Signs for Hope goes to China!

God places the lonely in families. Psalm 68:6

I have often wondered why God would call me to "coordinate the adoption of Deaf orphans in the world", when He has never called me to adopt. I have never experienced, personally, the feelings and diverse emotions a family goes through as they progress through each phase of the adoption process. Nor have I experienced that emotion-filled moment when I am finally face-to-face with my son or daughter—for the very first time—and feel the warmth of love well up inside my heart, filled to overflowing, as I embrace them—for the very first time.

However, as you read this Signs for Hope April prayer letter, I will be experiencing, what I believe, to be the next best thing; seeing—with my own eyes—a mom and dad meeting their 8-yr old son for the very first time as I join Larry and Dawn Barnes in China for the next two weeks, as their ASL interpreter.

Our first encounter with Tie, the Barnes' Chinese son, will take place on Monday April 9th in Shanghai. From that time on, Tie will be with us. We will spend the rest of the week in Shanghai being ushered to various required meetings with some time for leisure. On Friday, April 13th, we (all four of us) will fly from Shanghai to Guangzhou where more required meetings are scheduled and more "free time." We will depart Hong Kong on Friday, morning April 20th to make our way home.

As with every family that adopts, the Barnes' have their own unique adoption God-story. I have known the Barnes family for many years and it is my honor to take part in this journey with them. Please pray for us as we go; pray for our families as we are away, pray for a strong bonding to develop between Larry and Dawn and Tie over the next few weeks. We have no idea how much Chinese sign language Tie already knows, if any.

Please also pray for God to provide the needed finances for our trip. As you can imagine the costs to travel abroad for two weeks are staggering. ABBA Fund has provided the Barnes family with an interest-free *covenant loan* for their travel expenses, but it must be paid back. Donations for the Barnes Deaf adoption can be mailed to Fayetteville Deaf Church, 1136 Thornwood Place, Fayetteville, NC 28304. Put "Barnes Adoption" in the memo line.

Liberia 2012 has become Rwanda/Liberia 2012

God has opened the door for me to join ZOE Ministry in Rwanda as the first leg of my Africa trip in May. I will have the opportunity to see, first-hand, the Orphan Empowerment Program they utilize in the country in which it was birthed. ZOE boasts of 27,000 orphans being empowered just since 2007. A Rwandan woman, named Epiphanie, is credited with developing this incredible program. I had the distinct privilege of meeting with Epiphanie, and ZOE's founder and executive director, Greg Jenks, a few weeks ago. The purpose of this trip is to help me change my western mind-set of continually providing aid and/or relief to one of self-sustainability and empowerment. And, of course, how this relates to Deaf orphans self-sustainability. I want to not only know the old adage "Give a man a fish, feed him for one day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime!" but I want to actually put it into practice.

I will leave for Rwanda on May 6th. Then fly from Rwanda to Liberia on May 23rd. I will join the Liberia team as we work to update sponsorships, hold VBS for the children, and do some teacher training at both the Daniel Hoover Village and the Deaf Mission and, most importantly, to love on some precious Deaf children in Jesus' name. Charles will not be joining me on this trip, so please pray for him as I will be away for 27 days. He has graciously agreed to be my Signs for Hope assistant while I am away and tend to any time-sensitive issues that might arise from the ministry.

It has been an awesome experience to watch the building of the Vocational Trade School at the Oscar and Viola Stewart School for the Deaf (Deaf Mission) since early 2011. As you can see from the photos below, the building is nearing completion. Funds are still needed to roof the school, furnish the school and build a wall of protection around the property, but God will "see it to completion." Ask God if you are a part of His plan to do that?

From my heart to yours.... *As I think about all the God-activity He has allowed me to be involved with, just in the past month, I am constantly aware that I could not be doing any of this without your prayer support. This past month, I have experienced the battle in my mind, against the Enemy, on various occasions. His tactics are subtle—doubt—but they are effective. 'Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ' is my goal, but that is not something I can do apart from God's Spirit. You and I have, within us, the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Can you and I really imagine all that we could accomplish simply based on that one fact, if we truly believed it? The Enemy cannot overcome us when we arm ourselves with His great power. I am praying that you and I will not hesitate to utilize this all-consuming power made available to us freely because of the love God has for us. And that when God calls us to do something for His kingdom, we will move out, unhindered by doubt, and fully empowered by our Omnipotent God.*

There are, finally, some new updates on the Signs for Hope website (check out the Adoption Resources tab). Yes, Signs for Hope is in need of your partnership to support the ministry financially. Do what God leads you to do.

Only by His mercy and His grace,

Becky

"With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine."
Ephesians 3:20