Africa Ministry

Frequently Asked Questions (v1)

The following are common questions and answers regarding True Jesus Church’s missionary work in African countries where there is TJC.

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A. AMC and AMC VT

Q 1: What is the Africa Missionary Committee (AMC)? Who is on the committee?
The AMC is a committee that oversees the ministry work of True Jesus Church in Africa. The current AMC consists of full-time ministers and workers: Preacher T.K. Chin (Chair), Preacher H.H. Ko, Preacher F.F. Chong, Deacon Luke Chan (UKGA Religious Affairs), and Deacon Silas Chan (UKGA Chairman). Pastor Derren Liang attends as the Chairman of Western Hemisphere Department of World Mission (WHDWM) of the International Assembly (IA), which oversees the AMC.

Q 2: What is the AMC Voluntary Team (VT) and its role in the AMC?
The AMC VT was initiated and formed after AMC meetings with Preacher Derren Liang during the January 2010 AMC Voluntary Workers Training (VWT) in London. The VT is to assist AMC to plan and to execute the various divine works in Africa, under the guidance and approval of the AMC. Within the VT, there are three VT members who co-ordinate three groups that cover and assist in the various works associated with the Africa ministry:

1. Religious Education Group (REG) – to build up and establish the Religious Education system
2. Religious Seminars Group (RSG) – to plan, hold and recruit teachers for the annual NSSC
3. Recruitment and Awareness Group (RAG) – to recruit volunteers, oversee promotion/publicity and central archiving

The VT members will together oversee the functions of the VT and the three groups to meet their objectives, holding regular meetings to discuss and furnish opinions so as to augment betterment for the works in Africa.
The term for the VT is three years; the next term will begin in 2014.

Q 3: How can the AMC VT help me?
If you require further information regarding attending the annual VWT seminar, or in applying to volunteer on an upcoming missionary trip, you can contact the VT. You can request assistance in what to prepare for your trip. When returning from your trip, you can channel your experiences and testimonies to the VT for assisting in ongoing promotion and awareness of the Africa Ministry. You can contact AMC VT by e-mail amc_vt@tjc.org.
B. Volunteering and Mindset

Q 4: What can I do when volunteering in Africa?
There are a number of areas volunteers can contribute to on a missionary trip:

1. Religious Education (RE)
   a. Annual National Students Spiritual Convocations (NSSCs) have been continuing each year since its first event in Kenya in 2005, and will be held in more countries from 2011 onwards. If you are joining this trip, you will be helping to organise events, staying in two or more locations for prolonged periods of time, and assigned to teach the set syllabus.
      Prepare: teaching notes, paper and pens for tests and assignments during the seminars, hymns to teach
   b. Teaching RE classes may be required when visiting local places of worship on a normal missionary trip. The accompanying full-time worker will be having services with the older members while the children will need teaching and taking care of.
      Prepare: RE class teaching notes, paper and pens and any other crafts supplies needed for class activities, children’s hymns to teach

2. Evangelism and pastoral works
   a. Pastoral works include delivering sermons, leading hymnal singing during congregational worship, sharing with and encouraging local members, holding youth fellowship activities.
      Prepare: sermons, sharing and encouragement to members, hymns
   b. Evangelism works will require you to know your basic doctrines well. You will meet truthseekers during travelling, at each place of worship, and when going out street preaching, and may need to lead truthseeker classes. Be prepared to answer questions, needing Bible verses to back up your answers.
      Prepare: evangelism leaflets to give to truthseekers, knowing your basic doctrines with Biblical back up
   c. Supporting full-time workers in recording a daily diary, keeping of expenditure accounts, assist with planning the trip itinerary and travel arrangements. At the end of the trip, you will be asked to submit a short trip report for the AMC records.
      Prepare: notebook to record diary entries, record expenditure and records for end of trip short report

3. Contributing to AMC VT projects
   a. Taking photos of new pioneering places of worship and new church building constructions
   b. Writing articles reflecting on experiences on your trip for sharing and publishing
   c. Recording testimonies of local African brethren
   d. Recording personal testimonies of your experiences on your trip for sharing and preparing information for promotional presentations made to your local church members on your return from Africa
      Prepare: digital camera for taking photos, notebooks for recording testimonies and notes

4. Building / construction works of church buildings – for volunteers with a background in construction
   a. Purchasing and organising delivery of materials, dealing with the building contractor and managing building funds. You will be based in one location for the duration of the build.
      Prepare: notebook for recording expenditure and daily diary of events and construction progress
Q 5: Can I just attend AMC VWT and not commit to joining a missionary trip?
AMC VWT aims to equip volunteers with the knowledge and tools in order to realise the ultimate aim of joining a missionary trip to Africa. Not all past participants of AMC WT have joined a missionary trip for various reasons or expressed an interest to go, but all have found the training very useful as it can be applied on your return to your local church.

Q 6: Can I join a missionary trip without having attended any AMC VWT?
Since the first AMC workers training held in January 2004, volunteers have attended the training before enrolling and applying to join a missionary trip. Experienced local church workers however can also apply to join a missionary trip, with endorsement from their local church board. If you have much experience in local church evangelism, Religious Education and sermonising, these will equip you well in Africa.

Q 7: Are all applicants automatically approved to go to Africa?
All applications for any Africa trip are vetted by the AMC. In the past, the AMC has rejected applications from volunteers for various reasons. If you would like to apply for a trip, prepare yourself and your mindset through prayers. God willing, there will be an opportunity for you to go on a missionary trip to Africa.

Q 8: I just want to go and ‘see’ and prefer not to be too involved with evangelism and pastoral works. Can I still volunteer to go?
The basic works of Africa ministry are evangelism and pastoral works. It will be difficult to justify your reason for going to Africa to ‘see’ what it is like. If this is your mentality, it would be advisable to reconsider your application to go as a volunteer.

Q 9: What mindset should I have when volunteering in Africa?
A church worker sums it up: “Always prepare for the worst, then every day will be a thanksgiving day”. An example is when travelling on bad roads, some volunteers may complain about the crowded public transport and their discomfort which amount to suffering; other volunteers may enjoy the ride, feeling that if they do suffer, they are suffering for Christ. With the first type of mindset of having high expectations, you will easily become discouraged.

Q 10: Will I see great miracles on the trip?
The majority of past volunteers and full-time workers will testify that the greatest miracle is the constant guidance and protection from God throughout the missionary trip. Miracles from God seen on trips include members receiving the Holy Spirit, conversion of devout Christians from other denominations, healings, casting out of evil spirits, resurrection of the dead and seeing visions. The emphasis however is not on going to Africa in order to witness miracles, but to assist in the divine work.

Q 11: Do I really have to pray one hour every day when in Africa?
Prayer is an essential part of the daily routine when in Africa. Workers will often pray two or more hours each day during the trip: morning for one hour, evening for one hour, and other prayers throughout the day.
Q 12: Have any volunteers regretted going?
No volunteers have refused to go again; the majority have come back from a trip with positive feedback and experiences. The leader and co-ordinator of each trip will try to ensure everything is tolerable.

Q 13: Can I go to Africa every year?
If you are able to volunteer to join a missionary trip every year, God willing, you will have the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

C. Things to Consider Prior to a Trip

Q 14: Do I have to go for the full duration of the missionary trip? Can I leave mid-way through the trip?
If you are unable to take extended time (up to five weekends) from your usual schedule, arrangements can be made to join part of a missionary trip – to leave mid-way or join for latter part of a trip. It may be difficult to visit numerous places on a short duration trip. It is advisable to try and take extended time of at least two weeks or three weekends to ensure the trip is worthwhile.

Q 15: I am not familiar / do not know who the full-time workers are going on the planned trip.
If you have not had the opportunity to attend the AMC VWT, you most likely will not have met the full-time workers who are sent to Africa each year. Sometimes, volunteers will meet the full-time workers for the first time at the airport or on arrival in Africa. The AMC VT will help guide you through your volunteer application process and introduce you to the assigned full-time workers for that particular trip.

Q 16: Can I choose which planned trip to join? Can I choose which workers to follow?
When submitting your volunteer application form, you can state your dates of availability and which particular trip you can join. There will already be at least one full-time worker assigned to each particular trip. If you decide to join that trip, you will be following the assigned full-time worker(s). On arrival in Africa, there may be times when the full-time workers need to separate to visit different locations; you will then have an option of which worker to follow.

Q 17: Can I stay in one location / region during the trip?
Trips will often be planned to take in locations that require visiting or form part of the trip’s main objectives, e.g. training, NSSCs, pioneering work. If the trip is planned towards the holding of a national or regional event, you may find that for most of the trip, you will be stationed in that one location or region. Other trips will require visiting numerous places of worship as part of pastoral works. It will therefore be difficult to specially arrange for you to stay in one location while the workers journey to other locations.

Q 18: I am a sister; can I volunteer to go along with the preachers / brothers?
Sisters can volunteer to go on a trip with preachers and brothers. Sisters are encouraged to find accompanying sisters to join them on a planned trip for convenience in room-sharing and travel. In past years, there have been a number of sisters who have travelled together with full-time workers to help with national events like NSSCs.
Q 19: Are volunteers allowed to go to war-torn countries?
Due to the risks and dangers of travelling in war-torn countries, volunteers are normally advised against going to these countries. Volunteers will usually be left in a neighbouring ‘stable’ country to continue with preaching and pastoral works if visits to such countries are part of the trip itinerary.

Q 20: Chinese is my first language; how good does my English need to be?
Previous volunteers who have Chinese as a first language have joined missionary trips. You will need some basic command of English as speaking to members, preaching, sermonising, teaching is all in English. You will find it very difficult if you require an interpreter and translator when interacting with members or participating in local divine works.

Q 21: Can I join a trip going to a French-speaking country, i.e. Congo?
Unless you can converse in French, it will be difficult for you to join a missionary trip to these countries. There will often be no members to translate or interpret for you. Trips to French-speaking countries are organised by the workers in Paris Church, France.

Q 22: I want to go but do not have the permission of my parents / guardians. Can I still volunteer to go to Africa?
Serving the Lord in Africa is a very meaningful and worthwhile thing to do. However, without the permission of your parents / guardians, it will be difficult for you to go. If you have such difficulties, please take time to pray and seek the approval you require before submitting your application form.

Q 23: I want to go but cannot afford the plane ticket. Can AMC sponsor me or subsidise me to go?
Generally, there is no sponsor or subsidy scheme for volunteers; it is the AMC’s consensus that travelling fares (plane ticket) shall be borne by volunteers. If you have difficulty in raising the required finances to purchase your ticket, you can let the AMC know.

D. Preparations for the Trip

❖ Things to Bring

Q 24: How much should I pack?
Pack as light as possible; you may be on the move constantly (on foot over rough terrains, crowded public transport, etc). Taking the nature of your trip into consideration, bring as few items as you feel necessary / comfortable with, use the smallest bag possible and consider sharing non-personal items with others where feasible. A lot of items can be purchased locally (if you are not fussy about brands and quality).

Q 25: What essential items will I need for the trip?
1. Passport with valid entry visa(s)
2. Plane ticket
3. Yellow fever certificate
Q 26: When should I book my plane ticket?
Once your volunteer application has been approved by the AMC, the VT will get you in touch with the assigned
full-time worker for that particular trip. You can discuss when is best to book and which dates to book. There
may be cost savings the earlier you can book.

Q 27: Do I need a visa to enter the country?
All countries will require a visa to enter. It is advisable to arrange for your visas well in advance of your trip as
not all countries will provide visas on entry into the country. It will also cost more to arrange your visa at short
notice before your trip.

Q 28: What other items should I consider bringing for the trip?
Choose from the following items (not all are essential):
✓ Swiss Army knife / multi-purpose tool
✓ Money belt (for holding your money and other belongings)
✓ Kneeling pad / foam (for prayer)
✓ Torch (useful if it has its own stand or can be hung up)
✓ Earplugs
✓ Alarm clock (small)
✓ Raincoat / small umbrella
✓ Neck tie (for Sabbath) – brothers

Q 29: Do I need to take sun protection lotion?
It is advisable to apply sun protection lotion to protect your skin from the sun. Generally, a sun protection factor
of ‘15+’ should be considered.

Q 30: Can I take valuable items / possessions on the trip?
Leave valuable items (including jewellery) at home and use a cheaper alternative instead e.g. wear a cheap(ish)
watch.

Q 31: What clothing is appropriate?
Loose, lightweight and long sleeved clothing is the most appropriate to bring on trips. This will be more
comfortable to travel in and will help to cover up your skin from insects and the sun. Always bring a warm jacket
and rain gear for rainy season, plus sunglasses, a sunhat, and comfortable reliable footwear. It is advisable to
take around three or four changes of clothing. For brothers, bring shirts and trousers; for sisters, bring long
skirts or long shorts (to the knees), and T-shirts and tops covering your shoulders. For Sabbath, local members
will dress formally and smartly, so volunteers will often wear something formal likewise. It is best for sisters to
wear long skirts (to the ankle) for Sabbath worship.

Q 32: What can I take for the local members?
Fully utilise your remaining baggage weight allowance (check with airline, usually 20kg or 23kg) and bring as
many as possible of the following for the local members:
1. RE teachers textbooks published by AMC (please contact AMC VT for more information amc_vt@tjc.org)
2. Surplus English evangelistic leaflets / booklets (ask your local EPG in-charge)
3. Old / surplus TJC English publications, e.g. Manna, Whispering Hope, etc. (ask your local church librarian)
4. Usable Bibles (NKJV only) and TJC English hymn books (ask your local GA in-charge, local members, etc.)
5. New Bibles for Africa (please contact AMC VT for more information amc_vt@tjc.org)
6. Mobile phones with chargers that members can use
Q 34: What are the local currencies?
Each African country has its own local currency. US dollars can be used in all African countries and can be exchanged for local currency at currency exchanges at banks and at the airport. The UK Pound can also be exchanged for local currency.

Q 35: What things will I need to pay for or spend money on?
All expenses on the trip (accommodation, transport and food) are covered by AMC. Money can be used for purchasing consumable and non-consumable goods for daily use, but you will have no need for considerable amounts of cash.

Medical Travel Advice

Q 36: What vaccinations do I need before going?
Generally, the following vaccinations will be required (for medical advice, consult your doctor):
1. Yellow fever
2. Typhoid
3. Hepatitis A and B
4. Diphtheria
5. Tetanus
The following are useful websites:

Q 37: What if I have specific medical needs and treatments that I need to take on the trip?
Special and / or personal medicine and treatments can be taken on the trip. Accompanying full-time workers should be made aware of your medical needs.

Q 38: What other medications and food supplements can I bring on the trip?
The following are suggestions only:
✓ Paracetamol / Ibuprofen (or similar)
✓ Antihistamines
✓ Travel sickness pills
✓ Indigestion pills
✓ Constipation pills
✓ Diarrhoea relief tablets
✓ Tiger Balm
✓ Ointment for insect bites
✓ Antiseptic cream
✓ Cough medicine
✓ Antibacterial hand wash/gel (no water required)
✓ Vitamins / nutritional supplement tablets
✓ First aid plasters
Q 39: What about malaria in Africa?
There is a significant risk of malaria in most parts of Africa and appropriate preventive medicines are essential for visitors to this area. Adequate measures to avoid mosquito bites, such as nets and creams, are also essential. The most popular prescription anti-malaria tablets are Malarone, Doxycycline or Lariam.
1. Malarone tablets dosage - *One tablet daily for two days before departing, one tablet daily whilst in Africa, one tablet daily for one week on return* (7 tablets).
2. Doxycycline tablets dosage - *One capsule daily for 2 days before departure (2 capsules), one capsule daily whilst in Africa, one capsule daily for four weeks on return* (28 capsules).
3. Lariam (Mefloquine) tablets dosage - *One tablet each week for three weeks before departure (3 tablets), one tablet daily whilst in Africa, one tablet each week for four weeks on return* (4 tablets)
Please consult your doctor for advice on Malaria prevention medication.

Q 40: What happens if I fall sick on the trip?
The majority of full-time workers and volunteers have fallen sick on trips. Often, medication can help, e.g. diarrhoea tablets. When illness is very severe, there are hospitals to go to.

Q 41: Do animals in Africa have rabies? Should I stay well clear of all animals?
It is advisable to stay clear of stray wild animals in rural and city areas due to the risk of rabies. Animals living on a farm are usually safe and well looked after.

Interaction with Brethren

Q 42: How do I greet our Africa brothers and sisters?
We greet our African brethren with “Hallelujah!”

Q 43: How different is the lifestyle of our brothers and sisters in Africa?
Although the standard of living in African countries is very different to that in the western world, our African brethren face similar lifestyle challenges and social pressures. The youths particularly face similar temptations and peer pressures regarding money, material possessions, drinking, and sex.

Q 44: Can I give money to members in need?
Although it is charitable to give to our brothers and sisters in Africa, it is the AMC’s consensus that any financial help rendered to brethren in Africa is to go through AMC. It is not advisable to just give out willingly to any members who ask or you feel require financial help. This has been kept and practiced for the past 15 years. We thank God, by following this guideline, the TJC in Africa has been growing and problems have been minimised. We love the brethren much, but this must be done with wisdom and care. Otherwise, we will not be different from other non-TJC missionaries who have for the past few hundred years “enticing” people with money and not preaching the truth. Past cases of volunteers giving to local members irresponsibly have caused members to stumble.
Q 45: What if local brethren request to name their children or animals after me?
In the past, local members have named their children after missionary workers and volunteers. It is AMC consensus that members should be educated to not do this. More recent trend of local members naming their animals after missionary workers and volunteers should also be discouraged and kindly declined.

Q 46: Can I keep in touch directly with members after a trip through e-mails, phone calls, etc?
It is AMC consensus that volunteers can keep in contact with brethren in Africa through e-mails and phone calls. If any African brethren request financial aid, this matter should be brought to the attention of AMC.

E. African Lifestyle

- Food and Drink

Q 47: Is it safe to drink the tap water in Africa?
Only in cities or built up areas will you find water from the ‘tap’. In other less built up areas, water is usually harvested from rainfall. It is advisable to boil any water before consumption. Bottled water is the safest source of drinkable water which is widely available from any small convenience store by the roadside.

Q 48: What if I am not used to the local cuisine? Can I take my own food?
All volunteers are encouraged to partake in meals prepared by local members. It is an interesting experience to try the local cuisine and many volunteers have not found a problem to adjust to eating it each day. Full-time workers and volunteers will however often take their own food, to cover all eventualities of there being no food available.

Q 49: Are there any local foods that I should refrain from eating?
Food prepared by the local members will be fine to eat. Buying food and snacks from stalls on the side of the road is not always advisable.

Q 50: What common etiquette (behaviour) is observed during meal times?
Mothers will eat separately with the children at home and in church, although voluntary workers (brothers and sisters) can eat together with the host of the home or the local church workers. Another common etiquette is that the guests of the home take their portion of the food first.

Q 51: What is the typical African cuisine?

a. Eastern African Cuisine (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)
A typical Kenyan chakula (meal) is usually a heavy staple food, such as ugali (cornmeal mush), rice or potatoes, with a boiled meat or fish stew and a side of vegetables. Ugali is typically served on a large dish where everyone can reach to take a portion (using the right hand). Sukuma Wiki (greens simmered with tomatoes) make up the typical side of vegetables. Mandazi, a semi-sweet flat doughnut, is usually eaten at breakfast with chai (tea) or kahawa (coffee). Chai is served very milky and sweet. Kenyans also eat chapattis at breakfast. Meat such as beef, goat, or mutton (sheep) is most commonly eaten. Other dishes can include githeri, a mix of beans (usually red kidney beans) and corn, and matoke (mashed plantains). Foods served at lunch and dinner are the same. Fruit is usually eaten for dessert.
b. Western African Cuisine (Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo)
Most Ghanaian meals will consist of a starch dish, and a sauce or soup saturated with fish, snails, meat or mushrooms. Common starchy dishes are cooked plain rice, jollof rice (rice cooked in tomatoes and tomato paste with onion, salt and spices), waakye (rice and beans), fufu (pounded cassava / yam and plantain), banku/akple (cooked fermented corn dough and cassava dough), and kenkey / dokonu (fermented corn dough, wrapped in corn or plantain leaves and cooked into consistent solid balls). The most popular soups are okra, groundnut, light, and palmnut. Stews are also popular.

c. Southern African Cuisine (Zambia)
Zambia’s native cuisine is based on nshima, a cooked porridge made from plain maize, corn or maize flour. Nshima is eaten for breakfast with some sugar perhaps, and as a thicker porridge (the consistency of mashed potatoes) for lunch and dinner, normally accompanied by some tasty relish, made of meat and tomatoes, or dried fish.

F. Practical and Daily Amenities

Q 52: Will we stay with local brothers and sisters during the trip?
Accommodation will be generally be provided by a hotel or guest house used on previous trips. In some locations, there may be an opportunity where one of the members is able to open his / her home to receive us.

Q 53: What facilities are there for personal hygiene?
In the cities, when staying in hotels or guest houses, there is normally running water for showers. When there is no such facility, bathing with water in a plastic container is most commonly used. Standard toilet facilities can be found in the cities. In rural areas, toilets are often holes and pits dug in the ground. Water for washing and cleaning is usually boiled before use.

Q 54: Do I have to wash my own clothes during the trip?
If you have packed only sufficient clothing to last for a few days, clothes can become dirty very quickly and will need washing. Although some local members may be able to assist, volunteers should be prepared to wash their own clothes.

Q 55: What if I am scared of spiders and insects?
If you have a fear of spiders and insects, you will have difficulty facing the environment in Africa. God willing that you can overcome your personal fears. Otherwise, there is not much that can be done.

Q 56: Is there a lot of walking each day?
When travelling in rural areas, walking may be the only reliable way to reach your destination. Having a good pair of walking shoes is essential. The amount of walking may vary from day to day. Sometimes, other forms of transport such as bicycle, motorbike, car and public bus can reduce the need to walk.

Q 57: Will electricity be available in rural areas?
Electricity might not be available in rural areas. Only bring electrical equipments you cannot “live without”, and consider the power source (disposal batteries / rechargeable batteries / mains only).
Q 58: Do our African brethren have access to any media?
An increasing number of families have access to a television, especially those living in the cities; in rural areas, it will be difficult to find a television. A small number of members who are not financially lacking may even have music systems or DVD players in their homes.

Q 59: Do they have internet access in Africa?
In more developed African countries, the internet is mainly accessible from internet cafés. It is uncommon to find such facilities in rural areas. Virtually all of our members do not have access to a PC or laptop or reliable internet access.

Q 60: Do members use mobile phones to communicate?
Some local African members have their own personal mobile phone. Missionary workers will communicate with local workers using mobile phones to plan their trip itinerary and to meet up.

Q 61: What safety issues should I be aware of?
Petty crime such as pick-pocketing and theft can sometimes occur, so keep your valuables out of sight and safely under your shirt. Be aware of people loitering around your belongings on arrival to an area and stay alert to keeping your bags closed. In busy areas such as city centres and coach stations, stay close to the full-time workers and follow their advice and direction. Volunteers should be careful not to walk alone anywhere after dark. In rare situations, tribal differences and other issues could rise at any time. It is best to stay cautious and avoid large crowds and demonstrations which may turn violent.

Q 62: What is there to do at night time?
Some church training sessions and services run into the night. Otherwise, evenings can be a time to reflect upon the day just gone, fellowshipping with the other co-workers and local members, preparing for the next day (sermons, teaching R.E.), cleaning clothes, showering, preparing and eating dinner. The habit of sleeping early is common, especially if there are early morning starts.

Q 63: Will I have any personal time during the trip, e.g. make phone calls home, sightseeing, go shopping?
There will be time in the evenings or during periods of rest when phone calls can be made to family back home. Although the trip itinerary is usually full with activities each day, there may be an opportunity when there is free time. Volunteers can use their free time for sightseeing and shopping if the opportunity arises.

Q 64: What can I bring back from Africa apart from souvenirs?
One of the important objectives for volunteers returning from Africa is to share with brothers and sisters in your native country your experiences. We hope that awareness can be increased and more members motivated to contribute to Africa ministry – through prayers, offerings, volunteering to join a missionary trip. All volunteers will have an opportunity on returning to their local church to give testimonies and make presentations on their experiences while in Africa.

If your question does not appear on the list, feel free to contact AMC Voluntary Team on amc_vt@tjc.org with your question.