



## *From Rags to Spiritual Riches*

### *The Story of Olga*

*by Jean Easley*

Beggars and handicapped peoples of Guatemala are everywhere—trying to coerce or plead for a few pennies for survival. It is a way of life for the down-and-out, whether they have a good reason to be there or not. It seems there is no other way for them to survive.

We have seen such sights as one could scarcely believe. We have seen men with no legs pulling themselves with their hands along the curb on wooden blocks to beg. Some people missing limbs are fortunate enough to obtain some kind of a makeshift conveyance on wheels, but they still beg on the streets. Children sell gum or guard cars or wash windows for a small sum. Most people consider them to be beggars, too.

It is customary for women beggars to carry at least one nursing child to her favorite spot to elicit her handouts for the day. Olga was one such beggar.

We saw Olga more and more frequently, it seemed, on our way to town from our colonia, which was down a long hill, around a bend, and up another long hill from the main part of the city. Olga stayed in the same vicinity at a stop light along the way all during the year we lived in that place.

At first, before we knew her name, we recognized Olga by her bushy, dirty, scraggly red hair and her broken teeth. We learned that beggars put on a certain "face" to tug at the hearts of the people. Olga was no exception. And she always had the nursing baby with her, covered in a dirty shawl.

The more we saw her, the more our hearts were drawn to Olga. We began to look for her and to give bigger and bigger offerings each time. And we prayed for her. Then, she began to recognize us. Soon, we could talk to her about the Lord, telling her that God was the Answer to her needs. She would smile now when she saw us coming—a bright, beautiful smile—and we began to feel she was a friend.

One day, we bought her a Bible and put a nice offering in it. The next time we saw her, she was anxious to tell us she had started to church—a Nazarene church, she said—and her smile was now because of Him and not because of us—or our offerings. She said she was now "feeding" on the Word of God we had given her.

The last time we saw Olga, she was no longer begging but had taken up employment as a vendor, and she told us she didn't beg any more. In fact, she said she attended church on a regular basis, and she attributed her better life to the Lord.

Whatever Olga's station was in this life on earth and whatever turn for the better had been made, we know that spiritually she was not the same hopeless, sad-faced, desperate woman we had first known. Now, she testified and encouraged us with intense animation and joy about how the Lord had become her supply! Praise God!