Hello, my name is Becky Lloyd. I am hearing but my maternal grandparents were deaf. My grandfather died before I was born, but I can remember learning my ABC's and a few signs from my grandmother when I was very young. However, I did not continue to learn sign as I grew older and never really had a conversation with my deaf grandmother before she died in the early 80's.

My mother and her younger brother were born hearing, but her sister (my aunt) was born deaf. My aunt, Geneva Chambers, married a deaf man, Bob Lange and they had four deaf children. My deaf cousins are now scattered around the country in various jobs. My oldest cousin, Wendy, works for DOT in DC, my next oldest cousin, Camy, teaches Math at Gallaudet. Next is Andy, he is a very successful businessman and a past president of NAD and the youngest is the Athletic Director/Coach at the Kentucky School for the Deaf. Maybe you know one of them; their last name is Lange.

As a college student, many years ago (I am 50 yrs. old), I took an ASL Class at the University of Tennessee. I knew there was a possibility I might have a deaf child and I wanted to try to learn more sign language in case that happened. It did not, but my love for the Deaf and their language began to grow.

After moving to Asheville, NC in 1983 I began checking the local community college for sign language classes. Every time a class was offered it was on Wednesday night and I was never willing to give up my Wednesday night church for sign class.

However, in the late 1990's God moved our family to Merrimon Ave. Baptist Church in Asheville, NC. This church had a strong ministry to the Deaf (Joyce Smith and Ralph and Deborah Bradshaw and many Deaf) and I became fascinated by the interpreters on Sunday mornings and my love for the Deaf grew even more.

I felt God calling me to go back to school to become a certified interpreter, but I told Him I was too busy. Two years later, in the fall of 2000 (at the age of 41) I surrendered to God and enrolled in the Interpreter Training Program at a local community college. During that time I became involved in the Deaf Ministry at our church and in the spring of 2003 I graduated from the 2-year program there.

However the summer following, God made it clear that I did not have enough skill to do what He had called me to do, so in the fall of 2003, I enrolled in the ASL Studies program at Gardner-Webb University. I began commuting to my classes from Asheville (70 miles one way). This past December (2008) after 5+ years, I graduated with a BA from Gardner-Webb with an ASL Studies major and Interpreting minor. Thank you, Jesus!

A few years ago, people began asking me what I would do when I graduated. I simply told them that God would show me what I was to do next when the time was right. I had been interpreting in my church, for state and national Baptist events, and for other opportunities in the community. I had taught a few ASL classes at my church and I loved seeing students learn about the Deaf Culture and begin to sign. I assumed God would direct me to either educational interpreting, continue interpreting in my church and for various religious events, become a teacher of ASL, or possibly a combination of all of the above.

Little did I know, that on March 18th, 2008 God would redirect my life, yet again.

While driving to class on that Tuesday morning I was listening to Christian radio. The program was Family Life Today and the topic was Orphan Ministry. They were discussing an upcoming event, Summit IV, which was scheduled for the first weekend in May in south Florida. Honestly, if it had not been for my son's love for the orphan I would probably have changed the station. But as I listened I tried to figure out a way for my son to attend Summit IV. I knew he would benefit from this event. However, he was attending college in Arkansas and this event was in Florida and it was the same weekend his finals were scheduled to begin.

In the midst of trying to figure out a way to get Joseph, my son, to Summit IV, God interrupts and says to me, "I want you to coordinate the adoption of deaf orphans in the world." My body jerked and I instantly began to cry. I was completely shocked! Never had I ever thought about this as being what He would "call" me to do next. I thought I would have to pull over because I could not see to drive.

My first response back to God was, "You are going to have to prove that!" Then I thought to myself, "Becky, He just told you!" Then I thought, "Was that really God?" My response, "Well Satan wouldn't want me to do that."

I was completely overwhelmed. *It just so happened* that Joseph was home for spring break, so he was the first person I told about my experience. As I told him what had happened he told me three times, "You tell me when and I will tell you who." I finally asked him *who* and he told me, "Emily Chapman with Shaohannah's Hope" (now Show Hope). Joseph and Emily had worked together the summer of 2007 at Kanakuk Colorado (a Christian sports camp).

"Show Hope is a non-profit organization (established in 2003) dedicated to mobilizing individuals and communities to care for orphans and reducing the financial barriers to adoption."

Emily put me in touch with a family who has adopted two deaf children from China; James in 2004 and Xiaoli in 2006. The father, Johnny Carr, works for Bethany Christian Services (the largest adoption agency and orphan care organization in the world). Johnny's job is the National Director for Church Partnerships for orphan care through Bethany.

What a precious family! I have been in contact with Johnny since last November. About a month ago, I flew to Pensacola, FL and spent the weekend with this family in their home. The family is hearing but all of them use ASL in the home…James and Xiaoli are thriving! You can check out the Carr family at www.carrsfororphans.org.

Johnny is helping me learn about adoption in general and he is connecting me with various adoption agencies around the world. I am contacting them and explaining to them what I am planning to do and they seem to be eager to be involved.

How do I "coordinate the adoption of deaf orphans in the world?"

Good question…after many months praying and asking, I believe that the development of an Internet database is how to begin. The website will list all deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) children, in the states and around the world, that are *waiting* (ready with paper-work completed) to be adopted. The information would be submitted by each adoption agency or by individual orphanages that represent these children. Of course, I will have to convince these agencies and orphanages this would be beneficial for them by providing some incentives (scholarships) for them to add this to their workload.

Families interested in adopting deaf/HOH orphans will log-on to the website and obtain pertinent information about each child listed. Of course, the amount of information given will be in compliance with each countries guidelines.

In addition to the database of waiting children, the development of an Internet resource site to benefit families who have adopted these precious children will be established and updated frequently. This resource site will include information for education options, communication options, ADA provisions, counseling options, Deaf and HOH support agencies, etc., etc.

The intent of this resource web site will be to give families who have adopted deaf or HOH children the best possible chance for success and even the ability to thrive. This information will be listed state-by-state as each state varies in what they have to offer the family with a deaf or HOH child(ren).

Finally, I believe God also wants to provide hearing screening in orphanages around the world.
Today, in the US, 38 states require—by law—that newborns be screened for hearing loss before they leave the hospital. With the advancement of medical
technology hearing screening can easily be provided in orphanages, as well. A hand-held OAE (Otoacoustic Emissions) Screener can be used for infants to adults and costs under $5000. These screeners can last for many years and anyone can be trained to use them. I plan to be trained to administer this screening by July of this year.

Providing hearing screening in the orphanages around the world will identify children with hearing loss earlier. If possible, depending on the country, signed language could be utilized with these children increasing their ability to communicate at a time when it is so crucial. I envision multiple mission trips to numerous countries for the express purpose of hearing screening and teaching the hearing screening technique to orphan care workers in orphanages. Other mission trips will involve supporting orphan care workers by helping them teach sign language to the orphans.

Ultimately, I believe God's desire is for these deaf orphans to grow up in Christian homes and be prepared for God to call them back to the deaf peoples where they were born or to the Deaf community right here in the US to share His love.

I cannot begin to tell you of all the ways God has "proven" His call to me over and over again. Often, it is daily! He is so good!

By the way, my husband Charles and I will be attending Summit V in Irving, TX the end this month.

What can you do?

Please, please, pray without ceasing for this ministry. I have so much to learn and do!

Ask God to remind you of people who might be able to help me in this ministry. If someone comes to mind either email me their information or share my information with them. If it is you, don't hesitate to contact me. My email:

beckylloyd@juno.com
beckylloyd@signsforhope.org

At the present, the name for this new endeavor appears to be Signs for Hope. If you want me to keep you informed as things progress simply email me your address and I will add you to my list for updates.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. God bless you as you continue on your journey with Him!

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.
James 1:27