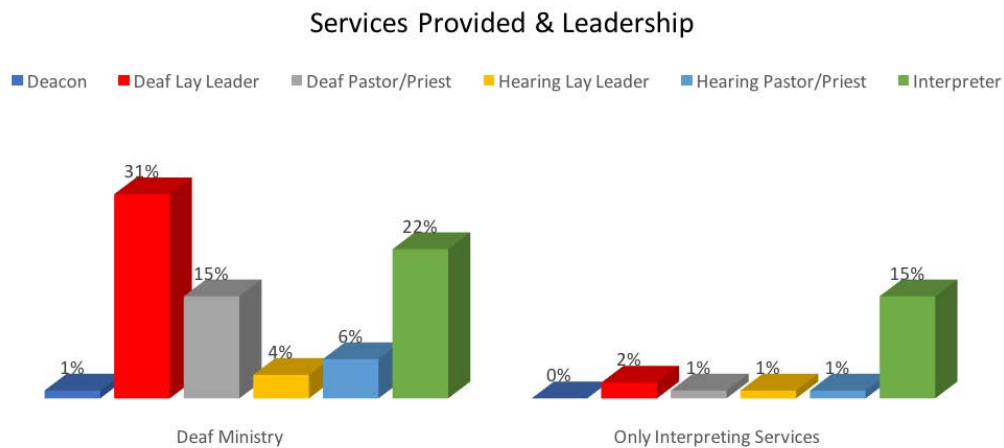


Figure 26. Deaf Individuals Regularly Attending Services

## APPENDIX D: Services Provided and Leadership

Of those responding, 109 indicated whether their church offers only interpreting services or if they have a Deaf ministry within their church and the leadership for these services. Thirty-eight percent only offer interpreting services at their hearing church, which is led by a majority of interpreters. Sixty-one percent of the churches represented have a deaf ministry, meaning beyond interpreting the services they either have a deaf Bible study, Sunday school class or services conducted in ASL, led mostly by Deaf lay leaders.



*Figure 27. Services Provided and Leadership*