Signs for Hope

"coordinating the adoption of deaf orphans in the world"

Winter 2011 Newsletter

My wish of Happy New Year for each of you comes late, but with a challenge that is timeless; make the year 2011 a year of absolute recommitment to utter obedience to honor our Heavenly Father with your whole heart. If you desire to experience true happiness and inward joy—that can only be attained by your surrendering every aspect of your life, every day to your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the plan He has for you today and each day thereafter. Romans 12:1-2, The Message.

> So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

New for the Lloyds in 2011 is the place we call home here on Earth. We signed the papers for this new residence December 15th, however we did not move in until January 20th. We lived in our previous home for almost 26 years. We have wonderful memories of that place where our children, Rachel and Joseph, grew up, and where we have grown in our relationship with our Lord…but He has given us a new address in 2011. His process of bringing us to this new place to live was not without its frustrations, uncertainties, and much prayer, but we can clearly see God's hand throughout this process as we reflect on the events of the past year.

This new home has already included many hours of manual labor as we have been repairing and preparing it the four weeks prior to our moving in. As I watched the sun rise the first morning from our new home, the Spirit reminded me that Jesus is preparing a place for me—and for you—that cannot be compared to anything here on this Earth. Anticipation wells up inside when I think about that Heavenly abode and seeing my Savior face-to-face, of course I am limited in my ability to imagine what it truly will be like. But there is much to be accomplished here before joining Jesus there for eternity.

While Charles and I still do not understand what the Lord has planned for all this new space—almost double the square footage of our previous home—we are committed to dedicate every inch of it to Him and for His purposes. We did the same with our previous home.

Ultimately our goal is to reduce our debt, little by little, but the temptation to quickly furnish this home with all the things that we desire is challenging. We are trying to be wise in the things that we choose to buy or upgrade. The first night here, as we took our showers, we realized there was only a large trickle of water flowing out of the shower head. Charles quickly retorted, "Well…guess we need a new shower head, too." I remembered the shower at the ACFI Guest House in Liberia, West Africa where we were thrilled to have inside running water and it didn't matter that it was just a trickle or that it was not hot nor cold. Reality check—what really are our *needs* and what really are our *wants* or our *desires?* Are we good stewards of all that God has given us? Are we? When He reminds us of others who do not share the same luxuries that we share, do we just shake our heads in pity and walk away or do we actually do something to change it? Utter obedience—complete abandonment of yourself—to our Lord. What will that look like for you in 2011? What will it look like for me? I will be praying for you as you embark on this adventure—please pray for me as I do likewise.

Liberia Deaf Mission

In November, *Signs for Hope* received a request for clothing for the children at the Deaf Mission. Apparently, the best way to purchase clothes for the orphaned children in Liberia is in "bales." One bale of clothing is enough for 20 people, which meant the Deaf Mission was in need of four bales of clothing. I sent out the request and several of you responded, quickly, with enough money to purchase all four bales of clothing—$800. Thank you! On Christmas Day I received photos of the children with their new clothing and enjoying their Christmas dinner—a small piece of chicken, rice, a delicious Liberian roll, and a soda. Their smiles and hands raised in praise said it all.

Pastor Harrington Jududoe, director for the Deaf Mission, called me Sunday two weeks ago. I am always pleasantly surprised when I get a call from Liberia. Communication with the Deaf Mission is very limited; however the telephone call has become the norm for Harrington to be able to keep me informed. I am thankful English—albeit seasoned with some strong Liberian accent—is the accepted language there. Typically, I hear from Harrington every two months or so. His voice was filled with joy and thankfulness when he called—that is his normal demeanor. They were all so grateful for the clothes. He also told me that the sponsorships for the Deaf children had been enough to provide all of the children—not two, but three meals a day! Praise God! Keep in mind the definition of a meal in Liberia is much different from that of our American meals. Their breakfast usually consists of tea and bread or a doughnut, lunch is a bowl of rice with hopefully a little cassava, fish, or chicken in the form of a soup on top, and then dinner is cool aid and bread or a doughnut.

You must also realize that while this is a great accomplishment and blessing, something could easily happen to cause this to change. Life in Liberia is still very fragile and vulnerable. For example, the cost of repairing an unexpected break down of the water mill would deplete the funds for that 3rd meal in an instant. Sponsorship for all the Deaf children is by far the best way to provide for the ongoing needs of these children. Let me remind you that sponsorship is only $40 a month. That is roughly $10 each week—approximately $1.33 per day. Your sponsorship will help provide food, fuel (coal or wood) to cook the food, medical supplies, teacher and caretaker stipends, and everyday maintenance for the building and grounds.

There are approximately 40 children at the Deaf Mission and only 13 have sponsors. While I tend to focus on the physical benefits sponsorship provides for these children, the spiritual and emotional benefits far outweigh the physical. Knowing that someone cares enough to pray for them and send them small packets a couple of times each year goes much further enhancing the lives of these children than simply filling their tummies. If the sponsor has the opportunity to visit their child, that impact is beyond description. Personally, I call sponsorship "heart adoption." While you are not physically/legally adopting them and/or they may never be able to be adopted, "heart adoption"

will not only change their lives forever, but it will change yours and your families, as well. Please email me (beckyblloyd@gmail.com) for a secure link showing photos of each of the children at the Deaf Mission still in need of sponsorship. "In You, the fatherless find mercy." Hosea 14:3. Are you willing to show the Father's mercy "to one of the least of these" and become a sponsor, today?

Other opportunities to partner with the Deaf Mission in Liberia are being discussed with those in Liberia and we are seeking God's guidance through prayer for clarity. The need to build a fence to protect the compound from local thieves has become paramount in recent months. Pastor Harrington shared with me that as the community begins to grow surrounding the Deaf Mission, so does the stealing. Two weeks ago I felt impressed that the time was right for building the Vocational Trade School planned for the Deaf Mission when they moved to their current location in 2007. The foundation for the school was laid back then and stands as a reminder of that vision for future growth and development. When I shared this desire with Angel Rutledge (Christian Adoption Services) it was so encouraging to know that God had already revealed to her the same vision for both the Deaf Mission and the Daniel Hoover Children's Village. It is vital for the Deaf children to be trained in a trade or vocation if they are to ever be able to become self supportive in the Liberian society. Please join us in praying for clear guidance on the timing and the funding for building of a fence at the Deaf Mission and for both of these trade schools that are so crucial. This endeavor, no doubt, will help give these children the tools they will need for sustainability in the Liberian culture.

The Liberia Mission Trip 2011 is in the planning stage. It is not too late to join our team. The tentative dates for the trip are May 29th – June 13th. Team members can choose from a one week trip or the full two weeks. Contact me for more information. You will not want to miss out on this opportunity to be involved in some life-changing hands-on mission work and to love on some precious Deaf children and those who care for them day-in and day-out. If you want to help us collect some of the many supplies we will be taking with us this year click on the link http://www.signupgenius.com/go/liberia1. If the link does not work, copy and paste (or type) it into the URL and click enter. Please pray for God to bring together the team He wants to use to accomplish all those things 'He has prepared in advance for us to do'. Pray for the funding of this trip to be one of great anticipation. And pray for God to be glorified by all that we do.

In regards to fundraising for the Liberia trip, Duane Newman of Goldbug Parties, Inc. has partnered with me to help me raise the needed funds. I will be hosting two parties in my home March 15th and 17th. They are "drop in" from 5:15PM – 8:00PM. Duane will pay you CASH for your broken, unused, gold and silver jewelry. The current rates being paid by Goldbug are the highest, yet. This is a GREAT time to CASH-in that unused gold and silver and help me raise funds for Liberia 2011 at the same time. Contact me for more information. beckyblloyd@gmail.com

SHARE HIS HOPE 2011

In the fall 2010 newsletter I told you we were "planning a training conference for foster/adoptive parents, social workers, and counselors—and really anyone else who loves and works with children." I have been encouraged by several to combine this conference with Share His Hope 2011 and I have decided to do so. The date for Share His Hope 2011 is still to be determined; however the second weekend in September (the 9th and 10th) is the time we are leaning toward. As soon as the date is set, I will let you know. Please be much in prayer for these two events. Organizing something on this scale requires many hands to do the work and many others to partner with us to share His hope for the fatherless with all who attend. As was Share His Hope 2010, Share His Hope 2011 will be accessible to the Deaf. Sign Language interpreters will be there for those Deaf attendees who come.

From my heart to yours…

Do you ever feel discouraged? I do. The problems needing solved are just too big? Sure seem so. The statistics are overwhelming? Indeed. Do you ever think, "How did I/we get to this point?" Often. Does that discouragement paralyze you and prevent you from acting? Sometimes—but so far, only briefly—thank the Lord. If we allow the Enemy to deceive us into thinking that we can never change something because we are so insignificant ourselves, then somehow we have lost the victory Jesus himself has already given us. The Enemy delights to steal, kill, and destroy the very breath within each of us…but our God delights even more in doing the impossible through us—which—takes our breath away. What is our responsibility in the midst of the Enemy's attacks? We must persevere and say,

> *"Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. We are pressured in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who live are always given over to death because of Jesus, so that Jesus' life may also be revealed in our mortal flesh."*
> *2 Corinthians 4:7-11.*

As I think about the staggering numbers revolving around the orphan crisis, it is incredible to hear the stories of the plain, ordinary, people who are doing what they can to reduce those numbers—one-by-one. Recently, I attended The Idea Camp in NW Arkansas. This was a unique experience which provided the opportunity to hear numerous stories from lay people, people like you and me, and the way God is using them locally and around the world to shrink the number of orphans. This movement of His Church to care for the orphan is evolving. God continues to drive this movement causing us—His Church—to realize the solution to this problem is multi-faceted and the ideas He is generating to assail this crisis are vast.

Of the more than 143 million orphans in the world today it is estimated that a very small percent will ever be adopted—only .018%. While domestic adoption is on the rise, the number of international adoptions has been decreasing for the past several years. The reasons for this decrease vary, but one is due to countries closing their doors to those who wish to adopt—most recently, Guatemala and Vietnam. In light of this information His Church is reevaluating the answer to the orphan crisis. The need to provide sustainable, permanent care for orphans that will never be adopted is now at the forefront. I will share additional information about some of these new initiatives to solving the orphan crisis in my next newsletter.

Once again, thank you for reading my newsletter. I feel this is the best way, so far, to keep you apprised of some of the events that are impacting Signs for Hope and me, personally. I have found it interesting, each quarter as I try to communicate to you about this process, how much it ministers to my spirit. I have never been one to *journal,* but I can see how putting into words can help provide some clarity to this life's struggles and frustrations. One thing I am compelled to do when I share my frailties' with another—especially when writing—is to point them to scriptures and promises that help me persevere. The Word of God is alive! It has power beyond anything we can comprehend. While there is much we do not understand about the God who has created this universe—and all the others, there is no doubt this God loves each one of us more than we will ever be able to grasp. That great love for you and for me is what motivates us to love others with our whole heart.

Thank you for the moral support, prayer support, financial support you provide for Signs for Hope. I am praying for you as you face the year 2011 with His power and in His strength. Join me in expectation that God will not only meet us in our desperate need for Him daily, but that He will give us life abundant right here and now! To expect anything less, is to succumb to the Enemies lies.

Only by His Mercy and Grace,

Becky

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
Galatians 6:9 (NIV)