Signs for Hope

Spring 2011 Newsletter

Spring is, by far, my most favorite time of year living here in the mountains of Western North Carolina. I love watching the colors from God's vast palate burst forth after the dead of winter's various shades of gray seemingly never end. As the barren trees become alive again with leaves in hues of greens and reds and the flowers—in their rainbow of colors—break forth through the brown desolate ground, God's creation is obviously shouting, "We are born again!" What a beautiful picture of the Christian life! Life before or without Christ is dead, dreary, and desolate. Life after and with Christ is alive, vibrant, and abundant; shouting to the world, "I am born again!"

The life that Jesus came to give is one of abundance. However, do we Christians really believe that? Many times we do not act like it nor do our faces look like it. In John 10:10 Jesus is teaching the Pharisees when he says, "The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." Of course the thief is our Enemy—Satan himself—and his plan always is to steal, kill, and destroy. I believe one of Christian's greatest challenges is the Enemy's ability to steal, kill, and destroy the inner joy and the abundant life Jesus has promised each of us, right here on this Earth. Often we may misconstrue the true meaning behind an *abundant life* or *life that is full* to be one that is free from want, free from pain, and materially blessed beyond our wildest dreams.

"Wants vs. Needs" are a common topic in my thought processes these days. Sometimes it is truly challenging to determine the difference, especially since I have never ever been in need of anything materially. I do struggle with wanting *this or that* from time to time, especially when I see others who have *this or that*, but usually it is not too long before the Spirit nudges me to ask, "Do I really *need* that?" and then, "Do I really *want* that?" I still struggle with the desire to acquire some things, but I have begun to realize that having those *things* actually will not make my life *more abundant*. I believe the *abundant life* is not something tangible and not based on my circumstances, but the *abundant life* is something altogether spiritual in nature. Only those Christians who have

experienced dire need can truly grasp a better understanding of the *abundant life* Jesus came to give.

Pastor Harrington Jududoe called me recently to give me a report from Liberia. He is the Director of the Deaf Mission in Monrovia. This man has lived through two civil wars in his country; the first 1989 -1996 and the second 1999-2003. I cannot begin to imagine the atrocities this man's eyes have seen, nor the intense pangs of hunger he has endured, nor the pains of body, heart, and soul that he has been through, but the joy of his Lord is obvious in his smile and in the sound of his voice. Survival mode is still the norm in Liberia; however, dealing with the affects from two of civil wars in the previous two decades, Harrington does so with much grace and wisdom. Pastor Harrington lives the *abundant life* Jesus so freely offers each one of us. Please pray for this man of God as he shares the gospel by his lifestyle and his words with all the children at the Deaf Mission and those who attend the hearing church he is now pastoring in the village near the Deaf Mission.

Most of you are aware, by now, that my original Liberia 2011 trip planned with Angel Rutledge of Christian Adoption Services (CAS), for the end of May, has been postponed until next year, 2012. An insufficient number of team members committing to go resulted in this decision. However, I strongly believe God would have me travel to Liberia this year to be face-to-face with the Deaf children living there—as well as their caregivers—and I am working to secure the dates for my trip ASAP. Please pray for clear guidance from God for the planning of this Liberia 2011 trip (July 23 – August 6)and for those He wants to join me—to be willing to follow His call to "Go!" Please contact me for more information.

Pastor Harrington's phone call confirmed that the construction of the Vocational Trade School at the Deaf Mission is underway. Some of the older Deaf young men at the mission are not only helping with the making of the concrete blocks that are being used for building the trade school, but they are also helping *build* the trade school. I love this dynamic of learning a trade while building the Vocational Trade School where they and others will learn even more trades providing them with the possibility of future self-sustainability.

As I have mentioned before, the education of these Deaf children in Liberia seems to be on a good level. However, for them to be better equipped to work in the *hearing world* of Liberia, they will require much needed skills and the Vocational Trade School will provide them with the ability to learn those skills. I shared with you in the Winter 2011 Newsletter that God had placed on my heart the vision to begin building the Trade School, but what I did not know was that He had already placed that desire in the hearts and plans of the US board members of African Christian Fellowship International (ACFI)—which is the indigenous Christian church in Liberia caring for these children. Not long after I sent out that newsletter I discovered (through an Internet search on

a different topic) that an estimate of $40,000 for the building of the Trade School had been secured and the ACFI board members had already collected more than $15,000 toward the goal of $40,000. In addition, Signs for Hope has recently committed to raising $7,000 toward the building of the Vocational Trade School in Liberia. I am asking you to pray about giving a one-time gift of any amount from $5 to several thousand dollars to help complete the building of this school. In order to keep this building process ongoing, please make your donations as soon as possible. Completion is planned for students to begin using this facility when school resumes this fall. $100 toward the $7,000 goal has been donated thus far. Donations of any amount can be made via PayPal on the Signs for Hope website http://www.signsforhope.org/component/content/article/17 or you can simply mail a check made payable to Signs for Hope to PO Box 460, Fairview, NC 28730. In the memo line please put "Vocational Trade School." Your donations are tax deductible.

On the right you see a photo of the Vocational Trade School foundation which is what I saw in June of 2010 and beside it is a photo I received this past week showing the new construction in progress. Praise the Lord!

Liberia Sponsorships

Sponsorships—or *Heart Adoptions*—continue to trickle in for the Deaf children living at the Deaf Mission, however there are still dozens who have no sponsors. If you have felt God speaking to you about this please do not hesitate to step-out-in-faith to become a $40 monthly sponsor. The impact your sponsorship will have on this child will be three-fold (spiritual, emotional, and physical) but the impact it will have on you and your family will also be life-changing. Contact me for additional information concerning the Deaf children still in need of sponsorship. beckyblloyd@gmail.com

Share His Hope 2011

Planning for the Share His Hope 2011 Orphan Care Conference, here in Asheville September 9-10, is in full swing. General Session speakers are being confirmed and exhibitors are being invited. I attended Summit VII this past week in Louisville, KY and it is exciting and invigorating to hear the vast stories of adoption and orphan care that our heavenly Father is utilizing to "care for the fatherless!" These stories of adoption, foster care, sponsorship, and empowering the local

indigenous church to care for their own—and the practical ways each one of us can become involved—are exactly what Share His Hope 2011 will offer. The Share His Hope 2011 registration will open July 1st. Volunteers—in various capacities— for this event are needed, so please let me know if you are willing to serve. As was Share His Hope 2010, Share His Hope 2011 will be "Deaf-friendly." Sign language interpreters will be there, as will stories of Deaf adoption and orphan care. This year an additional track will be added to the Share His Hope orphan care conference. This track—called Hope Training—will focus on parental training for foster and adoptive parents, social workers, and really any parents who want to become better equipped to raise their children in these challenging times. Often children can be born with, or develop soon after birth, challenging behaviors which require parents (biological and foster/adoptive) to seek additional help in parenting skills. The workshops offered through Hope Training will be "for-credit" and will benefit those needing increased support and training. Please join me in praying for all aspects of Share His Hope 2011 and Hope Training coming this fall, September 9-10.

Once again, thank you for your continued prayer support for me and Signs for Hope! I know that I cannot accomplish what God has called me to do without your faithful prayers and encouragement. One long-term prayer need you have been lifting to our Father is for the establishment of Signs for Hope to become a 501c3 non-profit organization. After almost 2 years of prayer, God has answered by placing Signs for Hope under my church, Merrimon Avenue Baptist, here in Asheville, NC. Signs for Hope will function as a ministry of Merrimon Avenue Baptist Church until God deems it ready to become a separate entity with its own 501c3 status. This partnership with Merrimon Avenue Baptist Church will enable all donations to be tax deductible and give Signs for Hope the freedom to apply for grants. Praise God for this answer to prayer!

My heart goes out to each of you as you deal with struggles in your daily walk with Christ. A little book that is helping me keep my focus on Christ and His glory is, The Red Sea Rules. Check out a quick overview of this book, http://www.ninetyandnine.com/Archives/20030505/review.htm

Only by His Mercy and His Grace,

Becky

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:7