

Guatemala 2026

In Affiliation with Arms of Jesus and Bonavista Baptist Church

Trip Dates: January 30, 2026 to February 8, 2026

What is this all about?

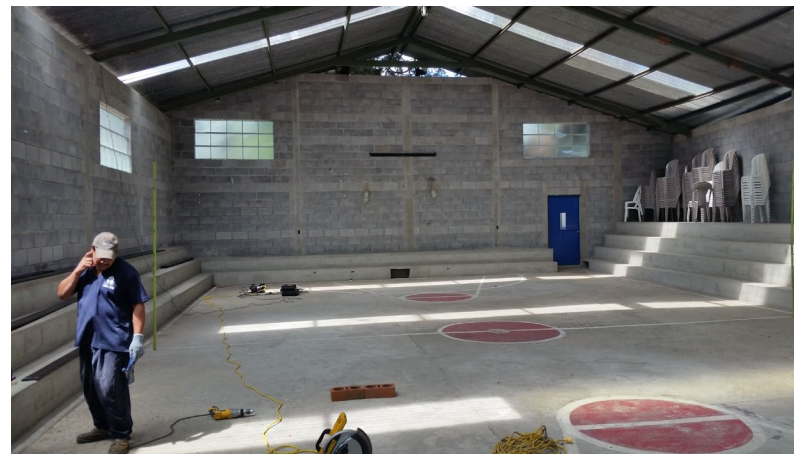
- ▶ Bonavista Baptist has been involved with the Arms of Jesus Children's Mission for over 20 years. We started by working with and through a group from Southview Alliance, and eventually developed our own teams and resources to serve the families of Guatemala. The primary focus of the mission teams travelling through Bonavista Baptist to Guatemala is to build community with the Mission and assemble homes for the homeless.
- ▶ We go primarily to build (assemble, let's be real) homes, but along the way build community as well. We build community with the staff and students at the mission, people in the community, families we build for and wherever opportunities present themselves for service.
- ▶ Since the initial trip, the mission has grown from less than 100 students to over 900 students. The Mission has developed a Child Sponsorship Program, Housing/Building Program, a Food Bank, Medical Care and education up to Grade 12 plus trade schools for carpentry and sewing.



Building into Lives...



Building into Minds...



Building Relationships for a Future...



The 5 W's and How...

- ▶ Where - Parramos, Guatemala- because of the Arms of Jesus Mission school there which has over more than two decades added K-12 grades and specialized teaching in carpentry, chef and kitchen staff training, accounting and waitering as Antigua, which is a major tourist spot in the world for 1500's Spanish architecture, employs all those same skillsets.
- ▶ Who – The Guatemala-Calgary teams are led by veterans of this trip who have planned and gone many times. They vary in age but each have deep ties into the community and the families. The Arms of Jesus is a Canadian Based ministry, but the mission is run by locals – “Guatemaltecos”. The Arms of Jesus school employs a team of teachers, cooks, social workers and custodians on an expanded property which now houses 3 separate grade schools (K-6; 7-9; 10-12) and an indoor and outdoor arena. Pastor Sam Martin founded AOJ more than 20 years ago out of Pickering Ontario CDA and has AOJ schools and staff in both Haiti and Guatemala Link: <https://www.armsofjesus.org/missions/guatemala/>

The 5 W's and How...

- ▶ *What* – although the house assembling is the main component of what the Calgary team does each year there are other monthly teams that come down in teams of 12-14 and assist with the school teachers, perform heavy to light construction duties, lead a morning of song and dramas with the school kids, meet with the social workers and help them deal with the families of the school-age children and meet with the families who frequent the local city dump scavenging it for morsels and items they can sell. Each house is prefabricated with the concrete pad being built by the family receiving the house paid for by the Calgary team, who typically set a very ambitious goal for the number of houses they build each year!
- ▶ Teams of 4 or 5 put the house together and paint it. The highlight is the dedication ceremony when each family receives ownership papers from the school, a lock for the door, and a cross to hang on the wall. Each family is chosen because they are poor and in desperate need by social workers. Each family may send a child to school while the remainder work, so the school children end up teaching their entire family English, literature, math and social studies.
- ▶ The team donates food, bedding, furniture (made at the AOJ school) and gifts for everyone in the family. Birthdays and Christmas gifts are not known to these families so Mom, Dad and all the little ones share a special moment that day the house is dedicated. AOJ is a Christian organization and devoted to teaching all about Christ while living out His commands to serve and assist one another. The dedications are indeed an emotional event as Moms and Dads express their gratitude to God, to the team and to each other as the miracle of a house develops in front of their eyes in half a morning.

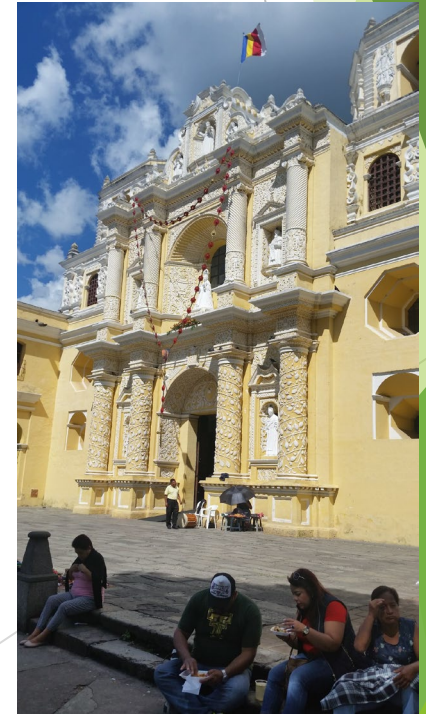


The 5 W's and How...

- When and How – The Guatemala Calgary teams go annually and flies from Calgary to Houston or Guatemala City, overnight there then on to Antigua in the morning on transportation provided by AOJ. Meetings are held frequently prior to the trip at Bonavista Baptist Church as plans are made and money is raised for the houses and gifts. Each volunteer provides ~\$2300 Cdn for their air fare and accommodations and while in Antigua the team stays in the heart of Antigua each night in a modern hotel with a rustic historic atmosphere where cobblestone streets, open squares and the aroma of strong coffee is everywhere.



Historic Scenery to be Experienced...



Community to be shared...



The background of the slide features a photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, the roofline of a church with several small domes is visible. The middle ground shows lush green trees and vegetation. In the background, large, hazy mountains rise against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The right side of the slide is overlaid with a dark blue and green geometric design consisting of overlapping triangles and polygons.

Contact Us...

- ▶ Bonavista Baptist Church (BBC) Link:
<https://www.bonavistabaptist.ca/ministries> Mission work as we call it is reaching out to all our communities. At BBC we consider our church in Bonavista to be a doorway into South Calgary, to Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Bolivia (new) and Inn From the Cold, the Mustard Seed, and partners with CBM we experience serving around the world through direct and indirect methods. Pastor Scott Simpson is a veteran of the mission world and would be glad to point you to the right folks 403.271.6969 or main.office@bonavistabaptist.ca
- ▶ If you are interested in the current trip, please email bonavistabaptistmissions@gmail.com
- ▶ We are always planning for future trips. If you are curious, we can send you more detailed information.
- ▶ Requirements – A valid passport that does not expire within 6 months of travel. Severe allergies to food, grasses, smoke may cause difficulties. Travel and construction experience are helpful but not essential. \$2500 plus \$500 spending money is a typical budget amount. Local currency is Guatemalan quetzal \$1 Cdn = 5.8 Q which varies. An open mind to Christian ethics, attitudes and spirituality.

A woman with a red headband and a black t-shirt is smiling and interacting with a group of children. The children are wearing blue and white uniforms. The background is outdoors with greenery.

Contact Us...(Continued)

- ▶ Risks – Health risks include but are not limited to malaria (none in Antigua as it's >1500m), “jungle fever” (high fever; affects Germanic folks), irritable stomach, sunburns and heat rashes, hepatitis A*, B, typhoid*, yellow fever, tetanus* (*most often required) Guidance is given for appropriate vaccinations as well as a recommendation to see a travel doctor or pharmacist prior to travel. See Link: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/Guatemala>
- ▶ Interested in donating (?) - Mission work like this has many types of supporters from donating \$\$ for houses (~\$2000 each), to sending folks on the trip covering part or whole amounts, to supplying food, ovens, furniture, to sponsoring a child in school through to age 18, and other helps directly from AOJ via their website, to buying meds like children's aspirin, cough medicine, vitamins, Tylenol, to dental supplies like toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss, to gently used soccer shoes for ages 5-10 boys, and so on. We produce a list in advance of each trip focused on what is needed most NOW versus a standard list.

Expect the Unexpected...

Most folks characterize a trip like this as “what we can do to help others” but what often happens is “Wow. They helped me discover myself in new ways.” Yes – their world is devastating to health, family stability, education and social support but we help one family at a time; all the time. There are too many needs out there to manage but we make a difference one family at a time.

Thank you for reading and listening to our story. It’s not perfect but it’s our story to tell and it’s written on the hearts of 425 home recipients in years past. It’s remembered by the families of those who’ve been given a hand up, not a handout. It’s a story that’s been retold hundreds of times by both builder, supporter and recipient around the family table, the campfire, the shopping mall and the office boardroom. It’s about you and it’s about me making this world a better place and hope is at the centre of it all.