



# Maranatha Multiple Group Project

## Information Packet

**Location:** Limon, Costa Rica

**Project Dates:** March 16-26, 2017

**Participation Fee:** \$895



*Flight to San Jose, Costa Rica, is not included in the participation fee*

## Maranatha in Costa Rica

Maranatha spent several years in the early 2000s constructing churches and schools in Costa Rica. One of these large schools, called an Education and Evangelism Center (EEC), provided a key extension for Centro Educativo Adventista de Limon, a Seventh-day Adventist school in the Caribbean port city of Limon, Costa Rica. Today, the school continues to thrive with six primary grades and five secondary grades, plus a pre-school. In fact, they have added three classrooms to the end of the large EEC, plus there are 16 additional classrooms, a library, kitchen/dining area, covered basketball court, and administration building.

## Project Overview

The 2017 Maranatha Multiple Group Project will primarily be a painting project. After nearly two decades, it's definitely time for a new coat of paint. Because of the tropical climate, oil-based paint is much preferred over water-based paint. So we'll be painting the entire school, inside and outside, with oil-based paint (which is much messier and requires turpentine to clean one's body and clothing). This challenge will be further extended by painting the school while the students are in session. Their school year runs from February through November, so they will be just one month into their new school year. We will coordinate our efforts by having them vacate a few classrooms each day and then moving back in to use them right after we paint them.

In addition to painting, we will construct a block wall at the front of the school complex. Our focus of ministry will be the school, which means we will also conduct three Weeks of Prayer at the school—one for the primary school (about 200 children), one for the secondary school (about 200 more children), and one for the preschoolers (about 15-20 children). We will also assist in classes on conversational English and may conduct health and dental instruction for the students. The school is considered a "mission school" with only 15 percent of the students being Adventists. The school is respected for its quality of education and for instilling positive values in the students.

## Project Schedule

**Thursday, March 16**  
Arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica and travel to Limon

**Friday, March 17**  
Work day

**Sabbath, March 18**  
Worship with three local congregations; go to botanical gardens

**Sunday-Friday, March 19-24**  
Work days

**Tuesday or Thursday**  
Excursion day (half of our group one day; half the other) either snorkeling or white water rafting)

**Sabbath, March 25**  
Depart Limon for Tortuguero for church service; then on to San Jose

**Sunday, March 26**  
Departures from San Jose.

## Why This Maranatha Project?

Short-term mission trips have become a popular way for people to serve others, make a difference, challenge themselves, grow spiritually, and see unique parts of the world. Most people have several reasons for participating, some stronger than others.

It's important for all Maranatha participants to be clear on the purpose(s) for this Maranatha short-term mission trip. Maranatha's mission statement gives the focus, which is "Maranatha spreads the Gospel throughout the world by building people through the construction of urgently needed buildings." If you wanted to put this as bullet points, three items jump out, namely, Maranatha:

- Spreads the Gospel throughout the world
- By building people
- Through the construction of urgently needed buildings

Notice that "visiting a new country" or "posting cool pictures" or "donating to a worthy cause" aren't part of the mission statement, even though each one of these may happen on your Maranatha project. In fact, many other things will happen, too. But Maranatha's three broad, but clear, purposes will guide the planning of this project. People say, "This is what it's all about."

While Maranatha will do 30-50 short-term mission trips in 2017, this particular project, the "Multiple Group Project" (MGP), will emphasize the following primary purposes under the overall mission statement of Maranatha. These are what will shape what we plan, what we do, and how we evaluate this particular Maranatha mission project:

1. Service opportunities that grow faith in God
2. Challenges and bonding for each small group and the larger group
3. Quality work for God, for others, and for one's self

Please take some time to reflect on the reason(s) why you are going on this Maranatha mission trip. How do your purposes match what you can expect for this project? What adjustments might you need to make?

## Flexibility

"FLEXIBILITY" is the one key word that will be necessary in all that we do on this mission trip. It's not the purpose of the mission trip, but it will be necessary to achieve our purposes. While we make plans, we can pretty much guarantee that there will be surprises that will force us to adapt. If we aren't flexible, we'll have plenty to feel miserable about and will lose out on multiple opportunities to serve others and to grow ourselves.

Your flexibility will be tested when you're put on a job you don't want to do OR when your accommodations aren't like back home OR when the food is strange or tastes scary OR when some people bug you and you can't get away from them. Most of us want to grow—to improve, but most of us don't want to go through discomfort or make changes in order to grow.

By going on a Maranatha mission trip, you are putting yourself into a great environment for growth, but that means changes in your life. Are you ready for that? Are you hoping for that? Have you already started to pray for this to be a reality? FLEXIBILITY enables you to grow without breaking. By all means, bring FLEXIBILITY with you because you'll need it just about every day.

## Accommodations

Our group will be the primary residents at Hotel Maribu Caribe, outside the city of Limon, about a 10 minute drive from the school. It's the only hotel large enough to accommodate our group, and we'll be very crowded since we have more people interested in this project than we have beds available at the hotel. Each bed will be filled, with two people sharing each double bed and some possibly sleeping on mattresses on the floor. The hotel is approximately a 2-star hotel. Each room has beds with linens and pillows, towels, private bathrooms, and even hot water and a small air conditioner. There is also a swimming pool. The setting is beautiful with a view of the ocean, but we will certainly be crowded!

Our breakfast and supper in the hotel restaurant will be packed, and we'll have our group worships there as well. Our lunch will be at the school. There is very limited Wi-Fi and the entire group will be sharing the bandwidth, so don't plan on getting through much on the very limited internet. If you need to do some personal laundry, you can do that in the sink in your room or pay to have the hotel provide that service. Most will simply bring all they need for the project. Each day, the group will travel to the school on a private bus for the group.

For more information about the Hotel Maribu Caribe, visit [www.maribu-caribe.com](http://www.maribu-caribe.com).

## Excursions

### 1. Sabbath, March 18

Our first Sabbath, we'll divide into three groups and participate with local churches in their Sabbath School and church services. After lunch, we will load the buses and drive for about an hour to a botanical garden for a Sabbath afternoon in nature. Subgroups can also opt to do door-to-door visitation with church members instead of visiting the botanical gardens.

### 2. Tuesday or Thursday, March 21 or 23

Our full day excursion will be either Tuesday or Thursday. Half of our group will go on one day and half will go on the other day. This enables us to continue the "work" activities each day at the school, even though we'll have reduced numbers on the excursion days. There are two options for the excursion, and you'll need to decide prior to the project which excursion you will choose since we will have to make plans accordingly. You will need to make a decision on which excursion you will be part of by March 1.

#### a. Snorkeling (No Extra Charge)

The first option is to go snorkeling. This is about a 1-hour bus ride from our hotel (the port city of Limon is for ships and merchandise, not for tourism). In addition to snorkeling, there is a national forest along the beach with walking trails. Lunch is provided and your participation fee includes this activity.

#### b. White Water Rafting (\$35 Extra)

The second option is to go white water rafting on the Pacuare River. This is about a 2-hour bus ride from the hotel and there is a surcharge of \$35/person (it's great fun, but it's expensive). Lunch is included in this trip of repeated class IV rapids as you paddle with your guide in large rafts. You will definitely get wet!

### 3. Sabbath, March 25

On the final Sabbath we'll leave early and drive partway back to San Jose and then go off the main road for about an hour. Then we'll transfer from buses to boats and meander through tributaries and rivers to get to the remote coastal town of Tortuguero (Turtle). This small, sleepy town is where backpackers like to go to see large sea turtles lay their eggs and return to sea. Although the sea turtles won't be there when we are, we will still see the beaches where they lay their eggs. Our primary activity won't be watching the turtles (they won't be there anyway), but to worship with a small Adventist Church where a few members have started their outreach to the community. A number of them work in the recycling center of this eco-sensitive development. We'll worship and eat lunch with the church members, then head back by boat to where we left our buses. We'll board the buses and continue to the main road and on to the capital city of San Jose. We'll spend Saturday night at a hotel near the airport and be ready for our return home on Sunday.

## Expenses

The participation fee of \$895 per person covers housing for 9 nights at the Hotel Maribu Caribe and the final night at a hotel near the airport in San Jose. Your fee also pays for three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation to and from the airport and project site, translators, local excursions (those who white water raft have a \$35 surcharge), secondary accident insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

This fee can either be paid individually on a per person basis or as a small group. If your group is paying all together, send a check to Maranatha along with a list of the participants whose fees are included. The group leader's fee will be discounted the original \$500 group deposit that was paid to secure and reserve your spots on the project.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by February 1 due to application processing time. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

Maranatha participation fees are tax-deductible. For Canadian tax-deductible receipts, payments must be made by check to the Maranatha Association (address located at the end of this information packet). For U.S. tax-deductible receipts, payments can be made by cash, check, or credit/debit cards.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations, please have them sent directly to you or work with your local church treasurer to collect funds and issue tax-deductible receipts, since it is difficult for Maranatha to track individual small checks. If your church will not work with you, please wait until you have collected the full amount of your participation fee before submitting your participation fee to Maranatha.

## Estimate of Additional Costs

- **Flight to San Jose, Costa Rica:** \$500-\$800
- **Passport:** \$130 or \$110 for renewal
- **Exit tax:** \$29 (if you are not on a major US airline that includes this fee in your ticket)

## Leadership

### Steve Case | Project Coordinator and Spiritual Coordinator

Steve is the president of Involve Youth, a youth ministry organization that energizes young people for service. This includes leading several Maranatha projects each year, including the annual Multiple Group Project. Steve lives near the Maranatha headquarters in Northern California.



### Luther Findley | Construction Superintendent

Luther has worked in different branches of construction for years and currently maintains the facilities at Sacramento Adventist Academy. Luther has served in construction leadership on many Maranatha projects.



### Loretta Jessop | Head Cook

Loretta and her husband Gary have provided leadership on Maranatha projects for decades. Their flexibility and commitment to service have made them role models for people of all ages.



### Mary Johnson | Children's Ministries

Mary has served as an educator in the United States, but her passion for missions and her bilingual skills place her on Maranatha projects each year. In fact, Mary plans to take a year off of "work" so she can devote herself full-time to Maranatha projects. Mary will head up our children's ministry outreach and ESL experiences and also assist the medical and dental instruction at the school.



## About Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a beautiful country with both Caribbean and Pacific beaches, plus the high mountains and rain forest between the two oceans. They say there are two seasons in Costa Rica: the rainy season and the "not quite as rainy" season. It's a major thoroughfare for butterflies; there are more species of butterflies in the country of Costa Rica than the entire continent of Africa.

From the 1960s through the 1990s, many Central American countries engaged in civil wars; Costa Rica did not. The country has benefitted immensely from keeping the peace! Life expectancy is almost 80 years of age, and the economy has been much stronger than warring countries. Costa Rica boasts of not even having a military, although it does have a police force.



Costa Rican culture is vibrant in color, music, and food. Influences from indigenous people groups blend with the influences from the Spanish colonization of the Americas to create a rich culture epitomized by the Costa Rican phrase “Pura Vida” or “Full of Life!” The cuisine of Costa Rica is full of delicious tropical fruits, tamales, and meats. But one of the most popular dishes is “gallo pinto,” a combination of rice and beans. This is not only a national dish but also a staple food item, and it may be served at breakfast, lunch, and supper. Each person fixes it his or her own way.

Christopher Columbus landed in “Puerto Limon” in 1502 and saw it as a great seaport for exporting Costa Rica’s resources to Spain. In 1870, Puerto Limon was established to export bananas and other grains from Costa Rica to the rest of the world. It continues to be Costa Rica’s most important port. The capital city of San Jose is in the middle of the country, up in the mountains. The road between San Jose and Limon winds through dense rain forest, but it is heavily traveled with trucks taking products from Costa Rica to the port and from the port to Costa Rica.

## Facts and Figures

**Capital:**  
San Jose

**Population:**  
4.87 million

**Language:**  
Spanish

**Climate:**  
Tropical, rain

**Religion:**  
Catholic 76%, Evangelical 14%

**Currency:**  
Colón (exchange rate of 425-450 colones per \$1 US (Dec 2016))

## Travel Information

Volunteers will purchase their own plane tickets to the city of San Jose, Costa Rica (see below). Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project. You will be met at the airport and together the group will travel to to Limon, about a three to five hour drive depending on conditions at the time.

### Flights

**Arrival** | Please plan to arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica (airport code SJO), before 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 16, 2017.

**Departure** | Please plan to depart from San Jose, Costa Rica, in the morning or afternoon on Sunday, March 26, 2017.

### Arriving Early or Staying Late

Costa Rica has some beautiful travel destinations. Some of you may choose to arrive earlier than March 16 or stay beyond March 26 to explore the country on your own. Please make your own hotel and transportation plans for any days outside of the Maranatha project dates. If you have questions, call Maranatha at (916) 774-7700.

## 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 with [ellen@butlertravel.com](mailto:ellen@butlertravel.com).
- **Kayak:** [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

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

### Entry Requirements

**Passport** | All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (September 27, 2017). 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.

If you are from a country other than the United States or Canada, please check the Costa Rican embassy or consulate in your region to confirm any additional entry 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 legal guardians must travel with the minor. Otherwise, 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 other 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 of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends vaccines for hepatitis A and typhoid. Many Americans are concerned about malaria when it comes to Central American countries. While there are certain to be some mosquitoes because of the tropical nature of the country, the concerns for malaria aren't as high in Costa Rica as they are in some other countries. You are advised to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites by covering yourself, including arms, ankles, hands and wrists, and face and neck. Use of a mosquito repellent with DEET is also recommended.

Some of these vaccines you may already have and some of them you may deem unnecessary for this trip. You should schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in Costa Rica and the ways to minimize them.

## How to Register

To register, please complete the online registration form. Your group leader will have the link. If you are participating as an individual or a staff member without a group leader, please contact Maranatha for this link. If possible, please pay the full participation fee or an initial deposit of at least half the total participation fee at the time of registration. You can make this payment by credit card online or over the phone or with a check made out to Maranatha Volunteers International and sent to the address below. 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.

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:**

Maranatha Volunteers International  
Association  
c/o V06494C  
PO Box 6494, Station Terminal  
Vancouver, BC V6B 6R3

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\*All confirmed volunteers on an International Maranatha Open Team receive a Maranatha t-shirt as part of their participation fee.

