



While Visions of Mothers and Fathers Danced in Our Heads

For many in Honduras this will not be a very merry Christmas. Fall floods wiped out most crops. What little money a family had to spend on festivities must now be spent on basics.

The lack of basics on nearly every level of life for the poor is primarily caused by the disintegration of the family.

In my mind's eye, just thinking of Honduras, a virtual sea of orphans spills out before me. This is truly an abandoned nation – getting more out of control every day.

In the five years since we began our work here we have heard and witnessed some of the most gut wrenching scenarios imaginable.

Here are a few of the stories...

"My mother sold me to have sex with a man for fifty cents. I was only eight and she was in the other room and didn't even care that he hurt me. I am worth nothing. Nothing. Nothing..."

At seventeen that abused little girl attempted suicide. It was not her first try. If not for a complete miracle, she would be dead now.

When asking another child (with five siblings) about the family living situation this was the reply: "My father was murdered when I was a baby. The man who lives with my mother has another family. Sometimes he goes to live with them. But he sent

all of us away to live with my grandmother. I miss my mom. He won't let her near us and now she is having another baby. What are we going to do if my grandmother dies?"

And then there was the ten-year-old who had never been to school. This beautiful and bright child told us, "My mom says I am too stupid to go to school. She needs me to stay home and make the tortillas and take care of my brothers and sisters."

Unfortunately, they were all thought "too stupid" to go to school as none of them were ever enrolled, until we came along and had a monumental battle with the mother to get the children enrolled and keep them in school. This story is not unique.

The worst we encountered, by far, was what an innocent girl of eleven witnessed when she came home from school one day.

Her mother and the mother's boyfriend were having an argument. "I heard my mom crying and begging him not to shoot as she backed out of the bedroom with her hands in the air. A bullet ripped right through her palm in front of me. He shot her again in the leg, then in the right breast and then in the left breast."

The little girl then went on to describe her mother dying before her eyes. After the boyfriend determined she was dead, he stood up, shot himself in the head, and also died in front of the child.

Three weeks later when we returned to Honduras no one knew how to help the little one, who suffered from a very bad case of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. She had not spoken of the incident to anyone until she told the whole story to us.

Thanks to a complete miracle of God the little girl was healed completely. She and her little brother are mothered, fathered, kept in school, clothed, fed, and housed by our staff.

Through the years the sad stories are repeated over and over. Beatings, child molestation and rape, teens pregnant by half brothers and mother's boyfriends, suicides, poisonings, shootings and attempted murder, are all too familiar in the towns where we work.

The lenses through which the villagers see the world is highly distorted. While most see all these things as somewhat tragic, they have become a normal part of life in the village. It has been our job to change the prescription on those lenses. To help them see that these things are anything but normal. To help them focus in hard on the horror and desire to change it.

To that end, in these five years, we have been sharpening vision wherever we go. Those with whom we work are beginning to see clearly now that these atrocities are not normal. They don't have to be victims of this warped mentality and are not doomed to repeat the past.

Love and consistency gives them the courage to take a good long look at the horrors for what they are and the hope to make changes.

It is our desire to work ourselves out of a job in each and every village we enter. It takes truth, love, and time to win the hearts and minds of the poor. They yearn for love and direction but have been used and abused for so long that trust is not easily won.

continued on page 2

...It takes truth, love, and time to win the hearts and minds of the poor. They yearn for love and direction but have been used and abused for so long that trust is not easily won.



Continued from page 1

Over the years, by spending a great deal of time on the ground in Honduras, we have steadily earned trust. Building a small army of teachers, mentors, adult leaders, and teens, the villagers are mobilizing to change the face of their towns.

This group is attracting the attention of the Honduran elite who are being enlisted to help us fight this battle for their nation. We are attracting the attention of national leaders in Honduras and in the U.S. who realize unless something is done, what affects a small town in Honduras *can and has already* become an epidemic in our own nation – flooding us with illegal immigrants.

Those who cannot find work stateside will be found by gangs who will teach them how to rob, kill, and steal. When they are caught and repatriated to their countries, they have new skills to teach the hapless youth there. Or they steal a couple thousand dollars and pay to be smuggled back across our border.

In our first year of this work we served primarily one village with a handful of staff. Five years later we have built a staff of twelve Hondurans and a solid group of 30 teenage volunteers (who each have chosen more teens to mentor). We are now reaching ten communities and serve both teachers and children in eight primary schools and two high schools. Now several thousand children have access to our services.

I can't begin to tell you how many children and parents tell us that this outreach has changed their lives. None of our teen girls have gotten pregnant. None of our kids are using drugs. Many of the younger children are telling us that they want to grow up to help others in the way they have been served through our team.

Our teacher/mentor staff now understands the roles they play as mothers and fathers to the children. Scratch the surface of one of our teen leaders and they will tell you that our staff has been there for them in ways that their parents could not – in ways that have literally saved their

lives. The teens (pictured above) take very seriously their mentoring roles, as the children respond so positively to their leading and teaching.

In a generation or two, it is our fervent hope, that we have far more parents than we have abandoned children in the villages we serve. Single parent homes are one of the leading causes of poverty in the world. Only a long-term vision for the future can begin to challenge the years of degeneration and neglect. We are just beginning to reverse the forces of inertia resisting our forward push.

With your help we have made much progress in the last five years. Thank you for standing with us in this fight that not only concerns the least of these but whose trickle down consequences affect us all.

For the future, instead of a sea of orphans, our minds' eye must envision an army of mothers and fathers, productive citizens making Honduras a better place.

Let those visions dance in your head this holiday season. Merry Christmas to all!

UPDATE TO MONTHLY SPONSORS

For our faithful monthly partners this newsletter and statement will serve as a reminder for December and January pledges.

There will be no statements or newsletter updates again until February.

Many of our donors have scheduled payments through on-line banking to be automatically sent at the beginning of each month. This eliminates the need for invoices and reminders and helps us keep a constant cash flow for the center.

If this is an option that would work for you, please talk to your bank about setting up automatic payments to World Resources Group.

\$50,000! **MATCHING GRANT AVAILABLE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S WORK IN LINACA, DANLI, APALI, LA JAGUA**

The same generous partners who offered the matching grant for the truck fund have set up a \$50,000 matching grant for our work in the Linaca Children's Center, La Jagua, Danli, and Apali.

To date almost \$25,000 has come in! We are hoping to raise the remaining \$25,000 before the end of December.

One hundred percent – yes, 100% - of your donation will go to the field for teachers, teen scholarships, tuition, school uniforms, supplies needed for our centers and public schools, nutrition, medical care, and other needs associated with the children's work.

WRG is different than most 501(c) 3 organizations in that 100% of your giving goes to your designated choice. We raise all administrative funding separately.

All undesignated giving is used where our board deems the need to be the greatest.

Please make your check out to World Resources Group and designate **Children's Work Honduras** on the memo line to help us meet our goal.



WEB UPDATES

Please take the time to check out our website at www.wrgnews.com. There are slide shows, videos, past newsletters, and other articles that depict everyday life in the places we live and work in Honduras.

We are looking to update our email records - please send us your updated information. If you prefer to get your newsletters by email, please let us know. Many of our best friends in this work have come through our partners forwarding our newsletters via email. Please pass on the link to the web or this newsletter which is available as a PDF file.