

# THE MINISTRY IN XELA, GUATEMALA

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Samuel & I

I would be so grateful for your support through prayer. Please join me in prayer for these topics:

- **Samuel and I:** Pray for us as we are entering this new stage of life. Our prayer is that the Lord can lead us and that we can be His hands and feet. Please also pray for the many details of the upcoming weddings.
- **Maranatha Bible School:** Pray that God would continue to sustain the school that was started last year. Pray that we would have the capacity to accept many more children that are on the waitlist. We are currently looking for a piece of land to be able to build on to expand the school. Pray that God would provide land for this project.
- **Breakfasts in Xesanaj:** Please pray for the new project that we are trying to start. Our goal is to have monthly breakfasts in one of the poorest areas of Guatemala. The children and families there often only have tortillas as a meal. These breakfasts also include worship, a message, and activities. Pray for God's provision over the people of Xesanaj (pronounced "sheh-sa-na") and that we are able to continue to feed these people and to give them the hope of Jesus.

In June of 2023 I had my first opportunity to see what God is doing in Xela (pronounced "shella"), Guatemala. While I was there on a short term missions trip with Sierra Grace Fellowship I witnessed profound physical and spiritual need. I saw kids and teenagers in terrible situations who had been through abuse, threats, malnourishment, and abandonment. My heart broke.

The second time that I visited Guatemala, I got to really witness what the Aguilar family, with the help of Sierra Grace, does for people in these situations. I had the wonderful privilege of being able to see first hand how God cares for his people. I saw families being fed, I saw children receiving clothes and shoes, I saw houses being built for those in need. But more importantly, I got to see and hear how God is changing lives. I noticed that the people that the Aguilars serve don't only have hunger for material food, but for the bread of life and the living water that is Christ. I saw teenage girls who have suffered trauma praying together and developing hope. I saw children, who have homes made of sheet metal, praising God and thanking Him for his blessings. I saw how God's love and grace do not depend on our material things.

While I was in Guatemala for the second time, I felt God's calling on my life to stay. I ended up returning for six months in 2024. While I was there I got to experience even more wonderful things that God has done. While I was in Xela I became close friends with Samuel Aguilar, son of the missionary family I was learning from, and we started dating by the end of 2024. I am beyond excited to share that we are now engaged and plan to get married in May 2026. I believe that God has led us together for his divine purpose. After getting married I look forward to moving to Guatemala to do ministry full time with Samuel and his family.

The ministry we will be doing is in the mountains and the government homes (orphanages) of Xela, Guatemala. In the mountains we will be working with children in impoverished areas. Samuel's family manages a sponsorship program bringing food and fellowship to very poor families. We will help with this, but primarily we will run a weekly Bible school for children ages 5-12 called Maranatha.



*Leading worship at a special needs home*

These children often have a hard home life because many of their parents struggle with alcoholism. Teaching children how to adore and worship our creator no matter their circumstances has been a true joy for me. Being able to see these kids grow in their faith brings me so much hope.



*Teaching at Maranatha*

The government homes where we will be working are in facilities that house either people who have special needs, or teenage girls (and sometimes their babies) who have been sexually abused and trafficked. In these homes there can be deep darkness. Many of these young people find it hard to believe that God loves them because of their heartbreaking circumstances. We get to go into these homes and worship with them. We also teach a bible lesson and have time to talk, pray, color, and do crafts with them. These are places that don't have much hope and being able to bring the hope and joy that comes with knowing Jesus is such an honor.



*A sponsored family*

The Aguilar family has been faithfully working in this ministry for the past 18 years. I will start working full time in the ministry starting in July. I plan to finish my associates degree in Spanish and then get certified to teach English as a foreign language in Guatemala. I hope to be able to use these skills to bring more people into the ministry. I am so excited to join the Aguilar family and the ministry that God has entrusted them with.



*Girls in the government home*

I would love for you to prayerfully consider partnering with me in this ministry! Your friendship and prayers are so valuable. My monthly budget will include living expenses for Samuel and I and expanding Maranatha Bible school. If possible we would also like to start providing a monthly outreach to the people in a nearby mountain village through a nourishing breakfast and VBS-type children's program .

**How to donate:** If you are interested in partnering financially, visit [sierragrace.org/give](http://sierragrace.org/give) then click "Give Here." Select "Guatemala Ministry" in the drop down menu. The final step is important, please find the box that says "Add a Memo" and write my name, Melanie Wilson.



*Maranatha Bible school*

If you would like to know more about this ministry, or are interested in hosting a group presentation with a few of your friends, family, or church members, please reach out to me!

Thank you and God bless you,

*~Melanie*