



Azaria Spencer

Link Letter no. 20 | April 2023

Contact details:
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Location: Guatemala



What I do: Discipling young people and journeying with them as they develop their relationship with God, and training others in impactful youth work

Dear lovely family and friends,

It feels nice to be sat in my apartment in Guatemala again writing to you all. *Join me in giving thanks for God's provision and goodness through seasons of transition.*

Some of you might remember me introducing you to my boyfriend, David, in my last link letter. Well, BIG NEWS! David and I got engaged in January, so he is now my fiancé. Our engagement was a very special day. We were attending the CMS Latin America conference in Ushuaia, Argentina, a place they call "the end of the world" and David chose to propose beside a beautiful lake with green and snow-capped mountains as the backdrop. God blessed us with wonderful weather and by showing up in so many beautiful details. We are very excited to see where God continues to lead us as a couple, especially in how we can serve him together in life and ministry here in Guatemala.

Please be praying for us as we plan our wedding here in Guatemala and a blessing in the UK. Also keep David in your prayers as he starts the selection process with CMS to hopefully join me as a mission partner once we are married.

I arrived back in Guatemala in the middle of March after a wonderful few months back in the UK, including the trip to Argentina. While in the UK I was able to connect with all of my link churches and visit most of them in person. It was such a joy to be able to travel around and visit everyone and reconnect with churches and individuals who support me and the work I do in Guatemala. It was such an encouraging time and it is hard to fully describe just how lovely it is to feel "held" and supported by so many faithful people. It reminds me of the strength of Christian community and of how blessed we are to be part of a rich, diverse family of believers as we all seek to serve God in our lives individually and corporately. I was humbled more than once to be the one receiving such encouragement and seeing God's hand and provision through the support and love of others. All glory to God for how he works through his Church. Thank you to everyone who hosted me, fed me, listened to me, asked questions, engaged with my work and shared in fellowship with me.

As I mentioned, I was able to connect with all my link churches, and that included a lot of travelling around and both weekend and midweek visits, so it was a very busy time. It was important for me to visit as many people and churches as I could because due to the pandemic, I had not visited my link churches



Special Christmas with family; me with my brother Zeph and David

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



in person since before I left for Guatemala close to six years ago. It was through these visits that I was able to reflect and think on some of the amazing things God has done over the last few years. Quite a lot of people asked me how my Spanish was coming on and it reminded me that for at least 2–3 years I had constantly been asking you as supporters and churches to pray for my Spanish. This time I was able to report that my Spanish is good and we can all praise God for answered prayers. It was not an easy learning process, but it was good and I have learned so much through this beautiful language. I have also been humbled by it; there is nothing like not being able to communicate to make you feel vulnerable and help you lean more on God. It has also been a great equaliser in ministry, as young people have been able to teach me Spanish over the years (and lots more besides).

Praise God for all the ways he helps us learn and grow, even through things like learning a new language. Pray that I can continue to be open to different ways God wants to teach me new things and help me learn further dependence and obedience.

Many people commented on how much they felt I had grown and matured since they last saw me. I moved to Guatemala at 25, fresh out of study and with some experience of the world and overseas, cross-cultural mission and ministry, but nothing could have prepared me for the ups and downs of the last 5+ years. Living and serving in Guatemala has definitely shaped and formed me. It has not always been easy and there have been moments of real challenge and loneliness, yet God was, and is, my constant.

Now I am back in Guatemala and about to start serving in a new partnership with a local organisation called SOMOS (“we are”), in a role where I will be stretched in new ways and get to use all the experience from the last few years to help others in discipling young people and support and equip those who work with vulnerable people in Guatemala. I will also get to work with groups of young people in at-risk contexts and come alongside them as they explore relationship with God and what that looks like for them.

God has brought me to this new chapter and I am sure it will bring its own challenges but it is so exciting to move forwards into a new role, and also in my personal life with David. It’s amazing to be able to look back and have that assurance that God has been and will continue to be with me through it all.

Thank you for your continued support, love and prayers.

Love and blessings

Azaria x



Photos from top to bottom: Some of my link churches; seeing myself on a link church noticeboard never feels “normal”; the beautiful setting of our engagement



Going further with Church Mission Society

Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

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