

# Multiple Group Project 2016

## Information Packet

**Location:** Panama/Costa Rica

*Housing:* Panama

*Work Sites:* Panama & Costa Rica

**Project Dates:** March 17-27, 2016

**Participation Fee:** \$ 895

*Flight to Panama City, Panama is not included in the participation fee*



## Maranatha in Panama & Costa Rica

Maranatha's first major initiative in Panama took place nearly twenty years ago. Starting in the mid-1990s, Maranatha constructed 31 new churches, refurbished 16 churches, and built five large schools. Since then, those schools and churches have helped Seventh-day Adventist membership to grow. In 2013, Maranatha responded to Panama's request for additional churches and schools in hopes that the buildings will have the same, positive impact.

In 2001, Maranatha sent a number of volunteer groups to Costa Rica where they built churches and schools. After 14 years and harsh weather, some of those buildings are now in need of a fresh coat of paint.

## Project Overview

Maranatha's Multiple Group Project is designed for teams of 15 or fewer people—groups too small to undertake a typical project on their own. These individual groups may also lack some of the key leadership roles such as cook, spiritual coordinator, team medic, or construction superintendent. Small teams join together for a large group experience, while still maintaining the intimacy and bonding of their own group.

Our project includes working on multiple sites on the border between Panama and Costa Rica. We will be staying at the Adventist boarding academy in Panama but working on sites in both Panama and Costa Rica.

The primary work activity on this project will be painting—both newly constructed buildings as well as buildings in need of fresh paint; the need for paint will be obvious when you see the worn structures.

## Project Schedule

**Thursday, March 17**  
Volunteers Arrive in Panama City (PTY). Overnight at Crowne Plaza.

**Friday, March 18**  
Travel cross-country to David, Panama, by chartered bus. Group orientation.

**Saturday, March 19**  
Worship with the local congregations and afternoon nature hike.

**Sunday, March 20 - Friday, March 25**  
Work days with midweek afternoon excursion to the beach.

**Saturday, March 26**  
Worship with the local congregations. Leave in the evening for overnight bus trip to Panama City.

**Sunday, March 27**  
Wake up at the Panama Canal, souvenir shopping in Old Town, depart from Panama City.

Some of our construction tasks will include:

- Priming and painting the interior and exterior of a new church in Panama
- Painting the interior and exterior of a previously constructed Maranatha church in Costa Rica.
- Painting a large, multi-classroom school in Costa Rica.
- Constructing a One-Day Church in Panama, for use as a Sabbath School classroom.
- Constructing a church frame in Panama

In addition to construction, we will hold dental clinics at three sites where we're doing other Maranatha projects. We have dental teams already confirmed but not physicians or nurses (yet), although some have expressed an interest. If these medical professionals join our group, we'll expand our medical clinics to include their services. If you're interested in joining as a medical professional, contact Maranatha.

We will also conduct some children's ministry activities at several sites. We are still in need of some children's ministry leaders. If you have an interest and aptitude for this, please let us know right away.

We'll also have a kitchen crew to help prepare three meals a day. Some may want to work in the kitchen each day and some may prefer to do that a few days and then volunteer on other work crews for some of the other days. We expect that everyone will want to eat each day; at least that's the plan!

And we would like to do some small "odds and ends" types of jobs at the Adventist boarding academy where we'll be staying. Another Maranatha group will be staying there over Christmas, and we'll see what tasks they completed and what's on the priority list for the school after that Maranatha group completes their work.

## Accommodations

While waiting for everyone to arrive, we'll splurge on our first night in Panama City by staying at the new Crowne Plaza Hotel at the airport. Enjoy the air-conditioning and hot showers while you can—neither will be available once we arrive at our site!

Friday morning we'll take the 8-hour, cross-country trip to Instituto Adventista Panameno (IAP—pronounced "Ee-ah-pay"). We expect to arrive at IAP before dark so we can set up and get familiar with our new home.

At this moment, we don't know for sure exactly where we will stay on the campus of IAP. Much will depend on the school's enrollment for the new academic year, which begins in early March—just before we arrive. It's likely that our group will need to split into a boys' group and a girls' group and stay in the respective dorms based on our gender. Currently, we don't have rooms for married couples to stay together, but we'll see if some options become available in March.

No matter what the final details, we know it will be simple with 2-6 people per room. We will sleep on twin-size mattresses (single bed), and we will need to bring our own sheets or else purchase them there for \$20 (bottom sheet, top sheet, and pillow case).

We are going to test the Apostle Paul's words found in Philippians 4:11 (KJV), "I have learned, in whatsoever state [or country] I am, therewith to be content." Can we be content in a plush environment and then in a very simple or primitive environment? We're going to find out on this mission trip. Who knows, when you return home, you may choose to simplify your life!



If this is your first mission trip, you will soon learn that the key word to mission trips is FLEXIBILITY. We will continue to make plans, but it's very important that individually, and as a group, we are flexible. It starts with our attitude, and it shows in how we relate to situations, things, and people when things don't go the way we want them to go or the way we expect them to go.

Be sure to talk with your team about areas in which you are flexible as well as areas when you could use some growth. That's one of the major benefits of mission trips—it can push us to grow in ways we never would if we remained in our comfort zones!

## Excursions

During the project, the group will have a few opportunities to take a break from the busy workweek. Mid-week, we will take a trip to the Pacific side of Panama to a beach. At the end of the project we will stop at the Panama Canal before flying out of Panama City. The Panama Canal is considered one of the seven wonders of the modern world. Work was finished on the canal in 1914, and it enabled sailors carrying trading goods to make a more direct route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, and vice versa, instead of traversing the dangerous waters of Cape Horn. Ownership of the canal passed from the Colombian government to the French and eventually the American government, until it finally was returned to Panama in 1999. This short excursion includes a stop at the Miraflores lookout tower, which gives a view of the working canal locks, and a visit to the Panama Canal museum.



## Expenses

Each individual participant is responsible for paying the participation fee of \$895. This fee covers housing at the Crowne Plaza for one night and at IAP for the remainder of the project, three vegetarian meals a day, purified water, cross-country bus trip and daily transportation to the project sites, a midweek excursion to the beach and an excursion to the Panama Canal, secondary accident insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

The Group Leader has to put down an initial \$500 non-refundable deposit to reserve your group's space. When the leader goes to pay his or her individual fee, the original \$500 deposit will be discounted. If you will be paying individually, Maranatha asks for at least the first half of your participation fee before January 22, 2016. Alternatively, your group can gather the participation fees together as a group and send one check with the list of the participants who paid their participation fees, as opposed to submitting individual credit card charges or checks.

Wait for confirmation from your Group Leader or Maranatha before purchasing your airfare. Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by February 17, 2016, one month before the project.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations, work with your local church treasurer to collect funds and issue tax-deductible receipts to your contributors. Then your church treasurer will send one check to Maranatha on your behalf for your participation fee. Or have your contributors make the check out to Maranatha and send directly to you. Please wait until you have collected the full amount of your participation fee before submitting your funds to Maranatha. If you have questions about either of these processes, please contact Maranatha.

If, for any reason, an individual needs to cancel, we at Maranatha will do our best to refund the participation fee paid, up until one month before the project. After that point, \$150 is non-refundable, and the remainder will depend on the reservations and the project arrangements already made. However, if the small group adds another person in place of the cancelled participant, the funds reserved can be applied towards their participation fee. The \$500 group deposit is non-refundable.

## Estimate of Additional Costs

**Flight to Panama City:** \$500-\$900

**Passport:** \$130 or \$110 for renewal

## Leadership

A network of experienced Maranatha employees and volunteers from North America and Panama will help with this project, led by an overall Project Coordinator.

**Steve Case, Project Coordinator** | Steve will oversee all aspects of the trip, and he will also be leading the group worships each morning and evening. Steve has coordinated numerous short-term mission trips for all types of groups. He has led Maranatha's Multiple Group Project for a number of years and he gets excited to see what combinations of people and small groups come together for a unique experience each year. Steve lives in Carmichael, California, with his wife Marit. He is president of Involve Youth, a ministry organization that energizes young people for service.



<b>Rebekah Widmer</b>	Maranatha Office Contact
<b>Kim Haas</b>	Group Leader Maranatha Office Contact
<b>Carlos Brenes</b>	Maranatha Volunteer Support in Panama
<b>Luther Findley</b>	Overall Construction Superintendent
<b>Dave Shafer</b>	Construction Leader
<b>Maggie Peterson</b>	Head Cook
<b>Mark Turner</b>	Dental Team Coordinator

## We Need Your Help

While we have the core leaders required for a project, we still need more help. We are seeking individuals with a willingness to serve in painting, children's ministry, basic medical services, first aid people, and more translators (English/Spanish). We will depend on your groups to assist in these leadership roles, and we pray that God will provide people with the skills and the attitudes helpful for a short-term mission trip. If you would be interested in leading out or assisting in any of these areas, please contact Maranatha at (916) 774-7799 and join the Multiple Group Project.

## About Panama

Panama is approximately the size of Mississippi in the United States. Early inhabitants of Panama tended to reside on both sides of the country near oceans, swamps, and rivers. It is no wonder that the country was named Panama, meaning "Abundance of Fish." As an illustration of its moniker, Panama is full of fish markets.

Panama is perhaps best known for its canal, a throughway connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Constructed by the United States after a failed attempt by the French, the canal opened on August 15, 1914. It was a historical moment for the world and the United States, as the country's sovereignty over the "Canal Zone" marked America's rise as a superpower. Nearly a century later, the canal is now under the control of Panama's government, and it remains an important link in world trade. It has seen the passage of more than 800,000 vessels so far.

Aside from the canal, Panama is a fast-growing country with 3.6 million people. Great progress has been made in education, as access has been broadened to reach rural areas, and the literacy rate is 93%. Female enrollment at secondary schools is dominant, and in 1999, Panama elected its first female president.

Unfortunately, Panama still struggles with socioeconomic disparities. Poverty is great, particularly among the indigenous people. While the government has implemented social programs, the problem is still widespread.



### Facts and Figures

**Capital:**  
Panama City

**Population:**  
3.6 million

**Language:**  
Spanish and some English

**Climate:**  
Tropical, hot and humid. Long rainy season from May to January

**Religion:**  
Roman Catholic 85%, Protestant 15%

**Currency:**  
U.S. Dollar

Weather in Panama is fairly tropical. Temperatures average in the 70's and 80's year round. The rainy season lasts from May to January, and in June, visitors can expect anywhere from 10-20 inches of rain. This weather provides an excellent environment for tropical animals. Panama boasts a vast biodiversity with 218 different mammal species and the largest number of avian species in Central America, including large populations of macaws, quetzals, parrots, and toucans.

## Travel Information

### Flight Information

Volunteers will purchase their own plane tickets to Panama City, Panama (see below). Please note that although part of this project takes place in Costa Rica, you will be booking your ticket in and out of Panama. Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project. Volunteers will travel by chartered bus, the following day, to project housing near David, Panama.

#### **Arrival:**

Please plan to arrive in Panama City, Panama (airport code PTY) in afternoon or evening, March 17, 2016. Supper will be provided at the hotel.

#### **Departure:**

Please plan to depart from Panama City, Panama (PTY) in the afternoon or evening (after 2:00PM) on Sunday, March 27, 2015

### Travel Resources

**Azumano Travel:** 800-454-4099 or by email with Erle at [edpenha@ciazumano.com](mailto:edpenha@ciazumano.com)

**Butler Travel:** 503-879-5005 or by email with Nathanael at [nathan@butlertravel.com](mailto:nathan@butlertravel.com) or with Ellen at [ellen@butlertravel.com](mailto:ellen@butlertravel.com).

**Kayak:** [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

When contacting the Azumano or Butler travel agencies, mention Maranatha to receive a discounted service charge.

### Entry Requirements

All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (valid until at least September 27, 2016). If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at [www.passport.gc.ca](http://www.passport.gc.ca). It can take up to two months to complete the entire process, so plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport.

U.S. and Canadian citizens can travel in Panama for up to 180 days without a visa. Citizens of other countries, please consult the Panamanian embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

### Traveling with Minors

If you are traveling with a legal minor (under the age of 18 on the date you depart), both parents or the legal guardians must travel with the minor. If a minor is traveling alone or with only one parent, you must have two parental consent forms notarized. This provides government entities with evidence that both guardians have consented to their child leaving the country with the other guardian and Maranatha. One original must be mailed to Maranatha, and the other original must stay with you while you travel.

If a parent is divorced, the missing parent still needs to sign the form unless the parent traveling with the minor has sole legal custody. In that case, a copy of the divorce paperwork, indicating sole custody, must also be included. If a parent has died, a copy of the death certificate must be included. You can download a PDF of the Parental Consent Form at <http://www.maranatha.org/resources>.

This form will ask for two people as appointees of the minor. The first appointee will be the guardian traveling with the child. The second appointee will be Steve Case, Maranatha's project coordinator for the Multiple Group Project.

## Staying Healthy

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current tetanus vaccine (within the last 10 years). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends vaccines for hepatitis A, typhoid, and an antimalarial medication other than Chloroquine.

When many people think of Panama, they recall stories of malaria and yellow fever during the construction of the Panama Canal 100 years ago. However, many of these disease-carrying mosquitoes have since been eradicated through aggressive interventions. Our group will be staying in the Chiriquí province west of the canal, and currently the CDC does not have advisories for malaria in any region west of the capital. However, mosquitoes do thrive in the tropical environment, especially during the rainy season, and they can carry other diseases as well. We recommend taking personal precautions to avoid being bitten during the project, especially during dawn and dusk. If you choose to take malaria preventative medication, keep in mind that Chloroquine is not effective against the strain of malaria present in Panama.

You should schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in Panama and the ways to minimize them.

## How to Register

To register your small group, please complete the online registration, and pay the group deposit of \$500. Once Maranatha confirms your group, you will be given a link to complete your individual registration. There is also a payment link available for individuals wishing to pay online. Members of your group will use that link to register themselves individually or as a family. The group leader will also need to complete the individual registration form.

If you are a member of a small group, speak with your Group Leader to receive the application link.

While the Multiple Group Project gives preference to small groups, there are a few spaces for individual volunteers. These registrations are confirmed on a first come, first serve basis. To register, contact Maranatha for the individual registration link.

If for any reason you need to cancel your participation, Maranatha will do their best to refund your deposit up until one month before travel. After that point, \$150 is non-refundable, and the remainder will depend on the reservations and the project arrangements already made. The initial \$500 group deposit is non-refundable.

Register online at [Maranatha.org](http://Maranatha.org) or over the phone.

## Contact Information

**Phone:** (916) 774-7700

**Fax:** (916) 774-7701

**Email:** [volunteer@maranatha.org](mailto:volunteer@maranatha.org)

**Website:** [www.maranatha.org](http://www.maranatha.org)

**Mailing Address:**

Maranatha Volunteers International

990 Reserve Drive

Suite 100

Roseville, CA 95678

**Canadian Payments Only:**

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