

## **Presbytery of Baltimore**

### **Guatemalan Task Force**

Minutes of September 25, 2002

The Guatemala Partnership Committee met for a regular meeting on September 25, at 5:00 p.m. at the home of Peg and Bob Ferguson. Present were: Tom Eastman, Bill Clarke, Bonnie Clarke, Robert Ferguson presiding, Millie Kreider, recording. The meeting was opened with readings and prayer by Bob Ferguson.

Bonnie reviewed requests from churches for speakers on the Guatemala Partnership.

Bob recommended the book "Silence on the Mountain" by Daniel Wilkenson; the saga of a coffee plantation in the Pacific Guatemalan area, which reveals in story form the history and complexity of the twentieth century Guatemala economy and culture.

Tom reported that he has the design of the Mountain Institute Rammed Earth Machine, which builds interlocking waterproof blocks of soil and cement. Buildings have been constructed with this machine in Tibet. The machine could be manufactured from the design by a local machine shop in Guatemala, for the cost of \$2000. Tom reports that shockproof buildings may be constructed utilizing this method. Construction of a building was viewed as a potential project for our youth.

Bill asked if we have determined what Habitat for Humanity is doing in the country. We do not have this information at this time.

Bob reported that each of the villages has presented a project list. Bob is in the process of translating this list.

Tom report on the last Global Mission Meeting, and indicated that it was well attended. It was suggested that the relationship developed in this partnership may be used as a template for future partnership agreements.

Bonnie indicated that some churches are indicating they would like to take a group to Guatemala. First PC of Howard is one that is planning a trip.

Bob led a discussion of plans for the October trip to Guatemala. He suggested that we can increase the use of our time by at times dividing the group in two, and sending each group to a different activity. Two vehicles will be rented for this reason. Activities to be covered on the trip include a visit to the Kaqchikel Presbytery to review progress of projects funded in the past (the agreement calls for a periodic review), plans for and relationships with the outlying faith communities; review of opportunities to connect with organizations which may facilitate efforts of the Kaqchikel Presbytery; visits to the

villages of Tecpan, Labor de Falla, Bolo de Oro and Cerro Alto; visit to Common Hope; review of

progress with the Technical and Theological School which is in the development phase; possible visit to Antigua and Iximche. The group would like to meet with the new physician, and have an exit interview with Dr. Lucia. Another activity suggested was to visit the alternative Mayan School in Chimaltenango.

Tom raised the question of the integration of Mayan and Christian Theology which is evident in the incorporation of Mayan celebrations into Christian practices, since when we talk about scripture, we say no one comes to the Father but by the Son. Bob responded that the real issue here is scripture fundamental literalism. The key things that we learn through the scriptures (in shorthand) is that God is Love, and that Jesus and his Abba relationship of love is open to anyone. The group agreed that to introduce these ideas in an initial report to churches was provocative and time consuming.

Tom reported that a draft of the Partnership Agreement has been given to Ken Kovacs. Recommendation of the acceptance of the agreement should come to the Presbytery from the Global Mission Committee.

The next assembling of this group will take place on the occasion of the trip to Guatemala on October 18 to 23, 2002. In addition to these member, Mike Weddle from Cumberland, Jim Richards and a parishioner from Hanover PC in Indiana will accompany the group.

Respectfully submitted,

Mildred S. Kreider, Recorder