



Azaria Spencer

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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,

Today I am celebrating six years since I moved to Guatemala and started this crazy, wonderful, challenging, exciting adventure with God that is life and ministry in Guatemala. One of the most beautiful gifts God has given me over the years is the realisation that in his goodness he called me to life in Guatemala. What I mean is that when I first set off on this journey, I knew I was being called to serve in cross-cultural mission and ministry and that involved living here in Guatemala for an undefined number of years. I knew that I was to live here but I didn't realise until much later that it included living the fullness of life here. At every turn God has shown me his care, his love, his provision, his faithfulness, and I have been blessed. I am not by any stretch of the imagination suggesting it has all been easy and pain-free, in fact there have been many hard moments and challenges that have left me hurt, heartbroken and questioning it all. However, God has repeatedly shown me his grace and helped me learn (forever learning) how to show grace to others. It is wonderful to look back and see how God is teaching me to live more freely and fully all of life here in Guatemala, one of my earthly homes.



Save the Date photo shoot

Please join me in giving thanks for six years of this adventure called life in Guatemala.

Most of you will recall that David, my fiancé, and I are planning our wedding for later this year, 12 November, and a blessing in the UK early next year. Thank you all for your prayers and support as we get ready to step into married life. We are very excited, and it is such an encouragement to have so many people, both in the UK and Guatemala, supporting us. We are enjoying our pre-marriage course with a pastor and his wife; it has been a great source of learning and is drawing us closer in the lead-up to our wedding. David has also started his selection process with CMS and things have been moving forwards well. We are trusting God and his will for us as a couple in life and ministry.

Please be praying for David and I and all the plans and details for our wedding and blessing, for our start in married life, God's guidance and wisdom and our process with CMS.

My new role with SOMOS has a couple of distinct aspects and I have really enjoyed the first five months. The SOMOS team is made up of a bunch of very gifted and inspiring individuals all brought together by a common cause/vision: to help the most vulnerable, orphans and other vulnerable children/youth, by

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With each other
To the edges**



equipping local churches and Christians through education and training to step out and help make a difference in Guatemala. I had such a warm welcome to the team that it did not take me long to settle in and find my feet. I have learned so much and it has been exciting to be stretched in new ways in my ministry. One aspect of my role is accompanying mentors who work with children and youth in children's homes across Guatemala City. We have around 100 active mentors and I have been intentionally meeting up with them to hear about their experiences and find out how best we can support them. It has been a pleasure to hear their stories and learn from them all. I know from experience how crucial good support is when we are serving vulnerable people. When we serve in these types of contexts, for example mentoring a child who has suffered trauma and is separated from their biological family, it can be emotionally challenging. It is so important to have a safe place

to share, be heard, feel understood and supported. We can offer so much more to those around us if we are not doing it alone. It is a privilege to be using all I have learned to help support these wonderful mentors and by extension children and youth. Moving forwards we are hoping to start a Community of Mentors to help increase support through the sharing of experiences. I am also leading the development of an online resource platform to help equip mentors and others. We are also researching the benefits and value of mentoring with a view to presenting our findings to the Guatemalan government to support the children's homes when they make a case for having mentoring programmes within their homes.

Another aspect of my role is supporting the work in a vulnerable community where SOMOS has a programme in Bethania, MANOS, that provides educational workshops to children and youth. My focus these past few months has been connection with the children and their families. I have been enjoying helping the other volunteers with their activities and getting to know everyone. As we start the second half of the year my focus is shifting towards working with the families, starting off with a group for the mums. The idea is to have a connection group specifically for the mums to come, relax, share together, have devotionals and build community. I am excited to see how this grows.

Please pray for SOMOS – work with vulnerable populations in Guatemala.

David and I continue to mentor children through SKD and it is great to see how they continue to grow. We all enjoy our weekly breakfast and devotional time together. Little by little we are building trust and connecting more with them.

Thank you for your continued support, love and prayers.

Love and blessings,

Azaria x



Photos from top to bottom: Leading trauma and short-term mission engagement training; mentoring breakfasts; MANOS – David teaching singing; MANOS – Mother's Day



Going further with Church Mission Society

Adelante: Saturday 23 September 2023. A hybrid event – in-person and online – to celebrate, learn about and pray for mission in and from Latin America. Book at churchmissionsociety.org/Adelante

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