

Children Of Honduras Trust

Newsletter December 2001

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__COUNTDOWN__

How time flies! It seems but a short time since the last packing day. Already plans have to be put in place for containers 2002. This Newsletter brings you some news from our partners in Honduras but mainly focuses on the needs and opportunities for our next consignment of aid to the children of Honduras.

First, some reports from our helpers and partners abroad which have encouraged us as we work towards providing a better tomorrow for the school children that we are trying to help.

__PAULA VALENTINE'S VISIT TO HONDURAS - JULY 2001__

Paula pulled in a visit to Honduras whilst spending a year travelling through central and South America. As a result of contact with our newsletter she called in



- CLASSROOMS AND PLAY AREA AT NORMA'S SCHOOL -

at Vision Cristiana in Valle de Angeles and met Norma Ramirez. Paula was kind enough to write back to us about what she found.

She writes:

I spent two very enjoyable weeks with Vision Cristiana in Valle de Angeles (from 14th to 28th July) and was welcomed with open arms. I was generously invited to stay with Norma, her sister and her nieces for a week and then stayed a week with David Sanchez, another parishioner. I was looked after very well and felt very welcome in both houses and at the school. I taught each class an hour of English per day (except for the little ones). The lessons went down very well and I think the children actually learnt some English! We had a lot of fun in class. The kids were enthusiastic about learning a new language and were sad when it was time for me to leave. As a teacher I learnt a lot too. I really enjoyed teaching them and I think their teachers enjoyed learning from my methodology. The rest of the time I worked in the storerooms opening boxes and labelling some of the amazing goods that arrived in the containers. I was so impressed how much you sent. As the boxes were unpacked, the contents were sorted out for distribution and items of food sent out to some needy members of the local community.

One of my little jobs was to translate some of the letters and cards that arrived for the kids into Spanish so that they could read them. They also received their presents. If any of the sponsors are worried about stuff getting through, they need not. The children are very grateful to their sponsors for all the lovely things they have received.

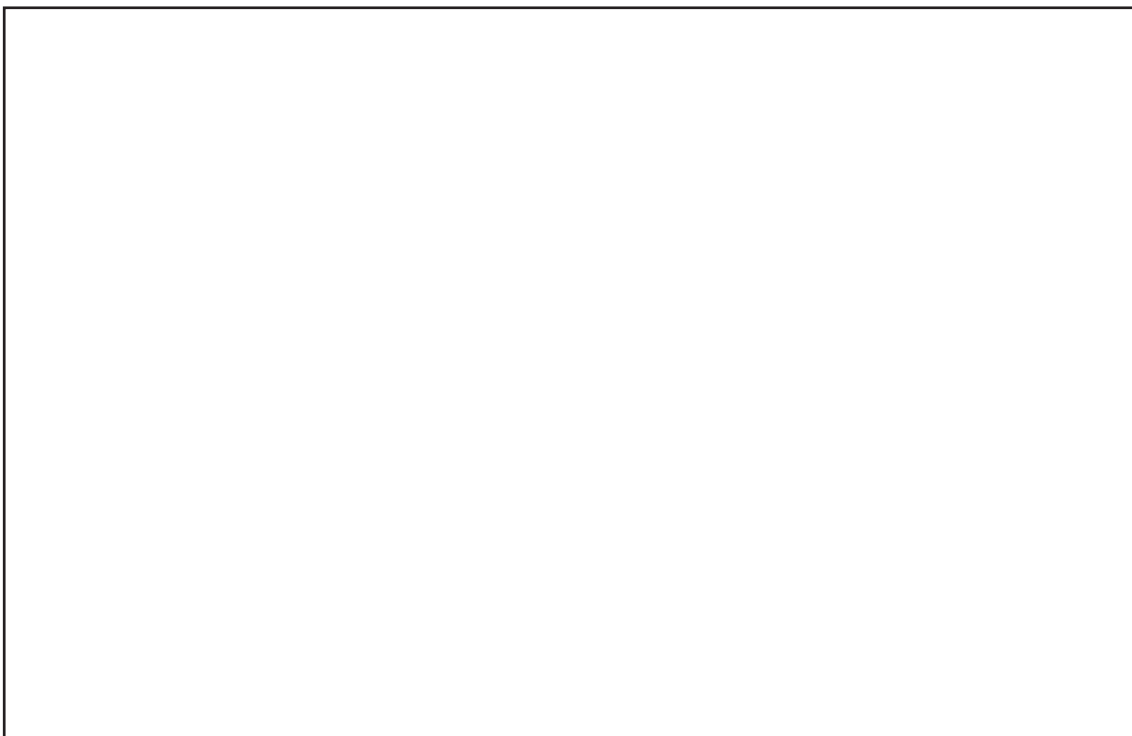
My visit happened to coincide with Dia del Lempira. I had the honour to witness the children celebrating their national hero's day when they all dressed up in Indian costume and looked adorable! There was a morning assembly with the national anthem, singing, poetry recital and dancing from all the kids. It was lovely to see the parents present too and participating in their national day.

During my stay at Vision Cristiana I was made very welcome at every occasion and, embarrassed and unaccustomed to it as we are, I was brought to the front of the church congregation twice to share with them my thoughts on my experience there, which were all very positive. I can certainly say that the atmosphere at Vision Cristiana was very welcoming. There are some very special people working there.

GORDON AND MARGARET'S VISIT TO HONDURAS

Gordon and Margaret Moughtin have visited Honduras several times. They write:

In March of this year we returned to Honduras and what a great improvement we experienced in travelling. No bumpy bus rides to Tegucigalpa any more, travelling time was cut by half. Our first work encounter was with the Easter Week (Santa Semana) Bible Camp, a special one this year, being the 25th Celebration of it's commencement. The week was an extremely busy one, especially in the kitchen, cooking and providing meals for 540 campers. I don't want to see another tortilla (type of pancake) again !!!!



- GARDENING PROJECT AT ENCAMPAMENTO -

Our time was mainly spent at Campamento which is very close to Valle de Angeles. Here we taught English in the school from kinder to age six. We took the lessons together as Gordon's Spanish is better than mine. This arrangement also proved beneficial to the children. Rosiebell, the wife of Rodolfo, one of the maintenance workers at El Campamento, made porridge for some of the children who obviously don't get any breakfast before leaving for school. This starts at 7:30am and finishes at 12:30pm. Some of the children have to walk through or over a river or through the countryside. This may take them well over an hour since there are no roads near their homes. In some cases their home is just a shack.

The school observes special days during the year such as Mothers Day. This year it brought tears to your eyes when children sang so beautifully to all the mothers, many of them not knowing what a mother's love is. Also El Dia del Indio when many of the children dressed in traditional clothes and competed for best dressed, most original, most attractive, etc. Environmental Day of the Tree. To celebrate this day we all crushed into the school bus, 2 or 3 to a seat and travelled into the country. Here the children learned to appreciate the beauty and usefulness of the trees, God's creation, as taught to them by Samuel the headteacher, and emphasised by some of the pupils reciting poems about creation. After this we descended about 600ft. into a valley and enjoyed cooling off in the river. Some kids went in fully clothed. We changed into bathing gear and enjoyed standing under the waterfall. This is one of the few times when some of the children leave their village and have real exercise. Consequently, after the ascent they were exhausted and fell asleep on the return journey.

Because of our extended stay in Honduras (4 months) we were able to visit the homes of some of the children and see first hand the desperate needs of these people. We were able to help in advising and in some cases, providing practical help.

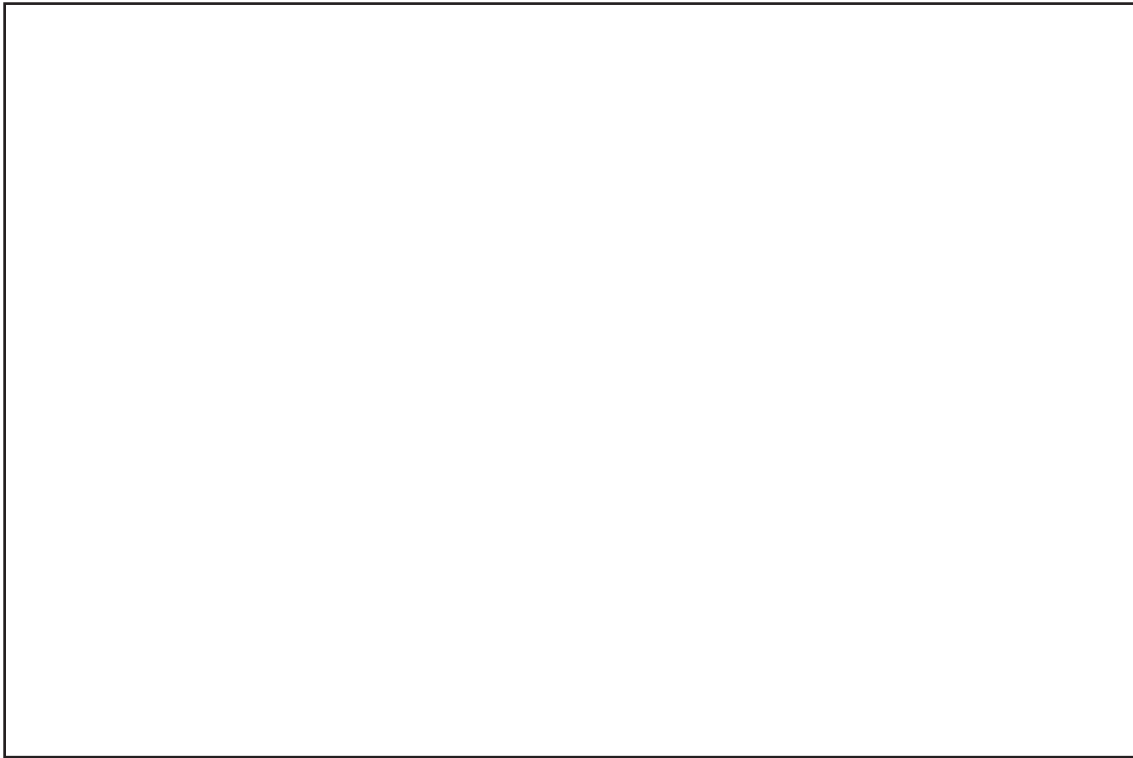
Our last two weeks were spent helping in the bilingual Bible Camp with Bible teaching, nursing, cooking, judging competitions, and generally getting to know the kids. Everything is worthwhile when sowing the seed of the Gospel in young lives, and more so when they call in to the cabin to say they have trusted The Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Our four months in Honduras were well spent. We give God all the glory and thanks that He protected us and favoured us with kind, loving, and hospitable families on the Campamento and good health during our stay.

SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM RANDALL WRIGHT (ON THE PROGRESS OF DAVID DOMINGUEZ'S WORK IN CHOLUTECA).

He writes:

Topographically, the area around Choluteca is very similar to Chicago ... quite flat. Although there's a significant temperature difference at this time of year. We spent the 17th to the 23rd September in evangelistic outreach to a number of neighbourhoods where we've been working since Mitch, focusing especially on the children.



- CHILDREN QUEUING TO ENTER ENCAMPAMENTO SCHOOL -

The format of activities was similar to a week of Vacation Bible School, with games, Bible lessons, songs and Christian movies for the kids and adults. On Saturday's closing ceremonies, with 79 children in attendance, we celebrated with a pinata and presented gifts of candy and snacks to all the children. Also, we awarded the children who had made the greatest effort during the week with diplomas, and the colouring books, coloured pencils, and family bags that you sent in this year's containers. The children receiving first, second, and third place recognition were those who made the best effort during the week to memorise Bible verses, showed the best behaviour and were the most attentive during lesson times.

It was a pleasure and privilege to invest this time with the children, and see them benefit by learning more about the Lord Jesus' care for them. The daily activities also provided them with a positive and structured time of social interaction with their peers in the community.

A STEP ON THE WAY TO REALISING OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE

The aim of the C.H Trust ministry has gradually been developing in the direction of helping as many children as possible in Honduras rather than be a permanent blessing to a fewer number, who become dependent on our continuing support. In order to realise this objective we have been seeking other Christian ministries

who are demonstrating good stewardship and work that will benefit children and young people. Five candidate churches have been brought to our attention in the context of requiring help. The churches are listed below and can be located on the accompanying map of Honduras.

Vision Christiana, Chaloma, San Pedro Sula

Iglesia El Calvario, Siguatepeque

Iglesia El Calvario, Danli

Iglesia Fraternidad Christiana, Tegucigalpa

Ministerios El Verbo de Dios, Siguatepeque



1. Choluteca

2. Danli

3. Puerto Cortés

4. San Pedro Sula

5. Siguatepeque

6. Suyapa

7. Tegucigalpa

8. Valle de Angeles

VISION CHRISTIANA, CHALOMA

This ministry is located in the Cerro Verde (Green Hill) church in Chaloma, near San Pedro Sula. This is a daughter church of the one run by Norma Ramirez in Valle de Angeles. It consists of 25 members made up of families and they presently worship at the home of its pastor Renaldo and Elizabeth his wife. The growth of their church has already outstripped the capacity of their house and created the need to find larger premises. With Norma's help, they have managed to find larger premises for which they have paid a deposit and obtained a loan. They hope to operate from there soon. Next year Alberto (Norma's under-minister) now fully qualified, along with his wife Wendy will take over the pastorship since Renaldo is unable to service the ministry adequately on top of

his day job. Among other things they need to furnish the church. We would like to help by providing children's chairs for the Sunday school along with teaching materials such as paper, crayons, etc.

IGLESIA EL CALVARIO, SIGUATEPEQUE

This church is established in the Colonia El Siteo and is pastored by Jose Fernando Montero Suazo. He has written to us to explain the church's needs. They are seeking to develop the work of their Sunday school and have appended a wish list. Some of these items are within the scope of our ministry and we are therefore able to help. However, any teaching material we send will have to be pictorial since they have little or no English.

200 Adult Chairs, 200 Children's Chairs, 5 Office Chairs, 6 Blackboards, 50 Children's Tables, 1 Overhead Projector, 1 Small Photocopier, Paper for the Office, Crayons, Pencils, Books, Colouring Books, Exercise, Books, Educational Toys, 1 Bookcase, 10 Ceiling Fans, 10 Lights, 2 Complete Toilets and 3 Tents.

IGLESIA EL CALVARIO, DANLI (EAST OF TEGUCIGALPA)

El Calvario are seeking to provide a service to married couples in the areas of guidance and counselling. Even though Honduras is a democracy, its economy does not extend to providing state help for healthcare, unemployment and social services. Even state education for children is not affordable to all since items like uniform, stationary and school equipment must be provided by the parents. It is in this context that the children's clothing, shoes and general support that we can supply continues to be so important. Marriage is not common in the poorer communities. The results of family break up can sometimes be life threatening for mothers with children. The need for secure relationships is vital. It is this problem that the Danli church is attempting to address. It hopes to help couples with relationship problems and thus protect the children that are often the most serious casualties of the break-up. The objectives of the proposed service are to promote Christian values and encourage couples to provide a secure and stable home life for their children. One of the needs to facilitate this work is the setting up of an office. In this context they are looking for a fax machine. Can anyone help with this? It needs to be compatible with U.S. telephone systems. Like the other churches they would also appreciate help with Sunday school materials and chairs.

IGLESIA FRATERNIDAD CHRISTIANA__

This church is located in a very poor area in the city of Tegucigalpa. We don't know much about this church as yet and look forward to hearing from them in the near future.

MINISTERIOS EL VERBO DE DIOS__

This is a small new church in the town of Siguatepeque. They write, "as a new church we need a lot of help to establish the work of God in a well organised and extensive way, able to reach throughout central Honduras". Their vision is big with a wish list to match! Sadly, many of this church's requests along with the other churches, are outside the scope of C.H. Trust. Never the less it is good to hear how they are seeking to work for the Lord and looking to Him for provision. Their enthusiasm appears unlimited and their example a lesson to us all. Their minister, Pastor Patricio Mejia goes on to say:

God has also placed within us a 'MISSIONARY VISION' which reaches out to other nations of the world. We are already praying and working towards this end, asking God that He may grant us success.

Greetings and blessings come to you from my family and from the small congregation that we are building up.

Their ambition extends to acquiring a vehicle to transport some of their congregation home after meetings. The majority travel quite a distance to attend church. This can be very dangerous after dark. They are also working towards obtaining a church building of their own. The current premises are rented. We do have some opportunity to help them since they also require Sunday school materials, chairs, etc. They have a couple of specific requests that might strike a chord in the UK. One of these is the need for an electronic keyboard to accompany worship. The second is for a sound system to the sort of specification below:

A 150-200 watt multi-channel amplifier. Speaker to match the amplifier. Any microphones, stands for microphones and speakers. If you send what you can the Lord will ensure that a complete and compatible system is given.

Can we help them to make loud and joyful worship to the Lord?

As we learn more about these ministries we will try to share with you their aspirations and how we can help them to enrich the lives of many needy children in Honduras. All the Sunday schools need sugar paper, which we buy from educational suppliers. Paper, colouring crayons and pencils. Bible stories, flannel graphs and bible pictures to colour. Children's bible stories in Spanish.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS AT OUR END

PRAYER TIME

Would you please remember in your prayers all the people in Honduras, particularly those we hope to touch with the contents of the containers, that the supplies that we send will be used wisely and help as many people as possible. Can we ask especially for your prayers for the half term week and packing day, for the safety of all those involved and the Lords patience and guidance to organise and control the events at those times.

Please also pray for those receiving the containers for the early completion of all the necessary paperwork, the safe and speedy transit through the docks and the safe delivery of the goods. This will be the first time Norma's ministries have imported and we are aware of how involved and time consuming this can be.

MILK

As you read in the last newsletter the four tonnes of milk cost us more than our budget. We are very aware of the value and importance of milk to the diet and future well being of the children, but we have to consider our financial position for 2002.

We would value your prayers for provision and wisdom in this matter as we seek to decide how much milk we can afford to order.

FINANCES

We are once again planning to purchase milk at £1500 per ton, the amount yet to be decided, oats at £240 a ton (40 sacks = 1 ton), cereal, drums of cooking oil, vitamins, worming tablets, antibiotics, etc. Estimated cost £6000.

Shipping and transport costs for the two containers are £5500.

PACKING

Space will be very critical in this year's containers and we are hoping to be able to provide the packers with as much help as possible. In order to do this

and maximise the space we need as many items as possible packed in small wine box size boxes. These will fit between the stacks of chairs and tables. Can you please bear this in mind when packing especially tinned food and school supplies? Banana boxes are better for larger and lighter items.

CHILD SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

The sponsorship scheme is gaining momentum and Escuela Vision Cristiana has much appreciated the financial support we have been able to provide. The school has been able to significantly increase the number of students on the register and, with our help, hopes this trend will continue in the next academic year. We have been able to transfer sufficient funds (just under £3,000) to help 48 of these students to attend school.

As the academic year comes to a close we are looking for sponsors for next year to allow Norma to help even more of the local children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend school. The cost to the school is £112 per pupil per academic year. Our sponsors here in the UK donate £60 of this. Ministerios Vision Cristiana provides £28 and the child's family pay a much-reduced rate of £24. If anyone would like to sponsor a child at the school, please get in touch with Derby and we would be happy to send further information.



- SOME OF THE CHILDREN AT NORMA'S SCHOOL -

All the children sponsored last year received a gift bucket or box on the containers shipped in March. These have now been distributed amid great excitement and the children are very grateful to their sponsors for all the lovely things they have received.

DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY!

The schools have also requested A4 (or smaller) lined exercise books, lead pencils and pencil crayons as the pupils must provide their own and not all families can afford to. Some of our sponsors included small lightweight rucksacks in their sponsorship gifts and these have been well received, they are very practical as the children carry their equipment to and from school each day and, as many have a long walk, they are grateful for something to contain everything. Norma has asked if we could provide some for other pupils at the school.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Any sports equipment that can be sent will be a great blessing, and will be utilised in the various programs of the Onesimus Project as it gets underway. For example, badminton rackets and shuttle cocks, foot and basket balls (pumps would be appreciated), team kit, bibs and strips. A basket ball hoop has also been asked for but it needs to be very sturdy.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

David Dominguez has noted emergent needs, such as band equipment for marching in civic parades. He now has a music teacher who is teaching the students on the few recorders that they have. They would like to be able to present a drum and recorder marching band at El Verbo for the Independence Day parade and other special occasions. They observe much enthusiasm on the part of the students to form and participate in such a band. It is also a great way to teach civic and community values while developing an enhanced sense of school unity and pride.

The Honduran schools have a tradition of marching. September 15th they celebrate Independence Day and are required to march by law. Both ministries have asked for musical instruments. They are available in Honduras but economically out of the reach of the schools. For both marching and worship they are interested in drums, tambourines, recorders, woodwind and brass instruments, guitars, keyboards etc.

COLOURING BOOKS

Colouring books are a great boon with the teachers in the school, as rewards to students for academic excellence and best behaviour and for use during their free time when they have completed their tasks in lesson time.

They can use more than we receive. A good source is 'Wilkinsons' at 25p for a colouring book. Also 12 wax crayons at 29p, 12 pencil crayons at 29p and 49p. Paint pallets for under £1.

BUCKETS

We are in constant need of buckets with lids. We use these to pack various vulnerable items for safe transport. They are also very useful in Honduras as storage containers, safe from insects, etc. and for carrying or storing water. These buckets are mostly ones used by the big stores and other bakeries. We collect them and wash them out for use but have difficulty keeping pace with demand for them. Can anyone help in this area? If so could you please get in touch, since we will be needing them to start packing immediately.

BOOKS

Many of the books we send although much appreciated, have limited value as they are in the English language. We have been able to acquire some Spanish books, mostly as a result of people on holiday spending time and effort looking for ones suitable for us to send. So, if anyone will be visiting a Spanish speaking country perhaps you would consider the possibility of purchasing a few books suitable for school, to be sent in the next container.

TOILETRIES

Margaret and Gordon write :-

'The head lice packages which you sent, (shampoo, conditioner and dust combs with video) were well received, and an anti head lice programme was set in motion as many of the children were troubled with (piocos) the little creatures. Things were made so much easier by your thoughtfulness in providing written instructions in Spanish, which helped both teachers and parents, the teachers were very co-operative in the programme.

Shampoo and soap are always required as there is a constant need, particularly since that purchased in the U.K. seems to be of higher quality than that available locally. Shampoo and conditioner are important in the treatment of head lice, which is a constant problem. 'Tea-Tree' shampoo we are told is particularly

good in this respect and is often no more expensive than ordinary shampoo. Dust combs have been well received and more can be used. As you collect for next year, please DO NOT pack any shampoo into your boxes. We will need to pack it into buckets in Derby. The bottles are mostly quite fragile and need this protection to ensure their safe arrival. Requests have also been made for toilet rolls.

SOMEONE TO SHARE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Norma has asked if there is anyone who is willing to join her team in the school as they try and start to teach English to the children. This would be at a very basic level, mostly oral as the children are almost complete beginners. This would involve four hours a day, an hour with each class. They have accommodation ready and are prepared to pay a Honduran wage. The school year runs from the first week in February to the end of November.

A teacher for any part of this school year would be a bonus to the school. Anyone should be able to teach at the level required but some Spanish would help. Norma is eager to hear if anyone could help. Please phone Derby if you are interested. Paula who taught in the school earlier this year says that the children are very keen students as they are aware that knowledge of English is very important.

GENERATOR

Honduras is once again having problems with their electrical supply, due to lack of rain earlier in the year. We experienced such shortages on one of our visits when the power would be off for about four hours at a time. The most frustrating thing is that without electricity you have no water supply, as they do not work with water header tanks.

Electric storms that often occur in the mountains can cause a temporary blackout, black being very descriptive. It goes dark at 6pm every night throughout the year so many services are held using electric lights. A generator would make all the difference in this situation. Can anyone help?

SCHOOL

The schools are looking for bookcases, cellotape, masking tape. The teachers have requested pictures of trees, wildlife and flowers. Also old picture calendars. We received some wonderful ones last year. Thank you.

White board markers are also needed. Battery driven wall clocks for the classrooms. Scissors and glue. Also Bible pictures to colour and flannel graphs.

They have also requested ceiling fans especially in Siguatepeque and San Pedro Sula, which are both very hot and humid areas of Honduras. Overhead projectors are a valuable teaching resource and are greatly appreciated.

Reels of film of the type for viewing with Aldis type school stripfilm projector are still needed. We have already sent the projectors. Schools and Sunday schools are the main source of these. Some schools are also no longer using stamps with ink pads and other resources that are considered outdated, these would be greatly prized in Honduras.

Plastic reusable picnic plates and mugs. The school has requested these for meals times. The Ikea type of tumbler is ideal. Ikea's plates are however rather small for children to handle a main meal on them. Salad size plates or larger are best.

Tents - size not specified used for youth camps

Outdoor swings. These are requested for use in the school grounds which act as the local recreation area when the church gates are open and therefore needs to be of strong construction preferably plastic.

Camera - we have had a request for a point and shoot camera if anyone has one spare. This would be used in school. Few parents have cameras and photographs are still very special. If you have any spare reels of film these would also be appreciated. A video camera has also been requested in order to send film back to England of the various projects as they grow.

CHILDRENS' PERSONAL NEEDS

Toothpaste and brushes are a constant need as the children are taught in school the importance of oral hygiene but to many these items are a luxury, not in the family budget, so we would like to provide as large a quantity as possible, also combs and soap.

Exercise books, pens, pencils, rulers, glue sticks, scissors rubbers, pencil sharpeners and pencil crayons are required by each child in order to attend school. They also find rucksacks to carry them very useful.

Black shoes are needed for the children to attend school, but all shoes are useful.

All families would appreciate towels, sheets and other bedding. Umbrellas are

very useful and are much prized possessions as coats are too warm, but some protection is needed from the heavy tropical rains.

This is an opportunity for us to help the children, as they need uniform to be able to attend school. Any of the following will help:

White short socks, black trousers (also dark green) and black shoes (we can never send enough). White blouses, shirts and T-shirts. Bottle green sweatshirts, cardigans and jumpers.

KNITTERS

The school uniform at Norma's school is dark green. We get few sweatshirts in this colour as it does not seem to be popular in this country. If anyone knows of a local school using dark green they may be able to encourage any surplus and outgrown supplies to be donated. Is anyone is able to knit a jumper or cardigan in dark green (not too thick) please? Any size from 4 years to 10 years would help some of the poorer families with school uniform.

They have also asked for help with their P.E. kit. They need socks, T-shirts, football shirts and shorts in green or yellow and green also tracksuit/jogging bottoms in these colours. These are for children 7-10 year.

We are sending several wheelchairs this year we are however looking for bicycle or foot pumps to go with them.

OTHER REQUESTS

Black bags, cutlery, candles, tea towels (towelling type preferred but any useful). Torches with batteries, these are very useful for walking on unlit roads, as the majority are. Wooden trays (these are stronger), catering size saucepans, liquidiser and catering cabbage shredder. 4 or 6 inch bench vice. Stainless steel sinks. Trowels and small forks for use in the gardening project.

CLOTHES

Good quality baby and children's clothes are required in many areas. Nothing too thick or fragile as it is a tropical country with mostly very limited washing facilities. i.e. On stone or in rivers.

New pants or socks would be a great treat for many children. We have a limited outlet for adult clothing and shoes, in petite sizes only.

TOYS

Kinder, educational and ride on toys have once again been requested. They have been used to equip the day care centres and kinder classes.

FOOD

Plain flour (9p 3lb.), cooking oil (cheapest) tuna, dried pasta, sardines, sugar, dried milk, evaporated milk,(27p) peaches (9p), fruit cocktail (17p), raisins. Inexpensive drinking chocolate to be made with water (69p), tinned peas, sweet corn, carrots, tinned tomatoes (9p), Oats, Rice, Breakfast cereal. We need quantity rather than brand names. Please be mindful of dates as nothing will be used before June 02 and much of what is sent many months later.

CATERING SIZE FOOD

Tuna, long round tins of chopped ham and pork, sweet corn, peas, drums cooking oil, dried milk, mustard, mayonnaise (check the dates on mayonnaise as it is usually short dated).

Balloons, sweets (not the chewy type sweets or lollies as they go sticky in transit) and squash are a great delight for the children on very special days of the year.

PASTOR ON WHEELS

Norma is still praying that a motorcycle can be donated for her use. She needs it to more easily reach her congregation members, many of whom live up in the mountains. The sort of thing required appears to be a Japanese manufacture (for spares) trail bike with knobbly tyres, preferably a 125cc engine or similar. The bike will be used on ungraded dirt roads with many steep hills. In other words a hard life. Any offers?

HALF TERM - 'BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES'

February 16th-23rd 2002.

Please ring and let us know if you are bringing supplies into Derby and what day as we may not be at the yard at all times that week. If you have any large items please let us know as soon as possible as storage space is at a premium this year.

PACKING DAY

For those who are involved it is March 16th 2002