

# A letter from the mission field

[Ed. note: In the July issue we collected many stories from members. Unfortunately, Ramsay Mudgett was still in Guatemala at press time. But we wanted you to read his story!]

I was recently privileged to visit Guatemala with the [Mission Presbytery June Mission](#). Fifteen of us traveled to Iglesia Evangelica Presbiteriana Elim to install a floor. I had visions of spending two days mixing concrete, but that wasn't to be. When we arrived, the concrete had been poured and we were to lay a ceramic tile floor! For those of us with high quality standards and no prior experience, this was disaster in the making. Things didn't get better when the foreman laid out starting lines along both walls. Everyone knows you lay a starting line in the center of the room and work toward both walls, don't you?

We started work the first day very slowly. The mortar was too wet. Then it was too dry. The "thick set mortar" was one inch thick in places and ¼ inch thick in other places, compliments of an uneven floor. Yet, we did lay a few tiles. The next morning many tiles and much mortar had been removed. We worked on. On the third day a local workman arrived "to cut the tiles along the walls". He had lived in Los Angeles for a few years and had experience in laying tile, which he proceeded to do, finishing the floor in half a day.

We dedicated the floor on Thursday. There was still a lot of cleanup and grouting to be accomplished. It wasn't perfect — I suspect that much of it will be reworked — but the congregation was thankful. We had come from America to meet with them and listen to their stories. In the process we completed their floor. That might be the end of the story, but .....

## I met a woman in Guatemala ...

I was recently privileged to visit Guatemala with the Mission Presbytery June Mission. Oh, I already told that story. We went to install a floor, but .....

Arlene had other plans. The first day she led five or six children with markers and coloring books. The next day there were fifteen children who made masks and eye glasses with markers and the cardboard from the tile boxes. By the last day there were thirty children. They, unknowingly, made picture frames from four tongue depressors and several packages of stick-on stars. When the Polaroid camera arrived they were thrilled. We started with the adults, some of whom stood in line several times, and then the younger children, sixty photos later, we ran out of film. The high point of my trip

was when the church caretaker, age 72, cried over his first picture of himself. Our crude frames and these Polaroid photos will hang on walls for many years. That might be the end of the story, but .....

Mission  
@SHPC

**We went to  
install a floor,  
but .....**

## I met a man in Guatemala ...

I was recently privileged to visit Guatemala with the Mission Presbytery June Mission. We installed a tile floor, but...

Mark was born in France of American parents. His wife Ana Maria is a native of Guatemala whose family has owned the *finca* since 1930. They met in Costa Rica during their globe trotting days. Mark was raised in a family of activists. His father can be seen walking to the right of Martin Luther King in the documentary film of the Selma to Birmingham march. Mark plays a mean acoustic guitar and sings a fine tenor, a legacy of years of touring with the family band. He spent many years as a diplomat and relief worker before retiring to the Finca Santa Elena, if you call it retirement. Somewhere along the line he managed an MBA from Yale.

The *finca* is a working coffee plantation about 150 acres. Coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world behind oil. Today low price producers in Brazil and Vietnam, where chemical ripening and mechanical pickers are used, are depressing world prices with lower quality beans. In Guatemala's hills the beans are picked by

*continued, page 16*

**Crown Financial Ministries invites SHPC members and friends to join a small group that studies what the Bible says about money.**



Whether young or old, rich or poor, everyone can benefit from this type of study because God's Word teaches us how we should live.

It is a ten-week session that looks at how God works with us and through us to be responsible financial stewards as well as loving Christians. The discussion topics include debt, seeking counsel, honesty, giving, work, and investing. During the course, participants examine their finances and Christian goals and work to improve those areas that they feel are important. (No personal information is shared at any time, though.) Moreover, Crown is a way to build friendships while discussing Bible principles in a small group atmosphere.

## CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES

*True Financial Freedom*

A fall class will commence on Wednesday, September 14, 2005 at 7 p.m. Childcare is available for a small fee.

If you have ever thought that there must be a better way to handle the financial resources so that proper priorities are established, this is a good time to learn how Scripture defines God's way. **You can sign up for the Crown class beginning mid-August in the narthex, or you may contact Margaret Fetty at 288-9034.**

## BOOK LOVERS ALERT!



Adult Spiritual Life sponsors a reading group focusing on books (mostly novels) with theological content. Meeting the second Tuesday of each month in Portable A, the next meeting is on August 11<sup>th</sup> and will feature Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. Future titles include:

<b>September</b>	<i>The Kite Runner</i>	Kahled Hosseini
<b>October</b>	<i>Blue Like Jazz</i>	Donald Miller
<b>November</b>	<i>Peace Like a River</i>	Leif Enger
<b>December</b>	<i>Cold Sassy Tree</i>	Olive Ann Burns
<b>January</b>	<i>Seeking Enlightenment Hat by Hat</i>	Nevada Barr
<b>February</b>	<i>A Prayer for Owen Meany</i>	John Oliver
<b>March</b>	<i>Gilead</i>	Marilynne Robinson
<b>April</b>	<i>Saints and Villains</i>	Denise Giardina

If you would like to join the group, call Margaret Nakamura at 301-2602 to get a copy of the group guidelines and the discussion questions for August 11<sup>th</sup>.

*Letter, continued from page 12* hand as individual beans ripen. Six or seven passes are required. Labor is more than 70% of the cost while most of the profits are in distribution. We bought roasted coffee for \$2.50 per pound, considerably more than they get for their green beans. I had visions of the rich landowner getting richer at the expense of the poor peasant, but now I know better. The best recommendation for the small landowner is to diversify into other products, and most of the neighboring landowners have switched to cattle. Why? A cattle operation of this size would require three cowboys. As a coffee farm it supports 4 full-time employees, 12-25 occasional workers, and 15-45 listed pickers. I think you can see the economics. Staying in cof-

fee requires a commitment to the future of Guatemala and its working poor. In order to survive, the *finca* sells coffee, bananas and plantains, lumber, firewood, honey, and fruit. They are experimenting with sun dried fruits and with turning the hacienda over to agro-tourism. Life is tough for the small land owner, but jobs, even poorly paying jobs, are valued in Guatemala.

Mission is where you find it.

Ramsay Mudgett, Living Waters Team

PS: My thanks to all those who worked to put together the gift tote, especially to the children who wrote and decorated letters to children in Guatemala, and the translators who provided Spanish translations. I delivered your gift to the church at El Ebenezer.