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Children Of Honduras Trust

Newsletter December 2005

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

In response to the need to communicate with our colleagues in Honduras I have learned something of the Spanish language. The Spanish word for 'more' is 'mas'. I could not help noticing the 'mas' in Christmas. In England Christmas is associated with more of nearly everything material but this is not the experience of many poor families in Honduras. For many there will not be a special meal or even enough money to provide a good filling meal. A toy is something that another child may have but many will not. That is the bad news. The good news is that we are making a difference. We are getting toys and small gifts to many children. We are getting shoes and clothes to even more. Such things are taken for granted by children in England. Parents will always buy them an ample supply of clothes to wear. In Honduras, a ten year old told me that the thing she most appreciated receiving from England was the clothing.



- SMILE -

We have sent toys for the crèches and kinder schools. Most toys are given out on the National Day of the Child. However, the churches will keep some of them for distribution at Christmas. Each of the 800 family bags sent out included at least one small child's toy. We have sent food out that will give many children an extra meal at this special time of year. Yes, we are making a difference with items you give and finance. Without things to pack and finance to send them, none of this would happen. It is very much a team effort.

HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

How much do you take your heritage for granted? Do you complain about being British? I hope that you will re-assess your view after you have read the following brief about family values and the lot of mothers in Honduras. Currently, more than half the population of Honduras live on less than one dollar a day. Bear in mind that food and many other essentials cost the same, sometimes less, here in the UK compared with Honduras. You may remember that the floods, rains and landslides caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 set back the development of the country by about 20 years, in circumstances where it was already a long way behind most of the developing world. Try to imagine changing place with a Honduran mother in an average working class income family. The first thing you will discover is that, culturally, women in Honduras are not valued as partners, only as possessions. Even in 21st century Honduras, men-folk still traditionally consider that a woman's place is strictly to be at home. Naturally a baby every year helps to ensure this. In this very male dominated society, it is common for the woman to be a victim of domestic violence, not only at the hands of their partners but also from the men that they work for. Personal circumstances usually deny the means to escape. As in many cultures, the men can get very angry and abusive when they think their womenfolk are not being submissive. Sadly, this is not counterbalanced by the male duty to provide an environment were there is no cause for such discontent. In this kind of society it is little wonder that many Honduran women have little feeling of self worth and accept violence against them as part of every day life.

In spite of the inequality and darkness that still prevails it is encouraging to know groups of women have come together with the aim of improving their lives. As recently as 1992 there was a law against women owning land unless they were widowed and had no sons. Thankfully this has now been repealed. Although the change in the law is beneficial to single women and mothers, it has been very difficult to realise its potential. This is because many of the women are

illiterate, since they received little or no schooling, and continue to be entrenched in tradition. As a product of education, some progress is being made by groups of women forming self-help groups. There are groups around the country who are now becoming self-sufficient on the land, creating fertilisers and pesticides from what is available to them. No longer do they need to turn to working in the sweatshops of the cities to make a living.

Although good progress has been made, it is only a small beginning. There are still more than 130,000 children who cannot attend school, because they lack the basic things necessary i.e. shoes, uniforms and books etc. One third of all children fail to complete their primary education. Education is a Government concern. One of the biggest obstacles to overcoming the problem is that Honduras is spending between 40 and 45% of its national budget paying off its National Debt and there is simply no money available to fund education. I wonder who is responsible for that state of affairs? In the meantime, as national and individual values slowly improve, the average mother is mostly occupied by the unending task of survival, making a worthwhile future for her children and spouse and encouraging hope for the future.

Well, do you fancy facing up to the challenges set before an average Mum in Honduras? I think not. I have considerable admiration for the way these people deal with their problems. Many live with great dignity in very difficult every day circumstances, sometimes life threatening, with little in the way of security outside of their families. I thank the Lord greatly for the privilege of being born a UK citizen. However, we need to remember that privilege should be equally matched with responsibility. It is our duty to help others less fortunate than ourselves by whatever means we can. CH Trust does its best to bring relief to the poorest of the population through your donations of both material goods and educational sponsorship. It is a delight to observe that many of the orphaned children we helped 30 years ago, following good education, have now assumed responsible positions in society and are making a difference to the culture that they have inherited.

THE CH TRUST WATER AID PROGRAMME

Contaminated water is a real problem in Honduras. It is scientifically proven that 85% of child sickness and 65% of adult diseases are the result of water-borne viruses, bacteria and intestinal protozoa. Children exposed to this kind of environment frequently suffer from diarrhoea. The problem is particularly bad at the end of the dry season when water is in short supply. Even the Government

recommends that any drinking water should be treated during this time. Sadly, most people do not have the means to do so. As a result we have often been asked to supply medication to treat diarrhoea in children. Unfortunately, there is no satisfactory treatment for this condition. Thus, there is little we can do to meet this need. However, it may be within our capability to help treat the cause, i.e. to provide a way of purifying their drinking water.

We made a start in 2005 by sending out 1500 large plastic buckets and lids. This has given many families an opportunity to store some water when the piped supply is reduced to one day in seven, sometimes one day in ten. This prompted the response “The buckets were distributed one for each family and are very usable because some times there is no water in the pipes”.

We also sent out some large tablets, which sterilise 200 litres of water at a time. However, this does not satisfactorily address the problem at every day family level, since most cannot access such a large amount of water at one time. The quality and availability of water varies from area to area. The children at highest risk are those who have to drink the local river water. During this year, I have researched the subject of water treatment in respect of the children’s needs and the most practical and cost effective way of meeting them.

The solution we have devised to help poor families enables them to treat 5 litres of water at a time. This is only a small amount but is representative of how much each family can obtain each day towards the end of the dry season. The worst time is between Christmas and May, after which the rain starts up again. The cost of the treatment is 50p per year per family. This is a small price to pay for the improved health of many children. This cost, multiplied many times, will however increase our expenditure into this new area. The basis of the system is as follows:

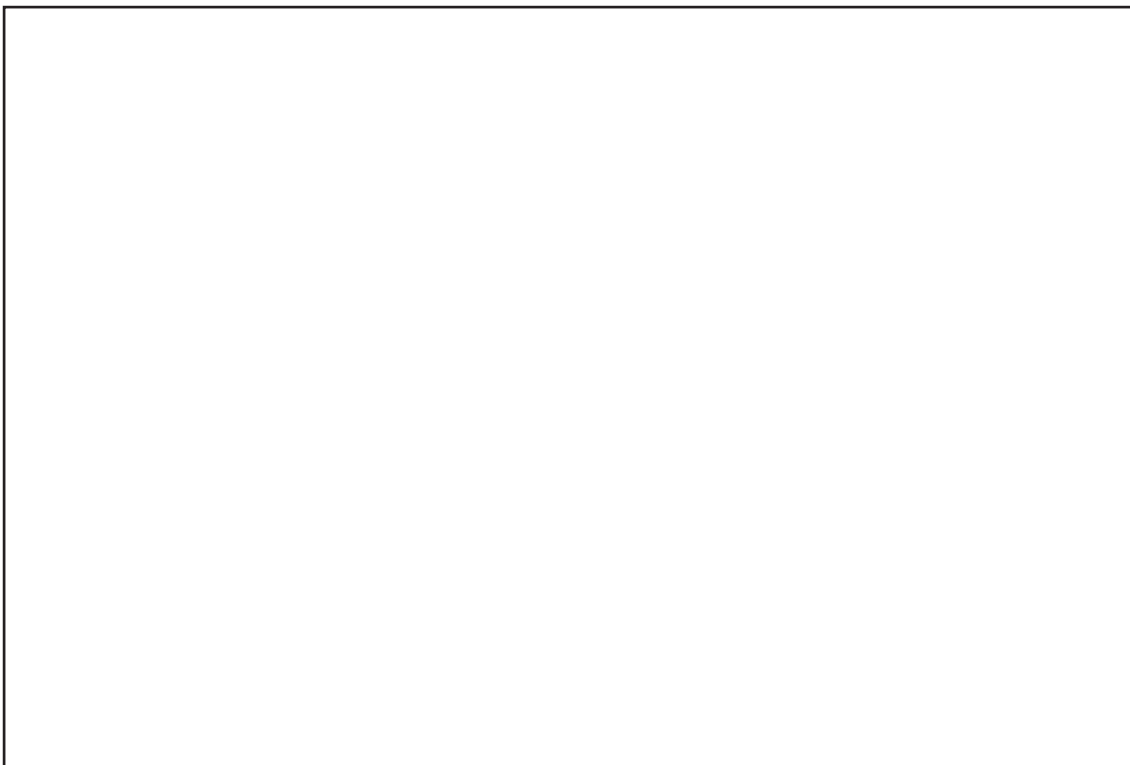
For cost reasons it is highly advantageous to work with the tablets that treat 200 litres at a time. The proposal is that responsible people within a church or organisation will prepare a concentrated solution of sterilising liquid using the big tablets mentioned earlier. Each mother is then furnished with a 25ml measure, a bottle of the concentrate and a 5 litre plastic bucket with sealing lid. Adding one measure of the concentrate to the 5 litre bucket full of water will render it fit for drinking in about half an hour. The bottles of concentrate will contain sufficient to provide one bucketful of purified water each day for a month.

As an experiment for 2006, it is the intention of the Trust to try out this system in selected locations where close supervision and education of participating families, together with monitoring of the whole process through to the end user, can be guaranteed. If it proves successful, then it may be possible to expand the scheme in future years.

A Rotary Club in the region, who heard about our work, has made an additional initiative available to us. This offer provides large 'aqua boxes' that can be used in corporate scenarios such as schools, child centres and children's soup kitchens.

We are also researching the purchase of an Ultraviolet Light treatment unit for a larger establishment. This provides large amounts of clean water but costs about £300 for the equipment. Ultraviolet light is a natural, cost effective, environmentally friendly process, which disinfects water without the need to add chemicals. Although costly, it is particularly suited for use in buildings with piped water supplies.

Please pray that the Trust's exploration of these possibilities will be successful. The potential return in the health of the children who benefit is likely to be substantial.



- TENT TESTING -

NEWS FROM OUR COLLEAGUES IN HONDURAS

Pastor Alberto reports that the Valle church has managed to purchase land on which to build premises for their daughter church, of two years, in Choluteca. This is a city located in the south of the country. They eventually hope to build a church hall, classrooms, children's dining room and toilet facilities on the site. Choluteca is an area of great poverty. There are many children between the age of 5-12 years that work in the street. There are also many single mothers, a lot of alcoholism and malnutrition.

"In Valle de Angeles, there is a lot of work to do in the Vision Cristian storage facility in preparation for National Children's Day. On this day we will give out clothes to about 320 children here in the locality. The celebrations will feature plays, a lunch and the distribution of the clothes, toys and sweets."

A word sent by Pastora Candida who works in Comayagua

"I send you a strong hug and blessing of God. Thank you for all the things that you sent. God has permitted me to shepherd a very, very, needy people and they are very happy with all they received. As their Pastora, I observe many happy people. It brings tears to my eyes to see the joy of the tiny children as they received sweets and gifts that you sent. Infinite thanks."

DANLI

"We are helping 30 children on a regular basis. We try to administer the supplies you sent us so that they will last through the year and leave some to give out at Christmas."

CHOLOMA

"The works of the church have advanced a lot in the next months. We will be visiting another place near El Ceibón called Trenches. This is another village with people very poor and, if is possible, we will carry a project of food to the children."

PENIEL

Pastor Roger Rivera writes:

"The new church is 30 minutes from Tegucigalpa. It is in a village called New Arcady. There is some 75 children and 150 adult people. We have the vision, in the future, to raise a centre for children in that place, since there is a lot of need."

Pastor Ricardo, working in Naranjal says:

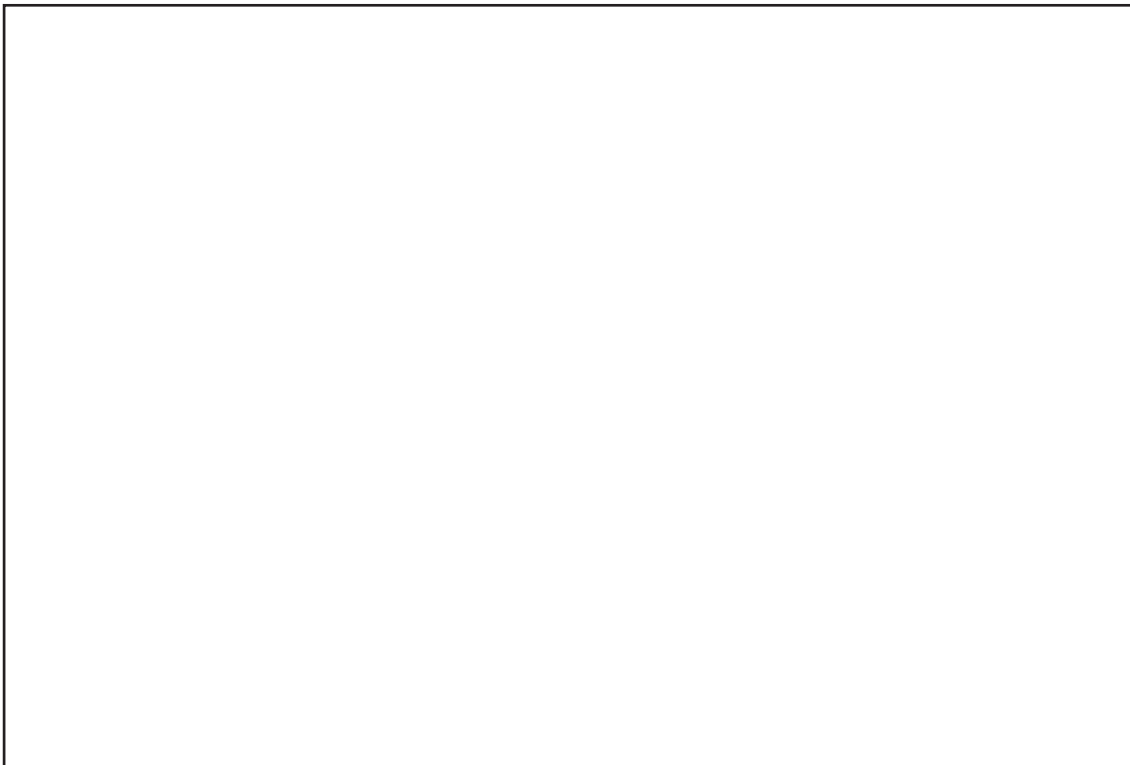
"Your help has impacted several communities. I am still trying to work on funds to

maintain the soup kitchen permanently. We will see what the Lord brings as our major support area is from New Orleans. The churches and members of our family located in New Orleans were affected by hurricane Katrina and had to evacuate.”

THE CHILD SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

The £50 one-off sponsorship scheme has proved to be very popular. Even so, there is always a need for more sponsors. After all, the number of children that need help far exceeds the number of potential sponsors by many thousands. Is it an area where you would like to help? Education is perhaps one of the best gifts you can give to a child, otherwise denied access to this aspect of life that we take for granted.

For those of our readers who are unfamiliar with the scheme, a one-off donation of £50 (or £25 for a half sponsorship) provides a child with uniform, shoes, school bag, school curriculum manual (in Spanish) and sufficient equipment to attend a state school for a year. In Honduras attendance at a state school is free but only if the parents can afford to purchase school uniform, black school shoes, PE kit, trainers, exercise books, curriculum manual, pens, pencils, etc and a small rucksack to carry it all. The children also have to take their own lunchtime snack and water to drink.



- RECEIVING SPONSORSHIP BUCKETS -

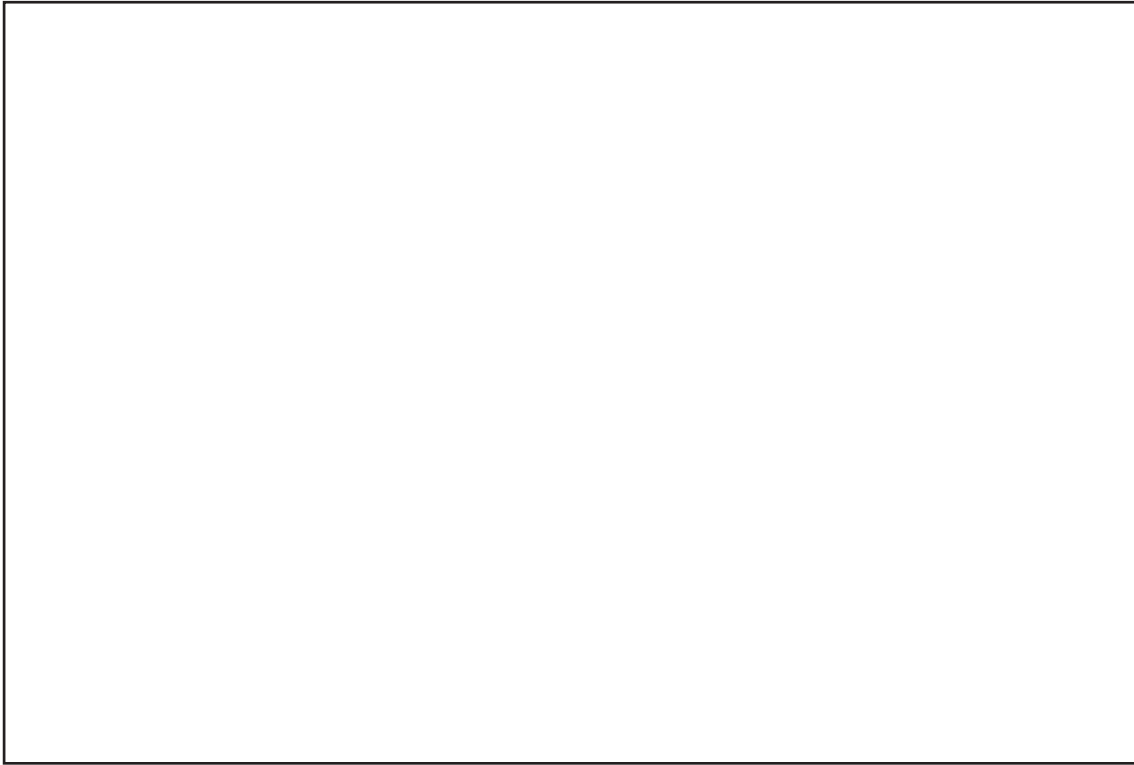
We rely on the church leaders to identify the most needy beneficiaries, fix them up with the required 'school starter kit' (purchased with the sponsorship money) and to provide us with information about the progress of the child. They, in turn, have been delighted to help us provide access to one years' education for some of the poorest children. The benefiting children demonstrate their commitment in terms of their application, achievement and attendance at school. Each year, we look forward to receiving letters from the children, photographs and other information about their progress. Most of them score very high in their annual assessments/exams. Any information we receive is fed back to the sponsors of individual children to keep them informed and to encourage them and others to continue sponsorship. The scheme is managed to enable, as far as possible, all the children complete their education.

For the school year 2004 to 2005 sufficient people engaged in the scheme to enable 91 children to attend school. In the event, careful budgeting by the pastors stretched this gift to help 129 youngsters attend school in 7 different locations around Honduras. This wonderful result included the proceeds of three one-off gifts sourced from a private sponsored event, a school project and an individual.

It is early days yet, but so far 51 individuals and groups have responded to our sponsorship newsletter in August. When Gift Aid is added to the pledges received we will already be able to count on sponsorship for 4 additional children. This is a marvellous response so early in the year.

Thank you to everyone participating in the scheme. You are all actively contributing to a better future for the poor, as the children you are educating grow up and take responsible positions in Honduran society.

If anyone else would like to sponsor in 2006, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Jennifer at the contact address at the head of the newsletter. We need to get as much sponsorship money as possible to Honduras before the New Year. The school year starts the first week in February and the Pastors have to organise the purchasing of all the uniforms. It is very expensive to transfer money to Honduras and therefore I need to send all the sponsorship money together.



- NEEDY FAMILIES CHOOSE CLOTHES FOR THEIR CHILDREN -



**- HEALTHCARE CLASS. INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW THE CHILDREN ARE
TO BE GIVEN THE WORMING AND VITAMIN TABLETS -**

FINANCES

This is what we spent last year and will give you some idea of our projected expenditure for the coming year. (The rise in oil prices around the world is likely to impact our transport costs for next year)

2 tons of powdered butter milk £2820

3 tons of breakfast oats £720

Medical supplies £2028

Educational Items £310

Transport from Derby to destination of four 40' containers £9744

1 ton of spaghetti £320

Drums of oil and Rice £730

I would like to thank everyone who has provided finances both large and small. We could not operate without the money to purchase the items we try to provide each year and the money for transport. Thank you.

Also a big thank you to those who pay monthly into the charity's bank account. This enables me to budget for the many items I need to purchase early in the year, before all the funding has been received e.g. items such as milk, which has to be ordered by the end of January. Managing the finances is hard work. I greatly appreciate anything that helps relieve the worry of financial forecasting, planning and cash flow.

One piece of information we always seem to miss from our newsletter is who to make cheques payable to. All donations both for general funds and sponsorship are to be made out to CH Trust and sent to the address on the front page with details for its use.

NEW PREMISES FOR CH TRUST

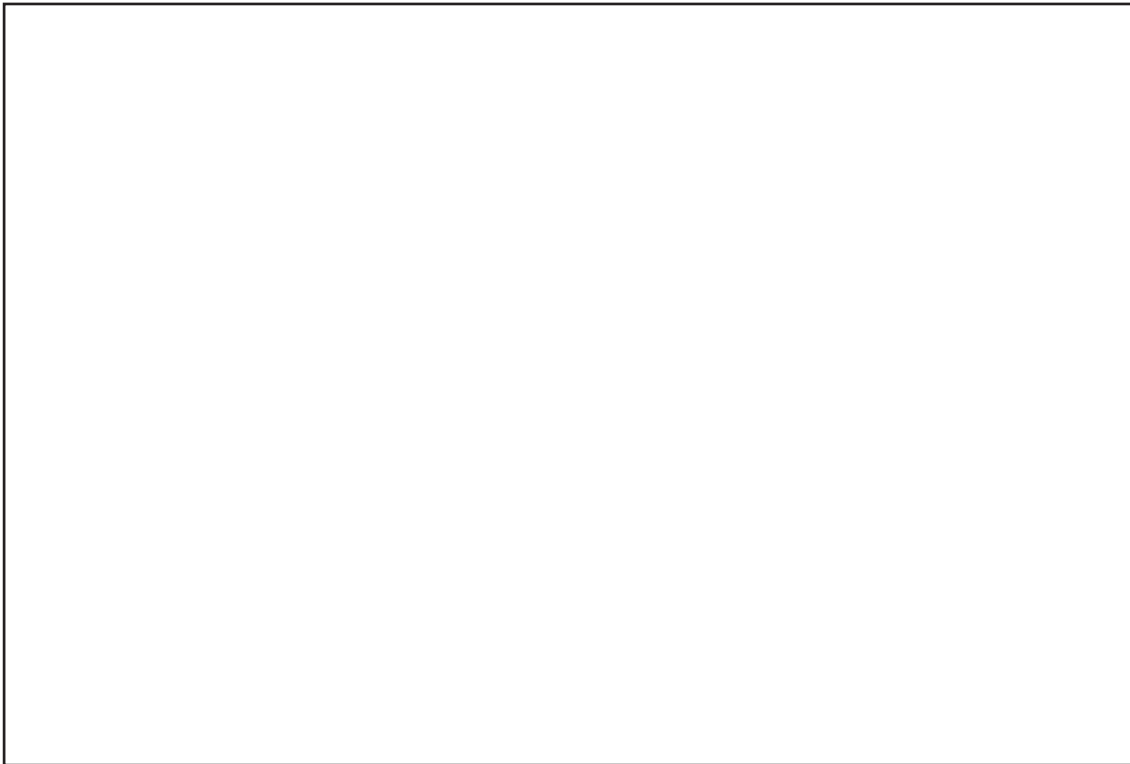
We were greatly disappointed to hear that a property, we had asked permission to use, is now to be redeveloped. On the face of it, it seems this option is no longer open to us. However, the Lord continues to confirm that He is providing a new place for us. We are thankful and look forward to the revelation of God's provision. Unfortunately He has not, as yet, told us his time plan or His intentions. Thus we await developments with interest. In the meantime we are indebted to Rotadata for their patience and long suffering as we search for new loading and storage facilities.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

TOYS

At this time of year many people are coping with the business of finding Christmas presents for their children or families. Not surprisingly, there is also a great demand in Honduras for toys to give to individual children. However, the giving of presents is more predominant on the National Children's Day, which is held in September. For this occasion all the churches we work with try to give each child a small gift of some sort. The older children may get toiletries or school supplies but the younger children really do need toys. Items such as small dolls and model cars, skipping ropes, hair accessories etc, etc. are most suitable. We have at least 6000 children to think about, possibly more, so we will not be short of children to send to.

MacDonalds type toys are particularly good for giving to individual children. All toys need to be of a small size, as space is at a premium in both Honduran houses and on the containers. Soft toys, less than twelve inches tall, can be sent but larger soft toys are not appropriate. Cars are always a favourite with boys. Locally we have some ladies who are making dolls clothes but have currently run out of bare **babies and Sindy dolls to dress.**



- TOY TIME -

Requests have also been received for puppets of animals or people for use in Sunday school etc.

THE TROUSER FACTORY!

We are gathering a group of ladies who will sew the small pull-on trousers for small boys. However, we are struggling to keep them busy with enough suitable material for them to sew. Do you have any material suitable for trousers? If so, it would be very much appreciated here in Derby.

IT'S A FOOTBALL THING

Are there any spare footballs about? It seems that throughout the world football is always a great pastime. Especially so in poor countries, since all that is needed to play is a ball. As well as being a popular street game, it is also supported in the form of organised games and matches between schools, churches or other groups. There is of course, always a need for footballs, football boots, shorts and tops. One Pastor wrote, "even though I have given out all the bits of uniform available to me, several local soccer teams are still asking for them". This is just one pastor. Here in the UK, schools and sports centres can be a good source of spare or unwanted kit.

EATING 'KIT'

Plastic dishes, plates and beakers are once again on the wish list of many Pastors. Many churches prepare a snack type meal or a drink made from the milk, oats and sugar that we send. This is often served up after Sunday school. Other churches provide meals for very poor children through a project scheme funded from the States. Here again they need the tableware in order to serve the children. Plastic is much preferred as it bounces well when dropped. Ordinary spoons and forks are also needed. Knives are rarely used at the meal table.

INSULATION BOARD

Many Honduran buildings feature tin roofs nailed to wooden rafters. Apart from the unbelievable noise they create when it rains they also make life uncomfortably hot when the sun shines. We have received requests for insulation board suitable for attachment to the rafters supporting the roofing sheet. The pitch of the rafters is often large, typically 1.5 metres, sometimes more. If you have suitable pieces of insulation board that you would like to give away, then a prime project in Honduras awaits them.

HEAVY STUFF!

I never cease to be amazed at some of the requests I receive. On this occasion it is for an air compressor! We also have a request for a generator to provide electricity for lighting. Is anyone able to help?

ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

I would like to share with our readers one of the more unusual contributions to the contents of our containers. One of our supporters works on the riverboats that trawl up and down the Thames between London and the Estuary keeping the banks clear. Several tennis courts front on to the riverbank. Lost balls can cause havoc to shipping if they are allowed to get into the river. Our supporter collects them up and takes them home. A hot soapy wash and an airing on the shelves of the greenhouse brings them up like new!

GENERAL WANTS

Family bags continue to be very popular. These contain a **towel, soaps, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sewing kit, petroleum jelly and a small toy**. If you are interested in filling such bags please get in touch for a complete list.

Food buckets comprise **basics foods** such as **rice, oil, sugar, oats, pasta and plain flour** (the flour can only be purchased in the New Year since it is very short dated). In the case of perishables a **good date after arrival in Honduras** is needed, not just good at the time when we send. (i.e. June 06 minimum)

FOOD

We asked the Pastors which foods were most useful out of the basic foods we sent last year. They came back in the following order: milk, oats, oil, rice, plain flour and lastly spaghetti and pasta. They also like **tinned food** which they can store. We have been asked for the following. Hot dogs, tuna, rice pudding, spaghetti, fruit salad. (Quantity is needed rather than quality). **Squash** to drink.

Rucksacks for school are an ongoing need. Each child requires a backpack to carry their books, pencils, etc. to school each day. The state schools do not provide such things.

Blankets, towels and sheets are always needed.

We have been asked for **umbrellas**. The rainy season brings torrential rainstorms when children and adults get soaked walking to and from school and work. It is too hot for macs and they often have one, sometimes two or more hours to walk.

Toothpaste and brushes are always on the request list. **Soap, shampoo, petroleum jelly, hand cream or body lotion**. Family funds do not run to such luxuries but a bit of cream on sore skin can be just the thing.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

As usual **children's clothes**, from **baby** to **teenager** years. Don't forget the Honduran people are not as tall as we are. They do not have six feet tall teenagers.

New pants and socks are always greatly appreciated.

CHILDREN'S SHOES

Black shoes are needed for school and **white tennis shoes** for P.E. Without these two items, which are very expensive in Honduras, children cannot attend school.

Exercise books, pencils, pens, rubbers, pencils sharpeners, wax crayons, pencil crayons, are needed by all school children. Older children also need a **protractor and compass. Pencil cases**.

The schools ask for **masking tape and sugar paper**.

Colouring books are a great favourite but they are becoming scarce in England.

Stacking Chairs, preferably metal framed with plastic seats, are needed for both adults and children.

COPIER PAPER

Several churches now have photocopiers sent out by us. They are often used to produce pictures for the children to colour and to make school worksheets.

CALENDARS

Your old picture calendars are still needed. The schools particularly like pictures of animals.

WRONG DATES FOR PACKING WEEK

The dates given in the previous newsletter for half term Packing Week are wrong.

The correct dates are February 18th – 25th excluding Sunday.

Please **phone** the CH Trust Derby number to let me know what you are bringing and when, and I will tell you **where**. Please do not leave anything at Rotadata.

If for any reason you cannot come during that week please arrange to bring your things previous to Packing Week. With possibly three containers we must have everything in by 25th February. Late deliveries will not be acceptable this year because there will be too much preparation to do before the containers can be shipped.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR LOADING DAY MARCH 18TH ___

Please check where we are and if possible let me know who is coming. This will help with catering and ensuring that we have enough help on the day. If you are local could you make an effort to be there as near to eight o'clock as you can. We often get a slow start because we do not have enough people to unload the storage containers and load the transport containers at the start of the day when large amounts of items are needed to pack the back wall of the containers. People travelling greater distances will obviously be arriving later in the morning.

Please note, legal and insurance considerations **do not** permit us to **allow** any child under 17 to help on loading day. Our public liability insurance excludes the presence of minors on the premises even with their parent's consent.

Current legislation demands that we improve our practises as far as safety in the yard is concerned. This needs the co-operation and active input by everyone present. You need to stay aware of what others around you are doing, especially when vehicles are being moved. If you can obtain a hard safety hat, a reflective jacket or toe protector footwear, please bring them.

PRAYER SUPPORT ___

The CH Trust ministry depends totally on God and your prayers for its existence and prosperity. We would particularly value your prayers for Loading Day. It is a tremendous help to be blessed with a dry, mild day, patience and stamina for the organising team, safety and good nature on the yard. Beyond the work, it is important that everyone leaves knowing that they have enjoyed a good time.

Once the containers are loaded and ready to leave they need the protection of your prayers. They especially need a quick, safe passage through the Honduran docks. It is also essential that our import will be accepted by the customs without

delay. Delays at the docks caused by customs problems can quickly amount to hundreds, sometimes thousands of pounds of wasted money.

FINAL REMINDER!

Packing Week Date - Saturday 18th February to 25th, 2006, excluding the embedded Sunday.

Loading Day Date – Saturday 18th March 2006.

Enjoy the Christmas Season. We look forward to seeing some of you on Loading Day, a time when you can lose a few of those unwelcome calories! God Bless.

STOP PRESS

This year Honduras has suffered considerable rainfall from tropical storms and hurricanes passing nearby. Hurricane Gamma, in particular, resulted in widespread flooding as it passed by a few days ago. It has resulted in substantial losses to their crops, such as maize and coffee. It has also resulted in severe problems for those engaged in subsistence farming.



- TEENAGERS TAKE ON POSTMAN PAT -