

We are glad to see interest in missions to Ghana via Relevate Church. After receiving many gray hairs from my preparation, I wanted to make this guide to assist others in preparing for their trip, and the trip itself. We will cover precautions of the trip along with step by step, detailed description of the process from start to finish. I hope this book will be helpful to you; and that it will keep ten years from instantly being gained to your life.

I am Wayne Smith and I've got experience in a variety of survival situations. "Survival?", you ask. I want to look at it this way. EVERYTHING in life is survival. Maybe not like being alone in the desert but we work, take meds, exercise, etc.; this is survival. Ghana has a different level of survival. Your going to a foreign country with which you may stay if you don't handle your paperwork correctly, they may keep some of your things, they have killer mosquito's, killer bugs, killer water, killer food, killer temperatures. Don't fool yourself. From the moment you step off the plane you are in a different survival mode than America. It's not like being out in the desert without water or food but if you make the wrong moves, you can cause yourself great harm or even death. This makes this publication and your guide to Ghana very important.

This publication is merely a guide. All prices, and all government restrictions and requirements are subject to change at any time. Relevate church, and those responsible for this guide, are in no way responsible for any changes, any extra fees charged, or any issues pertaining to any portion of this trip. Remember that, ultimately, you are responsible to make sure you have what you need. The Relevate Church Trip Planner will do their best to communicate all necessities to the trip.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Risks

1. Planning for the Trip

Early Preparation

Passport

Vaccines

Deadly Mosquitos

Visa

Ticket

Currency

Phones and Electronics

Dress Code

Etiquette

Market Place

Food and Water

Tips and Tricks

Packing

Rules and Regulations

Church Documents

Final Check List

2. Flight to Ghana

3. Life in Ghana

4. Returning Home

Appendix

## INTRODUCTION

If you've ever watched some kittens you will have noticed that a kitten will be standing there one minute than all of a sudden leap straight into the air and take off. Yeah, Relevate Church missions is much like a kitten.

When you hear an announcement that there will be a trip to Ghana soon, what that really means is, there will be a Ghana trip that you should have started preparing for a month ago. With that in mind, if you plan on going on missions, start preparing today.

To start to **PREPARE**. You'll want to save, save, save. You can not rely on people to give you money. Honestly, not that there's anything wrong with receiving money for missions, nothing at all, think about the blessing for sacrificing something you have for missions to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, set up an extra savings account and sacrifice a few meals a week while putting that money in the savings. So, start building today.

Or, you can wait because there's nothing like living on the seat of our pants on something we feel drawn to while praying that the money makes it after already purchasing a \$2,000 plane ticket and not knowing if you'll get to go.

There are a number of things you can start ahead of time that will alleviate much of the financial burdens that come with this trip. The trip itself (plane tickets, meals in Ghana, transportation in Ghana, hotels in Ghana) will cost about \$3,000. Then there is a second column of cost that will vary based upon the clothes you own verses what you want to wear to Ghana, travel items like power converters, Permethrin spray, etc. Many of these items you can purchase ahead of time, spread out, so you don't feel a financial burden come time to go.

While this guide is not inclusive, I'm hoping to alleviate much of the lack of knowledge and prepare you to the best of my ability.

## RISKS

I want to list a little information of some inherent risks in the venture.

1. There's no such thing as "safe travel"; especially to a third world country with an unreached people group.

All the easy and safe people to be reached have been reached. That's why there are area's of the world that everyone goes to - they are safe-er there. Northern Ghana is mainly muslim and only .5% of the people have been reached with the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

With this understanding, we need to also remember that we serve a Sovereign God. This means that nothing can happen without His okay. We need to also be aware that the attempt to avoid danger often amplifies the danger in the place we consider to be a "safe haven". In 2015, there were as many people killed in car accidents in America as were killed by terrorist world wide. In America, those who died from obesity were over three times higher than those killed by terrorist world wide. The same is true for those who died from illnesses resulting from laziness. If God wants to allow you to die, there's nothing we can do to stop it - it can happen in America

just as easy as it can happen in a third world country. At the same time... if God wants us to stay, there's no one that can take us. So, don't worry... God's got this.

2. Yellow fever, malaria, and typhoid are very real. Yellow fever and malaria are contracted via mosquito's - and they have plenty in Ghana. This is a reason you receive a yellow fever vaccine. Before your departure, you will get a prescription for malaria medication but there is no guarantee this medication will stop malaria. We will cover this more later. Typhoid is a food borne illness; so, unless your going to fast the entire time... yeah.

3. Don't drink the water. Food borne illnesses are very real in Ghana. The septic system is basically ditches that run down the street. When they receive heavy rains, the runoff runs into the drinking water. Ghana does not have the technology of water preparation as America does therefore the water is contaminated with microorganisms, parasites, and virus' that could make you very ill and even cause death. Be sure to follow the advise of the knowledgable guides who are leading you into this venture.

4. They keep what they want. Many people like to carry camera gear with them. You do so at your own risk. At the airport in Ghana, your luggage may be searched. While it's gotten better, if they see something they want they can keep it and there's nothing you can do about it. The most you can do may lengthen your stay in the country - involuntarily.

5. A spirit with an "immune deficiency" is susceptible to spiritual sickness upon return. There is a large amount of voodoo type practices in these areas. It seems that there is no fail of a group returning and there be issues with one or more individuals - typically of a sexual nature. Most people would like to believe themselves to be spiritually strong but fact is many are not. If your not completely honest with yourself on your current condition, you may end up coming back spiritually sick.

Make sure your house is in order. This means both spiritually and physically. If your marriage is not very strong you can be in danger. If your not constantly in the Word of God and prayer, if your not constantly spreading the Gospel in America and avoiding temptations here, you may need to consider waiting until the next trip and spend the next year building your relationship with God.

I can't mention a "relationship with God" and not give you something to think about. Many think they have a relationship with God but what does that look like? Most people can't describe it or are very vague in their description. Relate the relationship with God in the same way you relate your relationship with your spouse or dating partner. When you were single, how did you spend your time and money and what was the subject of your conversations? When you met the one you thought to be the one, how did all those things change? Has there been a change spiritually? Do we still spend our time and money on our own pleasures and do we still talk about our hobby's rather than God? What does our relationship with God look like? It's impossible to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Christ and still live like your affluent atheist neighbor. Be sure your "relationship" is more than words - it's your life.

## **1. PLANNING FOR THE TRIP**

### **EARLY PREPARATION**

**SAVE MONEY.** As mentioned earlier, the trip will cost about \$3,000, but there is a secondary column of cost that is dependent upon you and what you have. Some people can wear jeans in the hot temperatures and some would be better with hiking clothes. Some have hiking clothes and some need to buy hiking clothes. Some don't have a passport and some don't have their yellow fever shots. Many factors line up the bottom line cost of the second column of cost.

As I mentioned earlier, if your planning on going to Ghana start preparing early. There are a number of things listed that you can start on early; some are large expenses and some “nickel and dime” expenses. We’re going to look at a few of those items now. Review the guide and determine what you can do now to help alleviate financial strain later.

While we are looking at some things that you can start early, the detail of these different items will be listed further in this section of the guide.

One easy thing you can start on is your **PASSPORT**. If you wait to the last minute, a passport will cost about 40% more than if you get it early. Add this to the fact that you may be getting your VISA early for a last minute departure, getting your passport early will help you save money in the long run.

Visa’s can not be applied for until the trip is planned but you can go ahead and get your **VACCINE**’s. As of the time of this publication, Yellow Fever vaccinations are listed to be good for ten years; yet, the CDC is looking at extending these to a lifetime virus protection. This means, whether ten years or a lifetime, you can go ahead and get this now. Why? Well, with having to gather \$3,000 plus dollars, plus \$100 for Visa, plus any clothes or luggage you still need for the trip, it would be nice to have this \$200 service out of the way. Yes, two hundred dollars - and that’s the cheap place. We’ll discuss this further in the guide.

It’s hot in Ghana. A few people are fine wearing jeans in 106 temps with 98% humidity. Some rather have light weight, breathable, **HIKING CLOTHES**. If your not equipped with several changes of hiking clothes (men) or dresses / skirts (women) you’ll want to start working on those now. For women, sun dresses and such can be found at Goodwill but it’s harder to find hiking clothes for men. Hiking pants and shirts are not cheap so you want to start working on that now. The pants can range from \$40-\$60 each and the shirts from \$40-\$90 each. If your a man with no hiking clothes, you can expect to pay in upwards of \$400+ for four outfits.

You can go ahead and get your **POWER CONVERTER**. Ghana is on 220 power and our items operate on 110. You will need a converter. A good converter runs about \$40.

**PERMETHRIN** spray for your clothes. You want to spray everything that is cloth with Permethrin spray; back pack, socks, underwear, hat, shirts, shoes, pants, everything. This means you will go through about three to four bottles of Permethrin spray. This comes out to about another \$60. You can go ahead and start slowly buying the spray; but don’t spray anything until a week before you leave. The spray lasts for only six weeks or six washings.

Let’s summarize real quick. The things you can go ahead and complete long before your trip is:

- Save money
- Get your passport
- Get your yellow fever vaccination
- Purchase necessary clothing
- Purchase power converter
- Purchase Permethrin spray

## **PASSPORT**

A passport is like a global identification card. While abroad, and while returning to the US, you will be asked for you passport many, many, many times. This means you will want the passport easily accessible but not in a place it could get lost or stolen.

Needed:

Passport Application

Valid Birth Certificate

Passport Photo

Two Personal Checks (Visa or bank-card not accepted)

As mentioned earlier, if you can get this prior to a couple months before your trip, you will save money and gray hair. If your bald... well I guess your safe of gray hair anyway.

#### Passport Photo

You will need to acquire a passport photo. Passport photo's are specific photo's that are two inches by two inches square. There are a number of locations to get passport photos such as Walgreens or CVS pharmacies. Two (2) passport photos will cost around \$13.

**NOTE: Passport photo's are one of the two most common reason's for passport delay's or denials. It may be worth paying the price rather than trying to make your own.**

**NOTE: If you will be traveling to Ghana within three (3) months, you may want to obtain a total of three (3) photos; two of which will be needed for the Ghana VISA application.**

#### Passport Application

Passport applications can be picked up at the post office or court house. Fill out the application being careful not to leave any line blank. If a specific question does not apply to you write "Not Applicable" in the space provided. If your not certain the dates of the trip put a question mark "?" in the two spots provided.

**NOTE: Blank spaces are the second of the two most common reason's for passport delay's or denials. Please be sure to fill it out correctly. You may want to let someone look over the application with you... preferably someone who has a passport.**

#### Passport Book or Card

You can get the passport in a book or card; or both. Most country's require a passport book. Ghana is one of those countries. Passport cards are enough for Mexico and Canada. You can get into Mexico and Canada with a passport book. Therefore, don't worry about the card and get the book. This option is at the top of the passport application.

#### Application Submission Timing

It takes about six to eight weeks for a passport application to be processed and the passport arrive back at your door. You need the passport to apply for a Visa which could take another four weeks (they say 14 days but I like to add a few because it's the Ghana Embassy in DC). You would like to receive your Visa a couple weeks before your departure date. This means you will want to submit your passport application about 3 1/2 months before your planned departure.

If you've already submitted your application via standard and need to change it to expedite, you can call 877-487-2778. You will need to have your application number (given at your application submission) and a visa card ready.

#### Submission of Application

Submission of the application can be done at the post office or county courthouse. An appointment must be made to submit your application at the post office. Call your local courthouse to find out if you need to make an appointment.

Your birth certificate and passport photo will have to be mailed with the application so have them available at the venue your submitting your application to.

#### Application Cost

Passports cost about \$110 and another \$25 to file through the courthouse or post office. You need a check for each institution. If you are not outside the 3 1/2 month window to your departure date, you may want to expedite the application. Expedite fee's run between \$65 and \$80 extra.

#### Item List

- Passport Application
- Passport Photo
- Two (2) Personal Checks
- Birth Certificate

Passport Photo = \$15

Non-expedite = \$135

Expedite = \$190 - \$215

(Total trip cost to date = \$150 - \$230)

**<PASSPORT APPLICATION EXAMPLE HERE>**

### **VACCINES**

Unless you have some sadistic pleasure in receiving a vaccine by a needle that's been used on twenty other people before you, you will want to receive required vaccinations before you leave. If you want to take the risk of the shot in Ghana... refer back to the RISK's section of this book - specifically #5.

#### Where to Go

Yellow fever vaccinations can not be received at any old doctor. You must go to an approved INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL CLINIC. Comparing the costs, the best location is the North Georgia Health Department located in Ellijay, GA. An appointment will have to be made for this visit.

#### Required Vaccines

There is only one required vaccine to travel to Ghana - Yellow Fever. Yellow Fever can not be contracted from human to human; it's contracted via mosquito's. Since Ghana is affluent with mosquito's, this makes this vaccine very important.

Another sickness caused by mosquitos is malaria. In efforts to avoid this sickness, request a prescription for oral malaria medication. There are two types of malaria medications; one that does not cause hallucinations and one that does cause hallucinations. You want to specifically ask for MALARONE. Malarone does not cause hallucinations... I promise.

#### Recommended Vaccines

During your visit, the clinic professional will cover all dangers of the travel, the required vaccines, and vaccines which are recommended by the CDC (Center for Disease Control).

One highly recommended vaccine is Typhoid. Typhoid is a food borne illness that is typically contracted by the water. This can create a problem because any food washed by the water, and not cooked, is likely to cause Typhoid Fever. This means a plain hamburger is fine as the meat is cooked and bread unwashed. Yet, as soon as they put lettuce on the hamburger the chances

of the typhoid virus increased. You can take the lettuce off the hamburger but water has most likely dripped on the already cooked meat. The risk is reduced but still there.

Receiving the Typhoid vaccination does not mean you will be able to drink or eat anything you want while in Ghana. There are plenty of other virus' and parasites to be had from the water; so, be sure to stick close to someone with experience in the foods to avoid.

Hepatitis A and B vaccines are recommended. These virus' are contracted via fluid transfer. Unless you plan on having sex, working with open wounds, or being operated on while there, you may not need these vaccines. One hepatitis vaccine is a two part vaccine and the other is a three part vaccine.

Other vaccines are also suggested but these are the primary ones focused on. Remember that it's a goal of the medical facility to sell more vaccines.

#### Vaccination Cost

Obviously, the cost of vaccinations are dependent upon which vaccines you receive. For the sake of this book we will stick with the required vaccine and the cost without insurance.

**NOTE: You can log onto the North Georgia Health Department site to obtain cost of vaccines (nghd.org)**

**NOTE: You can reduce the cost of prescription medication by going to [goodrx.com](http://goodrx.com). Type in your zip code and the medication needed (Malarone) and see which pharmacy is cheaper. Print the coupon for the pharmacy of choice and provide the pharmacy information to the clinic.**

Office visit = \$50

Yellow fever vaccine = \$150

Malarone (16 tablets) = \$110

(Total trip cost to date = \$460 - \$540)

## **DEADLY MOSQUITOS**

It's hard to think that something so small could be so deadly; but, in Africa, they are. Yellow Fever and Malaria are contracted through mosquito bites. You will have taken a Yellow Fever vaccine, which is pretty reliable, but the Malaria medications are not a guarantee. You do not want to get Malaria.

The best preventative is a bug screen with the maximum dosage of deet; which is 98%. It's hot in Africa and you will sweat the solution off pretty quick. Be sure to carry two bottles of bug spray as you will be reapplying throughout the day. A deet lotion, which is thicker, is also available. Avoid spray bottles as you waist much of the deet solution. Find a squeeze bottle. Sawyer Jungle Juice makes a fine deet solution which is also small enough to carry in carry on luggage of planes.

Keep your luggage zipped and your clothes inside. Do not provide dark places for mosquitos and other insects to hide. It's a rude awakening to put on a garment and receive a bite; especially when you don't know what it was that bit you.

Be sure to use Sawyer clothing spray with Permethrin. Spray your clothes before you leave and they will be good for the duration of the trip.

## **VISA**

Needed:

Visa Application

2 Passport Photos

Passport

Letter of Invite from Ghana resident or company

Two FedEx envelopes

FedEx account

Money order or cashiers check

More information can be found at: <http://www.ghanaembassy.org/>

You can download the visa application form at: [http://www.ghanaembassy.org/uploads/files/Visa\\_Application\\_Form.pdf](http://www.ghanaembassy.org/uploads/files/Visa_Application_Form.pdf)

### VISA Application

You must fill out your VISA APPLICATION properly or there will be a delay or refusal of your application.

1., 4., 10., 11. Make sure all dates are in Day/Month/Year format. In other words, if your leaving on May 4th, 2017 then your date will be listed 4/5/2017 or 4 May, 2017.

Leave no spaces blank. Fill in any blank space with NOT APPLICABLE

Make sure the form is filled out in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

Nationality is: American

5. The return flight ticket number is NOT the flight number but rather the entire ticket number. A minimum amount of money needed will be communicated with you by the trip organizers at Relevate Church.

6. Purpose of Journey is TOURISM

7. Name, Address, and Phone Number of two references will be provided by Relevate Church. Usually, these names are Pastor Joseph and the hotel you will be staying at.

9. Duration of stay is the landing date to the departure date. For example, You may leave Atlanta on Tuesday but not arrive in Accra until Wednesday. Duration of stay does not include the Tuesday flight.

### Passport Photo

You will need two PASSPORT PHOTO's, no older than three (3) months old, for the VISA application. If you did not purchase these photos when purchasing the photo for your passport, these photo's can be obtained at a local Walgreens pharmacy.

**NOTE: DO NOT glue passport photo onto applications until the application is approved by the Relevate Church Trip Planner**

**<VISA APPLICATION EXAMPLE HERE>**

### Passport

Your passport MUST be mailed with your VISA application. The Passport will be returned with the Ghana VISA stuck on one of the pages of your passport. You will not be able to gain entry into Ghana without this sticker.

**<COPY OF VISA HERE>**

### Letter of Invite

Your LETTER OF INVITE will be provided by the Relevate Church Trip Planners. This letter MUST be included with your VISA application.

#### Money Orders or Cashiers Checks

These can be obtained at your bank, post office, or grocery store.

#### FedEx Envelopes and Account

VISA applications CAN NOT be shipped together. Each application must be shipped separately.

You can not purchase a prepaid FEDEX ENVELOPE. You will need to set up an account with FedEx using a major credit card. If you do not have a credit card, consult with the trip organizer on alternate means of shipping and receiving your VISA.

Once an account is set up, FedEx will provide a smaller envelope that will fit inside a larger. Prepare the two FedEx labels as illustrated in the Appendix of this guide.

#### Sending Envelope Label

1. Your Address. Be sure to fill in your FedEx account number in the upper right corner of section one (1); in the red boxes provided.
2. Leave Blank
3. Fill in address listed on the top of the VISA application form with recipient "The Consular Section"
4. Check "FedEx Standard Overnight"
5. Check "FedEx Envelope"
6. Check "No"
7. Check "Sender"

#### <FEDEX SHIPPING LABEL EXAMPLE HERE>

#### Receiving Envelope Label

This is the label that will be adhered to the envelope your passport will be mailed back with; the envelope that will be inside the envelope you are mailing out.

1. Fill in address listed on the top of the VISA application form. DO NOT put your FedEx account number in the red boxes at the top right of section one (1).
2. Leave Blank
3. Your Address
4. Check "FedEx Standard Overnight"
5. Check "FedEx Envelope"
6. Check "No"
7. Check "Recipient" and fill in your FedEx account number in the space provided

#### <FEDEX RECEIVING LABEL EXAMPLE HERE>

#### Item List (Include the following items inside the shipping envelope)

- VISA Applications (2) with passport photo's glued in the proper box
- Passport
- FedEx Envelope with filled out return shipping label adhered in the proper place
- Cashiers Check or Money Order for the amount needed
- Letter(s) of Invite

Passport Photos (2) = \$15

Visa Application = \$60 - \$100

(Total trip cost to date = \$535 - \$655)

## **TICKET**

As of the publishing of this guide, Relevate Church uses Delta Airlines for flights to and from Ghana. Unless otherwise instructed, you will be responsible for the purchase of your ticket. This section will guide you through the process.

**NOTE: Check with trip planners of Relevate Church for proper airline and flight information. You MUST be on the same flight from New York to Ghana, Ghana to New York, and New York to Atlanta. This restriction is to make sure everyone arrives and returns safely and makes it through customs correctly.**

Information Needed (From Relevate Trip Planners)

Flight information

Date of departure and date of return

Ticket Price

The ticket price will vary based upon supply and demand; and current oil prices. Main cabin tickets can range from \$1100 to \$2000; and even higher.

Purchase the Ticket

You can purchase the flight ticket at [delta.com](http://delta.com)

Make sure "Round Trip" is selected

In the FROM field enter "ATL"

In the TO field enter "ACC"

Enter the date the Relevate Church trip planner has set for leaving Atlanta in the DEPARTURE DATE field and enter the date provided for leaving Ghana in the RETURN DATE field.

Select number of passengers

Select the type of seating desired. The better the seating the higher the price.

Click FIND FLIGHTS

A list of available OUTBOUND flights will appear. Choose the flight numbers that were provided by the Relevate Church Trip Planner. The flight numbers are listed as "DL" and then a numeric number after. Be sure all flight numbers match the one provided to you by the Relevate Church Trip Planner. For example: An outbound trip may consist of two flights (Atlanta to NYC and NYC to Accra). These numbers may be DL 997 and DL 420. Be sure both these numbers match those give to you by the Relevate Church Trip Planner.

Click select for the OUTBOUND flight and you will be given options for RETURN flights. Make sure all flight numbers match those provided by the Relevate Church Trip Planner.

Once you select your flights, fill in all personal information, emergency contact, payment information, etc. You will be given an option to pick your seating for each flight.

**NOTE: Many people like window seats but I suggest isle seating (especially for taller people). Isle seating offers quicker exiting which could be crucial in flight transfers which require check in with customs officials. In America, the flights will load and unload from the front of the plane. In Accra, the flights will load and unload from both the front and rear of the plane. Therefore, for the flights from Atlanta to NYC, Accra to NYC, and NYC to**

**Atlanta, choose seats that are as close to the front of the cabin as possible. For the flight from NYC to Accra, Choose an isle seat as close to the rear of the plane as possible.**

**NOTE: You will be given an option to purchase insurance. This is totally up to you. This insurance will recoup money lost in case you need to cancel the flight. It will also provide emergency transport back if you were to become injured or sick while abroad. You can contact the Relevate Church Trip Planner or Lance Johnson for more information on this option. No matter the information provided, you are responsible for the choice you make.**

Once your ticket is purchase, you will be emailed confirmation of the flight. A copy of this email MUST be supplied to the church. You will need this information at the airport.

Airline Ticket = \$1800 (average)

(Total trip cost to date = \$2335 - \$2455)

## **PHONES AND ELECTRONICS**

### Phones and Tablets

American cell phones do not work in Ghana. If you leave your phone on while in Africa, it will cost you thousands of dollars. If you take your phone, make sure you place it in airplane mode, which disables cell network access. The trip leader will be purchasing a pre-paid phone to share (You are responsible to purchase your own minutes). The hotel provides wifi service which you can use to FaceTime, text, Google chat, etc. with loved ones while at the room.

### Power Outlets

Ghana runs on 220 volt systems; unlike America that is 110 volt. You will need a power converter with the appropriate plug. Do not go cheap on the converter or you may fry any electronics you attempt to charge with it.

The plugs are not the same as we have in America. Ghana uses the Britain and the India plug system. These plug types are called: Type D (India) and Type G (Britain). Most converters come with the Type G plug; which is fortunate since this is the plug used at the hotel in Tamale and the one in Accra.

You can get converters with just one plug or converters with more than one plug, even USB outlets. If you plan on using more than one plug at a time, you may want to think about the multiple plug converters that typically run about \$40. This will save you from needing to pack a power strip.

**NOTE: Some converters only convert the style of plug and not the output voltage. Be sure to purchase a unit that converts from 220 to 110.**

Power converter = \$40

(Total trip cost to date = \$2375 - \$2495)

## **CURRENCY**

You will be provided a list of expenses for in country transportation (flights, buses, etc), hotels, food, etc. You are responsible for acquiring all needed expenses. All money for general expenses will be given to Lance Johnson; or other delegated carrier. It is MUCH easier to pay all bills with one lump sum than to have each person trying to divi up at the time of service.

On top of general expenses, you will want \$100 - \$200 for personal use. This money you will exchange for CIDs and keep. You may want to carry an extra \$100 - \$200 for food in Atlanta and at the airports; or you can carry a credit card.

If you carry a credit card to Ghana, be sure to notify the banking institution of the trip before you go. They will not be able to contact you once you are there.

At the publication of this guide, \$1600 is needed for both general expenses and personal money.

**NOTE: Ghana does not take travelers checks, small bills, old bills, wrinkled bills.**

There is an exchange rate and the higher the bill denomination, newer the bill year, and nicer the bill condition, the better the exchange rate. You want to obtain all one hundred dollar bills (\$100) that are new and in good condition.

Everyone's currency will be exchanged at once, upon arrival in Tamale, by Pastor Joseph while purchasing water.

**NOTE: DO NOT try to exchange on your own - they will cheat you - and make you feel good about it.**

You do not want to use American currency while in Ghana. You can use it at the airport but if you use American currency elsewhere you will not receive an exchange; and possibly be cheated there as well.

Before returning, all un-used money will be collected and donated to the people who helped us through the trip. **DO NOT DO THIS ON YOUR OWN.** Refer to the ETIQUETTE section of this guide.

Pick pockets are alive and well in Ghana; especially at the airport. Do not think that it can not happen to you. Wallets are discouraged. Wear a money belt, a travel wallet, or find a place to stash money around your body. With the proper shirt and pants, you can stash bills in leg pockets of pants and vent zippers of hiking shirts. Be sure to offer yourself a place to carry your passport as well. You do not want to lose this.

General expense and personal money = \$1600 (average)

(Total trip cost to date = \$3975 - \$4095)

## **DRESS CODE**

Different cultures have different customs of dress. We want to adhere to a dress code so we do not offend our host's. At the same time, it's hot... no, I mean HOT; therefore, it's good to know what to wear to remain as cool as possible while maintaining a morally acceptable appearance.

### Men

**NO SHORTS, NO CAMOUFLAGE, NOTHING MILITARY LOOKING**

You may wear a light weight hiking pant with a light weight hiking shirt. You want a material that will wick away moisture, keep you cool, and dry quickly. You may wear jeans but you will hate yourself when it's all said and done.

For that matter, you don't want to wear boots either. Choose a comfortable, light weight, breathable, hiking shoe.

Hiking / Fishing shirts are recommended. Columbia and Cabela's shirts offer zippable vents that can be used to carry money as well.

### Women

#### **NO PANTS and NO SHORT SKIRTS**

Women are to wear dresses or skirts. Leggings, under the dress or skirt, is a common clothing item among locals. It is highly recommended that you wear leggings. Leggings, sprayed with permethrin, provides greater protection against mosquito bites. Leggings also keep you cooler and wick away moisture to prevent chaffing.

No open toe shoes. Remember that every portion of skin left open is susceptible to mosquito bites.

### Hats

You may want to choose a hat. Some like "truckers hats". Some women may prefer a hat more suited to women. I would suggest a hat that will protect the face, neck, and ears.

### Underwear and Socks

You may wear your traditional cotton underwear and socks but there may be some better alternatives for the hot climate and a lot of walking.

If you normally wear cotton, you may want to consider an athletic / hiking underwear and sock that allows wicking; for a number of reasons. Wet cotton underwear can cause chaffing between the legs and is more susceptible to holding odor. Wet cotton socks will keep the feet moist providing the perfect opportunity for athlete's foot, odor, and blisters. By exchanging these garments for wicking materials, you can better prevent these issues.

Another advantage to wicking underwear and socks is if you plan on hand washing and hang drying your clothes in your room, these items dry much faster than cotton.

### Long Sleeve vs. Short Sleeve

While short sleeve shirts provide more ventilation, long sleeve shirts are actually a better choice. The long sleeves will protect more of your skin from mosquito bites and a sun that your skin is just not use to. The covered arms will be blocked by the hot sun and the shirt sleeves will hold moisture which will help cool you. If your cooler, you will not need as much water to remain hydrated.

### Mosquito Repellant

Sawyer sells a clothing spray with PERMETHRIN. This is AMAZING stuff. You will spray your clothes with the solution about two days before you leave for Ghana. The solution will last for about six weeks and through about six washings. Spray everything: underwear, bra's, luggage, etc. Malaria is not a joke... don't think about it just DO IT.

### Jewelry and Accessories

Do not wear expensive jewelry, watches, etc.; unless you want a target painted on you.

### Amount of Clothes

The Relevate Church Trip Planner often recommends enough clothes for a change each day. An eight day trip would require eight changes of clothes. You may be use to wearing a pair of pants two days in America but in Africa your pants will be very dirty and stinky after just one day.

### Washing Options

If you do not want to carry eight days, or your finances will not work for buying eight changes of hiking clothes, there are three options for washing.

You can have your clothes laundered in the laundry service, it does not cost much at all in Tamale. Every couple days you can pay to have your clothes laundered.

Laundry is one option but then there's the "bushman's" option. While your showering at the end of the day use some shampoo, or bar soap, to wash your clothes and hang them up. Hiking clothes dry very fast and will be dry the next day; even in the humid climate.

There is a third option which is to allow one of the pastor's wives to wash your clothes. They consider this an honor and blessing.

**NOTE: Be aware that clothing will be susceptible to getting REALLY, REALLY dirty; with stains that can not be removed. Remember this when choosing what clothing to take with you.**

### **ETIQUETTE**

It should go without saying but be on your best behavior. Remember, things that are acceptable in America may not be acceptable in Ghana.

**NO SMOKING.** This mean ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME. The hotel charges an extra \$100 for smoking and our Christian host's find smoking offensive by professing Christians; which disgraces our church in Ghana.

**DO NOT GIVE ANYTHING TO ANYONE THERE.** Any gifts MUST be given through the group leader. Personally giving gifts can cause issues that can destroy relations between us and them. They need to retain respect for their leader and we need to show respect to ours and let them handle gifts.

### **MARKET PLACE**

During the trip there may be a day or less in which you can go to the market place and purchase a souvenir. **DO NOT GO BY YOURSELF!**

Even looking beyond safety, American's stand out in the crowd there (even the African Americans). They think we are rich and will charge 3 times for an item you wish to purchase. Any market time will be accompanied by a local from Relevate Ghana. The local will negotiate prices and translate for you. If you are good at dickering and dealing just remember the rule of three. The shop owners will triple the cost. If they say 30 CID's, you tell them it's too high and you'll pay 10 CID's. Deal until you are satisfied with the cost.

**NOTE: Remember the exchange rate. CID's are worth just over 1/4 USD. I bought a bowl for 30 CID's which comes out to about \$8. Think about the exchange and deal a price you find reasonable for the item.**

**NOTE: Remember not to purchase anything for the person guiding you in the market place. All gifts must go through the trip leader.**

## **FOOD AND WATER**

### Food and Snacks

While in Ghana, you will only be eating cooked food. The meals you eat will be ate at the hotel restaurant, or restaurant selected by the missions leader. Follow the instructions of your leader so that you order the best tasting and safest foods possible. Failure to follow the instructions of your leader can leave you sick, diseased, or dead. I know we've joked some in this book but this is no joke.

**NOTE: DO NOT eat fruits or vegetables that have not been thoroughly cooked. It seems weird but do not eat anything WITHOUT checking with your guide first.**

If you want to carry some food over to pack in your backpack while out in the villages, I would recommend any snack bar that does not melt. I'm providing a short list of some snack bars that I would recommend: Lara bar (those without chocolate), Payday candy bars, Probar, Balance OUTDOOR (Make sure you get the OUTDOOR Balance bars), Kashi nut bars or trail mix bars (no chocolate), Nature Valley Roasted Nut Crunch Bars.

There are other possibilities for snack bars but be sure to check for melting factor before you take them. The last thing you want is to get out in the hot sun and find your food is a melted mess.

### Water

Your trip guide will be purchasing water from a reputable business upon arrival. Water will be divided out at that point. The water is in large bottles; therefore you may want a water bottle or hydra-pack to transfer the water to.

**NOTE: DO NOT buy water on your own. Some stores will reuse the water bottles and fill with Ghana tap water.**

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### Water

There are other items that some may take. I carry a water filter by Sawyer that can be used connected to my hydra-pack but can also be attached to a water bottle. I also carry water purifying drops. You don't need them but they don't take up much room and I always try to prepare for an emergency.

### Versa-cloth

A "versa-cloth" is simply a four foot by four foot piece of cloth that can be used to lay on the ground to kneel or sit; lay on a stump, rock or seat to sit on; use as a bag, a sling, a towel, a cover, a head wrap, or many other things.

### First Aid Kit

You never know and you rather have first aid from some where your aware of rather than from Ghana. In the first aid kit include moleskin just in case you get blisters on your feet.

### Hand Sanitizer

Your going to be touching people in the villages that are less than sanitary; you WANT hand sanitizer. Purchase a small bottle to carry.

### Electrolytes

Electrolytes (sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium and phosphate) help the body balance the water; thus electrolytes help in the hydration process. You may opt to bring an electrolyte additive to put in your water at various times of the day.

Some people like to take gatorade packs but I'm not too fond of these. They carry as much sugar as a soda and therefore cause the dehydration process in the body. They also contain many other ingredients that are dreadful to the body. Adding electrolytes is simple and you don't need a bunch of chemicals and sugar to do it.

My recommendation for electrolyte replacement would be Nuun tablets. These can be found on Amazon, at REI, and Kroger.

### Eye Drops

Remember that your going to a new country with new plants and lots of dust while being out in the sun. You may very well appreciate that you brought eye drops.

### Allergy Medications

If you have allergic reactions to certain plants, there may be plants in Africa that you are not use to and you may have allergic reactions to. Pack your favorite allergy meds.

### Imodium AD

Before you break out the travelers diarrhea meds, start with Imodium AD.

### Sleep Aid

While on the plane from NYC to Accra and Accra to NYC, you may need some assistance in falling to sleep. Even if you don't typically have trouble, you will be sitting in an almost upright position on a noisy and bumpy plane with little room... you may need them.

## **TIPS AND TRICKS**

**Acclimate yourself.** The Georgia heat holds nothing on Ghana. It's no joke, Ghana is hot. Start acclimating your body early. A few weeks before leaving for Ghana, turn the temperature up in your home, don't run the AC in your car (windows only), and spend time outside. Getting your body use to the heat and less dependent upon AC will make your time in Ghana more bearable.

**Examine your urine.** We've talked about underwear, why not pee? Because of the heat in Ghana, your body will be trying to cool itself with the water within; this water will come out of your body as sweat. If you do not replenish your body with water you can suffer a heat stroke, dehydration, and kidney failure. How do you know how hydrated you are? What color is your pee? The darker your pee the less hydrated you are. As your pee moves to a dark copper color you are working your kidneys hard. Continued lack of hydration will start showing signs of blood in your urine. It's at this point that your kidneys are susceptible to failure. You want your urine to be clear, with a light tint of yellow. Keep track of the color of your urine while in Africa; and it's not a bad idea in the states also.

**Diarrhea.** Underwear, and pee, and poop, oh my... It's highly likely that you may encounter a bout of diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by a number of reasons. Don't start taking Imodium AD as soon as diarrhea starts. Diarrhea is the body using water to dilute something it does not want inside and quickly removing it. Drink plenty of water and let the body do it's job. As soon as you stop the process with Imodium AD, you leave that substance in the body which the body wanted out.

**Airline Seating.** I mentioned it earlier but I want to mention it again because seating can be crucial. For plane transfers, especially where there will be long lines to check in at immigration and customs in both Accra (going to Ghana) and NYC (coming home) you will want to save as much time, and be in front of as many people, as possible. If you are not flying first class, seating is very important to accomplish this task.

In Atlanta and NYC, planes are loaded and unloaded in the front only. If you are sitting in the rear of the plane, you will be one of the last off the plane. In Accra, planes are loaded and unloaded in both the front and rear of the plane. The fastest place to be sitting for exit is either in first class or at the rear of the plane.

What this means is, for flights to NYC and Atlanta, make seating arrangements (at time of ticket purchase) that are as close to the front of the cabin as possible. For flights to Accra, make seating arrangements as close to the rear of the plane as possible.

**Diatomaceous Earth** is an all natural powered form of silica; which is highly beneficial to the body. Diatomaceous Earth, D-Earth or DE for short, is like lubrication for the joints, good for the skin, cleanses stomach, cleanses colon, and many other things. I highly recommend DE because it kills parasites. If you put about a tablespoon in water and drink in the morning before you have any breakfast, this product works wonders. While the power is too fine to hurt humans, the sharp edges of the crystals cleanse the inside of the stomach walls and cut the outer shell, skin, of parasites and worms. If you take this product each day while in Africa, you may avoid the problems I had.

When I returned from Africa I found out that I gained a parasite from somewhere. I had cramps, churning stomach, bloated, and a sore tummy... on top of a serious case of diarrhea. To tackle the parasite and help my body pass it, I drank DE each morning.

**NOTE: Be sure to get food grade DE. There is non-food grade and that is used to clean swimming pools, etc.**

## **PACKING**

There are typically layovers on this trip. This means you may take a flight from Atlanta to New York, then jump on another flight to Accra. Any checked luggage will not be seen until you reach Accra. Anyone who has ever flown or watched a movie, especially a comedy, about flying knows there's an inherent risk of lost or delayed luggage. The following steps will help in planning your packing.

### Carry On

You are able to carry on three items: a carry on luggage, a sweater or coat, a small bag (purse, computer bag, camera bag etc).

As of the publication of this guide, the largest carry on size for Delta Airlines is a maximum of 45 linear inches. This means the length, height, and width can not exceed a total of 45 inches; including all handles and wheels. A standard maximum carry on luggage is 22" X 14" X 9".

Any other bags must be checked and will be loaded in the belly of the plane.

### Restricted and Approved Items

**NO KNIVES!**

TSA does not play. You can log onto [tsa.gov](http://tsa.gov) to check the approval of any item you have a question about.

The trip time is about 20 hours and you will want a few items, as in deodorants, tooth pastes, etc. The following will help guide you to the best, and easiest, possible way to clear the TSA checkpoint.

TSA has a 3-1-1 rule. No toiletry items more than 3.4 oz in size. All toiletry items must be inside one (1), one quart, clear zip-top bag. There is allowed only one (1) bag per person.

Ok, as an example, you will have one (1) clear zip-top bag that is one quart in size. Inside the bag you may have a deodorant, a small mouthwash, small tube of tooth paste, travel tooth brush, small cologne, etc; each containing 3.4 oz or less in size.

You may purchase a TSA approved travel bag at Walmart which includes all items you may need for the trip.

### Medications

Any required medications may be taken on the plane; as long as the packaging is of reasonable size. This means, don't buy a family size bottle of headache medication and want to carry it on the plane. Also, do not buy a family size bottle and transfer some of the contents to a generic bottle. Make sure all medication, prescription and non-prescription, are packaged in it's original packaging.

Most people do not travel this much so you may end up getting travelers diarrhea. There's a reason why Imodium AD, and other anti-diarrhea products advertisements are focused on travel.

You will also want to carry on a travel sized headache medication. Our bodies are typically not use to the pressurized systems located on planes and headaches can occur.

Allergy medications are a plus if you find you are allergic to something in Ghana. They are also a plus on the flight from NYC to Accra as they will help you sleep.

Gum. Yes, on a plane, gum is a medication. You will definitely realize this upon descent.

**NOTE: The flight is about 20 hours long. If you may need the medication within a 20 hour timeframe, take it on the plane.**

### Inside the Carry On

If you are checking luggage, make sure you have at least one FULL change of clothes inside you carry on bag. If you checked luggage is misplaced (airline term for lost), you do not want to be in Ghana Africa with only the clothes on your back.

You will want any camera gear inside your carry on luggage, unless you using the camera bag as one of the extra items allowed. Do not put valuables and money in the checked bag. Keep your money on your person and cameras, tablets, etc in your carry on.

If your packing light weight hiking clothing, these items pack down very small. You may be able to get a couple changes of clothes in the bag. Military often roll their clothes to prevent wrinkles and the items pack tighter because of it. If you do not want to check a bag, you may want to try this option.

All batteries and lighters **MUST** be packed in the carry on luggage.

**NOTE: Carry on availability fills up fast on international flights. They may want to check your bag. Delta will not check bags with electronics. If they want to check you bag, inform them of the value of the contents and ask if they want to insure the bag. They typically will let you carry it on.**

### Women

Ok, this is a delicate subject but one that is needed. Travel, time change, plane flight, all may affect your monthly cycle. Even if you have already been through your cycle and do not plan on your "friend" returning until your back home, pack some emergency rations just in case. Airline toilet paper is fast dissolving and does not work well as a backup.

Also, bring any medication associated with said cycle.

**NOTE: Africa may not have the same stuff you use. So, bring it with you.**

### Checked Luggage

Any items not allowed inside the plane are often allowed in the checked luggage. If you want your favorite knife pack it inside the checked luggage. If your not checking luggage, check to see if you can put all large quantities of toiletries, knives, etc in someone else's checked luggage. Or, have a community checked luggage for all people to add these items to.

You may want to use a TSA approved lock for your checked luggage.

**NOTE: NO GUNS; not even in checked luggage.**

### Example of Packing

I wanted to provide an example of packing so that you can get the best out of your space and make sure you have the majority of what you need if your luggage was to get lost. This example is what I used.

I used a small Draco backpack with pocket for a hydra-pack. The bag is about half of the allowed size for Delta carry on. Just because Delta allows you to carry on their flight does not mean you will be able to carry that bag on the intercontinental flight; their requirements are much smaller; therefore, I like to go as small as possible.

I used two (2) - two gallon zip-lock bags and three - one (1) gallon zip lock bags. I packed my pants in one two gallon bag and my shirts in the other. I packed underwear, socks, sleep gear, wash cloth, and sleeping bag liner in the three one gallon bags. Once the items are in the bag, zip the bag but leave about an inch for air to escape. Roll and squeeze the bag to remove the air and finish zipping while the bag is squeezed. This will create a vacuum pack with your clothes and they will pack much tighter.

I packed these bags in main body of the backpack; along with my GoPro and Canon video camera. In the front pouch is my travel bag purchased from Walmart, my versa cloth, and deet. In the top from pouch is my medications. Pack your tablet in the pouch for the hydra-bladder.

The following items went in a shared checked baggage: flip flops, hat (packs flat), sun glasses, toiletries, sunscreen, couple extra deet, headlight, power converter, hiking first aid kit (with mole skin), and utility knife. The flip flops are the largest item.

Once you arrive at the hotel in Tamale you will unpack your clothes and leave them in the zip-lock bags. This will prevent any unknown critters crawling into your clothes without you knowing. Remove your travel toiletries from the front pouch and your tablet from the hydra-pouch. Then, pack the following items in your back pack: Versa-cloth, medications, snack bars, cameras, first-aid kit, sun glasses, sun screen, headlight, purifying drops, extra deet. Put your hydra-bladder in the proper pocket. Your knife can either be carried in your pocket or in the backpack. You want to carry a copy of your passport, visa, vaccination papers, and flight information in a zip-lock bag on your person. I used a travel wallet that fastens to the belt and slides inside the pants. Some use money belts and some use the various pockets found in hiking pants and hiking shirts.

If you have an extra two gallon zip-lock bag use it to put your dirties into.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- Modesty at all times
- Remember you are representing God and Relevance Church
- Stay in groups at all times
- No attitudes
- NO Shorts
- Stay with your leadership
- NO tobacco use
- ALL foods need to be approved by leadership (Failure to adhere could result in sickness and death)
- ONLY consume sealed bottled water / NO Tap water
- NO Ice in your drinks
- DO NOT drink directly from bottles or cans
- Brush your teeth using sealed bottled water
- Do not allow water to enter you mouth while showering
- Insect repellent must be applied at all times
- Wear flip-flops in the shower and walking on the floors of your room. DO NOT walk barefoot.
- Take your Malaria pills every day
- DO NOT give your personal information to anyone
- DO NOT give gifts or money to anyone
- DO NOT let anyone at the Accra airport touch or help you with your luggage
- Spray your clothes with permethrin two days before you leave on your trip
- WE will change your money. DO NOT try to exchange your currency on your own
- Make sure all luggage is marked so that it's easy for you to identify
- If security checks your bags while in Africa, let leadership do the communicating
- DO NOT let your emotions over rule your common sense. This include anger and compassion.
- This is a mission field; do not complain. Be appreciative that God has included you in His work.
- Stay away from ALL animals
- DO NOT make any promises.
- If God informs you of something, take it to leadership before acting.
- Do not interfere or interject on how they discipline their children in their culture
- They will lie and manipulate to try to deceive
- Have a copy of your VISA on you at all times
- Keep up with your items; especially the expensive. Set them down and they can come up missing
- DO NOT have any expectation on this trip
- Listen to leadership at ALL times
- Disobedience will result in an immediate flight home (1 Sam 15:23)

## CHURCH DOCUMENTS

The following items are needed by the church for either legal reasons or precautionary reasons. Please be sure to leave the following items with the church in case there's any problems while abroad. Failure to do so could cause an unplanned extended stay.

- Release Form
- Application
- Copy of Passport
- Copy of Visa
- Copy of drivers license
- Copy of shots
- Copy of flight documents
- Copy of Passport (For U.S. trip guide)
- Copy of Visa (For U.S. trip guide)

## FINAL CHECK LIST

### One week before

#### Bought / Used

- Spray clothing, luggage, everything cloth, with Permethrin

### On your person

You will want these items on your person at all times, even in flight.

#### Bought / Packed

- Passport
- Passport - Color Copy
- Pen
- Cash
- Medications
- Drivers License
- Immunization Records
- Flight Information
- Africa Packet or Guide supplied by Relevate Church (HIGHLY NEEDED)

### Packing List

#### Bought / Packed

- Passport - Color Copy
- Lightweight Pants (Men)
- Sneakers
- Flip flops for shower
- Hiking Shirts
- Hat
- Sun Glasses
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Toiletries (soap, shampoo)
- Sunscreen
- 90% plus Deet
- Flashlight or Headlight
- Dresses (Women)

- Leggings (optional)
- International Power Converter
- Two (2) Gallon Zip Lock Bags (Qty 2-3)
- Wash Cloth (Not provided by hotel)

### Carry On Bag

#### Bought / Packed

- Clear zip-top one quart bag
- Travel Deodorant
- Travel Toothpaste
- Disposable Toothbrush
- Headache Meds
- Allergy Meds
- Imodium AD
- Motion Sickness Meds
- Hand Sanitizer
- At Least One Change of Clothes
- Camera Gear
- Female Supplies (including any medications)
- Communication Items (Tablet, etc)
- Deet (98% - travel size (3.4 oz or less) to be applied before leaving the plane)

### Optional Items

#### Bought / Packed

- Extra pair of sneakers (in case yours get wet)
- Eye drops (in case of eye irritation of plants, sand, sun, etc)
- Electrolytes (Gatorade packets, Nuun tablets, etc)
- Power Strip (If your inverter only has one plug and you want to plug in more than one item)
- Diatomaceous Earth (Food Grade)
- Sleep Aid (To help you sleep on the flight from NYC to Accra)

## **2. FLIGHT TO GHANA**

It's time to head to Ghana. Are you excited? The trip is exciting and tiring. It's also filled with unknowns for those who've never flown and/or have never left the country. If your like me, the last thing I want to do is mess up in a way that will make my time more aggravating, or worse yet... make my time extended at the request of foreign officials. I don't think any guide will totally eliminate the newness nor all the frustration but I pray this guide will at least give you a heads up on what to look for and how to manage different legs of the journey.

## **LEAVING ATLANTA AND AMERICA**

### Check into Your Flight

For Delta Airline flights you can check in 24 hours in advance. Airlines often overbook the flights. If there are 200 seats on the flight, the first 200 to check in are guaranteed the seat. It's good to check in the day before your flight. You can do this on the computer at [delta.com](http://delta.com) but I suggest downloading the Delta app because it will come in handy in Accra for your return flight.

### Van from Church to Atlanta

When flying out there is a lot of luggage. Typically, the church is sending supplies and using check luggage spots. Therefore, if you have two check luggage spots and only one luggage to check, the church will use your other spot. If you have a spare piece of luggage, it may come in

handy to use in order to ship the supplies. Check with the trip guide to get any further information.

Since there are so many people and so many pieces of luggage a van is often rented or donated. If the van is not donated, the cost of the van is divided among those flying out. This cost ranges at about \$40 per person.

#### Atlanta Hotel

Chances are your flight is sometime in the morning. This means the team will stay at a hotel close to the airport and catch the airport shuttle the morning of the flight. That hotel will range anywhere from \$120 to \$200. This cost can be split if you share the room with another team member.

#### Checking Luggage

Once in the airport, if you have not checked in the day before, you will need to check in by using the kiosk at the entrance. The computer will ask a series of questions then ask that you scan the barcode on your passport.

**<PASSPORT BARCODE EXAMPLE HERE>**

**NOTE: When asked how many pieces of luggage to check, only count the pieces going under the plane. Do not count the pieces of luggage you are carrying on the plane with you.**

**NOTE: If a member of the team or the church has asked you to transport items in your check luggage, do not mark “Yes” to the question of “Has anyone asked you to carry an item in your luggage”. They are only concerned with people you don’t know and marking “Yes” will cause more stress than it’s worth.**

Once you have gotten your boarding passes, printed at the kiosk, you will head to the counter to check your luggage. At the counter they will check your boarding passes, passport, and visa. They will tag your luggage and take it from you. They will place two barcode stickers on the back of your NYC boarding pass. These barcodes are for positive identification of luggage upon arrival in Accra. **Be sure not to lose this ticket.**

From here you wait for the team and head to the TSA security check point.

#### TSA

Ok, we are talking about the US government so be prepared that the instructions of this guide can change at any moment depending upon the head of the TSA, current terrorist threat, the officers stubbornness, your stubbornness, etc.

**NOTE: TSA and other checkpoints are smoother with a minimal amount of items in your pockets and shoes that easily slip off and back on.**

The easiest way to clear checkpoints is to have everything in your backpack. Have a sandwich size ziplock bag to place all loose items in (keys, chapstick, change, etc). Place the bag, filled with the items, and your money belt in your backpack and leave them there until you clear all security checkpoints.

Cell phones and tablets do not have to be turned on unless you receive a quick pass or are specifically asked by the officer. Laptops must be turned on. If you received a quick pass you are probably not reading this guide because you’ve done this many, many times. Place your

phone and tablet in the tray with other smaller items. Place larger items, like carry on luggage and camera cases, on the rollers.

Follow the instructions of the officers and be polite.

Once you are past TSA in Atlanta, you are past the security checkpoints. If you wish, you can put your money belt back on and put your pocket items back in your pocket. Save the ziplock for later because you have many checkpoints before you return home.

### NYC

Upon arrival in NYC airport, your checked luggage will automatically be transferred from the arriving flight to your Ghana flight. You will not see your checked luggage at this point.

You will not be leaving the terminal area, therefore you will not have to clear TSA again.

Relax, have a bite, talk, board, and get ready to leave the country.

**NOTE: At about an hour before boarding the boarding agent will be checking everyone's passport, visa, and boarding pass. This can be done for the entire group by one or two members of the group. Go ahead and appoint the one or two members, preferably experienced in the travel, and give all passports and boarding passes to the individual(s).**

### Flight to Ghana

Your flight to Ghana is a long nine to ten hours over night. If you listened to the advice of the guide, you have an aisle seat which will give you a little more leg room and the ease of getting up, stretching, and walking.

**NOTE: A tip that a frequent flyer friend taught me was to take the small pillow provided by the airline and set it on the seat. Sit on the pillow and position it just in front of your tailbone. This will help your tail endure the long flight.**

**NOTE: This is the leg of the trip that the sleep aid may be needed. It is often hard to sleep on planes. If you don't, you will be exhausted upon arrival in Ghana.**

**NOTE: Do not lose your boarding pass. Your luggage claim barcodes are on the back and you WILL need those in Accra.**

### Food and Entertainment

This flight has three meals, one hot and two cold, along with several snacks and drinks.

**NOTE: Be sure to drink water during the flight. Flying dehydrates the body.**

You will be given a set of headphones. The screen facing you is your own personal entertainment center. Games and movies are free.

### Immigration Paperwork

Either just before take off or shortly after, the flight attendants will pass out two immigration forms to be filled out during the flight. If you're sitting in the rear, you may or may not receive a copy. Sometimes they run out. It's ok, there will be forms available once you arrive in Accra.

If you received the paperwork, be sure to fill it out on the plane. It will make clearing customs much quicker. You will need the information packet given by the Relevant Church Mission

Coordinator, or that included in this packet. Do not fret mistakes, they really don't look at this paperwork too hard.

### Approach to Ghana

Upon your approach to Ghana position your passport and vaccination card so they are easy to obtain.

### Ghana

Once you exit the plane, if there are more of the team on the plane, wait on the tarmac for the other members. One may have done this before and will help guide you. Some may have already entered the building.

Right after entering the building you will come to your first check point. You will need the letter sized form at this point along with your passport and vaccination card. Have these three items in hand.

### Immigration

After passing the first check point is the long line for immigration. At this point you will need the small card that you filled out. If you did not receive the card, you can fill one out at the desk's located before entering the line.

**NOTE: Be sure to follow the instruction of the officers. Pay attention. Watch others ahead of you to see what they are doing.**

### Picking up Luggage

If members of your team have already cleared immigration then move on to the luggage check point. Or, if there are members behind you that have yet to clear, especially those who have done this before, clear the immigration area and wait on the team.

All luggage will be picked up off a conveyor and loaded onto a series of luggage carts. You want all the luggage together to help clear customs. They are less likely to stop the team if there is a pile of luggage.

Before leaving the luggage claim area an employee will check your luggage to make sure you don't have the wrong items. This is where you need your luggage claim barcodes on the back of your boarding pass from NYC to Accra.

**NOTE: While waiting on luggage it would be a good time to apply some deet**

### Customs

Once you clear your luggage, you will go through the glass doors and down a ramp to the customs location.

**NOTE: The team MUST stay tightly together. DO NOT lag behind and DO NOT run ahead.**

There is no one to check in with at customs. As you head down the ramp you will see doors headed to the outside. To your left is the customs officers - **BUT DON'T LOOK!** The team should be talking to each other and moving swiftly towards the doors headed outside. They are only going to check you if they stop you. This means you act like you know what your doing, like you done this dozens of times before, and the team swiftly walks out talking. Walk right out the door into the arms of Pastor Wisdom. You will know him because he will know a few members of your team and will greet you with warm smiles and hugs.

### Luggage Handlers

**DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO PUSH YOUR LUGGAGE CART OR TOUCH YOUR LUGGAGE.**

There will be guys with official looking work shirts waiting just outside the door. They will follow you and even come to the hotel van. They will be trying to take your luggage cart from you and trying to assist in loading the luggage in the van. **DO NOT ALLOW THEM.**

In a not so kind way tell them “NO”. Talk boldly and talk firmly and tell them “NO”. Use the open palm and blocking hand gestures if they reach for the luggage or cart and firmly tell them “NO”

### Accra Hotel

It's quite possible that Pastor Wisdom, though the instruction of the Missions Guide, purchased one hotel room for the purpose of freshening up. This is done in pairs while the others wait by the pool.

**NOTE: If you take a shower be sure to not let the water get in your mouth. Do not brush with nor rinse your brush with the water.**

**NOTE: If you wish to purchase some water you can exchange small bills at the bank inside the hotel, located on the right just after you entered the hotel entrance.**

### Flight to Tamale

After everyone get's freshened up, you head back to the Accra airport to catch a flight to Tamale. These tickets were purchased in advance and are in the care of Pastor Wisdom.

**NOTE: Remember to firmly and boldly tell luggage handlers “NO”**

Once inside the airport you will pass your passports to Pastor Wisdom and an experienced member of the team. Pastor Wisdom and that member will check your luggage and obtain your boarding passes. These will be handed to you once the full task is complete.

At this point there may be only one gate so you may need to wait in a room until shortly before boarding. Go ahead and place all your pocket items in the zip lock bag and put the bag, along with your money belt, in your backpack. Keep your passport and vaccination card on hand.

From this waiting room the flight will be called and you will head to the security checkpoint. While in line, you will be asked for your passport, your boarding pass, and your vaccination card. This may be done at once or within a couple requests.

Once your cleared the checkpoint you will wait in the terminal area until boarding.

### Tamale

Once your flight lands in Tamale you will enter the terminal from the tarmac and claim your luggage from the luggage belt. Pastor Joseph and family will meet you there.

You will be inclined to take some pictures but photography is illegal in the terminal; even though it's just walls, a couple pictures, and a sign saying no photography.

## **3. LIFE IN GHANA**

At this point I'm not going to ruin any surprises that may await you. Not that I know everything going on. Each trip has it's own element of challenges and rewards. Just remember the acronym T.I.A. You don't know what that means? You will after spending some time in Africa.

### Hotel

You've arrived at the hotel in Tamale. Pastor Joseph, Wisdom, and the Missions Leader will work to get you checked into your room.

Once you receive your room key, take your luggage and get settled in. Check your AC while in the room.

Everyone will meet in the restaurant after getting their things to their room. The restaurant is located in the middle of the parking lot, between the two main buildings.

### Food

Three meals a day are paid for. You will only be eating in places that are approved. Any other place may make you sick so stick with the Missions Leader.

### **DO NOT EAT RAW FRUITS AND VEGETABLES!!!!**

Upon ordering your food, be sure to ask the server if there's any vegetables on the prepared food - they know what you mean. If you order a hamburger, order it plain. If you order fish, be sure to have them leave off the tomatoes. Some sandwiches come with raw vegetables mixed into the "salad" of the sandwich. Be sure to ask your server before ordering sandwiches. Fruit drinks are diluted with water. They will say it's bottled water but it's not. Your safer to avoid the cold fruit drinks. Hot coffee and hot tea is fine to drink. Once the water is boiled it is safe. Fruits are fine to eat if they have been pealed. I would recommend the pineapple; it's far better than that we get in the U.S.

Pastor Joseph will purchase a case of water for each person. You will ration your water for the week, purchasing any extra you need after the case is gone.

### Money

While he is getting the water, Pastor Joseph will exchange your money for you. While in the restaurant, after settling into your room, determine how much money you want to exchange. During our trip, most everyone used less than \$200. This included extra drinks, food, souvenir money kept, and the market place in Accra. The amount you need will depend upon your eating, drinking, and purchasing habits or needs. Any money left over is not exchanged back into U.S. currency; instead it's donated to Pastor Joseph and Pastor Wisdom for the assistance in our travels.

### **TIPS WHILE IN TAMALE**

While in the villages, do not accept anything from anyone. We once had a young lady accept two marriage proposals by accident. If someone is handing you something, be sure you know what is going on before you accept.

Keep your mouth shut while in the shower and use the bottled water for brushing your teeth.

If the door knob is loose on the bathroom door, be careful when closing the door or you may be locked in. Yes, this has happened.

A few things you need to understand:

- a. The internet may or may not work

- b. The water may or may not work
- c. The electricity shuts down at various, unscheduled, times. When it does, AC may not come back on by itself.

Women are typically not allowed in the chief's hut.

There are bathroom at the hotel... that's about it. The next best thing is in the city and that is three walls about four feet high. In the villages you may have a tree; sometimes in the middle of the village with people standing around. This means it's good to use it before you leave the hotel; especially if you are a woman or need to go "number two".

Do not eat ANYTHING at the villages, even if it's wild edibles that they eat. If flies laid eggs on the item you may get worms.

Do not touch ANY animals

No filming of pregnant women. This is a religious ritual so please be courteous.

No filming of naked adults or women breast feeding. It can not be used in a video therefore there's no need to shoot it anyway.

Do not leave ANY items laying about - they WILL come up missing.

Use hand sanitizer upon leaving a village.

Do not film road blocks or police officers at any time. If you are filming out of the van, turn off the camera before you approach a road block.

Check to see if anyone has purchased medications for Malaria and stomach bugs. These meds are cheaper in Tamale than in Accra and should be purchased by a designated person by the last night in Tamale.

### **3. RETURNING HOME**

I pray you had a rewarding time while in Ghana; but now it's time to return home.

#### Tamale

The flight typically leaves Tamale early in the morning. Like in Accra, Pastor Wisdom and Pastor Joseph, along with the Missions Leader will get your baggage checked and boarding passes issued. They will need your passport for this.

Once you receive your boarding pass, you will remain in the main lobby until your flight is called. Any pocket items and your money belt can be stored in your carryon to make your time at the security checkpoint quicker.

When they call your flight number, you will continue through the security checkpoint. You will need to have your passport and boarding pass handy.

#### Accra

Once in Accra, you will be met by vans from the Accra hotel. You will be staying the night in preparation of early departure on the next day.

Remember to not let anyone touch your baggage nor push the luggage cart. Be firm, be bold, say "NO".

After checking into the hotel there may be time to go to the market place. This will be done as a group only. A taxi will be hired to drive the crew and Pastor Wisdom to the market.

Upon seeing your white skin, even lighter blacks compared to them, the price of all items increases by three. If an item is normally 10 CID's the American's price is 30 CID's. The market place is a bartering place. Work them back down starting at one third the price given, telling them the price given is "too high".

You may also want to reason the price with yourself based upon American prices. In other words, They may say a shirt is 50 CID's. You can get them down but if you pay the 50 CID's that is about \$14 USD. If the shirt is worth \$14, then don't worry about what you paid, be happy. But, even if you can't get them down to 17 CID's (1/3 the price given) then if you pay 30 CID's you still got it for about \$8 USD and you can be very happy about that.

If your not good with bartering, stick with Pastor Wisdom or someone who is good.

**NOTE: Be sure to check into your flight from Accra sometime while at the hotel the day before your flight. You can do this from the Delta app I had you download earlier in the guide.**

**NOTE: For the next day, plan on wearing shoes that are easy to remove and put back on for security checkpoints. Also, have your trip packet, or this guide, handy as you will need your Ghana contact info at the Accra airport.**

#### Flight back to America

Time to check into the Accra airport and head back home. You will be waiting in line to check your luggage. As your waiting, you will be handed two forms to fill out. The main form is the card that is similar to the immigration card you filled out on the flight into Accra. You will need your Ghana contact information from the trip packet or this guide; which ever the Missions Leader determines. It's in this line that you will have to clear immigration and customs where they will ask for the filled out card and your passport.

After clearing the two, Pastor Wisdom will help assist in checking the luggage and getting boarding passes.

While Pastor Wisdom and the Missions Leader are getting passes, pack all pocket items and money belt in your carryon luggage leaving your passport and vaccination card available.

Once you have your boarding passes, the group will head upstairs to the security checkpoint. Have your passport, boarding pass, and vaccination card handy.

You will have two security check points to clear. One will be cleared just after acquiring your boarding pass. Once you are through that check point, if there is time, the team may check into the first class room where there is free food and drinks. Access to this room cost \$20 USD. The first class lounge is located through the shop and to the left; up the stairs.

**NOTE: After the first check point, all money used is USD although they will still take CID.**

Once your flight is called, you will head to the second checkpoint. At this security check point you WILL be searched. They will ask you to empty your pockets and they will go through your carry-on luggage. Be polite and assist in any way they ask.

The plane flight from Accra to NYC is identical to the flight from NYC to Accra. There may be only a few differences. One, it may be entirely during the day. Two, It may be about one hour longer. Three, there are no immigration forms to fill out for U.S. citizens.

**NOTE: This would be a good time to dwell on what has happened. Think about how what you've discovered will affect your life at home and think about how to apply those lessons to you life.**

### Landing in NYC

You are arriving at the first port of entry and therefore will have to clear immigration and customs. The following is the pattern and guide to accomplishing the task.

You may or may not be accompanied by someone in the party so use this as a guide.

Follow the signs to immigration. Once in the immigration area, look for the U.S. citizen line. Once you make it through the line you will be presented with a kiosk for checking in. You will need your passport. Follow the directions being careful to answer all questions correctly. You will be taking a "selfie" of yourself at the kiosk. Use the kiosk camera and not the one on your phone. It's a bit awkward as your looking in one direction and handling a button in the other. Be sure the picture is good before continuing. Any portion that is not quite right will get you called into the extra room. Yes, this exists because I was called there from a bad picture.

Look at the form that prints and notice if there is a black X on the form. If so, move to the line that states forms with a X. Otherwise, get in the line for the forms with a O.

Follow the instructions of the officers and answer any questions they may have. Once certain question is the reason for visiting Ghana. The answer is tourism.

**NOTE: DO NOT USE THE CELL PHONE IN IMMIGRATION AREA - DON'T EVEN PICK IT UP.**

If you get called into the extra room, you still will not be able to contact the other members of your party. Your time there should be short as U.S. citizens are pushed to the head of the line.

Once you clear immigration you come to luggage claim. Some of the party may already be there and locating luggage.

When everyones luggage is acquired, the team will move to customs. Customs is straight back from luggage claim and to the left. You will notice a series of roped off areas for lines. Pay attention to the officers on which line they direct you to. You will need your passport so have it handy. If they tell you to go on, move through the double doors on the other side of the large desk area. If you are told to go on, do not head toward the large desk area. Move swiftly out the door and wait for the rest of the team there. If they tell you to move to the desk area, your baggage will be searched.

Once everyone is through the customs check and out the door, move to the left, around the wall, and hand your luggage back to the airport workers. You will then continue to head toward your terminal area. This will likely be up a set of stairs, a ride on the train, down a set of stairs, across the road, inside a building, then up to the TSA line.

This TSA line is no different from all the others. If your pocket items are not in your bag already, put your items in a ziplock and place it, along with your money belt, in you carry-on luggage. The rest you should be use to by this point.

Once you are past the TSA checkpoint, follow the lead of the Missions Leader. Decisions will be made based upon the amount of time until the next flight.

Atlanta

Once you arrive in Atlanta, you will be met by a church member. Luggage will be acquired at the luggage claim and you will start your ride to the church.

**APPENDIX**

(Editors note: Each item to be expanded to full page few before publication)

**MISSION TRIP APPLICATION**

For church records

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Current  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship (Country): \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Issue Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status:  Single  Engaged  Married  Separated  Divorced

Sex:  Male  Female Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please visit a physician or a travel clinic 4-8 weeks prior to your trip departure date. With the help of your physician, you must appropriately fill out the following information, receive the necessary vaccination for international travel, and discuss any needed medications for your trip (Malaria tablets and Travelers Diarrhea tablets are recommended).

### Physical Examination Information (To be completed by physician):

Lung Sounds: \_\_\_\_\_ Pulse: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Pressure: \_\_\_\_\_ Rhythm: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Pregnant?: \_\_\_\_\_ Miscellaneous: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies? \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Scars or Birth Marks? \_\_\_\_\_

Immunization Information (Date Received):

Yellow Fever: \_\_\_\_\_ Typhoid: \_\_\_\_\_ Polio: \_\_\_\_\_

Hepatitis A: \_\_\_\_\_ Tetanus: \_\_\_\_\_ Meningitis: \_\_\_\_\_

Hepatitis B: \_\_\_\_\_ Diphtheria: \_\_\_\_\_ TB Skin Test: \_\_\_\_\_

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR): \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

List of antipsychotics and all current medications (Names and Dosage):

Pertinent Medical History:

## AFFIDAVIT OF PURPOSE

One form per household signed by head of household

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) hereby avow that I personally will be traveling expressly for medical, humanitarian, or religious missionary purposes, and not for either business or leisure.

I also waive all liability and claims of any kind against Lions Gate Ministry Internship, Relevance Church, and Lance Johnson. I additionally agree that I am traveling entirely on my own risk; and assume all responsibility for, and not limited to, health, finance, safety, and loss of life.

As a demonstration of validity of this affirmation, I am hereby furnishing the name and address of the organization I'm traveling with, and not holding liable, below:

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Traveler (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADDRESSES

All Addresses are subject to change. Confirm with the Relevate Church Trip Planner for further information:

Pastor Joseph Yaro (Relevate Church Tamale)

Pastor Joseph Konlanbik Yaro  
C/O Post Office Box 444  
Tamale Northern Ghana - West Africa  
Cell Phone(s): 233-208293854  
233-245345798

Hotel Mariam (Hotel in Tamale)

Hotel Mariam  
Post Office Box 2363  
Tamale Northern Ghana  
Tel: 233-03720-25446  
233-03720-23548  
Fax: 233-03720-25556  
Website: [www.hotelmariam.com](http://www.hotelmariam.com)

email: [info@hotelmariam.com](mailto:info@hotelmariam.com)

Relevate Church Ghana

Relevate Church Ghana  
Tamale-Katariga West  
C/O Post Office Box 444  
Tamale N/R