Ethiopia has a proud and long history extending to the known beginnings of humankind. The country boasts of more than 80 different Ethnic groups with their own language, culture and traditions.

Ethiopia certainly marches to a different beat. In September 2007, it celebrated the new millennium, more than seven years after everybody else. The country has been out of step in this respect since 1582: while the rest of the Christian world changed to the revised Gregorian calendar, Ethiopia continued with the Julian calendar. It also still keeps its own time, measured in 12-hour cycles rather than 24-hour ones.

Uniquely in Africa, Ethiopia was never really colonized by Europeans. But its singular history has been a curse as much as a blessing. As the rest of Africa decolonized and modernized after World War II, Ethiopia remained stuck in civil and rural battles, presided over by then emperor, Haile Selassie. He was deposed in 1974, by which time the modern world had largely passed Ethiopia by and the country had become known for poverty and famine.

But as you drive through the high plains of Ethiopia and encounter the people living in the rural villages, your heart will be blessed by their hospitality and warmth. Although they are poor in the eyes of a westerner, they are generous with what they have.

Note: Recognizing that information on Ethiopia is readily available on the Internet, we encourage you to learn as much as you can about the political background, history, geography, economics and culture of this amazing country. This document provides a general overview, with some specific information that will help short-term teams appreciate Ethiopia even more and understand our work. Going to Ethiopia as part of a short-term team is different from a leisure trip or traveling for business. The information provided here can help you prepare for a potentially life-changing experience. Sources used for some country facts include CIA: The World Factbook and BBC News.
QUICK FACTS
Full Name: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Area: 1,127,000 sq km (439,530 sq mi)
Population: 84.9 million (UN, 2010)
Capital City: Addis Ababa
Language: Amharic, Tigrinya, Orominga, Guaraginga, Somali, Arabic, English
Religion: Islam, Ethiopian Orthodox, animist
Monetary Currency: Birr

PASSPORT/VISA
A passport and visa are required for all travelers to Ethiopia. All information regarding obtaining a passport can be found at the U.S. Department of State’s National Passport Information Center: www.travel.state.gov/passport.

This site will detail current fees, acceptable forms of identification, downloadable applications, and passport acceptance facility locations. It takes approximately 6 to 10 weeks for processing. Please allow additional time for gathering necessary documents (photos, birth certificate, etc.).

For an additional fee, the process can be expedited. Information can be found on the above website on “How to Get Your Passport in a Hurry.”

In addition to a passport, some countries require a visa for entry. A visa is a special permit issued by a country’s government to allow a foreign citizen into the country. At this time, a visa is required for Americans traveling to Ethiopia. This visa can be obtained upon arrival in Addis Ababa.

If you have a passport from a country other than the U.S., you may need to take extra measures to ensure smooth entrance into and exit from Ethiopia. Consult the host country consulate to find out what measures need to be taken.

For the most up-to-date information about travel from the United States to any foreign country, please visit the Department of State’s website at www.travel.state.gov.

VACCINATION INFORMATION
In addition to applying for a passport, you will also need to research vaccinations for your trip well in advance as some vaccinations take time or need to be given in a series to be effective. The best advice regarding vaccinations and any other medications can only come from a qualified physician. Please make an appointment with your family doctor and share with him/her where you are going, how long you will be there and what activities you will be participating in. In consultation with your doctor, you can decide which vaccinations and/or medications will be best for you.

To better familiarize yourself with travel health, please visit the Center for Disease Control’s website
at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) prior to your visit with your doctor.

**FOOD**

Food for the Hungry will be providing breakfast, lunch and dinner during the whole trip. Meals will be either at a restaurant or prepared by individuals selected by FH and are well-versed in healthy methods of preparing meals. Almost all the meals will be Ethiopian dishes as there are limited international menu options.

Ethiopian food has a good deal of variety, but the staples are *injera* (fermented bread), lentils (beans), vegetables, chicken and beef. The meat is fairly spicy. Coffee is also very popular, but it will be different than your local Starbucks. Please come with an open mind about trying new foods and combinations. If you have special dietary needs, please let us know ahead of time.

Avoid eating any food that hasn’t been provided by or approved by Food for the Hungry staff. Eating something from a local vendor or from a street market could lead to sickness.

Your Team Coordinator will also have a supply of bottled water for your team. Drink bottled water only. Also use it to brush your teeth and take medicines. If you are served ice in a drink, please verify that the water is okay by consulting with your Team Coordinator.

Any extra snacks should be brought by the team members.

**CLIMATE**

Ethiopia is a big country with a varied climate. Food for the Hungry works in several regions including Zeway, Belo and South Gondar. Zeway is an arid region located in the Rift Valley. It is fairly dry with warm days and cool nights. The rainy season is from July to September.

In the Belo region, the rainy season comes during the summer months, similar to Zeway. However, this rainy season is a lot more intense. The temperatures are slightly cooler than in Zeway, so be prepared with jackets and rain gear.

In the northern region of South Gondar, it is mountainous and cooler year-round. During the rainy season, the temperatures can be quite cold. Addis Ababa is in the highlands and experiences a rainy season from February to June. Temperatures range from 55 F to 75 F most days.

**CLOTHING**

Our dress code is a sign of respect for the people you will be working with, as well as to convey a conservative Christian lifestyle. The general rule of thumb for dress in Rwanda is conservative. Wearing appropriate clothing will open the door for establishing good relationships with the community members.

While in the community and during tourism days, teams members should wear long pants (Capri pants okay) and loose fitting T-shirts. If the team is attending a church service, women should wear long skirts and loose-fitting blouses, and men should wear long pants and collared shirts. Except when in the team’s guesthouse or accommodation, team members should always wear close-toed shoes.

Please do not bring the following:

- Shorts
- Tight or revealing clothing (pants, jeans and shirts)
- Low-cut shirts (scoop neck or V-neck)
- Tank tops
- Excessively low-rise jeans or excessively baggy pants
- Shirts that reveal the midriff
- Clothing that has inappropriate or questionable words or pictures
- Clothing with rips, holes or stains
Out of respect for cultural sensitivity, we request your cooperation in submitting to FH’s policy in regard to piercings, tattoos and radical haircuts. For more details about this topic, please talk to your team leader.

**LUGGAGE**

Although the airlines may allow you to check two hefty bags, we advise you to travel light. All team members will be responsible to carry their luggage. Also remember that vehicle space is limited, so be conservative when packing. We ask that you bring only one checked bag and one carry-on bag. When you’re working in the communities, your luggage will be safe at the hotel. We suggest that you bring a backpack for water bottle, sun block, camera, snacks, and small items. Please refer to your teams training materials for a packing list.

**TRANSPORTATION**

The team will travel around the country mostly in Land Rovers and full-size buses. If traveling to South Gondar, you will likely need to take a plane. Once in the community, going from one place to another will be mostly on foot. All transportation will be provided by FH. Your drivers will either be FH staff or hired by a reliable company that FH frequently uses.

In Ethiopia, the roads can be bumpy and winding. If you experience carsickness, try to sit in the front or take an appropriate medicine for motion sickness. Also, the traffic will likely be a new experience as well. You may feel that the vehicle you are in is uncomfortably close to the vehicle or pedestrian beside it. Traffic signs may not always be followed. Remember that you are in good hands. Your driver is a professional and used to the traffic conditions. Keep your hands, feet and belongings inside the vehicle at all times.

**CAMERAS AND CAMCORDERS**

We want you to be able to take pictures and capture videos and share these incredible moments of transformation with your friends and family back home. However, please use discretion when taking pictures or videos. Upon your arrival in the country FH/Ethiopia staff will explain in depth our photo policy for everyone’s safety. We want to make sure that we are focused on the work at hand, and ask that team members be sensitive to the culture and people. We want you to see the country through our own eyes, not only
through the lens of a camera.

You may bring cameras (disposable, standard or digital), iPods, cell phones and other small electronic devices; however, you assume all risks of damage, loss or theft of your belongings. Keep in mind that you will be kept quite busy, and there will not be a lot of time to use many electronic devices. Also, electricity may not always be available to recharge electronic equipment, including cameras and camcorders. Please bring extra batteries. When in public, don’t display expensive electronic items or any items that may just appear expensive.

**COMMUNICATION**

You will likely be without telephone and/or e-mail access during your time in Ethiopia. While these services may be readily available, especially in major cities, your schedule will be packed with activities. This will help you to focus your energy and attention on the transformative work of the Lord and to help maintain a cohesive group dynamic. We encourage you to leave your cell phone at home and inform your family and friends that you will be unavailable until you return to the States.

If there is an emergency in the country or community where you are serving, your Team Coordinator will contact your family and appropriate people at your home church. Before you leave the U.S. you will be given a U.S. phone number and other details, which you will pass on to your family and close friends. If there is an emergency in the U.S. while you’re on the field, your family member or friend may call that number. Your Field Liaison will assess the call and facilitate communication with you or the field staff as necessary.

**MONEY**

Once you arrive in country, you will not need any money for team-related activities. You will only need money for tourist activities, souvenirs and shopping that you will do in-country and while traveling. Bring bills that are crisp and new (no more than 5 years old) to ensure acceptance. If you will be exchanging a lot of money, bills larger than $20 are recommended to get a better exchange rate. Please note that you can only exchange Ethiopian Birr back to USD in Ethiopia.

**FH/ETHIOPIA HISTORY AND PROGRAMS**

FH began working in Ethiopia in 1974, through a partner organization, to deliver emergency food aid to famine victims. In 1984, FH became fully established in Ethiopia to more adequately undertake relief and rehabilitation activities in response to the severe drought and famine. By 1989, most programs had moved
toward long-term development. These integrated development programs seek to be participatory, integrated and sustainable. Through its programs, FH/Ethiopia has achieved major results in natural resources management, reforestation, and water development, including planting 3.5 million trees and fodder seedlings in 1985 alone.

The goal of FH/Ethiopia is to respond biblically to ending extreme poverty of all kinds in marginalized communities in Ethiopia through the following:

**Water and Sanitation (Wastsan):** Provides clean water at community wells via bored holes, capped springs or hand-dug wells. And constructs ventilated pit latrines to ensure healthier communities.

**Agroforestry:** Helps farmers to plant new crops, vegetables, fruits, as well as teaching them improved agricultural practices.

**Health:** Training on prevention of HIV/AIDS to youth by practicing abstinence and being faithful. Providing preventative health and nutrition training.

**Animal Health:** Introduced a new method to control a protozoal disease “trypanosomiasis” (human sleeping sickness), which is the leading killer of cattle and oxen.

**Conservation and Reforestation:** Works with the community to reclaim degraded lands and to reverse soil erosion.

**Water:** Provides clean drinking water by capping springs and digging wells and then turning them over to the community for management and maintenance.

**Community Leader Training:** Emphasis on building the capacity of community-based organizations including churches.

**Child Development:** Equips parents and the community to care for children wholistically so they can fulfill God’s potential for their lives. FH/E also assists orphans and child-headed households with guidance, food security, education, livelihood training and various living expenses (clothes and occasionally, rent).

**Prayer for Ethiopia**

- Pray for Ethiopia’s and the national leaders that they would govern the country with wisdom and justice.
- Pray for FH/Ethiopia projects and activities. Pray for effective programming – one that brings physical and spiritual transformation to children, families and communities. Pray that the staff would have greater sensitivity, compassion and wisdom.
- Pray that they would reflect the character of Jesus in their own lives.
- Pray that families and community leaders grow in the knowledge of God and increasingly solve their own problems. Pray for churches to effectively reach out to their respective communities.