SIGNS FOR HOPE

God places the lonely in families

-Psalm 68:6a

March's SFH Prayer Letter focused mainly on Liberia and our ongoing work with the deaf children there. May's Prayer Letter will focus more on adoption. I just returned from an interpreting trip to China with the Willard family (see photo). Tim & Cathy were connected to me last April, by a mutual friend, while I was traveling in China with the Barnes family. They joined us in Nashville for the Empowered to Connect conference last September and they spent the weekend with Charles and me, here in Asheville, in early November. Tim & Cathy's adoption of Kaylee, age 13 and deaf, was facilitated through Lifeline Children's Services. Lifeline shared equally in the travel expenses I incurred for this trip. What a blessing and answer to prayer this is! SFH has several other families adopting through Lifeline and some of those will also need ASL interpreting services. I love watching God bring together Christian organizations to accomplish His plan and purposes, for His glory!

Please include the Willard family as you pray for those SFH families who have brought their deaf sons and daughters home over the past year or so. Allow me to remind you of each of them: the Deml family (Ukraine 3, 1 deaf), the Barnes family (China), the Crawford family (Philippines – 2, 1 deaf), the Jordan family (China – their 2nd deaf), the Penland family (China – 2), the Fink family (China – their 2nd), the Collicott family (Bulgaria), the Worrell family (China – 2, 3 total) and the Willard family (China). The Robinson family was added to our group while we were in China, last week. That is a total of 12 adoptions of deaf children and there are numerous others still in various phases of the adoption process. Pray for them, as well.

The transition for all families will be life-long and will be as unique as each family member is unique. One of the resources SFH provides for families who have adopted deaf children and are in the process of adopting deaf children is a private Facebook page for discussions about the vast issues that surround the adoption of deaf children; we also share prayer requests, struggles and

accomplishments, and encouragement and everything else. Information about "waiting" deaf children that are searching for their families is also posted in this private group. We opened this page in November, 6 months ago, and there are currently 58 members. I have been told numerous times by several of our members they are so thankful for this safe place of support. Yes, we all believe the acquisition of ASL—by each child and their families—is vitally important for each of the deaf children, and we support each other in seeking God's leading for other options that might benefit the deaf children, as well.

Please continue praying for the Katic family as they seek God's guidance for what He would have them do next. As you remember, the Russian judge turned them down last November in the adoption of their deaf son.

Signs for Hope will be providing ASL interpreters for the Empowered to Connect (ETC) conference, for the 3rd year, scheduled for September 13-14 in Houston, TX. This conference will sell out so do not wait to register. I am planning to attend and I am praying Charles can join me. The possibility of some additional training for families who are adopting or have adopted deaf children is also in the works for this special weekend. Please pray for the details of this additional training to be finalized. And, please contact me about possible scholarships for Deaf families desiring to attend ETC.

The desire to establish an annual Signs for Hope Reunion for families adopting deaf children has been mentioned by several. Please join with us in praying about beginning this event, where to hold it, and when. If you know of a possible place for such an event, or have suggestions of any kind, please let me know.

Summit 9

(Christian Alliance for Orphans)

Summit 9, the first weekend in May, in Brentwood, TN was as inspiring and convicting as expected! This makes Charles' and my third Summit since 2009. When you have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with those of like-minds and those who walk with you in ministry throughout the year, it boosts your spirit and encourages you to persevere. These two days were great days of encouragement and strengthening for Charles and me. Two other Signs for Hope board members also attended this year, for the first time. Re-connecting face-to-face with many previous God-connections—individuals and organizations—was such a blessing for us as were the new God-connections He orchestrated. Three new families, who either are adopting deaf children or who have recently adopted deaf children were added to our number and we didn't even have a booth set up. I am so thankful our God is never limited...by anything! Two of our ministry partners, ABBA Fund and Lifeline Children's Services freely shared our information with those who came by their tables and several connections were made this way. Others were made when we wore our Signs for Hope t-shirts and then others were simply made by word-of-mouth and by God-incidents. I can no longer keep up with the number of families God has led to SFH, but it is over 60, now. For some reason, I just haven't had the time to stop and count, lately. :-)

Some of the new God-connections include not only new families, but new resources for Signs for Hope families. Dr. Jon Bergeron, Director of Familycare at Hope for Orphans, Family Life Today's orphan ministry, is one of those resources. Dr. Jon (I have started calling him this for short) and his wife, Shelly, have adopted two deaf children, one domestically and one internationally. I was connected to Dr. Jon via Laura Godwin, Nightlight Christian Adoptions. Dr. Jon will possibly be joining with Signs for Hope in Houston (ETC conference in Sept.) to provide some additional training, for our adopting families, as I told you about earlier. Please pray for God to make His desires clear for this and other opportunities of training for our families in Houston in September. If God does bring all this together, Dr. Jon would be presenting in ASL and this will be a huge blessing and benefit for our Deaf moms and dads. Please pray!

Additional meetings with others concerning the possibility of doing hearing-screenings to identify the deaf children in Bulgaria orphanages continued at Summit 9. I love watching God orchestrate His plan, His way, in His timing.

Another unexpected blessing for us at Summit 9 was His re-connecting us with one of Joseph's college roommates, Bobby Neptune. God has given Bobby and Brain Hill, another of Joseph's college roommates, incredible talents and they are using them to impact His Kingdom nationally and internationally. Joseph joined Bobby in Mozambique, during college, to capture the amazing work being doing in a small HIV/Aids orphanage. Check Bobby and Brian's work out here.

Bobby took this photo of us as we shared what we hoped and dreamed for deaf children around the world. He created an entire wall sharing the many hopes and dreams Summit 9 attendees desire for orphans and children at risk. There were over 2,600 Summit attendees this year, the most ever, and they traveled from 49 states and 25 different countries to attend. We are eagerly waiting to hear where Summit 10 will be held.

We would like Bobby to join with us on our next trip to Liberia to capture God's work being done there among the deaf children, through Signs for Hope. If God leads you to do so, would you give so we can pay Bobby's travel expenses? He says that's all he will charge us, since we are Jo's parents. The over-all cost for Bobby to join us in August would be approximately, $2,700, if airfare costs remain the same. At this point in time, your gift would need to be made by check, as we are experiencing some issues with getting the PayPal link set up on the website. Thanks for your patience and your understanding. Please make your check payable to Signs for Hope and mail to PO Box 460, Fairview, NC 28730.

God-Connections … while in China! Only God!

The supernatural God-connections continued while I was in China! Upon arriving in Guangzhou, we saw the Robinson family, another Lifeline family. The Willards and I had met Tamara, mom Robinson, in Nashville at the ETC conference in September. I had learned then they were adopting a young deaf son, named Wyatt. I had not had any additional contact with Tamara since then, but their family had been on my heart and in my prayers. I am so thankful for how God has prepared this family for deaf adoption, while they will be learning ASL along with Wyatt, they accept Wyatt as God has made him and I believe they will do all they can to insure that he thrives. Tamara has been added to our SFH DeafAdopt Families Facebook group and we look forward to seeing how God works in the Robinson family's life, through their obedience to adopt Wyatt.

The Pruiksma family was processing through their 2nd adoption in about 14 months alongside the Willards. David and LeighAnn have 3 biological boys and have adopted two Chinese girls. Both girls have experienced some hearing and/or speech issues and the Pruiksma family was well equipped to identify and connect with Tim & Cathy and vice versa. Only God! It was such a blessing to be with this family in adoption meetings and sharing playtime, international church, and meals with them. I pray this God-connection will be one that is lasting and one that will continue to glorify God through the years.

Another possible ongoing resource for SFH adopting families also came while in China. The first week in Guangzhou, at breakfast, I noticed Tim looking over my right shoulder and acting as if he was signing to someone behind me. Since he delights in teasing me, I really did not expect to see anyone when I turned around, but sure enough there was an American woman signing back to him. Turns out Dr. Becky Clark was in China at the request of the US State Department. She is Deaf and I will not go into great detail about her accomplishments, you can click her name for more details, but we both know our meeting was not an accident and we are seeking God's guidance for how He desires to use her gifts and talents in this amazing God-connection to Signs for Hope and beyond. She connected immediately with Kaylee and will be an ongoing support for the Willards from now on, as well. *Only God!*

From my heart to yours...

In closing, I want to share with you there is much God-activity in relation to the ongoing care of deaf orphans and deaf children at risk that will never be adopted, in Liberia and China. God is continuing to lead in my thinking, seeking, and my connecting with the right individuals and organizations as this part of Signs for Hope's ministry continues to unfold. On this China trip, I was told how a ***simple, yet powerful*** God-connection that was made last year, on my last day in China, has created the potential for God to do exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or even think. No, I do not know all the details, I only know it is HUGE! Only God!

Another significant connection, I believe, was made on this China trip and I cannot wait to see what He does with this one...but, probably nothing I expect. ;-) I urge you to pray diligently for the lives of these deaf children whom God loves so dearly and desires to use them to share the gospel with their own peoples in their own languages. Let me remind you the Deaf Peoples are among the top 3 unreached people groups around the world. Less than 2% of Deaf people follow Christ and 750 of them die everyday with knowing Him.

I am not satisfied with deaf children growing up in orphanages without the benefit of family, nor with the "aging-out" of deaf children at any age and I will continue seeking His guidance for a solution to this as long as He gives me breath to do so. You can read more about "My Burdened Heart" for these least of the least, in a blog post on January 2012. Please join me in praying for the Deaf Peoples (and hearing) of the world to know Jesus, simply, because someone was Jesus to a deaf orphan/child.

The next Liberia trip is scheduled to depart Tuesday, July 30th returning to the states on Saturday, August 10th, 12 days in length (4 for travel and 8 in Liberia) The airfare is currently running about $1,700 from many cities across the South. In-country expenses (food, lodging, transportation, laundry) will be approximately $700 for this trip. Additional expenses could apply for needed vaccines, malaria preventative, Liberia visa, emergency medical insurance, and souvenirs. For additional details about this upcoming Liberia trip contact me, ASAP. I am praying for God to reveal to those of you who are to join with us on this trip. I am praying for Deaf and hearing team members, pastors and lay-people to join us. I am praying for God to allow Charles to join me, as well. I expect God to make His plans clear to each one of you, as He did for our February team members. Don't miss His calling you to join Him in Liberia, August 2013.

As you can see, the needs of this ministry are constantly being answered and often before we even know exactly what to pray. Please, please do not grow weary in your lifting these many great opportunities to our Father. God obviously has great plans in store for deaf children who are in desperate need of His love, and He is using your prayers to meet those needs. I will endeavor to do my best to keep you informed of all He is doing and make you aware of the needs and opportunities, as they arise. It is an honor to be in this ministry together with each of you. You are a vital part of this ministry called Signs for Hope.

By His Love,
Becky

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