

## Reflection on Honduras by Jill Decker

When I think back to my time spent in Honduras, sometimes it feels like a contradiction in thoughts. “A week away from home seems so long”, then “A week in Honduras was just not long enough”, “What does God want me to do here”, then “My mission is perfectly clear”, “What can I bring to these children”, then “What these beautiful children gave to me”.

My 11 year old son Jack and I went to Honduras in January 2010 with our church group, His Heart and Hands Ministry from Orland Park Christian Reformed Church and Faith Church in Dyer, IN. I was apprehensive at first, I had never traveled to another country and with my young son no less. The plans seemed not really in place, though I knew All God’s Children had been involved in Honduras for years. So, off we went.

I was hoping to show my son how privileged he was to live in America and all the possessions he had were so insignificant in the eyes of these children. I was shocked at how fast the transformation was. At first, he was apprehensive and not sure of what he should be doing, but by the end of the week, he was visiting different places without me and even said that Hotel Quan was the nicest hotel he ever stayed at!! When he told me that it was probably dumb of him to care so much about his next PSP game when his friends at the orphanage sometimes worry about their next meal, my heart filled with so much pride.

I was moved by the reality that I was not sent to Honduras to teach or help these children learn something, but rather for them to teach me. They taught me about true faith and how God truly works miracles daily in their lives. They taught me that even though they are orphans, God has them exactly where they are supposed to be. Most importantly, they taught me that even though in the world’s eyes they don’t have much, they love more beautifully than anything I have ever experienced. These children truly changed my life.

Now, as I see our church prepare for the next trip to Honduras, I am sad that my son and I can’t join them this year, but I am so excited for those who are going for the first time so they can experience the overwhelming emotions that I did. I smile when I think how my son’s life has changed and how he has been saving his allowance for next year’s trip. He still prays daily for his good friends Reuben, Julio and Sarai. We were truly blessed by this experience.

### Special note:

Carmen is reluctant to discuss the subject but as you can read in her letter, she has had some significant health issues. ( not cancer or life threatening ) She’s had multiple surgeries and is currently receiving physical therapy five days a week. More surgery is planned in the future.

Carmen told us a family member was going to sell a house in order to pay for all of this; we thought that idea was out of the question. We estimate that her expenses will be close to \$30,000.00. Please consider sending some extra money to help with Mama Carmen’s medical expenses.

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.”

1 Peter 3:12

**All God’s Children**

**PO Box 5909**

**Villa Park, IL 60181**

(630) 862-1728

e-mail: [agcltd@comcast.net](mailto:agcltd@comcast.net)



For sponsorship opportunities, the history of Hogar de Niños and more information about AGC visit our Web site: [www.agcltd.org](http://www.agcltd.org)



# News of the Niños

Fall 2010

Comayagua, Honduras

Dear Godparents, Friends and Board of Directors,

Receive all our love, respect, thanks, and our wish that God is blessing you abundantly together with your families and loved ones.

I would like to begin this short letter by thanking God for His immense mercy and kindness and you, who have been with me always during my difficult situation with my health. (*See special note on page 4*) Your prayers have been heard by our Heavenly Father! Thanks, infinite thanks, for all your support—spiritual and financial! May God bless you and may he give you many more blessings.

In our home things are improving. Our spirits were very low among the boys, girls and the staff. The AGC Board’s visit last month was very beneficial to help us improve in all our different tasks. Thank you, AGC Board!

Our country celebrated its independence on September 15, and we have been in the parades. The boys and girls at Abuelo Jerry School paraded on September 14 and it was spectacular. Everyone looked very happy greeting all the people of our city and the government officials who were stationed in a special location, waiting for the student’s salute. The school received a lot of applause during the parade.

Victoria School and Maranatha Adventist Bilingual School paraded on September 15. Only the kindergarteners and first graders participated from Maranatha School. Our girls were beautiful, they looked like princesses. They were dressed like butterflies and danced to the beat of a small drum. Armando and Miguel and the rest of their classmates were all dressed as little animals—it was like an entire zoo in the street, and they thoroughly enjoyed the parade. Miguel, because of his health issues, paraded only 30 minutes. He started getting chills and we had to take him out. He wanted to participate and had his doctor’s permission, but he couldn’t finish the parade. Thank you so much for supporting Miguel and making it possible for him to get his medications at the right time.

Armando is no longer at the Granja. We took him back to the Hogar because he wasn’t doing his chores and is depressed.

On September 17 we had a special supper and sporting events at the Granja with all of our homes. Our boys and girls and young people are sometimes very stressed and it is important to look for ways for all of us to relax. Our country has many problems—political, social, economic, environmental (rains, landslides), violence—practically all Hondurans are stressed and we need to be with God and pray for our country.

I ask you to continue to pray for our staff and board of directors as they deal with employment issues. Also for 2 of our employees, Wendy and Mirna who are expecting babies soon.

Jairo Licon is no longer at the home. His mother and the rest of his family had been looking for him in many different homes and centers for children and young people. His family lives in Olancho and the judge in their city helped them in their search. He (Jairo) is happy to see his family and to return home with them.

Maria Elena, Albita’s (the child with whom we began the Hogar) sister, is getting married on October 2 and Delmis Gavarrete is getting married on November 27. We are very excited for these weddings.

Thank you for being with us always.

May God bless you. With much love and thanks,

Carmen Beteta

**“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.” Mark 9:37**

August 27<sup>th</sup> five members of the AGC Board of Directors, along with several spouses, arrived in Comayagua for four amazing days with some of our very favorite people. Here are some highlights from our trip: Our first meeting was with the Honduran board of Hogar de Niños Nazareth, 8 young men from the farm and several staff members. As we looked around the table of more than thirty people we were overwhelmed to see, sitting on that Board of Directors, two former children of the Hogar. Albita, one of the first two children to come to the orphanage and Pedro, another young adult who grew up under Carmen's care have come full circle and now serve on the board of the Hogar in order to help other children succeed. Both are now married and have children of their own. What a beautiful thing it was to sit there with both of them, knowing the odds that were against them and celebrating their success.

The dedication of the other members rang true as well as we listened to the number of years they had served and as we learned of their willingness to do whatever God calls them to do to make sure these children receive what they need to achieve their goals. During that meeting Carmen shared with us a time some 20 years ago when there was just one building on the property and all the children lived in one room. She was sitting outside on the red patio one evening with some of the children and she told them that one day they would have separate rooms with bathrooms inside, and now look what God has done through All God's Children! Thank you so very much to everyone who has ever supported AGC. Your time and money has produced beautiful fruit.

From there we went to Casa Buen Pastor where we oohed and aahed over lots of adorable babies. Buen Pastor is a home for teenage moms and their babies. Greg and Janet, otherwise known as los Abuelos (the grandparents), reside with these girls and their babies. It was such a blessing to see how well these young girls are doing. Greg and Janet have their hands full caring for young girls who have dealt with traumatic situations while teaching them how to care for their babies. Casa Misericordia, a home for emotionally disabled women, shares this facility for the time being. They are also under the care of Greg and Janet. It is amazing how well these girls have adapted to their surroundings. They are happy, loved and safe. Jesus must smile watching these content young women.

Then it was on to CasAyuda to visit Nelly. CasAyuda is a school for handicapped children and Nelly is truly the Honduran version of Superwoman. She has been a paraplegic since she was 16 years old. At that time there was no opportunity for a wheelchair-bound person to attend school so Nelly started her own. It is the first school of its kind in Honduras. She is married with three children of her own, all of whom work in the school. She runs a top notch facility with 100 students.

The children at the school make pizza, hamburgers, calzones and bread to sell to schools in the community in order to raise money. She also rents out the facility on the weekends. You will not meet a more innovative person. She says she would rent out her wheelchair if she could. She is now trying to raise money to dig trenches to stop her classrooms from flooding and she has no qualms about asking for help, so if you go visit the school... take your check-book! Nelly says that our spirit is our motor and when God controls our spirit there is no stopping where we can go.

A trip to Arvil's school was also on the agenda. Arvil and his wife Miriam started a small orphanage after Hurricane Mitch and eventually a Christian school. They have 20 children in the orphanage and 300 students attend the school. The facility is immaculate, the students are well-behaved and the impact that the school is having on the community is wonderful. They even have a marching band!

Our last day included a beautiful devotion given by Carmen on working together in harmony. The entire staff, the older children and the AGC board were all in attendance. Carmen talked about the body of Christ working together. This seemed to be a theme during our entire trip. As board members, padrinos, contributors and prayer warriors of Hogar we are all part of the body of Christ working together to make sure that these children of His have every opportunity to succeed in this world and to spend eternity with Him. What an honor to be part of such a team. Thank you!

Being on the board of All God's Children has allowed me the opportunity to serve God in ways that I never could have imagined. Whether it is celebrating successes or hammering out solutions to problems being a part of this board has caused me to grow in my faith and to desire to please Jesus Christ with every aspect of my being.

*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

Acts 20:28

### AGC Board of Directors

Brent Brewster	Brian Kamstra
Pamela De Boer	Paul Lagestee
John Hiskes, Editor	Robert Venhousen, Treasurer
Allen Heerema, President & Executive Director	

*For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.* Philippians 4: 11-13

I cancelled my trip to Hogar with the Board the day before they left. It wasn't an easy decision, and not something I wanted to do. I always cherish my visits to Honduras, but this time I was swayed by a higher priority. I had to help tend to Ed, my sister's husband and a close friend, who was in the last days of his struggle with cancer. He was still hanging on, probably not doing my weary sister Carol and her children any favors at that point, but subconsciously and involuntarily clinging to life.

Ed never visited Hogar, it just never worked out. Maybe a short term mission trip wasn't a high priority with him, although as a firm believer in Christ and a solid church member he would fully endorse anyone who went. He supported mission work, loved children, and always showed interest in what we were doing down there.

Ed was one of the most content persons I knew. I once heard him describe an individual as "a good guy, he's happy with what he's got." That was probably the first time I heard contentment described as a virtue, a quality to be admired in a person. Ironically, in my mind it was this characteristic that most accurately described Ed. I know Ed had worries, but he never let them overwhelm him or dictate his outlook on life. Ed had a phrase he would use for dealing with adversity, whether it was a losing hand in a friendly game of poker or something much more grave. He would smile and say, "Well... what are you going to do." I came to know what he meant by that. It wasn't a question; more of a declaration that whatever misfortune took place it wasn't going to ruin his day. In his last years when setbacks came in waves and adversity rose like sea billows, it was his statement of faith. He belonged to a loving God, whose presence in his life was tangible and whose promises of eternal hope were certain.

Ed finally passed away a week after my fellow Board members returned. As it turned out I could have gone on the trip, but so it goes. My board colleagues spent countless hours in tedious but tremendously important meetings, patiently waiting for endless discussions to be slowly translated in order to get to the heart of a problem. I admire each of them for their persistence and good judgment. And while I wanted like anything to be there, I made the right call. I experienced several moments of grace with Ed and Carol that week, helping out with final decisions. Carol and Carmen may be the two strongest women I know, and it is my hope that they will get acquainted in the near future.

Ed lived a life we can all aspire to, for ourselves and maybe for the Hogar niños as well. In Chapter 4 of Philippians Paul tells us that true contentment isn't something that comes naturally to us, it's something that has to be learned. He tells us that it isn't found in things or circumstances. Rather, it comes from having a relationship with Jesus Christ, and experiencing his strength when ours is absent.

Contentment like this may be a lot to ask our niños to learn, I know. If it's tough for us imagine what its like for them. I think especially of the most vulnerable ones, the older teens and young adults. Growing up in poverty, lacking normal family support and guidance, having limited educational opportunities, and confronted with a scarcity of opportunities – it's remarkable that many have achieved a life where contentment is reachable. They all need our prayers and support, regardless of whether it's a visit or equally important prayers or sponsorship. Thank God for Carmen and many others who have modeled lives of faith and contentment for them to follow.

In the meantime, I have my own lessons in contentment to learn, and two really good guys, Ed and Paul, to learn it from.

*But godliness with contentment is great gain*  
*I Timothy 6:6*