SIGNS FOR HOPE

Prayer Letter March 2013

God-connections - the unexpected connections to people and/or organizations, orchestrated by God, which could possibly become a part of the next chapter in His story called ... Signs of Hope.

Not all connections, become a part of His story for Signs for Hope, but all of them become a part of His story for me. You see, that first trip I made to Liberia in 2010, I lost my passport before leaving the US and therefore was stuck in Washington, DC for two days, while my team left for Liberia without me. I was on alert for two days trying to figure out why it was God wanted me to be in DC and not in Liberia as I **knew** Liberia was His plan for me. I was so aware of everyone I met, the airport shuttle driver, those riding the shuttle with me, the front desk clerk at the hotel, the woman who cleaned my room, the waiter in the restaurant, my GWU classmate and her husband now living in DC. I paid extra attention as I read the scriptures and the books I had with me, those 48 hours. While I enjoyed chatting with all these people and made sure I was friendly and not upset with God for allowing this to happen, He never revealed to me that ONE specific person, I thought I was destined to meet. However, as I was boarding the plane for Liberia—someone in Charlotte found my passport and we had it overnighted to DC—I heard from Him, "Becky, it is not the ONE, but EVERYONE you meet." That experience has changed my perspective on those I encounter, even in a chance meeting, daily.

I have experienced so many God-connections since God called me to "coordinate the adoption of deaf orphans in the world", in March 2008. That's right... 5 it's been 5 years! Each time, it always takes my breath away, just a little, and I pray they always will. Sometimes, I may not recognize them as such, in the beginning, but He makes sure that I do not miss the ones He sends my way for a lasting relationship. And when I take time to pause, long enough, to think back on those, numerous, God-connections...WOW! I am in awe!

Continued on page 2

The number of God-connections He orchestrated in the 6 weeks prior to our most recent Liberia trip and then the ones we made in Liberia were nothing short of miraculous. Do you notice the miraculous when it happens? Or do you, like me, most often, miss the miraculous because you are not eagerly looking for it? The first week of January God connected me to two American men who are already working in Liberia and their organizations have ties to working with the Deaf, as well. When I hear Deaf AND Liberia in the same sentence, I really pay attention! One man was connected to me via a recent Facebook reconnection with a friend from my long-ago church youth group and the other had done a Google search and found the Signs for Hope website. I LOVE technology! So much of what God does through Signs for Hope is through the technology He has allowed.

At this point, I am still praying, as they are, as to what these connections really mean, for Signs for Hope, for the future. Should we work together for the good of the deaf orphans/children in Liberia? We are seeking His leading for this and I ask that you join us in discovering His plan and then, His timing.

I once told a mission team how I feel about mission trips, in general. So often, when we are preparing for a mission trip we become obsessed with being so—in tuned to God and His will. That is not a bad thing, but we somehow think that the mission trip will be a much more spiritual experience than we have ever had or that we will have when we return home. I, however, believe that our every day lives should be lived exactly the same. Why would we limit God's involvement with our every day lives? He is the same God when I am home as He is when I am on a mission trip and I need him just as much. His plans for me, at home, are just as important as when I am on a mission trip. Your, and my, every day life…should be…the mission trip!

Liberia - February 2013

Dedication of the Vocational Trade School at the Deaf Mission

Your prayers were an integral part of our recent trip to Liberia. Below are prayer requests I asked you to pray for, as we were in Liberia. As I look back over the 19-days, our team was away; it is so obvious this is exactly what God did and so much more!

"I could give you a long list of requests, but I simply want you to pray that we will be completely humble, completely surrendered, completely obedient, completely dependent, completely unified, and completely attuned to God's plan for us and for each person we meet. The goal...glorify God alone...whatever that looks like!"

January 2013

People ask the same question each time we return from Liberia, "How was your trip?" Every team member struggles to know how best to answer that question. I have finally decided to answer, "Our trips to Liberia are incredible! Incredibly hard! And incredibly blessed!"

The vast difference in the culture is just one of the reasons these trips are so hard. In addition, when you take excessively spoiled Americans and place them outside their comfort zones, they instantly think their way of doing things is the best way. That's the *American Way*…right? This is one of the mindsets God has been transforming in me for the past 7 years, or so. This transformation started before God called me to SFH, but the greatest revelations came as I began to read books like, "Dangerous Surrender" by Kay Warren, "When Helping Hurts" by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert, "Crazy Love" by Frances Chan, "Radical" & "Radical Together" by David Platt, and "Toxic Charity" by Robert Lupton. Now, Johnny Carr's newly released book, "Orphan Justice", continues to propel that transformation forward.

It was such a relief for me, as team leader for this Liberia trip, to watch God knit us together as we surrendered our agendas to Him. The hardest things were bearable because we chose to allow Him to give us His perspective on any given situation. He opened our eyes to see what was going on around us as we consciously thought about what we were seeing and who He had planned for us to be with in light of His perfect plan. "*Completely attuned to God's plan for us and for each person we meet*." If you and I would pray and practice this on a daily basis, our lives would be so much richer (abundant) and our experiences and relationships with each other would bond us together like nothing else.

February 14, 2013

Some of our greatest blessings...

Allow me to list some of our greatest blessings, we experienced, during our February 2013 Mission Trip to Liberia, aside from the answers to prayers above:

- Sharing on Liberia radio the rights of all Deaf people being equal to the hearing and how God Himself is the One who makes man deaf and/ or mute (Ex 4:11)
- Meeting and bonding with three other hearing teams (American and Canadian) who have been working alongside ACFI in Liberia for many years
- Watching God use our Deaf team members impact the hearing and Deaf Liberians, as well as, the hearing Americans/Canadians we met and ministered alongside
- The dedication of two buildings, the vocational trade school at the Deaf Mission and the sports complex at the Daniel Hoover Children's Village! God is faithful!
- Sharing 8 Jesus-filled days with our Liberian brothers and sisters in River Cess County for the ACFI Annual Conference
- Our 7-member team becoming "family"
- Meeting numerous Deaf across Monrovia and visiting 3 Deaf schools and the leaders of the Liberia National Association of the Deaf
- Liberian food and their unequaled hospitality
- Handing out the sponsorship packets to eagerly waiting outstretched hands
- Getting to know our Liberian brothers and sisters stories and how God has shaped their lives through each one, good and bad
- Experiencing the fully engaging worship (including multiple offerings) of our Liberian brothers and sisters
- Seeing the light shining brightly in the eyes of the deaf children at the Oscar & Viola Stewart School for the Deaf, even when they are hungry and have almost nothing
- Discovering three deaf children living in Cestos City with families who cherish them
- Being made aware of multiple opportunities for enhancing the lives of Deaf children across Liberia
- God's amazing creation, all across the country of Liberia, the landscape and the people
- The ability to endure the heat and sweat, the little-fast-furry creatures, the big creepy crawlies, the left leg/foot parallels, the inconveniences of no running water and only generator-run electricity in the evenings/overnight, the many delays (God-detours), transportation issues (but safe), sharing one bathroom with 10 people for 8 days…etc, etc, etc.

There is no way to know all that God will continue to accomplish because 7 people (3 Deaf and 4 hearing) were obedient to follow His call to go to Liberia on February 12th – March 2nd, 2013. But, will you and I be willing to obediently follow His call today…right here at home? There is no way to know all that God will accomplish, IF we are!

The top two priorities remain the same for Signs for Hope's continued involvement in Liberia at the Deaf Mission. 1) Construct a concrete-block fence around the perimeter to provide safety for the children and to prevent the constant stealing by local villagers. 2) Enlist monthly sponsors ($40 monthly), Heart Adoption, for each and every one of the deaf children. We now have 21 of the 45+ deaf children sponsored, but this does not provide enough funds to feed the children 2 meals every day, buy fuel to cook their meals, or supply them with basic medical supplies. Please, if God places it on your heart to "Heart Adopt" one of these precious ones, do not delay, contact me today.

I am seeking God's plan about returning to Liberia in late July or August! Is He leading you to join me?

Just because the majority of this prayer letter is about Liberia, it does not mean things are quiet on the deaf adoption front. In fact, the contrary is true. 45 families have now connected with Signs for Hope seeking our support. That support comes in a variety of packages and includes, but is not limited to, prayer support, encouragement, ASL interpreter services, promotion of adoption fundraisers and continual research for resources to benefit these families and the deaf children when they do come home. We have 40 members in our private SFH DeafAdopt Facebook page. This is where we share our lives with each other! Once again, thank God for the technology He has allowed to be used for His eternal work!

Lord willing, I am planning to travel with the Willards to China in May, to bring their deaf daughter, Kaylee home. I am so thankful for God's provision of half of my travel expenses being paid by the Willards adoption agency, Lifeline Children Services. This is a direct answer to prayer!

Give Hope, Now! Yes, we need your prayer support and yes, we need your financial support! These are two tangible ways you can...Give Hope! As always, only do what God leads you to do...but do nothing less! Visit the Signs for Hope website to donate or mail a check to Signs for Hope, PO Box 460, Fairview, NC 28730. Every dollar is accepted with great thanksgiving!

Blessed, beyond measure,

Becky

As we celebrate the resurrection of our risen, living Savior,
this is my prayer and my plea!

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably
more than all we ask or imagine,
according to His power that is at work within us,
to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21