SIGNS FOR HOPE

SFH IS VIETNAM BOUND!!

Supporting family preservation for deaf children!

The institution of the family and its function is God-ordained and designed. God uses these familiar descriptions when describing our relationship with Him, His bride, our Father, His children, heirs with Christ, brothers and sisters in Christ and so on. When God called me "to coordinate the adoption of deaf orphans in the world" back in 2008, the thought never occurred to me He would desire for the hearing families of biologically born deaf children to benefit from this "adoption-focused" ministry, but He did. It wasn't too far into this journey, though, I knew this was a part of His plan. Preventing the increase in the number of orphans globally is certainly a large part of the current Christian orphan care movement. In fact some say, "It is a far, far better thing to prevent orphans than to adopt them."

The first opportunity SFH was granted to partner with families for orphan prevention came in December 2013. It has been a joy to pray for and experience, from afar, God's unfolding of His plans for the New Beginnings School for the Deaf in Tam Ky, Vietnam. They opened their doors in November, last year. The amazing opportunity to see this newly birthed school with my own eyes and to love on these precious deaf childen, their families and teachers is becoming a reality!! The SFH Vietnam 2015 Team departs for Da Nang June 11th. This first team consists of 4, me, Vandora Henderson and Ralph & Deborah Bradshaw. We honestly cannot wait to be there, in person, to see what God is doing, HOWEVER WE DESPERATELY NEED AND WANT YOUR PRAYERS!

That day, in December 2013, Tony Brewer of Orphan Voice found Signs for Hope through a Google search. Have I told you lately how much I LOVE and depend on technology for this work?!? Tony and I chatted through a Skype video call a few days later and I shared with him my desire to see these hearing families supported in continuing to care for their deaf children instead of whisking them away to a far off deaf school never to learn how to communicate with their families, severing a relationship that most likely would never be restored. Tony agreed and we began to prayerfully support, connect, counsel and financially support this new effort for deaf orphan prevention…family preservation.

Our time, one week on the ground, will be split between the Da Nang area, Orphan Voice's headquarters and Tam Ky, the location of the new deaf school. Both of these are clearly shown on the map above. This will be a new experience for each of us as it will be our first trip to a country, where we will be careful to honor our host countries' wishes in regards to *storytelling*. Our advantage may be the ability to do *storytelling* visually without the use of spoken words or books, but your prayers are so coveted for clear understanding no matter the limitations including the different languages. Vietnam is experiencing, as are some other countries, extreme heat this year. Please pray our team stays well hydrated and healthy, too.

Below is a precious God-story from the New Beginnings School for the Deaf, shared by Orphan Voice last week. In less than a week, Lord willing, our team will be hugging on Thai and others, in Jesus name!!

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

From Fortune Teller To Truth ...

In rural Vietnam, poor farmers sometimes turn to fortune- tellers in times of trouble. Thai's parents sought direction and a miracle in this way.

Thai's farmer parents loved their son from birth, but their hopes for him were shattered when a diagnosis of deafness came when he was 16 months old. In a panic, they sold all their possessions and borrowed heavily to get medical care. But no doctor could help.

Thai's parents then turned to the fortuneteller. Although he feigned to help the family, he was successful only in taking what remained of their money.

The public schools in Thai's rural district don't have signing teachers. Was Thai destined to a life of ignorance and illiteracy?

When they felt most depressed, the family heard of Orphan Voice's New Beginnings School for the Deaf. They applied and Thai was accepted!

New Beginnings proved to be the family's miracle. It's a place where truth and integrity are personified in the teachers. Since enrolling, Thai has learned a great deal of sign language. He can now write. He even does simple math. He won't be illiterate nor ignorant!

What do Thai's parents say: "Thank you Orphan Voice for helping our son. We hope that New Beginnings is open for a very long time."

With your help, New Beginnings will educate deaf children who have no other option and "be open a very long time." It takes $1,830 per student per year to educate one deaf student. Parents pay for books and food. They cannot pay tuition. Would you like to help? To help educate a deaf child in basic skills and character development, **click here**

Signs for Hope partners with Orphan Voice $200 on a monthly basis. It will take much more than this to meet the need to keep this deaf school "open a very long time." Please pray for God to touch the hearts of those individuals and churches He wants to support, with prayer and financially, the New Beginnings School for the Deaf in Tam Ky, Vietnam.

Matching Grant Opportunity!!

Deaf Adoption in the Dominican Republic

God places
the lonely in families.
Psalm 68:6a

We are the Pruyn family and super excited to be in the process of adopting a deaf toddler from the Dominican Republic. My name is Jessica, but everyone calls me Jessie. Well almost everyone...my mother hasn't gotten used to that one. I grew up on a small rural west Tennessee farm, learning to love God and the outdoors!

I currently work as an educational interpreter and have done everything from freelance to Sorenson Video Relay Service, although interpreting isn't really my cup of tea. Alas, I do have to say at the end of the day, I love my job! The amazing thing is how I just fell into the Deaf world from my small rural lifestyle, but that is another story for another day. The important part is that through our local Deaf Church I met the love of my life!

Brice is a native California boy through and through. Growing up in the bay area, the ocean is literally his second home. An alumnus of the California School for the Deaf, Fremont this boy stole my heart when his dad brought him to our church picnic. We became best friends and the rest, they say, is history.

Adoption has always been something very close to our hearts. My mom, uncle, and three siblings are all adopted so it was no surprise when Brice and I began our courtship in 2009; adoption was one of the many topics we discussed. We both knew that we wanted to adopt one day, but always thought it would be later down the road. In 2012, we welcomed our beautiful biological baby girl into our home and life has been an adventure ever since. Never did we dream that being parents would, could be so amazing! Soon after, we began once again talking about adoption. God slowly began opening doors during the summer of 2013 and we began inquiring about adoption from various agencies and friends for future reference. We asked a few questions, figured out what we would need to get our house in order (a large addition to meet the minimum square footage requirements) and just tucked it away as something we would do later and went ahead with our own family plans. Little did we know that He would be leading us in this direction quite so quickly!

It was spring of 2014, shortly after our second miscarriage that we were contacted about this specific child. When the agency told us of the requirements per the Dominican Republic, the 5-year marriage requirement, 6 months living in-country, and $40k we both prayed and agreed to take it one day at a time. The first step was to see if we could get the time off from work for the 6 months required for us to stay in the country. Brice asked his company where he works as a floater for a factory—he is a machinist/welder—and was assured he could take a leave of absence for that length of time. We called the adoption agency and told them we would press onward. We both agreed that God had opened this door and we were just going to trust Him to make it happen!

We could NOT deny the clear leading of God to this specific country. It has been over a year, now. We have worked almost non-stop on our house and finally this May right before our 5th wedding anniversary we finished our home study! We are now officially married 5 years and in the dossier process! God has provided every step right as we have needed it and we are trusting that He will continue!

Prayers as we move forward, please! The long in-country stay is going to be very taxing on us as we try to rent out our home, cover our bills both here and in-country and deal with lost wages. Please pray that all these needs will be met in the coming months as we continue to prepare!

Signs for Hope has offered the Pruyn family a $750 matching grant. For every dollar that is donated to their adoption fund, up to $750, SFH will match it. The full amount of support will be at least $1,500. If God touches your heart to go beyond praying for the Pruyn family in this adoption of their deaf toddler from the Dominican Republic you can make a donation on the Signs for Hope website here.

FROM MY HEART TO YOURS…

Volunteers! In the early years of SFH I remember creating a list of things I felt like I needed help with and would ask God to provide those willing to help. The need, at least as I saw it, was great for co-laborers. I prayed and shared that list with quite a few folks over several years that offered their assistance in some way. Less than half of those folks who committed in some way, actually followed through as promised. Volunteer help can be frustrating, at times, but it can also bring blessings beyond measure and the pathway for God to continue to a build a stronger foundation of faith and dependence upon Him.

In March, the great need for some additional support for our adopting families became crystal clear, aside from TBRI® Training. I truly wondered how it was God was going to pull this one off. So many families adopt deaf children with little to no background in understanding deafness and the Deaf Community, much less being fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) before they bring their deaf child(ren) home. Yes, we are working to educate adoption agencies and families surrounding this great need for equipping families BEFORE they bring deaf children home, but at the same time we must provide support for other families who have already done so.

It has been nothing short of awe-inspiring for me to sit back and watch God send multiple skilled volunteers our way for accomplishing some vitally important foundational tasks as we begin to develop what I believe to be one of the most potentially impacting services God has led us to undertake through Signs for Hope. ***Let me stop here and just rhetorically ask...honestly, is there anything He has called SFH to do that does not have the potential for great impact and requires our total dependence on Him?*** *Without these volunteers God knew there would be no way to accomplish this. This new wave of God-sent co-laborers is helping in the development of the SFH Early Deaf-Adoption Intervention Program. We have over 160 SFH deaf-adopting families living in 32 states and three foreign countries. Most states do offer Early Intervention (EI) Programs for families with deaf infants and toddlers, but their programs do not provide supports beyond age 5. The vast majority of deaf children being adopted are older than age 5. In addition, rarely do these EI Programs provide Deaf Mentors, one of the most important pieces, in my opinion, for this foundational support. Eventually, SFH will provide a team of support for each of these target families for at least one year. The curriculum we will use initially utilizes at least one hearing and one Deaf team member. You have no idea how thankful I am there IS a curriculum that is focused on ASL as the foundational language AND has a Deaf Mentor aspect. This is something I had continued to search for through the years and finally God revealed this to me, or should I say timely He revealed it, in March. Please ask God to identify and send additional team members, hearing and Deaf,*

Your prayers, as always, are so needed for accomplishing God's ministry through SFH. I cannot tell you how dependent we are on them, as apart from Him we can do nothing! Please join us in rejoicing and thanking our God for providing these co-laborers for 'such a time as this'. Not only are they willing, some are volunteering to do specific needed things, even before I can ask them. ONLY GOD!!

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16b

Each of you are dear to my heart. If we have not had an opportunity to chat and catch up with one another, recently, I pray God gives us the time to do so. It is fascinating to see how God sometimes pulls some of you into this daily ministry of SFH as certain needs arise across this country and around the globe. I am so thankful when that happens as I am granted that special opportunity to re-connect and pray with you and hear the God-stories and adventures He has you and your family on.

I do love each of you, but you know He loves you so much more!

Becky

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