

## **A Reflection on Our Trip to Honduras**

October 18, 2005

Children are children no matter where you go, and they are precious no matter where you go. When we walked onto the school grounds during our visit this past month the children came running with all the energy that children everywhere exude. They smiled and laughed and jockeyed for position. They sang for us, they recited poems for us, and they presented us with small tokens of their appreciation.

We had the privilege of eating lunch with the children (we ate around 10 am); our lunch consisted of a banana and a cup of corn and dried milk soup. As I drank the soup, I thought to myself this isn't much of a lunch. I was wrong. I didn't get hungry again until after 4 in the afternoon. I remember commenting to Ron that I was surprised at how our lunch had stayed with me.

What seems to be so little is in reality a great deal. The children of El Amatillo come to school with an empty belly, and go home with a full stomach. Because they are fed, they are better able to learn while they are at school.

Without an education in Honduras, you are destined to a lifetime of abject poverty. I have traveled all over the world and have seen poverty in many places. The poverty of Honduras is the worst I've ever seen. The poverty stricken of Honduras do not thrive, do not advance, do not have hope. They often subsist day to day on a single meal. For the elementary school children of El Amatillo that one meal is very often the meal they receive in school because of our lunch program.

During our visit with the children they played a very familiar game for Latin American children. They hung a piñata in a tree and began the familiar blind folded dance. The laughter and joy of the children almost seemed out of place for me. It was a moment of light in darkness. When the piñata was finally broken open and the children began to gather up the candy I thought to myself, "This is a rare treat for them." When the children began to come to us and give us some of their candy, I was overwhelmed by their gesture. They wanted to share what little they had with us, and they did so with a smile.

When we were getting ready to leave that day, all the children came and gave us a hug. I finally had to get down on my knees and just let them mob me. It was another overwhelming outpouring of their love for us. I now truly understand what Jesus meant when he said, "Let the children come to me, for of these are the kingdom of God made." In that moment I caught a small glimpse of God's glory in the faces of those little ones. It was a moment I shall never forget.

We have so much in this country. What we are doing for those who have so little in Honduras will make a huge difference in their lives. Those children have an opportunity to escape the poverty simply because we are giving \$15 a month to help them.

There is much more I could say, but it would take too much space. The most important thing I learned while in Honduras is this: We are bringing joy and hope to the children in El Amatillo. I don't say that out of a sense of pride, but out of a sense of thankfulness. I am thankful that we can help these children and bring hope and joy into their lives.

Shalom  
Pr. Randy