Signs for Hope

The Deaf Peoples of the World

One of the top three unreached people groups, the Deaf, number more than 36 million strong. The vast majority of them have never seen the sign for Jesus. They do not yet know of His love for them, or His story of salvation for them. 750 Deaf people die everyday without knowing Jesus Christ!

Signs for Hope was established in February 2009 to "coordinate the adoption of deaf orphans in the world". In the beginning, in my limited thinking, I thought that only meant the adoption of deaf children into families. That thinking broadened, very quickly, when I began to realize just how many deaf orphans there are in the world and how very few would ever be adopted. That knowledge came as God made sure I was exposed to an event called Summit, an annual event, organized by the Christian Alliance for Orphans. Actually, I was listening to a radio broadcast about this same event in March of 2008 when I heard God's call.

Sometime after God's call in 2008, I realized I had never been in an orphanage—much less an orphanage for deaf children. I began to search the Internet for deaf orphans, country-by-country. It was not an easy search, but as time went on, God, unmistakably, led me to the country of Liberia, West Africa. Not a place I would have chosen, for sure. Some of the many Liberia God-connections included a family here in Asheville that had adopted two children from Liberia. Another couple—I found through the Internet—dad is Deaf and mom is hearing—had adopted two deaf children from Liberia, and a third family had adopted a deaf daughter from Liberia. And realizing a friend from church grew up a an MK (missionary kid) in Liberia. I was connected to Angel Rutledge (Christian Adoption Services' Liberia Adoption Coordinator) as I had Googled "deaf orphan mission trip 2009" and found her report of their recent 2009 trip to the Deaf Mission in Monrovia, Liberia—home to approximately 40 deaf children.

I joined Angel in 2010 and experienced my first face-to-face encounter with hungry, discarded, needy, precious deaf children, ages 4 – 24, living at the Oscar & Viola Stewart School for the Deaf (OVSSD) just outside Monrovia, Liberia. That experience solidified that the monthly sponsorship "Heart Adoption" of the deaf children in Liberia was another part of His plan for Signs for Hope. I have been seeking monthly sponsors for these deaf children ever since I made my first trip there, with Angel Rutledge, in May of 2010. Current sponsorships now provide all these children two meals per day, instead of just one. It also helps to provide medical supplies, school supplies, teacher stipends, and maintenance for the school compound. While your monthly sponsorship benefits **all** of the children, your connection to just one of them will change their life forever. Contact me for more information about the more than 20 Deaf children still waiting to be Heart Adopted. Their needs are great, but their greatest need is to know someone cares. The cost is $40 monthly.

As God continued to define my calling throughout 2008, 2009, and 2010, He also began opening the doors for some great missionary efforts, to reach the Deaf. Efforts to reach the lost Deaf peoples with the gospel have become a more urgent movement over the past few years. In addition, the theology of adoption, as being God's established way of growing His own family began to be incorporated and compared to the world of earthly adoption. In a very short time I saw strong adoption-focused ministries broadened into more overall orphan-care focused ministries.

This new correlation of our adoption by our Heavenly Father and the adoption of orphans began to connect in my mind and spirit. This was how God revealed to me His ultimate plan "to coordinate the adoption of Deaf orphans in the world" to not only be the traditional way of adopting, but also include Heart Adoption (monthly sponsorship) and the most life-changing adoption of all—His desire to adopt each one of the Deaf children into His own family for eternity…the only true…forever family!

My friend, Johnny Carr, has written a book about this topic and I cannot wait to read it. You can pre-order *Orphan Justice: How to Care for Orphans Beyond Adopting* on amazon.com. Johnny and his wife, Beth, have adopted three deaf children, two from China and one from the US Foster Care System. They also have two amazing biological children. The Carr family have some amazing God-stories of how Deaf adoption is impacting this world for Christ…both the Deaf and the hearing worlds.

I want to share with you some of the verses God is using to broaden our minds to accept adoption as being His plan from the very beginning.

"I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." John 14:18

"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." Romans 8:14-16

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves." Ephesians 1:4-6

Liberia Mission Trips in 2013

Signs for Hope is planning two trips to Liberia in 2013. The first will be in the latter part of February and I am encouraging as many Signs for Hope board members to join me, as possible. I have asked my Deaf pastor, Phillip Easterling, to join us as he has much experience gathering information for establishing work and ministry among the Deaf around the world. And his sharing of the scriptures with Liberian Deaf will be life changing! Most often it is through the Deaf schools that outreach among the Deaf begins.

The 2nd trip will be about 6 months later and will be for Deaf pastors, Deaf Educators, and Deaf lay people, as well as, hearing people who know sign. If you are interested in either of these trips, I want to hear from you ASAP. You need to realize, though, that Liberia is not for the faint-of-heart. It is a place of great need and the basics needs of an Americans life, running water and electricity, are not the basic needs for Liberians lives. Running water and electricity are two blessings our Liberian brothers and sisters do not have. And airfare alone for one person to fly to Liberia is approximately $2,000. Fundraising for these trips begins Oct. 1st.

Signs for Hope Family Deaf Adoption News

Signs for Hope now has 32 families in the Deaf adoption process, those who have connected with us for prayer, advice, encouragement, advocacy and whatever else the Lord leads us to give. I never dreamed this part of the ministry would grow so quickly and become so challenging, but He did. As I typed this, the Lord reminded me of my blog post just after returning from Liberia, earlier this year, "He Calls First…Then He Equips". I stand in amazement at what God can do through us when we surrender to Him, no matter what. I cannot do what I am doing without Him holding my hand leading me from one stepping-stone to the next. Your prayers continue to be my greatest need and my greatest blessing! Yes, it is scary, at times, to think about all that is going on and the responsibility that goes with it and where He has brought this ministry thus far. But even scarier is to consider the alternative of me not following His leading and me not following Him step-by-step, on this journey that He has called me to. Let me tell you, if you want a life that is never dull and boring, just surrender it all to Him. You will not be disappointed, but you will be humbled and you will be challenged to trust Him, by faith, more deeply with each passing day.

EMPOWERED TO CONNECT – NASHVILLE 2012
BEN & KAT LOO, BECKY, TIM & CATHY

Signs for Hope Praises and Prayer Opportunities

- The Empowered to Connect Conference, in Nashville, was a huge blessing for all
- Thankful for the new school year starting back at the Oscar & Viola Stewart School for the Deaf in Liberia, West Africa
- Thankful for all those who continue to prayer for me and this ministry called Signs for Hope
- Looking forward to seeing all His Deaf kids in Liberia in February 2013
- God has brought donors of all kinds to support Signs for Hope, we are so thankful for His touching your hearts to do this
- Construction on the vocational trade school at the Deaf Mission in Liberia is continuing
- God is continuing to grow this ministry in His way and in His timing
- Thank Him for all those helping raise funds for Signs for Hope

- Still waiting to receive approval of Signs for Hope to become exempt from Federal income tax (501c3); seems the government is experiencing a backlog of many applications
- Wisdom and discernment for the Signs for Hope board as we meet in November
- God to touch the hearts of additional donors to match His increased activities & work
- Finalizing the details of the February 2013 Liberia Mission Trip
- Please pray for the 32 SFH families in the deaf adoption process; this is a challenging and faith-building life-long journey. Twelve families are deep in the process of bringing their deaf children home soon
- There are still 20+ deaf children in Liberia in need of monthly sponsors – Heart Adoption
- Pray I will be completely open to God's leading and I will not miss anything He would have me do

Signs for Hope would not be where it is today without your prayers! Please know this is a reciprocal ministry and we would be delighted to pray for you. Send any prayer requests to beckyblloyd@gmail.com.

Striving to seek His face and not His hand,

Becky

"The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with."