



THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”

—Luke 9:48

I was asked to write about how I came to be a missionary. But I would like to share “Why am I still a missionary?”. Although I am in a management role, sometimes life has a way of pushing a bit farther out of your comfort zone. When Ray and I go to visit each project I have found that I take on the role; not as the standard missionary like a pilot, mechanic or nurse etc., but more as a teacher. I do it for a very important reason; the children. They are the first ones to come and welcome us and where I focus my outreach, for Jesus.

On my first trip to Guyana, I was kept busy indoors for the first few days. I always took the time to wave at the kids from the upper porch as they walked back and forth to school. One day I was hailed from outside by a few children wanting to sell avocados. Their boisterous voices were calling from outside “We want to talk to the blonde lady, can she come down and buy some avocados? I didn’t hesitate to go and meet each one of them, supporting their entrepreneurial spirit. I ended up not only buying avocados and bananas but becoming the new “aunty.

When I visited the Philippines, they would walk over to the base house





from the community and ask for a ride to the beach, or a visit with Ma'am Julie on the deck. They too were outgoing, responsible young children, always willing to come and lend a hand when we needed to burn the grass on the runway, pretending to be the fire fighters of the community.

They would pile into the truck, happy to attend Sabbath School, so we could participate and sing songs. It is a rare occasion that they are even able to ride in a vehicle. They would jump at the idea of being allowed to ride in the base truck, taking up every available space with the little ones doubling up on my lap! The only spot not shared is the drivers for safety reasons.

In Nicaragua I was the one that had to seek out and welcome the children in the community as my limited Spanish was the barrier there. They were more shy but curious, waiting for me to approach them. I would take the time to stop, share a fist bump or admire the young mothers and newborns.

Three very different experiences, simply seeing the joy on each one of their faces know matter what the circumstances, living quarters, family situation,

has shown me that we all want the same thing as kids, the desire to be included and belong.

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

—Matthew 19:14

God bless the children!

Ray and Julie Young

