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March 7, 2012: Guatemala

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Title: Guatemala

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3/7/2012—Patt and I returned from our trip to Guatemala Sunday night around midnight. Since our return, I have been teaching and just keeping my head above water. I will be posting about the trip, but let me say at the outset that the remains of Mayan civilization at Tikal, Yaxha, Tapoxte and Iximche evidence a spiritual power that is almost overwhelming. Like Inca sites that I saw in Peru in 2010, to be in the presence of these ruins undermines for me a simplistic materialism. But, unlike Peru, Mayan religion is currently practiced in Guatemala. We saw several ceremonies while we were there, which as far as we could tell were not staged for our benefit. The shaman does not seem to be a wonder worker but a combination of social worker and therapist. The gods are real but seem to be taken with a grain of salt. If they can deliver safety and prosperity, then they are worth worshipping. If not, not. It is an eminently practical undertaking. Not at all the dogma-type system we may think of when we consider religion.