

ABOUT MARIANNE

Dear family, friends, and new acquaintances who have discovered this space,

I know that many of you wonder how I arrived at the decision to travel to and do mission work in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Belize? And why?

Some who have known me since childhood might think it's logical because foreign travel has been part of my life from the age of 19. Got bored with college, packed up one day and took off to Europe (via Icelandic Air, the college students' friendly cheap airline back then), and stayed for eight months. Rome, Italy, is an easy choice when it comes to cracking boredom. My life since then has included a seven-year stint working and living in Rome again, followed by more of Europe, dozens of islands, Africa, Asia, Antarctica, and a brief visit to Argentina. Six of the seven continents.

Many friends who have known me only as an adult are of the clear opinion that I'm crazy, and can talk only of the dangers of where I'm going. Stories of bugs and parasites burrowing under the skin, only to emerge later from various body parts have been frequent. Not to mention die-hard (pardon the unintended pun) guerrilla soldiers still hiding in the hills, who might at any moment descend with AK-47s spewing bullets.

Others are immediately supportive and are certain the experience will be rewarding, enlightening, and meaningful. And yet others fall in-between – simultaneously patting me on the back while asking if I've had every vaccination and taken every pill known to modern medicine “just in case.”

As for me, I am not at all surprised. Central America has been calling to me for a decade. But the reasons for the call have been different from any place I've ever been. I have always traveled to see, to experience, to know, to learn, and to understand, but always for my own benefit. I am a firm believer that only by experiencing other cultures and peoples can we know them, and consequently understand who they are, and why they think and act as they do.

This trip is different. I am not self-propelled. I am pulled. That's the difference between going somewhere because it's my own idea and for my own purpose and pleasure, and going because I hear a call to be of service to others.

If you are part of a faith community you will understand that being “called” means that the call comes from a higher power, that God is behind this request. If you do not have a faith perspective, you might say that you have an unexplained, overwhelming urge to do something. Whichever one fits you, the point is that the call must be answered and the urge satisfied with action.

I don't for a minute believe that my presence will change the world of poverty, racism, discrimination and abuse that I will find among the indigenous populations in Central America.

But I do believe that if I answer the call to go and do, that I will learn more from the people I'm serving than they will learn from me. And that in my own small way, when I share that understanding with others in my own small world, it might lead to each of us understanding how our own personal choices and actions either perpetuate injustices in a global way, or help to promote a more just and positive world, one person at a time – not buying “blood diamonds” from Africa or gold mined by children in the Phillipines, for example.

I will try my best to bring you the good, the bad, and the ugly of this journey. To make the people, places, and circumstances real. My goal is to post at least twice per week, perhaps more.

I'm so glad and appreciative that you're coming along!

Marianne