

GO LEARN RESPOND



Our mission is to improve the future of children by meeting their educational, emotional and physical needs in a biblically based environment.

Liberia
Mission Team Book
2017

Serve The Children
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INTRODUCTION

Too often, short-term mission trips emphasize the adventure of the trip versus the impact on the people to be served. If you are looking for a relaxing vacation, safari tour, mountain trek or gourmet food, then you are going to the wrong place. We want to give hope and a future to these children.



Liberia is an English-speaking country located on the western coast of Africa. This area of West Africa has a tropical climate consisting of a dry season and a rainy season. The rainy season lasts from late May into October, which is when our teams typically visit.



Temperatures range from 68-97°F, although it can feel much warmer on sunny, humid days and cooler during stormy weather.

The team will stay at our Sinkor School in the capitol city of Monrovia. It is a beachfront location in an urban setting. Tidal action is very strong here so swimming is not permitted. Many

visitors struggle with the heat. Electricity is available when the school generator is working or city generated power is available. Running water is sometimes available so we fill the 50 gallon drums in each bathroom. Some visitors are uncomfortable with the lizards, mice, spiders, flies and cockroaches that are common in the area.

With little effort, you will fall in love with the people of Liberia. The Christians there have a deep faith in God drawn from years of struggle. They will sacrifice to make you more comfortable.



Some of you might be asking, *"What can I do in Liberia?"* We ask you the question, *"What do you want to do in Liberia?"* Your very presence makes an impact on the children and adults whom we serve. Education teams, medical and dental teams, recreation, hygiene skills, singing, skits, pastor and teacher workshops; share with us what you are interested in doing and we will try to find a place to match your skills and desires. Our short-term trips make an impact by meeting direct needs and communicating our care and support. But the long-term needs of the children in our schools are met by dedicated people here in the U.S. working throughout the year to raise funds, network with other agencies, and pass along the vision of our work in Liberia. It is our hope that the impact of your trip will continue long after you return as you tell the story of your own journey.

Pray. If God leads you, come with us to Liberia. Come prepared for an experience that will change your life if you let it. All we ask of you is a willing heart and a servant's hands.

History of Liberia Dr. Doug Collier

Liberia's history as a country began in the United States. In 1817, a group of influential Americans led by James Monroe (5th United States President), Francis Scott Key, Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson and others formed the American Colonization Society for the purpose of sending freed American slaves to Africa.¹ They had mixed reasons for forming the Society. The slave holders wanted to remove freed slaves from the United States out of fear. They were afraid that freed slaves would influence other slaves with their ideas of freedom, which could lead to a revolt similar to what the French experienced in Haiti and what occurred in Virginia. They were also concerned about potential economic ruin, since their farming economy was based on slavery.

Other members, mainly Quakers, wanted to evangelize Africa. Their goal was to send freed slaves back to Africa so they could lead the heathen there to a saving knowledge of Christ.² However, the Quakers did not consider the reality of the situation. African slaves came from many different areas of the continent and the freed slaves were more American than African. Most of them were born in America and had no knowledge about life in Africa. They were also no longer immune to some of the African diseases that their parents were.

Nevertheless, a ship carrying seventy-seven former American slaves left the United States for Africa in 1820. It arrived on the west coast of Africa in what is now the country of Sierra Leone.³ The freed slaves were not used to the tropical climate or the diseases and many succumbed to malaria. They decided to move to a more hospitable area and sailed south. They eventually landed on an island on the west coast of Africa, naming it Providence Island. They later moved to a neighboring island in an attempt to escape the mosquitoes. This they named Bushrod Island after George Bushrod Washington, the nephew of George Washington, who was a Supreme Court Justice and President of the American Colonization Society.

Eventually, with a \$100,000 grant from the United States Congress, they purchased land on a hill overlooking a small harbor across the river from Bushrod Island. They named the city they built there Monrovia, after President James Monroe. Monrovia, which means "village of Monroe" eventually became the capital of Liberia⁴.

Many of the transported slaves considered America to be their home, not Africa, since the United States was the only home they had known since birth. The influence of their American heritage still exists in Liberia. There are many southern style homes, as well as names for places that are very familiar to us, such as Maryland County, Mississippi and Louisiana in Sinoe County and the James River.

In addition to the freed slaves from America who settled in Liberia, the United States and British Navies diverted captured slave ships to Liberia and unloaded the Africans there. These freed Africans were called Congos. Unfortunately, many of the Congos became indentured to the American Liberians.

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Claude A. Clegg III, *The Price of Liberty*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 32.

² Clegg, 33.

³American Colonization Society. Available from <http://personal.denison.edu/~waite/liberia/history/acs.htm>

⁴ United States State Department. Available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm>.

Liberia became an independent country on July 26, 1847.⁵ It is one of the only two countries in Africa that have never been colonies of a European nation. Britain and France recognized Liberia as an independent country immediately, but the United States did not recognize Liberia until 1862. Congress was not ready to give that much recognition to black men until President Abraham Lincoln (a member of the American Colonization Society) signed the law recognizing Liberia and allowing a Liberian ambassador to come to Washington DC. Liberia is slightly larger than the state of Tennessee.

Liberia used the US dollar as its currency until 1985.⁶ The US dollar is still the currency of choice when purchasing anything. Liberian currency only has \$5, \$10, \$50 and \$100 bills. Liberians prefer the US dollar over their dollar (called LD's) since the LD is valued much lower than the US dollar.

During World War II, Liberia was an important ally for America, allowing the United States to establish an air base there. Planes flew from Florida to Brazil, then to Liberia and onward to Egypt and India. The United States also operated a large hospital in Liberia which served Americans wounded in the African campaign.

Liberia was a large supporter of United States operations against the Soviet influence in Africa during the cold war as well. The country was the main base for CIA operations in Africa⁷ and allowed construction of the Voice of America radio station for African broadcasts.

The Liberian economy relied heavily on the mining of iron ore and on the export of natural rubber prior to the civil war. Liberia was a major exporter of iron ore on the world market. In the 1970s and 1980s, iron mining accounted for more than half of Liberia's export earnings. Following the coup d'état of 1980, the country's economic growth rate slowed down because of a decline in the demand for iron ore on the world market and the political upheavals in Liberia.⁸

For a few years in the 1970s, Liberia's per capita income was equivalent to that of Japan. Liberia is now ranked by the World Bank as among the very poorest countries in the entire world. Liberia needs peace and stability, not only to protect human rights and make a better life possible for its citizens, but also to allow economic progress to take place.⁹

The origins of Liberia's civil war date back to its inception. Liberia was founded with the slogan, "The love of liberty brought us here." But the love of liberty was not consistent with the settlers' treatment of the native Africans who lived in what was to become Liberia. The freed American slaves that arrived settled mainly in groups on the coast. Most of them had a basic education. According to Stephen Ellis, a senior researcher at the Afrika –Studiecentrum, Leiden University, these

"...elite families were intensely proud of their Christian heritage and the American-style institutions of government and culture which marked them out from the

⁵ Arthur Kulah, Liberia Will Rise Again, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 19.

⁶ Kulah, 20.

⁷ Author's personal knowledge.

⁸ United States Department of State web site accessed 6 Feb 2008, available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm>

⁹ Global Security. Liberian Economy, accessed 6 Feb 2008, available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/liberia/economy.htm>

despised "country people" or "tribal people," the name generally applied to Liberians of non-American origin."¹⁰

"Country people" were not allowed voting rights or other privileges of citizenship until 1951, even though Congos were. It was injustice like this that opened the door for the first war lord of Liberia, Samuel Doe, to seize power in 1980. Doe was an illiterate sergeant in the Liberian army who led the coup which resulted in the murder of the elected president, William Tolbert.¹¹ Doe declared himself a type of Christ and was the first leader of Liberia who could not trace his heritage to America. He began an aggressive purge of all descendants of American-Liberians and members of the Liberian tribes that did not support him. This further aggravated hostilities and led to a horrific civil war.

In December 1989, a small group of armed men trained in Libya and led by Charles Taylor crossed the border into Liberia from the neighboring country of Ivory Coast.¹² Charles Taylor was a Liberian with American ancestry. He worked in the Doe administration but fled to the United States when he allegedly was caught diverting funds for his own use. In the United States, he was arrested as a thief and was being held in jail when he escaped and eventually made his way to Libya.

When Taylor and his men entered Liberia that December, it marked the start of the fourteen-year civil war that destroyed Liberia. Doe, Taylor and other war lords looted the natural resources of Liberia (diamonds, timber, iron ore and rubber) to finance their war efforts and enrich themselves. They destroyed the infrastructure of the country, terrorizing and massacring anyone in their path. Taylor spread his terror to Sierra Leone and the movie "Blood Diamonds" is a direct result of his influence there.

Liberia has recovered some basic utility services such as running water in some parts of Monrovia and generator produced electricity. The electrical distribution system from the dam that served Monrovia was destroyed during the war and has not been rebuilt. The telephone system no longer works (cell phones are the only system of communications available) and a postal system has been re-started but the reliability of this system is in question. There are no fire or ambulance services, few medical clinics or hospitals are operating (and the average Liberian cannot afford this service anyway),¹³ during the war 75% of the schools were destroyed¹⁴ and few have been rebuilt.

65% of Liberia's estimated four million people are under 21 years of age¹⁵. These children and young adults have known nothing but war. For fourteen years until the war ended in 2003, Liberians had to be ready to run away from their homes at a moment's notice when armed bands charged through, killing and looting. Over 250,000 Liberians, most of them civilians, died in the war. More than one million people (over one third of the population) were displaced from their homes.¹⁵ A major brain drain occurred during the war and this has a big impact on modern day Liberia and its future. An estimated 450,000 wealthy and educated Liberians immigrated to the United States during the war.

¹⁰ Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 43.

¹¹ History of Liberia. Available from <http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/liberia.html>.

¹² History of Liberia. Available from <http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/liberia.html>.

¹³ United Nations/World Bank, *Liberia Joint Needs Assessment*, (February 2004), 51.

¹⁴ United Nations Humanitarian Division, *Liberia CAP 2006*, (October 3, 2005), 21.

¹⁵ CIA World Fact Book. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html>.

In 1997, after more than a dozen peace and power sharing deals failed to end the war, Charles Taylor was elected President of Liberia. His campaign slogan was basically, "I killed your ma, I killed your pa, a vote for me is a vote for peace." Liberians were tired of war and they were afraid that if Charles Taylor, who was the biggest war lord and controlled over half of the country, was not elected president, he would go back to fighting. He won the presidency in a landslide, but the fighting did not stop for long.

Taylor purged the country of anyone that opposed him. He closed all radio stations and shut down any newspaper that did not support him. A group of rebels calling themselves LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) invaded Liberia from Guinea in 2000.¹⁶ They stated that their only goal was to remove Charles Taylor as president, but they were soon trafficking in diamonds, timber and other resources to finance their war machine and enrich themselves. In 2003, another group calling itself MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) invaded Liberia from the Ivory Coast.¹⁷

LURD controlled the port that served Monrovia and MODEL controlled the ports south of the capital and the airport. Many Liberians were trapped by the fighting in Monrovia and were starving to death. Warehouses full of food sent to Liberia by the United Nations were located in the Port of Monrovia (Freeport). A lot people attempted to swim across the river that separated the capital and the port only to drown, since many of them were too weak from hunger to swim the half mile wide river.¹⁸

The fighting reached its peak in August 2003, when the rebels encroached on Monrovia from two sides. Thousands of civilians were killed in the conflict or died from starvation, disease or lack of medical care. Liberians call this period in their history World War III.

President George Bush told Charles Taylor that he must step down as president. Taylor fled to Nigeria, where he lived until he was arrested while trying to flee to a neighboring country. Charles Taylor is a convicted war criminal and is currently appealing his conviction for crimes against humanity at the world court in The Hague.¹⁹

In 2003, the United Nations finally stepped in with 15,000 peacekeeping troops. In 2016, all UN troops were removed from Liberia. In addition, Liberia was a protectorate of the United Nations for two years.

In 2005, the first female president in Africa was elected to lead Liberia. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a graduate of Harvard University and worked for the World Bank and the United Nations before returning to Liberia to run for the office of president.²⁰ There have been three assassination attempts on her life since she assumed the presidency in 2006.²¹ She was re-elected in 2011 for a second term that expires in 2017.

She still has a huge task before her. According to the CIA World Fact Book²² (December 2007), over 80% of Liberia's 3.2 million people live in poverty, 35% are malnourished and up to 40%

¹⁶ Global Security, available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/lurd.htm>.

¹⁷ Wikipedia, available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_for_Democracy_in_Liberia.

¹⁸ Author's personal knowledge, 2003.

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, available from <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/06/20/liberi13590.htm>.

²⁰ African History, available from <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/liberia/p/Sirleaf.htm>.

²¹ Author's personal knowledge.

²² CIA World Fact Book, available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

are illiterate. The estimated unemployment rate is 85%. There are few medical personnel and little safe drinking water, sanitation or electrical services. Liberia's children have been killed, traumatized, orphaned, and used as child soldiers during fourteen years of war. Most Liberians cannot afford education for their children, even if enough schools existed to serve them.

In a speech on October 17, 2006 at Georgetown University, President Johnson Sirleaf said, "Across Africa and around the world, we must show that freedom can deliver prosperity and peace. Failure to do so will be more costly than we can contemplate and in Liberia that failure could be catastrophic." She went on to emphasize that Liberia's own recent past makes the country acutely aware of the suffering of neighboring civilian populations, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Darfur region of Sudan. She argued that the international community must act to restore peace and security in regions of conflict. "Civilized nations must not be indifferent to any conflict – internal or external – regardless of the factors that fuel it," she said.

Painting a graphic picture of Liberia, where the basic infrastructure was damaged or altogether destroyed by civil war, Johnson Sirleaf said the people of Liberia are beginning to regain hope as efforts to rebuild are underway. "Our children are beginning to smile again with faith in the future," she said. "I tell you there is one thing that bores down on us very, very hard and that is a sense of urgency. We have got to deliver fast to be able to keep that hope alive and to have that hope build on a solid foundation."

Johnson Sirleaf outlined some of the accomplishments her administration has achieved in the first nine months since her election in 2006, including renewing security and law enforcement agencies, returning electricity and water to parts of Monrovia, repairing roads and bridges, resettling displaced people, rehabilitating health clinics, and improving government accountability and transparency. She acknowledged that although some strides have been made, the international community must work in conjunction with Liberia and other countries in Africa to make issues such as foreign aid distribution more streamlined and responsive. She also emphasized that Liberia needs more help from the international community to achieve debt relief. "The poorest people of Liberia – some of the poorest people in the world – must not pay the price for the lack of accountability in which they played no part and had no responsibility," Johnson Sirleaf said.²³

The groundwork for peace and stability has been laid. Now Liberia needs help to move forward. Christians have the opportunity to help Liberians lay a firm moral foundation and work toward economic recovery by making an impact with holistic based short term mission teams.

Liberia continues to rebuild. The UN contributes funds and China is heavily involved in the reconstruction. China has repaved most of the major roads and built a new University of Liberia near Mt. Barclay where we hope to build a new school.

Many companies are exploring Liberia for oil. Other private companies have rebuilt hotels and restaurants. However, the benefits of much of this work has gone to trained foreign workers and Liberians are only assigned the menial tasks. Education is the key here and that is why our operations in Liberia are so critical to the recovery of the country.

However, the Ebola crisis of 2014/2015 set Liberia back to post civil war times. Some estimate 15,000-20,000 Liberians died during this time. No one will ever know the exact amount as the official totals were only based on the victims who died in a Monrovia hospital. Most foreign

²³ Georgetown University, available from <http://explore.georgetown.edu/news/?ID=19235>.

countries pulled out all of their people and aid and the Liberian government shut down all non-essential offices and closed all schools.

No one was being paid during this time except the teachers and staff at the AGC schools. We made a commitment to them that their salaries would be paid even though they were not working and we also provided them with a rice allowance and cleaning supplies to help contain the spread of Ebola.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

TIMELINE

Six months before the team leaves, we will begin holding informational meetings and request that you provide us with your application. You need to ask yourself, "Why do I want to go on a short term mission trip?" Schedule your vacation time at work. Join the Serve the Children Facebook group.

Five months before the team leaves, you need to complete the medical release form, the team covenant and give us a \$500 down payment. You also need to confirm that your passport is current and renew it if necessary.

To be a valid passport, the expiration date cannot be within 6 months of the trip date. You also need an adequate number of blank pages for the visa.

You should also send out your fundraising letters.

Be prepared for a spiritual battle! Satan does not want you to go on this trip and he will attempt to discourage you. The Holy Spirit is there for you to battle Satan. Your teammates are praying for you.

Four months Your plane ticket must be paid for. Start your journal.

Three months Review the "What Should I Take" list and start gathering these items.

Two months before we leave, you should begin thinking about the clothes and other items that you will need to take. Look for breathable clothing that dries quickly. REI and many sports type stores have this. Book your appointment for your immunizations.

Six weeks before we leave, the trip needs to be paid for in full. You need to complete a visa application, provide us with your passport, immunization record, the visa fee and two passport sized photos.

One month before we leave, confirm that you have a ride to the airport, purchase your supplies and make sure you know when to begin taking your malaria pills. You should also think about who will pick you up at the airport when we return.

1, 2 days before we leave- usually we have a packing party and weigh all of our suitcases to confirm they are within the weight limits for check in luggage. Review the check list- Do you have everything?

Start taking malarone for malaria if this is the pill you will be taking.

Go to the bank and get your spending money (small bills). Check each bill and do not take in bills that are ripped, written on or heavily worn. Sometimes it is difficult to get good bills so going to the bank and ordering "new money" two weeks before you leave is a good idea.

REQUIRED TEAM MEETINGS

In the U.S.

We will have team meetings beginning several months prior to leaving for Liberia. **These meetings are required for team members.** Spouse and friends are welcome to come. The purpose of these meetings is to prepare you for your experience, to bond as a team, to communicate the goals and objectives of the trip and to plan how we will accomplish them.

Topics include:

1. Trip Logistics, i.e. communication, dress code, travel arrangements, etc. These items are covered in your team book so we will not spend a lot of time going through these items in the team meeting.
2. Cultural issues covering clothing and other areas
3. Team member roles and preparation- what we will do there
4. Team building exercises- praying for your team mates is very important
5. Spiritual preparation- Satan will attack you
6. Immunizations and medications for malaria and other medical issues
7. Keeping a journal
8. Packing and luggage needs
9. Passport and visa requirements
10. Questions, concerns and other issues

In Liberia

Once we arrive in Liberia, we will gather regularly as a team. Usually we meet during meal times, so presence at meals is required, whether you plan to eat or not. At breakfast we will review the daily agenda and our goals for the day. At dinner we will do a daily summary of how things are going and how the trip is impacting you.

Another reason we gather as a team is to give you a chance to retreat from everyone in the area who will be persistently trying to spend time with you. We need time together as a team. Sometimes conflict within our team needs to be handled as well.

Married couples need time alone. Leaders need time alone. You will need time alone. But we also need time to just relax with each other. It is a good chance to decompress and cope with all of the things you will be experiencing. Anytime you are ready, there will always be a group of Liberians right downstairs who would love to spend time with you. Please read #6 in the team covenant that all team members must sign.

Re-entry

Your team leader will plan to meet with some of you after we return to the US. This is a casual meeting, an opportunity for us to learn about how your experience impacted you and to help us evaluate our short term mission trips. Everyone reacts to Liberia differently; seeing the journey through your eyes will help us do a better job at STC and on future trips. We hope that you will share your journal with us, or give us some excerpts for use with future team members or on our website.

IMMUNIZATIONS/MEDICATIONS

You are required to have a yellow fever vaccination to travel into Liberia. We also urge you to get a tetanus update, a measles/mumps and rubella update, hepatitis A and typhoid fever vaccine. You will need a prescription for prophylactic malaria medication. There is a high risk of contracting malaria during the rainy season in Liberia. You may become nauseous while taking this medication, so having a snack with you while traveling is very important.

There are two types of malaria medications that can be used in Liberia.

1. Malarone- taken daily, least side effects, most expensive
2. Doxycycline- cannot take this if you are allergic to penicillin type drugs

Note: Mefloquine has been taken in the past for malaria prevention, but may have serious neurological side effects. Do not use this medication.

You can also get a prescription for Cipro or any other type of oral antibiotic medication. Medical team members should be vaccinated against hepatitis B.

You can use Linda Hensley at Infections Northwest to get your immunizations. She is very knowledgeable about traveling to Liberia. You must schedule an appointment at least 30 days before we leave. They are located in Tacoma next to St. Joseph's Hospital at 1624 South I Street, Suite 405. Their phone number is 253-428-8754. Many Safeway stores have the yellow fever vaccination and it is cheaper.

You can take a Pepto Bismol tablet every morning for breakfast to prepare your stomach for the different type of food that you will be eating. If your stomach does become upset due to the food, weather, etc, you can increase the dosage as needed based on the instructions.

PASSPORTS

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of 7,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with two passport sized photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver's license. Webpage is <http://travel.state.gov/passport>. The web page provides you with locations and procedures to get your passport. **Be sure to apply early**; current wait times for U.S. passports can be over 10 weeks. You can renew by mail if: Your most recent passport is available to submit and it is not damaged; you received the passport within the past 15 years; you were over age 16 when it was issued; you still have the same name, or can legally document your name change. You can get a passport renewal application form at the web site listed above.

VISA

You will receive a visa application for Liberia at a team meeting. The visa applications for the team will all be submitted together. Cost is currently \$131 per person. You need a passport photo for you visa. You can get these at Costco and many other places.

WHAT SHOULD I TAKE?

Important Items

This is a suggested list of items and you will not need to purchase all of these. But if you are sensitive to the sun and this causes a lot of headaches, you should bring in more than one head covering, stronger sun screen and more aspirin than someone who is not as sensitive. Other team members will also bring items that can be shared (zip ties for example). Your supporters can use this list to help you with your expenses.

Clothing- Many of these items are recommended out of respect for the Liberian culture.

Everyone: 3-4 changes of outerwear in breathable fabric that dries easily, no military styles, hat, light night wear (2) and robe; sandals or flip flops for in-house wear; sturdy shoes & socks; underwear (4-5 changes). In the rainy season you should have a sweatshirt and long pants available. You can spray your clothes & bedding with bug repellent. We suggest no jeans due to the heat. LABEL EVERYTHING!

Women: Skirts & dresses are preferred and should be at least knee length, pants are acceptable; no spaghetti straps or strapless tops; no bra, underwear or midriff showing; no transparent clothing and no tank tops. Shorts that reach below fingertips when standing are acceptable around the AGC compound. No pierced jewelry other than earrings.

Men: T-shirts and shorts are fine except for church, when long pants and dress shirts are required. No earrings or other pierced jewelry for men.

MUST HAVE'S:

Bible
Bug spray, mosquito net & hooks
Deodorant
Journal and pens/pencils
All/any medications (malarone)
Electrolytes- add to water
Money belt
Passport and visa
Sunglasses
Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
Toothbrush/paste
Towels/wash cloths (microfiber)- 2 each

OTHER NEEDS:

Toiletries:

Bath/face/hair products
Baby powder (women especially)
Eye care products
Feminine products
Hand mirror
Nail clippers
Toilet paper- 1 roll
Waterless hand cleanser

For Travel & Free Time:

Cards/travel games
Earplugs
Gum
Music player
Neck pillow
Reading material
Blindfold

Motion sickness and/or sleeping pills

Wet wipes/Bath cloths

Medicinal:

Aloe Vera
Antacid
Antibacterial cream (Neosporin)
Anti-diarrhea medication
Band-Aids
Cipro (can purchase there)
Cough drops
Cough medicine
Hydrocortizone cream
Pain relievers
Pepto-Bismol tabs
Personal medications
Stool softener
Vitamins/Airborne

Snack Suggestions:

Cocktail Peps
Dried Fruit
Granola Bars
Jerky
Mixed Nuts
Peanut Butter
Protein bars
Nothing that will melt!

HELPFUL ITEMS:

Suggested by former teams:

Air freshener
Camera (include cables, extra batteries, film, & flash drive to download to)
Dryer sheets for your bed
Duct tape/Gorilla Glue tape
Fan- battery operated
Flashlight with extra batteries
Glasses cleaner
Laptop for photo storage & journaling
Mousetraps
Pictures of family
Plastic bags for dirty clothes
Q-tips
Rope or a cord to hang clothes
Rubber bands
Scissors (check-in luggage only)
Sharpie markers for labeling
Sheets/pillowcase (talk first)
Super Glue
Swim suit
Tea lights/candles
Umbrella (can purchase there)
Zip ties
Zip-top bags (various sizes)

Passport- Store this in a zip-lock bag to prevent damage from the humidity.

Money belt (and/or necklace) – cash in a combination newer \$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1 bills- they do not give change normally in US dollars- amount should be at least \$300 depending on how much you want to spend on souvenirs and eating out or at the airports. No traveler’s checks. One credit card for the US and Europe (visa or American Express); it will not be valid in Liberia. Snack size zip-lock bags work well for holding cash to keep it dry. US currency is preferred in Liberia.

Rule of thumb to follow: If I need this in the US, I should be bringing this with me to Liberia. Think about these questions as you prepare for the trip:

What medications do I take- occasionally, a lot, all the time?

What items I use every day, weekly or occasionally but I really need them?

Things I use when I do not feel well?

Stuff I wish I had when I am away from home?

Carry on- Bring snacks, games, books to read, electronics, **any medicines required for the entire trip**, at least two changes of clothes (I plan to have all of my clothing in my carry on and only team supplies in my check in), toilet paper (partial roll), journal and anything else you need or cannot be without for a couple of days. Plan carefully what you put in this bag. If your bag is delayed, you could be without if for one week or longer.

Check in luggage- Each person can have 2 fifty pound bags. **Keep your baggage claim ticket or give it to your team leader.** These are needed to clear your luggage out of baggage pick up. Remember to write down the brand of luggage, color and basic contents of each bag. We suggest you put this information in your journal. Make sure you have your name and address on each bag! **You also need to keep your boarding pass until your luggage is picked up.**

TRAVEL TIPS

Airline travel can be an exhausting experience. You probably did not sleep well the night before you left because of the excitement of the trip. You might have stayed up late preparing for the journey and taking care of last minute details.

There are a number of things you can do to make your travel experience more pleasant. Drink plenty of water on the plane. Purchase bottled water after you pass through security and before you board the plane. You can always ask the flight attendant for more water once you have boarded. On long flights it is important to get up and walk around occasionally to maintain good circulation and avoid stiffness.

Simple stretching exercises help a lot; stretch your feet, turn your head and hold it, flex some muscles. Wear support hose. Wear comfortable clothes and layer them. Take off your shoes. Take books, crossword puzzles, games to play, shows & music on your iPod if you have one. Remember to pack for both ways!

We will be crossing many time zones. Liberia is 7 hours ahead of us but if we fly through Europe we will cross even more time zones.

How can I improve plane travel?

Most people don't have any problems when they fly, but it's possible to make airplane travel safer and more comfortable. Here are some tips:

- Carry enough of all of your medicines to last your whole trip in your carry-on luggage. Ask your doctor whether you should change your dosages if your eating and sleeping times will change at your destination. Take extra medicine with you in case your return trip is delayed.
- If you have diabetes or epilepsy, carry a notification and identification card (such as the "Diabetes Alert Card" from the American Diabetes Association). Have the name and phone number of your doctor with you in case of an emergency. Remember to bring along the names and dosages of all of your medicines.
- The air in airplanes is dry, so drink nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages and water to avoid becoming dehydrated.

What can I do about jet lag?

- Get plenty of sleep before you leave.
- Don't drink a lot of alcohol.
- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Avoid overeating.
- Exercise as much as you can on your trip.
- Use sleep medicines for only a few days.
- Get used to a new time zone by going along with the local meal and bedtime schedules.

Melatonin may help with jet lag, but no one knows how long it can be used safely. Tell your doctor if you plan to take melatonin or any other herbal or alternative medicines.

Melatonin, a hormone sold in supplement form at health food stores, may help decrease jet lag. While in flight, consider taking some melatonin (generally 3 - 5 milligrams) at the time at which it would be appropriate to sleep at your destination. Then try taking melatonin several hours before bedtime for several days once you arrive at your destination.

What about pain in my ears?

If your ears hurt when you fly, try taking a decongestant medicine (such as pseudoephedrine) before you get on the plane. You can also swallow often and chew gum during the flight. Talk to your doctor about taking any kind of medication.

TRIP LOGISTICS

We will meet at the airport and check in together. Be prepared for a long flight. Regardless of the route we take, we usually have long flights and long layovers. Bring whatever you need to be most comfortable for this part of the journey.

When you arrive in Liberia you will pass through immigration, where they will check your passport. At baggage claim, you will need the baggage claim ticket that the ticket agent gave you in Seattle to clear your bags to customs. **This is critical.** If your bags are missing, they will want to see the claim ticket, your boarding pass (plane tickets or E-ticket) and they will ask you the brand of your luggage, the color of the bags and the contents (did you write this down in your journal?). The airport is hot and crowded, which can be very challenging after such a long journey.

We will cram into whatever transportation has been arranged for us and drive the 35 miles to Monrovia. The air will be thick with humidity and the smells will be quite distinct. You will pass by some extreme scenes of poverty. Once we arrive at the Sinkor School, we will learn how to use the bathrooms with a water bucket (absolutely no paper products down the toilet), introduce the housekeepers, hang mosquito nets, review the agenda for the next day and rest. If it's not too late, we might go somewhere to buy some snacks, bug spray or mouse glue.

Breakfast is around 7.30 AM and usually consists of eggs, hot cereal, rolls, bread, fruit, pancakes or donuts. You can either drink water, tea, instant coffee or hot chocolate. We want to develop daily habits of praying as a team so we begin each day praying together. We will have a short devotional and business meeting after we eat.

After breakfast, we will tour the school, go to meetings, the market or wherever we are working that day. We will return for lunch or take it with us, depending on the plans for the day. Lunch normally consists of sandwiches, French fries and fruit but we could have hot dogs or hamburgers. We can work with the cooks to prepare a menu.

The afternoon is typically the hottest time of day. You will need to remind yourself and your teammates to drink plenty of water (usually at least three liters per day), lather on the sunscreen and bug-spray, and wear a hat when outdoors. The sun burns quickly in the tropics. You will need to drink more water the first few days as you adjust.

Daily activities typically wrap up by 3:00 pm so that we can return home to rest. Napping, talking, playing with the local children, playing cards and writing in your journal will easily complete your day until dinner.

Dinner varies, but almost every night you will eat rice and fried plantains. The main course will consist of chicken, fish or beef stew. There is usually store-bought bread, peanut butter and jam as well. You are expected to eat the food out of respect for our cooks. Illness or a queasy stomach is an exception. The food can be spicier than you are used to at home.

During/after dinner we will usually go over what we did during the day, what we need to do differently and what our plans are for the next day. Evenings cool down and the wind and rain tend to increase. Thunderstorms often provide the evening entertainment.

Evenings are spent playing cards, building relationships, preparing for the next day, updating your journal, downloading photos (did you bring your camera cable?), bathing, or spending some quiet time with God, among other things. If there is power, you can charge electronics. The sun will set before 7:00pm, so pray that the generator works and fuel is available at a reasonable cost. Bring candles and flashlight batteries in case it doesn't!

What will we do there?

Our activities will vary while we are in Liberia so preparation in the US is important. We must plan ahead so we are prepared.

1. Child sponsorship program- STC uses sponsorships to support our staff in both countries where we serve. Each team member is asked to find five people who will commit to sponsoring a child. You will find a child for each of them while you're there. You can also help update our sponsorship information on children currently sponsored. We need team members to photograph children currently sponsored, get a letter from them to their sponsor and interview new children for sponsorship.
2. Chapel services- Every morning there is a chapel service that you can be involved with if you want (prepare a short devotion or lead a song).
3. Sports- be prepared to lead some outdoor activities like group games. The children play basketball (at Sinkor), soccer, four square, hop scotch and other games.
4. Classroom- read stories, read poems, teach phonics, math, art and other crafts.
5. Picture taking and display- the children love to have their pictures taken
6. Cooking- you can join in on the cooking and learn some great ways to cook Liberian food for your friends when you return home. They also love to learn how to cook American food so be prepared to cook our cooks a meal.

Picture taking

You're on a mission trip and you want to take pictures for a power point presentation at your church when you return home. But do you point your camera at people you do not know in the US and take their picture? We need to be sensitive to the people around us and treat them with the same respect and dignity that we treat people in the US. ASK!!

CULTURAL ENTRY

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved." 1 Corinthians 10:31-33

- As you enter a new culture and begin to make observations and experience life in a new setting, you will either find this to be a positive time of growth or a very difficult and frustrating time.
- Let go of expectations. Let the Lord speak to you. Let Him reveal new things to you about Himself, yourself and others. Be flexible. Keep a journal and maintain a daily quiet time. Lean on the Lord.
- Rather than being suspicious, fearful, prejudiced or feeling superior, try to see things with openness, acceptance, trust and adaptability. It is inevitable that you will feel uncomfortable as you live in a new cultural setting. At times, you may become frustrated or feel misunderstood, confused, tense or embarrassed. This is to be expected. It is your response to these emotions that will determine a negative or positive outcome. Rather than rationalize, criticize or isolate yourself, try to observe, inquire and listen. If you do, you will find that you will establish a rapport with the people and empathy for their plight rather than alienate yourself through withdrawal. Don't assume anything. Ask questions and observe. You will be stretched.
- Cultural differences exist all around you. Some are visible. In Liberia, almost all things are rundown or destroyed from the war. The concept of throwing trash in receptacles is foreign to many. Bathrooms are few and far between, and the beach becomes a latrine for many. Dress is different from America. Traffic is not controlled by the police force, few traffic lights operate and driving is basically a 'sport'.
- Cultural beliefs are not visible but they govern the thoughts of the people. Women care for the home and children. Men work outside the home, if they're lucky. Many Christian churches teach against dancing, drinking, smoking, excessive make-up and jewelry and hold to varying degrees of legalism about these matters. Some churches combine Christianity with a tribal religion. The society is event versus time-oriented. Liberians live in the present, while Americans are always looking to the future. They tend to communicate in oral versus written form.
- The purpose of your short-term mission is to be a support to the STC staff and children and be a witness to Christ. It is about dying to self and living for Christ for two weeks. It is about being sensitive to the culture. If it means wearing a long skirt, or removing an earring, or eating a food that you are not particularly fond of...just do it... for the Lord. You will be blessed.

(Portions taken from Intersity STIM Manual)

SPIRITUAL MATTERS

Your spiritual life could be challenged on a mission trip. Lack of privacy, a different schedule of activities (eating times, work, etc), and lack of sleep can impact your time with the Lord. But you must adapt your new situation to your daily time with God. Set regular times in your day for prayer, reading God's Word, and journaling.

We cannot emphasize the importance of having a daily quiet time. Satan will be doing his best to keep you away from God. If he succeeds, this will impact the team and the goals of our trip. Read Ephesians 6:10-19. Be prepared for spiritual warfare!

Bring a simple devotional along with you. Set the pace for your roommates by having a daily devotional. Let them see how important this is to you.

A great book to study on a mission trip to a country like Liberia is the book of Philippians. This is sometimes called the book of joy since the word joy appears about 20 times. Read 4-5 verses a day and meditate on them. Paul was in prison when he wrote this personal letter of thanks to the Christians in Philippi.

Be prepared to share your faith with the people that we come in contact with. Most of our staff are Christians but you may meet some who are not believers during your journey. Some of our students are from families who are not Christian. Liberians are very open about their faith and you could be asked to share the story of how you came to know and follow Christ during a church service.

Sharing your story is not hard. You do not have to create a theological discourse to explain how you came to know Christ. Talk about how your life was before you chose to follow Christ, explain how you came to a point when you chose to put your faith in Him, and end with a verse that has a special meaning to you or talk about the importance of Christ in your life now.

If you are a pastor or church leader, be prepared to preach in Liberia. We've learned from experience that it is a cultural expectation that you will speak while you are there.

The team will share about 1,500 square feet with 2 bathrooms. Privacy will be a challenge and sometimes this can cause conflict. If you are experiencing conflict with another team member, mention this to the team leader. This needs to be taken care of and not allowed to fester. Only Satan wins when we do this. All of us are hot and sweaty; do not let the environment impact your testimony or the testimony of the team. Please refer to point 6 in the team covenant that all team members must sign.

COMMUNICATIONS

We will have access to several cell phones in Liberia. It does not cost money for incoming calls to Liberia. You can purchase prepaid phone cards in Liberia if you need to call home on one of the cell phones.

Can you use your cell phone in Liberia? Maybe. Most of the world uses the GSM system for wireless calls except North America. If your phone has an international three band or four band GSM, you can ask your cell phone company to enable the phone for international use. However, your phone is not designed for the heat, dust and humidity that it will experience in Liberia. We suggest you leave your phone at home if it is an expensive one.

Texting is usually available but you should confirm the cost as it can be expensive.

Internet- There are several internet cafes located close to our Sinkor site and we have limited internet access on site. I suggest you communicate with your supporters, friends and relatives with regular Facebook updates. Do not plan on downloading pictures as this takes considerable time in Liberia since their internet service is usually very, very slow. We will only have access to these sites a couple of times during our stay. We also have limited internet access at Sinkor. Do not expect to have regular email time.

Facebook- The easiest form of communications of what the team is doing is to have your friends and family join the Serve the Children group site on Facebook. **This is updated regularly during the mission trip.**

Email updates- if your family or friends are not on Facebook, we can update them with regular email updates. Please provide us with their names and addresses.

However, I want to emphasize that you are in Liberia on a mission trip and you need to focus on the team and why we are here. Do not plan on spending all of your free time chatting with your friends in the US; that is not the reason you came here.

Emergency contact- We will provide you with a name and phone number to give to your family so if an emergency occurs at home, they can call the number and we will be contacted. There is a seven-hour time zone difference.

WHY RAISE SUPPORT?

- **A Prayer Team Will Result**

When people are challenged to give financially, they are likely to pray for you, too. You will need their prayers even more than you need their financial support.

- **Your Faith Will Grow**

Support raising is a faith journey. When days go by and your support level does not increase, you may be tempted to question your call to missions. Those are the days when you will be challenged to step forward in faith that God has called you and in His time will supply every need. You will learn how to adapt to divergent, difficult, and sometime desperate circumstances. That's when you realize that you are limited and God is limitless.

- **It Broadens the Missionary Vision for You and Your Church**

The best recruiter for world missions is the missionary yourself. When you meet face-to-face with others, you are able to communicate your vision and your call. Your enthusiasm and dedication stimulates and challenges interest and involvement in missions.

How to Raise Support:

1. **PRAY that God will lead** you and your team in looking for the resources for this trip. The cost of this trip is tax deductible.
2. **EVALUATE your contribution.** Other team members can tell you the surprising places God provides money (unexpected refund checks, garage sales, extra income opportunities). Challenge yourself to plan ahead, evaluate what sacrifices you can make in the next few months to contribute toward your trip.
3. **LOOK outside of your church.** Friends, relatives, co-workers and neighbors, whether they are Christians or not, will feel blessed to invest in you and God's leading in your life. Seek out their support. Use Facebook and other sites.
4. **ASK inside your church to see if your** small group or ministry team friends would pray about God's leading to give you prayer and/or financial help for this opportunity. Do not give requests to people that do not know you personally unless they hear of your need and want to be a part of your team.
5. **DEVELOP your financial supporters** into prayer supporters. Use the Prayer Covenant form (included in this book) to gather prayer team members. Your prayer partner can keep a copy of the covenant to remind them to pray for you. They should return one to you so that you know that you have prayer supporters lifting you up each day during the trip.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Clegg, Claude. The Price of Liberty. Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 2004.
- Cooper, Hellene. The House at Sugar Beach. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2008.
- Ellis, Stephen. The Mask of Anarchy. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Elmer, Duane. Cross-Cultural Servanthood. Downers Grover: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Huffman, Alan. Mississippi in Africa. New York: Penguin Group, 2004.
- Kulan, Arthur. Liberia Will Rise Again. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Pham, John-Peter. Liberia Portrait of a Failed State. New York: Reed Press, 2004.
- Powers, William. Blue Clay People, Bloomsbury, USA, 2006
- Shaw, Elma. Redemption Road. Cotton Tree Press, Washington DC, 2008. Note: This is a novel.

VIDEOS

You Tube- Search for Liberia and you will find many videos

PBS- they have several series on Liberia- www.pbs.org/wgbn/globalconnections/liberia/

INTERNET

Keep up on news about Liberia on <http://allafrica.com/liberia/>

AFTER YOUR TRIP

RE-ENTRY

RE-ENTRY is the experience you will have as you return to your home, family and friends. You may have experienced changed attitudes and values. The greater the change in attitudes and values, the more unsettling the **RE-ENTRY** to your personal home culture will be.

Although you may not realize the impact this short-term mission has had on you, there are a few things to consider:

- The things you have experienced here are very unique. Some people will never have such an impacting experience in their entire life. As you go home, it will be as though you were in a time-warp...so much has happened to you, while it has been 'life as usual' for most of the people you know back home.
- Roles that you have assumed here that have been significant and important may not carry the same value back home. In fact, they may serve no purpose at all.
- Values you have maintained all your life may come into question. You may feel convicted about certain things you have always done or become disturbed by things that others say or do. Things that once seemed very important may suddenly appear trivial or meaningless.
- Though people may ask you, "How was your trip?" many do not really want to know the details. Not everyone will share your enthusiasm or want to hear about your trip. Be prepared with a short story or quick anecdote. If they really want to know, you'll most likely find it easy to keep on talking.
- It is important to connect with your teammates after you return to help you adjust.

The following are some ways that people deal with **RE-ENTRY** and the above reactions

ALIENATE (negative)

- Assume the: "Nobody understands. Nobody cares." attitude
- Withdraw or become an elite group that excludes others
- Become depressed, judgmental, critical

ASSIMILATE (negative)

- Compartmentalize the experience. It is over. Check it off the calendar and get on with life as though nothing significant happened
- Dive into diversions: movies, malls, activities
- Channel your desire to do something by overcompensating or assuming 'black and white' mentality

- Be tough and untouched

INTEGRATE (positive)

- Use lessons from your experience as a springboard for positive growth and change
- Search for platforms where you can share your experience with a selective audience
- Become a 'bridge' between your experience and how those at home can benefit
- Use your experience as a tool for evangelism
- Be a spokesperson sharing with others so they can 'catch the vision' of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20

There are more positive ways for you to handle your transition back to life at home. Here are some steps you can take before you return that will help things go smoothly:

- Prepare for re-entry shock
- Pray and listen to God
- Journal and re-read your mission journal one day at a time
- Share your journal with others. Post it on Facebook or your Blog.
- Become a good listener with others. Be interested in their lives
- Prepare a 'snapshot' of your trip
- Become a story-teller. Learn to salt your speech to make others thirsty
- Seize the opportunity to share with that person that really wants to listen
- Get together with others from your team that shared the same experience
- Be a point of strength by living out your newly identified values at home
- Remember successes and accomplishments
- Use the 'talents' God has given you
- Write a note of thanks and share your experience with everyone who received your request for support letter
- Eat well, rest and exercise. Understand that you will probably feel a physical letdown upon your return as well
- Realize that long-term changes may take time and patience
- Continue to make plans to impact your life and the lives of others
- Make the minutes of your life count for eternity

Be prepared for flashbacks or re-runs; memories of your trip that were negative-the poverty that you witnessed, malnutrition of the children, etc. Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people or to children? Do you serve a big God who cares for you or a little god who cares nothing about you? You will be forced to ponder these questions and more.

(Portions taken from Intersivity STIM Manual)

CONTINUING YOUR MISSION INVOLVEMENT
WONDERING HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IN YOUR CORNER OF THE WORLD?

Discover Your Unique Life Mission

“What do I need to do next after a mission trip?”

- God has a mission for the world and is already working to reach out to the hopeless, hurting, and lost people groups. He has invited us to respond to his call to join Him at work around the world.
- We don't want you to develop an interest in going on multiple short-term trips for adventure travel. We want to help you develop a heart for your world.
- You have something unique to give! God desires to use your gifts, passions and life experiences as a unique life mission to the world. To where or to whom will it be?

“What is a unique life mission?”

It is allowing God to use your gifts and abilities, life and vocational experiences (both the good and the bad), and passions and interests for the Great Commission of reaching out to people with Christ's love.

Plan your schedule for the next 30 days by committing to some of these suggestions. Keep these commitments with you as a reminder in discovering your life mission.

1. PRAY FOR A WORLD VISION

*"When he saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus said to his followers, "There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them. **Pray to the Lord**, who owns the harvest, that he will send more workers to gather his harvest." Matthew 9:36-38*

- Pray for 5 friends, family members or neighbors that need a relationship with Jesus. Include someone of a different ethnicity than your own. How can God use your recent mission trip experience to expand your vision locally?
- Ask God daily for the next month: "Help me see the world the way you do."
- What can you volunteer for to help Serve the Children?
- Pray for your passion issues globally (i.e. abortion, homeless children, health, and women's shelters).
- Turn your current life roles (Little League coach, consistent customer, employee, neighbor, etc.) into a mission field. Ask God to give you opportunities to share God's love in practical, serving ways and to share a bit of your faith story with them.

2. CONSIDER WHERE YOUR LIFE DREAMS COLLIDE WITH THE WORLD'S NEEDS

- Ask yourself: What would I do for God if I knew I couldn't fail? Then write it down! Commit to praying about that dream.
- Read the international sections of the newspapers. (The Bible tells us what God wants to do in the world: the newspaper tells us where He needs to do it and where we need to be involved through our prayers.)
- Pray daily for the staff of Serve the Children.

3. GET CONNECTED

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."
Hebrews 10:24

- Invite a speaker from Serve the Children to your church, Sunday School class, small group or Bible study
- Volunteer some time in your church
- Commit to sponsoring a child or staff person at Serve the Children.
- Take a next step in leadership. How would you like to lead a short-term trip for Serve the Children? Contact dougc@servethechildren.com.

4. EXPLORE THE NEXT STEPS

"My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring." I John 3:18

- Lead out in an opportunity to practically serve in the community. Encourage other members to participate with you.
- Meet with a staff person of Serve the Children or your church to discuss in greater detail how God wants to use your experience for life mission around the world.
- Tell your mission story. Encourage others to step out in faith and be stretched to see and experience their world in whole new ways.
- Serve the Children has many openings for volunteers. We would love to talk to you about using your skills in our organization.

SERVE THE CHILDREN
SHORT TERM MISSION POLICIES AND TEAM COVENANT

I realize that the following principles are crucial to the effectiveness, quality and safety of our mission together. As a member of the short-term mission team, I agree to adhere to these policies:

1. Remember that I am a representative of SERVE THE CHILDREN (STC) and the church I attend, and as such I will seek to represent good spiritual values, moral conduct and a likeness to Christ that is embraced in that assembly. I will adhere to the STC Mission Statement and Statements of Faith and Belief in my conduct and conversation.
2. Remember that I have come not only to teach, but also to learn. I may be exposed to procedures and practices that I feel are ineffective or insufficient. I may also be confronted by attitudes that I feel are narrow or close-minded. As this occurs I will resist the temptation to "correct" my hosts and inform them about "how things are done back in the United States."
3. Respect my host's culture and distinctive practices of Christianity. I recognize that the Christian faith has many different faces throughout the world, and that one of the purposes of my trip is to witness and experience faith lived out in a different culture.
4. Develop and consistently maintain a servant's attitude toward all nationals and my teammates.
5. Respect our team leader(s) and their decisions and the guidance of our host country staff.
6. Refrain from gossip and keep my promise of giving only good reports. If there are policies and decisions made by the leaders with which I disagree or do not understand, I will go to the team leaders in private and make my concerns known to them rather than to other team members. In so doing I will avoid the possibility of sowing seeds of dissension and division. If someone on the team offends me I promise to remain silent and forgive the person before God in my heart (Mk. 11:25), allowing love to cover a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8), or go to the person privately and seek reconciliation. I will resolve to approach an offender in the spirit of gentleness and genuine love, having first corrected my own attitude and actions (Gal. 6: 1, 2). Only if I am unable to restore an offender will I share the problem with others according to the principles of Matthew 18: 15-20. When I violate these aforementioned principles, I resolve to ask the forgiveness of my brother or sister and the Lord, knowing that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). By doing all these things I will seek to promote harmony on my team.
7. Be patient, forbearing and forgiving toward the short-comings of the other members on the team.
8. Refrain from complaining. I realize that travel can present numerous unexpected and undesirable circumstances, but the rewards of conquering such circumstances should be my goal. I will resolve to be flexible, supporting and adaptive on such occasions rather than grumbling when circumstances are difficult.
9. Respect the work that is going on in the host country with its pastors and leaders. I realize that our team will be there for just a short time, but the local church and ministry is there long term. I will respect their knowledge, insights and instructions.
10. Refrain from negative comments or hostile discussions concerning the host country's politics and culture.
11. Remember not to be exclusive in my relationships with the team. If my best friend or spouse is on the team we will make every effort to interact regularly with all team members of the team.
12. Refrain from activity or undue interest that could be construed as a romantic interest toward a national. I realize that certain actions that seem innocent in my own culture may be inappropriate in another culture.
13. Refrain from any consumption of alcoholic beverages, including beer, wine, and liquors. While this is not an attempt to bind the conscience, I understand that such indulgence may cause another to stumble. I realize and accept that failure to adhere to this mandate will result in my exclusion from further short-term trips with STC.
14. Refrain from use of any tobacco or tobacco related products while on this trip. This is due to the different cultural or religious views of tobacco usage the team may encounter and I do not want to hurt my witness or the team's testimony.
15. Remember my financial commitment as a team member and to STC in choosing to be a part of this team.
16. Attend team meetings in the US and in the country where I am serving.
17. I will help with fundraising activities for the team as much as my schedule will allow. All pictures or videos that I am in are the property of STC.

I understand that if I cannot abide by this covenant, I may be asked to return home early at my own expense and will not have any funds that were spent on this mission trip returned to me.

Signature _____ *Date* _____

**SERVE THE CHILDREN
SHORT TERM MISSIONS APPLICATION**

PERSONAL INFORMATION-Name must be as it appears on your passport

Name _____ Phone _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Birthplace _____ Date of Birth _____

Email Address _____

Are you a U.S. Citizen? _____ Passport Number _____ Date _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Hair Color _____ Eye Color _____

Physical identification marks _____

Spouse name _____ Spouse phone _____

Nearest relative _____ Relationship _____

(Emergency contact)

Address _____ Phone _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Doctor's name _____ Phone _____

Office address _____

Medical insurance company _____ Phone _____

Plan name and number _____ Travel coverage? _____

If you are presently under a doctor's care for treatment and/or medication, describe care and dosage of the medication (attach additional pages if needed). _____

Describe any allergies or problems relating to food, medicine, heat or lifting. _____

Do you smoke or use tobacco? _____

Would you have trouble walking 2 miles carrying your suitcase? _____

If yes, explain _____

Describe any health problems in detail _____

SPIRITUAL INFORMATION

How long have you been following Christ? _____ How long at your current Church? _____

Positions or involvement include: _____

A close friend that is active at your church is _____ Phone _____

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Employer _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Your position _____ How long? _____

Describe any duties that might relate to this trip _____

MISC. INFORMATION

Describe any skills and proficiency _____

List present and past leadership positions _____

Foreign countries you have been to _____

Foreign languages you speak _____

Do you have a flexible work schedule? ____

Do you have the ability to raise funds to pay for this trip? ____

Will you need help to pay for this trip? ____

Can you help with fundraising activities for the team? ____

EMERGENCY RELEASE AND RIGHT OF REPRESENTATION

I, _____, in consideration of my participation on this mission trip to Liberia, represent and agree that:

- 1. I am prepared physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually for this trip. The scheduling, environment and other foreign country and travel conditions are not adverse to me. I will be flexible and have a servant attitude.
- 2. I grant to any of the Serve the Children leaders or their contracted agents the right to represent me in decisions relating to my welfare or the group welfare during the trip. I will follow the suggestions made on my behalf.
- 3. I understand the administrative role that Serve the Children plays in putting together our mission trip. I also understand that the mission trip could be handled by a contracted agent of Serve the Children in country and the contracted agent of Serve the Children will be responsible for the trip and the team.
- 4. I hereby grant any of the Serve the Children leaders or their contracted agents my permission to authorize medical treatment and medication on my behalf. I will not hold any of the Serve the Children leaders or their contracted agents responsible for the results of such treatment, medications or decisions made on my behalf.
- 5. I am aware of the hazards and risks to myself and property associated with this mission trip. I have read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory (if any) for this country found at <http://travel.state.gov/travel>. These risks include, but are not limited to, death or injury by accident, disease, terrorist acts, weather conditions, and inadequate medical services and supplies. I accept these conditions with full awareness and I assume all risks of death, injury, illness, terrorist assaults and personal property loss or damage associated with such risks.
- 6. I attest and certify that I am physically fit and have no medical conditions that would prevent me from performing my assigned duties which may include long hikes, high altitude, and heat, limited and infrequent meals. I am aware of the disease risks associated with foreign travel and I accept these risks.
- 7. I waive any and all claims for damages against Serve The Children leaders or their contracted agents, arising from death, injury, illness, inconvenience, or in property damage or loss occurring as a result of this mission trip for any reason including but not limited to any negligent act or acts of Serve The Children leaders or their contracted agents which may in any way cause death, injury, illness, inconvenience, or property damage or loss to me. I have read this release in its entirety, understand its contents and agree to them of my own free will.
- 8. Governing Law/Venue: In accepting service from us, this agreement shall be governed only by the laws of the State of Washington. Venue for any action hereunder shall be in Pierce County of the State of Washington.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent signature (for minor) _____ Date _____

Please return to: Serve the Children along with your application and covenant

Sample Fundraising Letter

Dear (name):

(Make your first paragraph a personal greeting and introduction.)

God has opened the door for me to go on a short-term mission trip to Liberia with Serve the Children. We will be working with the All God's Children school system in the capital city of Monrovia and at their two other schools located outside of the capital. I will be involved with the (education, recreation, medical team) as we work with the over 1000 kids and 50 staff of the three schools.

You can find out more about the ministries of Serve the Children by visiting their web page at www.servethechildren.com or joining their Facebook group site.

This is a team project, and you are needed on the team. First, I need to have a prayer team in the US supporting me while I am on the trip. Would you be willing to sign a prayer covenant and commit to praying everyday for me and the team while we are gone?

Second, please pray to God about becoming a financial partner with me in this project. The total cost is \$xxxx. Would you consider investing \$xx to help me pay for this trip? Much of the cost of the trip is due by February 1, 20xx.

If you would like to join me in this, please make your check payable to "Serve the Children." Either return your check to me or you can send it directly to Serve the Children, 4423 Pt. Fosdick Drive NW #202, Gig Harbor, WA 98335. Just place my name on the memo line of the check and the funds will be directed to my trip expenses. Your donation is tax deductible.

If I do not hear from you by _____, I will attempt to contact you to see what you have decided. I can answer any questions you may have at that time.

You are very important to me. Thank-you for praying about being a part of my team.

Letter tips:

1. Avoid mass produced letters
2. Avoid long words and sentences
3. Establish a deadline
4. Mention the amount of money that you need. Maybe suggest an amount to give
5. If you have been on a mission trip before, briefly explain to your supporters how the trip changed your life or impacted you personally
6. Follow-up

Serve the Children
Liberia Mission Trip- Prayer Partner Covenant

I do hereby covenant to pray daily for _____
from this date until they return from the mission trip. Further, I will pray for safety for
the mission team, that God will work in their lives and for the people they are serving.

Your Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Stay informed during my mission trip by joining the Serve the Children Facebook group.
We will update this regularly during our trip.

www.servethechildren.com

Cut here- keep one copy for yourself and return one copy to your prayer partner

Serve the Children
Liberia Mission Trip- Prayer Partner Covenant

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Your Name _____

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We will update this regularly during our trip.

www.servethechildren.com

CHECKLIST

Name _____

- _____ Application (enclosed)
- _____ Emergency Release Form (enclosed)
- _____ Covenant (enclosed)
- _____ Immunization record- have you scheduled your vaccinations?
- _____ Got your malaria prescription?
- _____ Sign up to volunteer for the STC Spring Fundraiser
- _____ Purchase your moisture wicking/cool max clothing
- _____ Visa for entry into Liberia - we will provide this form for you to complete
- _____ Two passport sized photos for the visa
- _____ Passport- Check and confirm that it does not have a renewal date within 6 months of the trip date or order one today. It also needs to have pages for the visa stamp.
- _____ Spray your clothing with bug repellent (one week before leaving)
- _____ Spending money- go to the bank and get new bills
- _____ Get luggage and pack to estimate your space needs and weight
- _____ Purchased your supplies (snacks, reading material, etc)
- _____ Rides to and from the airport
- _____ Gave emergency contact information to my family

TERMINOLOGY

- AGC** – All God’s Children. This is the name for Serve the Children’s operations in Liberia.
- Cassava** – A root vegetable grown in Liberia. The potato-like root is a major source of carbohydrates in Liberia, and the greens are used frequently in Liberian recipes.
- Charles Taylor** - Former president of Liberia (1997 to 2003). Once considered Africa’s most prominent warlord, he is now in prison in Europe, under trial for war crimes in neighboring Sierra Leone.
- 15 Gate** – The name of our rural school located at Gate #15 on the Firestone Rubber Plantation. This is about 40 miles outside of Monrovia. We serve about 350 children here.
- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf** - Current president of Liberia. She is Africa’s first elected female head of state.
- Freeport** - Deep sea port that serves Monrovia.
- JFK** - Public hospital located in the Sinkor district of Monrovia, built by the U.S. in the 1960’s.
- Lapa** - Large piece of fabric used as a wraparound skirt, dress, or baby sling
- Mamba Point** – Area where most of the embassies and relief agencies are located in Monrovia
- Manbahn Civil Compound** – Our third school located inside the Firestone Rubber Tree Plantation about 20 miles past 15 Gate. This school was re-opened in September 2009 and serves about 150 children.
- NGO** - Non-Governmental Organization. A common term for aid agencies not funded by a particular government. Serve the Children is an NGO.
- Plantain** - A starchy relative of the banana that cooks more like a potato.
- Red Light** – Main intersection in Paynesville, east of Monrovia with a red traffic light. It is a large market area on the road to the Firestone Plantation and Liberian interior. Considered a high-crime area.
- Roberts Field** – International airport in Liberia named after their first president.
- Samuel Doe** – Former President of Liberia (1980-1990). His regime was characterized by ethnically-based dictatorship and the suppression of political opposition. He was assassinated by warlord Prince Johnson who currently serves in the Liberian Senate.
- Sinkor** - Suburb of Monrovia where our largest school is currently located. We have two sessions of school serving about 650 children.
- UNMIL** – Liberia’s UN peacekeeping army.
- Waterside** – Large market area in central Monrovia.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR LIBERIA

1817-The American Colonization Society is formed. Its purpose is to raise funds to send freed American slaves to Africa, their ancestral home.

1820-The first group of freed slaves arrives in Africa.

1847-Liberia declares itself an independent country, the first republic in all Africa.

1862-America recognizes Liberia as a country.

1926- Firestone Tire and Rubber Company open their rubber tree plantation in Liberia.

1951- Women and indigenous Liberians receive the right to vote.

1958- Racial discrimination is outlawed.

1980-Sergeant Samuel Doe leads a coup, assassinating the president and his cabinet to successfully take over the country.

1989-On December 24th, Charles Taylor launches an uprising against Samuel Doe that quickly degenerates into an inter-ethnic conflict lasting 14 years.

1996—"April 6 War." There is fierce fighting throughout Monrovia.

1997-Charles Taylor is elected president of Liberia by a landslide vote, but does little to improve the state of the country, instead benefiting himself and his family. AGC was founded in Sinkor.

2000-In July, a rebel group known as the LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) invades Liberia from Guinea.

2003-In April, a new rebel group named MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) launches an invasion from Cote d' Ivoire.

2003-In August, peacekeeping soldiers sent by ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) arrive in Liberia. Eventually the UN brings in more than 15,000 soldiers from around the world to staff UNMIL, the peacekeeping force currently in the country. A transitional power-sharing government is formed by the three warring factions. Gyude Bryant, a politician with no ties to any of the warring parties, is named interim president.

2004-Disarmament begins for all former soldiers, called combatants.

2005-Parliamentary and Presidential Elections—the first peaceful, free elections in more than 50 years. The first women president of an African nation is elected
President of Liberia- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

2005- President Johnson-Sirleaf switches on generator powered street lights in the capital for the first time in 15 years.

2006- Former president Charles Taylor appears before a UN backed court and is charged with crimes against humanity.

2011- President Sirleaf is re-elected for a second six year term as president.

2013- Charles Taylor appeal for his crimes against humanity conviction is upheld by the World Court.

2014/15- Ebola Crisis- Possible 15,000 Liberians died during this time. The government shut down all schools, all non-essential government offices, it was illegal to shake hands or hug, you could not gather in groups. People suspected of having Ebola were enclosed in their homes for 21 days.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Forward, David C. The Essential Guide to the Short Term Mission Trip, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998.

Overlake Christian Church Short Term Mission Trip Team Leader Training Manual, Bellevue: 2004.

This Mission Team Book could not have been created without the personal short term mission experiences of the board members of Serve the Children as well as team members who have traveled to Liberia with me. Also, Dr. Chung of Faith Seminary in Tacoma has provided valuable insights and suggestions that made this book more complete.

HISTORY OF SERVE THE CHILDREN

Dr. Doug Collier

Purpose of Serve the Children

Serve the Children (STC) exists to improve the future of children by meeting their educational, emotional and physical needs in a Biblically based environment. STC provides tuition free education, one meal a day, basic medical care and counseling to needy children in the West African nation of Liberia. In central India, STC gives poor children from villages too small to have a public school the opportunity to attend a school in a larger village. They stay at a children's home during the school year, where they are provided with free room and board, school supplies, clothing and medical care.

The public education system is not free in Liberia and India. The children are required to wear school uniforms by law and the cost might be more than the total earnings the family makes in a month. Add to this the testing fees, school supplies and books, and a family earning from eighty cents to one dollar a day cannot afford to send their child to school. Because of subsistence living, they cannot afford to lose a productive member of the family for the sake of an education. For example, a ten year old child in India can earn one dollar a day working in the fields instead of going to school. That dollar pays for food the family would not otherwise be able to afford.

Liberia - All God's Children Schools

The groundwork for Serve the Children began in 1996 when a Tacoma area photographer who was covering the civil war in Liberia returned home during a break in the fighting. He met with his brother and me, telling us stories about the estimated 30,000-40,000 war orphans in the capital city of Monrovia. These orphans had no opportunity to return to school because the educational system had been destroyed. The only option left to these children was to return to fighting.

The two brothers and I decided to create a 501(c) (3) organization in Tacoma, Washington and raise money to finance a free school for war orphans, ex-combatants and other children who were too poor to pay for school. The organization was named All God's Children. The first All God's Children school was opened in the capital city of Monrovia in 1997, and served 125 children. Almost all of these children were ex-combatants. The vivid accounts told by these children are the kind of stories that people write books about and make into movies.

In 1999, three additional schools were opened in rural areas of Liberia. A \$100,000 grant was received from ADRA (Adventist Relief Agency) out of Sweden, which was used to build one site, remodel another, and rent two buildings. These funds were also used

to pay for the staff and all of the supplies. Almost 4,000 children who had no other access to education were served during this time, receiving education, counseling and food.

The schools stayed open except when they were forced to close due to fighting and looting. One of the rural schools was destroyed when fighting broke out in the area in 2000. Most of the staff except for one teacher were lost and STC never heard what happened to the children, only that they fled into the jungle. Another school was overrun in 2003, and when the conflict neared the capital in June of 2003, the remaining two schools were forced to close.

The schools were looted numerous times during the first six years of operation. The children used pieces of slate for their lessons, since paper was so hard to get and too expensive to buy. Slate also allowed for a portable school strategy in some very basic places when they had to move due to armed fighting.

After the war ended in August 2003, two schools were reopened. One school is in the Sinkor District of Monrovia, located on the beach of Atlantic Ocean. It has a three story building with approximately 1,500 square feet per floor, one small outbuilding with a couple of lean to additions, a latrine building, a well and a generator for electricity. Running water is available Monday through Friday from around 9am to 3pm and occasionally on weekends. We can also draw water from a well located on the school grounds by a hand pump.

The classrooms are on the first two floors of the main building. The third floor has dormitory style bedrooms, two bathrooms and a dining room, and is used to house visiting mission teams. The kitchen and laundry area are both in lean to additions and the compound is surrounded by a fourteen foot wall. The classroom windows do not have glass in them. The windows had to be covered with bricks to help secure the school to prevent looting. The classrooms receive some light through slots in the bricks, but they are still very dark. Learning is difficult when trying to read in a dark environment. In 2014, the city started providing electricity to the Sinkor district. It is reasonably dependable. However, we own a generator and use it only as needed when local electricity is not available.

To maximize space utilization, there are two sessions at the school in Monrovia. Both sessions combine to serve over 650 children. The morning session has children from pre-school through the sixth grade. Children through the ninth grade attend the afternoon session. Most of the classes have forty students. In 2013, we started a high school at our Sinkor location funded by our PTA and local contributions.

There is also a rural school located at Gate 15 of the Firestone Rubber Tree Plantation. We purchased this land in 1999 and constructed a new school here (replacing a building that Firestone allowed us to use) in 2012. Over 350 children are served at the 15 Gate School. There is no electricity or running water but we do own a generator. 15 Gate is a crossroads about thirty miles from of Monrovia. This school is the only one in the area and some of the children walk three hours one way to get an education. The school's

staff estimates that there are 250 more school age children living in the surrounding community who have no access to education.

The Mahn Bahn Civic Compound School (we call it Civil Compound) had to close due to the fighting in 2003. It was located in a very rural area of Liberia where there had never been a school. During the fighting it became too dangerous for the staff to go there.

I visited the site of this school in 2004 with an escort from the United Nations, since the area was not yet considered secure. The building had been completely destroyed. So great was the desire for education, however, that five classes were still meeting. They were found in a one room church of about 800 square feet. Over 100 children were crammed into this room, with separate blackboards for each of the classes. They had no supplies and the teachers did not have any textbooks. The teachers gathered their classes around a blackboard and the children memorized the lesson from the board. The teachers were the only hope that these children had for an education. It was a very emotional moment for me, as well as for the United Nations personnel.

STC received a \$30,000 grant from a Belgian organization to rebuild this school. The school building consists of 6 classrooms, offices for the teachers and principal, a well and a latrine. The local people donated the land and helped in the construction. They wanted to be involved in their children's education.

Our three schools serve over 1,300 children, with about sixty paid Liberian staff members. Approximately 1,000 children are on the waiting list for the All God's Children Schools. The Liberian Ministry of Education has rated the teachers as some of the best trained instructors in the country. They make around \$85 US per month. There is also a full time Christian counselor on staff to help the children at the schools deal with the trauma they experienced during the war.

Many of the children witnessed atrocities against their families and friends. Some are ex-combatants who committed atrocities themselves. Since the fighting lasted fourteen years, most of these children have never experienced anything but war during their lives. Their bright eyes and smiles hide a lot of fear. They like to have visitors hold their hands and hug them. I enjoy making them laugh and just sitting with them. The older kids love to ask questions about life in the United States.

It is sad that these children learn about America from Hollywood's point of view. Their ideas of America are far from reality. They call Liberia 'Little Hell,' but America is 'Little Heaven.' The children see America as their only hope for a better life and many of them base this view on the Hollywood image they have of the United States. Through everything they do, it is STC's goal to give these children hope for a better future for their lives in Liberia.

There is a full time nurse on staff to provide basic medical needs for the children and staff. The children need to be de-wormed regularly and thirty to forty children suffer

from malaria each month. Several students die from malaria each year. We provide malaria medications to our staff and children.

Unhappily, there is no hope for a staff person or a child that has a major medical problem. Quality medical care in Liberia is not available. The hospitals open in Liberia cannot handle involved surgeries, so the staff member or child dies if they have a major medical problem. Cost of any care for the average Liberian is out of their financial reach.

School children in Liberia are required by law to wear uniforms. Almost all of the children have only two changes of clothes; their school uniform and one other outfit. They have one pair of shoes, and they use these for school. Some of the children in the morning session share their shoes with children in the afternoon session. A few of them have one or two toys at home. They sleep on a mat on a dirt or cement floor.

The schools operate with over sixty Liberian staff which includes a principal at each school. The Country Director for All God's Children Schools is Sackie Kwalalon, who is a Liberian national that has worked for STC since 1997. He is responsible for the operation of the schools and reports to the STC Board of Directors. He currently lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and two children and visits Liberia for three months each year. He communicates regularly with the staff in Liberia via phone and email.

STC has achieved many things since operations began in Liberia in 1997. However, we must continually plan ahead. The government of Liberia is emphasizing education as their top goal. It is hoped that a free public school system will soon be in place inside the capital city of Monrovia. STC needs to start looking at moving outside the capital where the needs are just as great, or transitioning toward a vocational education system. In 2012, we purchased 7 acres of land at Mt. Barclay and will eventually raise funds to build a school there.

Previous short term mission teams have made a huge impact in the lives of the staff and children. Here are some of the accomplishments STC can build on as they look to the future in Liberia.

- Reconciliation workshops - teaching staff and children that they do not have to use force to get what they want
- Hugs and holding hands - these children need to be shown love and are starving for physical affection
- Their presence - someone in the world cares for the children enough to travel two days just to be there
- Attention - reading books, walking home with them and playing games with them give these children hope
- HIV/Aids workshops
- Teacher training

Currently, we are raising funds and starting a farming operation at our 15 Gate and Civil Compound schools. We will sell the produce and use the funds to help cover

operational costs. We will also be able to train our students in better agricultural methods. We also operate a taxi service in Monrovia to raise funds for our schools.

India - Ankoor Children's Home

In 2004, All God's Children combined operations with Serve the Children Coalition, a ministry for village children in India. The organization's name was changed to Serve the Children while keeping the name All God's Children for the Liberian schools. In India, STC partners with Hosanna Ministries and operates as the Ankoor Children's Home (ACH). ACH is located on five acres that was donated to Hosanna Ministries by Kiron and Nalini Gaikwad, who operate the home.

The Ankoor Children's Home is based in Lasina, which is located in central India. Lasina is a very small village with two barbers, a couple of small one room stores, two tailors and a small elementary school. Yavatmal is the nearest town of any size and is located about twenty miles away, with a population of about 125,000 people. The nearest large city is Nagpur.

On the ACH campus, there is a guest house, boys' and girls' dormitories, classrooms, a kitchen, a multipurpose building, a well, a water tank and a pump for running water. There is limited electrical power that does not operate on a regular schedule. Usually we can expect to have electricity (called current in India) about 40 hours a week. This is completely dependent on the water supply (the impact of the yearly monsoons) and the electrical needs of the nearby cities that take priority of any available current over the needs of the rural communities such as Lasina. ACH does have a small battery backup system for electrical needs when required.

At ACH, free housing, meals, medical care, school supplies and clothing are provided for children from villages too small to have a school. The children live at the home during the school year so they can attend our on-site school. The older children travel to Yavatmal for high school and college classes. Kiron, Nalini, their son and four other adult staff members run the home and care for the children, giving them spiritual guidance and training for life. Nalini is a retired nurse from a local government hospital in Yavatmal and she provides basic medical care to the children and staff. Many times Nalini has taken a very sick child to the hospital and they have treated the child without cost. The hospital has also donated medical supplies to ACH. A doctor also visits the home regularly to address any medical needs.

We serve about 90 children at the home. About ten of these children are orphans and live at the home permanently. We also have an outreach to the community by offering tuition based educational opportunities to children in the surrounding villages, treating simple medical problems and conducting classes on hygiene and other topics.

The children come from villages as far as 6 hours from Lasina by walking and riding a bus. They come from the lowest Hindu castes in India or from very poor tribal villages. Most of their homes are one room mud huts with tin or thatched roofs. When they first arrive at ACH, they are malnourished and covered with lice. Many are infested with

intestinal worms and all of them need to be loved. Many of the children come from homes where both parents work all day in the fields to support their families. When the parents return home at night, they are exhausted and do not have time or energy to show their children affection or play with them.

At ACH the children's day begins at 5:30am with some amazing devotions, eat breakfast, then chores and study. The children attend school from 10:30am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday and on Saturday morning. Many other activities are provided for the children to help them develop into well rounded adults with life skills. These activities include games, singing and skits, and lessons in sewing, haircutting and gardening.

We also have a small herd of cows the children help with that give milk. This helps provide a good source of nutrition for the children, and the surplus milk is sold in the local village to help with operational costs. We also operate a small chicken farm that provides eggs and meat for the children and surplus eggs and meat to be sold locally making the home more self-sufficient.

In 2012, we purchased ten acres of farmland about one mile from the home. We use this land to raise crops that we sell in the local market, and our cows go there daily for grazing. The land is located on a small river and we plan to eventually pipe water from this river to our campus to provide a more secure source of water. Many times during the summer, the well on campus will go dry requiring our staff to purchase water.

The ACH children return to their villages during the summer break from April to July and tell their parents that they only want to have one God worshipped in their mud homes. They are witnesses to their families and their friends. Some of their teachers at the local Hindu public school are anti-Christian, but they have told the STC mission team members that the children from the Ankoor Children's Home are the best behaved and strongest academic students at the school.

The children keep their entire store of belongings in small metal footlockers about the size of a medium suitcase. They might have two pairs of flip flops, an extra pair of pants and shirt or dress (other than their school uniform) and possibly one toy. It is depressing to look into these footlockers, but they are very proud of what they have. They have never had much, and they are being taught the great lesson of being thankful to God for what they do have.

Serving the Children

STC provides the only educational opportunities available to the children in the areas where they operate. This is a heavy responsibility and many decisions must be made. There are hundreds of children on the waiting list in Liberia, for example. They are being denied an education if quality for the few is stressed too highly over quantity for the many. Education changes the world one child at a time, but STC's donors expect results, and the organization must be result based for as many children as possible.

Considering the great education need, wise decisions on allocating resources must be made. Regardless of the difficulty in choosing allocation of resources, the local staff should make the call as much as possible. Learning to choose wisely is one way to help in-country staff develop into the leaders their country needs. Since one of the goals is to help native Liberians become self-sufficient, they must be given room to grow.

There are many more needy children in the villages of Central India that STC can serve. However, many families cannot send their children to live at the Ankoor Children's Home for the ten months of the school year. The children are needed to work in the fields to help support their families. Other families are able to send their children and want them to come, but ACH needs additional funding to support their needs.

Funding for STC operations comes from many sources. Over 130 children are sponsored at \$25 per month. There are approximately 8 staff members that are also sponsored at \$50 per month. Several churches and schools contribute to the needs and there are two yearly fundraisers that bring in about \$70,000. A few small grants have been received, but the majority of STC budget support comes from general donations.

God has shown his goodness by providing the funds necessary for STC to give these children hope and a future. In addition to meeting their physical and educational needs, STC's goal is to see them come to Christ and have an impact for the Lord in their families and communities. STC desires to help the children grow into positive and productive adults who make valuable contributions to their society. Through all STC does, they are also training the future leaders of Liberia and India.