

I. INTRODUCTION

CONGRATULATIONS! You have made the decision to join in a mission trip to Romania, which is being facilitated by the Romanian-American Mission (RAM).

RAM is a mission organization bringing together Great Commission Christians, churches and groups of churches from all across America to accomplish in Romania the task our Lord gave His church in Matthew 28:19-20, ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”***

RAM was born in 1996 when Dr. Vasile Talos, president of the Baptist Union of Romania at that time, urged Dr. Robert H. Jackson, pastor of the Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, Kentucky, to found a new national organization to partner with the Baptist Union in reaching Romania for Jesus Christ. On August 29, 1996, in Robertsedale, Alabama, persons from churches in Alabama, Florida, Kentucky and Mississippi came together and formed the Romanian-American Mission, Inc.

RAM has been working through the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, but it opens its arms to all Great Commission Christians who love the Lord, His Word and the people for whom Christ died, and who desire to be used to make a difference where God is at work – in Romania, Moldova, Serbia, Austria, Spain, England and to the ends of the earth!

Your involvement in a short-term mission trip will change your perspective on the world. You will see God at work and you will minister to the real needs of real people. Statistics will become people with names and faces. The mission field will become a reality for you and your life will never be the same!

Having launched out in faith and accepted the call to be a short-term missionary, it is likely that you have many questions and concerns. This booklet is an attempt to relieve some of your concerns, answer questions and prepare you for the task ahead.

II. PREPARATION FOR THE TRIP

As soon as possible, you should obtain a passport and receive necessary immunizations.

A. PASSPORT

In order to obtain a U.S. passport you have to **complete the following 5-step process** (available online the U.S. State Department's website: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html):

- 1. Complete and submit form DS-11**
 - a. The form is available for download or online processing at http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html
 - b. You must apply in person at a local [accepted facility](#) or local [passport agency](#).
 - c. Include additional documentation required by form DS-11.
 - d. Do not sign the application until instructed to do so by the Acceptance Agent.
 - e. You must provide your Social Security Number.
- 2. Submit evidence of U.S. citizenship**

Please submit one of the following:

 - a. Previously issued, undamaged U.S. passport
 - b. Certified copy of [birth certificate](#) issued by the city, county, or state.
 - c. If born abroad, a [consular report of birth abroad or birth of certificate](#)
 - d. If naturalized, naturalization certificate.
 - e. Certificate of Citizenship
- 3. Present Identification**

Please present one of the following:

 - a. Previously issued, undamaged U.S. passport
 - b. Naturalization certificate
 - c. Valid driver's license
 - d. Current government ID (city, state, or federal)
 - e. Current military ID
- 4. Pay the passport fees**
 - a. If you apply in person for a passport and your age is 16 and older, the total passport fee is \$ 100. Here is an [online complete list of passport fees!](#)
- 5. Provide two passport photos**
 - a. must be submitted at a designated post office location. It is a good idea to complete the application prior to going to submit it; however, do not sign it until you are in the presence of the clerk at the post office. To obtain a passport, you will need these:

Expect a minimum wait of six weeks for the return of your passport via mail. This process could take longer, especially closer to summer. Therefore, it is important that you apply as soon as possible!

VERY IMPORTANT!

Be sure to make a record of your passport number, date and place of issue. This is necessary to have in the event your passport is lost or stolen.

You should make three copies of this information.

- Take one copy with you and keep in a separate location from your passport – in your luggage or carry-on.
- Leave the other copy in a safe location at home, perhaps with relatives or friends.
- Mail the third copy to the RAM office at **PO Box 2024, Decatur, AL 35602**

If your passport were to be lost, it would be much easier and faster to get a replacement if you have this recorded information available.

Record your blood type, Rh factor and immunization dates in the back of your passport.

B. IMMUNIZATIONS

It would be best to obtain your immunizations as soon as possible.

The following recommended immunizations are available at the International Travel Site of the State Health Department.

1. **Typhoid** (within past 5 years) – Oral vaccine is best. You must obtain a prescription from your doctor. The current cost is approximately \$35.
2. **Polio Booster** – You need one dose if you have had series. Current cost – approximately \$5.
3. **Tetanus Booster** – Must have had within last ten years. If you're unsure, take one. Current cost – approximately \$5.
4. **Hepatitis A** – You need two doses. The first will give immunity for the trip. You should follow up with the second dose after the trip, which will provide for long-term immunity. Current cost – approximately \$40.
5. **Hepatitis B** – Only needed by healthcare personnel.

If you prefer, your local doctor may be able to provide these immunizations. However, the cost may be higher than at the health department.

Both the typhoid and polio vaccines contain live viruses. You should allow one month between these.

NOTE:

* Our doctors recommend **Tetanus** and **Hepatitis A** as the two immunizations to be obtained by all the missionaries going to Romania. Those working with the medical teams (medical doctors and nurses) should also obtain **Hepatitis B**, if they don't already have it.

C. EXERCISE PROGRAM

On the trip, you will be walking a great deal and climbing stairs. Physical fitness is not an option – it is a necessity! To best prepare for this, you should immediately start walking 1 – 2 miles daily between now and departure time. Stair climbing is also very good. Take every opportunity to exercise. Don't fight so hard for the parking spot closest to the door! You'll feel much better for it!

III. HELPFUL TRAVEL TIPS

A. PACKING

CARRY-ON BAG: On the airplane, each person will be allowed to take one carry-on bag which must be of a size that will fit either under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. (Ladies, you may also take a purse, which doesn't count as a carry-on.) If you have any doubt about the size of your carry-on, there are size guide frames at the airport that you can put your carry-on in to determine if it is too large. If you are concerned about this, you might take your bag out to the airport ahead of the departure date and check to make sure it's okay. (Note: If it is too large, you WILL NOT be allowed to carry it on. The airlines have gotten much stricter about this than in the past.)

Liquids and Containers: The quantity of liquids, gels, pastes, etc. that you can take in your carry-on bag is now strictly limited. Examples of liquids and gels included in these security measures are:

- Beverages
- Creams, lotions and oils
- Perfumes
- Mascara and other liquid makeup
- Hair gel
- Hair spray
- Shampoo
- Sunscreen
- Toothpaste
- Contents of pressurized containers, including shaving foam, other foams and deodorants
- Other items of similar consistency

LIMIT ALL LIQUIDS, GELS, AEROSOLS AND PASTES TO A MAXIMUM CONTAINER OF 3.4 OZ/100 ML.

PLACE ALL SUCH ITEMS IN ONE QUART-SIZE, CLEAR PLASTIC, ZIPLOCK BAG.

REMOVE YOUR QUART-SIZE BAG FROM YOUR CARRY-ON AND PLACE IN THE APPROPRIATE BIN AS YOU APPROACH THE SECURITY CHECKPOINT.

In addition to one quart size zip lock bag, you can carry in your carry-on bag any necessary medicines and dietary requirements for use during the trip. These should all be in the original container, such as the prescription bottle from the drugstore.

NOTE: Except for the limited quantity of liquids in your carry-on bag described above, all other liquids should be packed in your checked luggage. There is no limit in the checked luggage. (Be sure to place all liquid containers inside zip lock bags to avoid spillage on your clothes.)

It is **essential** that in your carry-on you pack one change of underwear, nightclothes and one outfit of clothes, along with basic toiletries and any medications you take daily. That way, if your luggage is

lost or delayed, you'll have at least two changes of clothes for the trip (what you have on and what you carry on). You cannot imagine how important this is until it happens to you!

TIPS FOR GOING THROUGH SECURITY CHECKPOINTS:

These simple hints will usually help you to breeze right through security:

- Travel light – minimal clutter will expedite the screening process
- Leave lighters and matches at home
- Pack in your checked baggage any pocket knives, files, scissors and any other sharp objects.
- Be ready to take off your shoes. Put belts, cell phones, cameras in the bin provided.
- If taking a laptop, take it out of the case and place it in the bin provided.
- Have two forms of identification (passport and drivers license) and your boarding pass out and ready to show.

CHECKED LUGGAGE: Each person is allowed to check two pieces of luggage. However, ***your second piece will be utilized by your team to transport humanitarian items for the mission trip such as medicines, Bible school supplies, etc.*** Your team leader will let you know whether or not you actually need to provide the second piece of luggage or if it will be provided by the team. In the past, some teams have used donated “disposable” suitcases that might be given by church members or purchased cheaply at garage sales.

You will be allowed only one piece of luggage for your clothes and personal items. Each bag must weigh **no more than** 50 pounds. The overall dimensions cannot exceed 62 inches (height plus depth plus width). When packing your bag, you can easily weigh it by using your bathroom scales. Weigh yourself without the bag, then hold the bag and weigh yourself. The difference, of course, is the weight of the bag. The airlines are **very strict** about the weight and size limitation. Don't try to “fudge” on the 50 pounds, or you'll have to unpack something and leave it behind at the airport (how embarrassing!).

Be sure that all of your bags have identification tags including your name, local address, phone number. It is a good idea to put the same identification information on the inside of your bag on an index card or piece of paper. That way, if the tags on the outside of the bag were to get torn off, at least your bags could still be identified. It is also a good idea to “mark” each of your bags somehow (colored ribbon, sticker or pom-pom tied to the handle) to make them easy for you to identify at baggage claim.

If you are purchasing new luggage, it is advisable to get bags with wheels, which will save your back and make it much easier for you to transport your luggage through airports.

Use Zip-lock bags to pack toiletries, medicines or anything that might spill during flight. This will protect your clothing. Large Zip-lock bags can even be used to pack complete "outfits" in. That way, you'll save time when you just "grab a bag" each day in order to get dressed! Rolling clothing will take up less space and prevent wrinkling. Begin now to save bags from the dry cleaners and/or plastic shopping bags (which can be used during your trip). Wrap each article of clothing in a separate bag, and you will be practically wrinkle-free!

Pack as light as possible, since you must be able to handle your own bags. It's a good idea to take lightweight, wrinkle-free clothes (polyester, for example) that can be hand-washed and hung to dry overnight. You can get by with fewer clothes this way, and wear each outfit more than once.

Look for sample sizes of toilet articles, which will take up much less room than large oversized containers. Or, fill small plastic bottles from your "family-size" toiletries you use at home. If there are items that you and your roommate can share, such as alarm clock, hair dryer, etc., packing only one of these will also save on space and weight.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

NOTE: Before packing, take time to think about the fact that everything you take with you that has value must be kept in your possession at all times! When you leave your hotel room each day, you must take with you all valuables. During the day, when you are “out and about”, you must keep everything in sight (preferably on your body). Therefore, if you do not want to carry something around all of the time, it might be best to leave it at home!

_____ Camera and batteries (You may want to take camera in carry-on bag and pack extra film and batteries in checked luggage.) You may want to take your video camera to record the trip. (However, see note above.)

_____ Alarm clock (preferably battery-operated)

_____ Prescription drugs to last duration of trip (Always carry prescription medicines in the original container from the drugstore with the label on it. If your bag is checked at customs, you might not be allowed to keep drugs in unmarked bottles or bags. This applies to over-the-counter drugs as well. Leave them in their original packaging.)

_____ Sunscreen (This is very important – especially if you are street-witnessing. Sunburn can make you feel miserable).

_____ Insect repellent (Skin-So-Soft by Avon works well for your skin. Take spray repellent- you will need it to spray your room and on curtains at night. (In some locations, the windows might not have any screens!).

_____ Handi-wash packets (anti-bacterial type) and anti-bacterial gel to carry in your backpack for hand washing when soap and water is unavailable

_____ Hair grooming items, such as comb and brush

_____ Hair styler/dryer (dual voltage ones 110/220 V recommended)

_____ Soap, deodorant and shampoo

_____ Toothbrush and toothpaste

_____ Prescription glasses, contacts (with all cleaning supplies, etc.) and sunglasses (Particularly if you are very dependent on your glasses to see, carry an extra pair if you have one. It is also a good idea to carry a copy of your eyeglass prescription with you.)

_____ Breath mints (important witnessing tool!)

_____ Small travel packages of tissues are good to carry with you in your backpack to use during the day when away from the hotel.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST (CONT'D)

- _____ Bible and devotional reading material
 - _____ Woolite or other detergent for hand washing clothes
 - _____ Kleenex (small travel packages take up less space)
 - _____ Shaving supplies
 - _____ Shirts/blouses
 - _____ Slacks/jeans (Men will need slacks for during the day and for night services. Ladies can wear slacks during the day, but should not wear slacks at any church services. Younger girls (youth) can wear slacks or jeans to church services.)
 - _____ Skirt(s)
 - _____ Dresses
 - _____ Scarves (Some married Romanian and Moldavian women still follow the custom of covering their heads in church, so ladies, you may want to carry a head scarf. This is not required, but you might feel more comfortable if you're in a service – especially in the villages - where all of the women wear scarves.)
- NOTE: Most Romanian Christian ladies, especially in the rural areas do not wear jewelry, except for a wedding ring and watch. DO NOT take expensive jewelry on the trip, and keep any jewelry you do wear simple. If you wear earrings, take small ones.
- _____ Shoes (Take comfortable walking shoes, maybe a pair of athletic walking shoes and a pair of comfortable sandals. You will put many miles on these shoes, so if you get new ones for the trip, be sure to “break them in” before we leave!!)
 - _____ Thongs, “flip-flops” or some sort of rubber or plastic shower shoes/houseshoes
 - _____ Socks/hose (It is not necessary for ladies to wear hose, even to church, but in the event of a “cold snap” hose would supply extra warmth, so you may want to pack some just in case).
 - _____ Underwear
 - _____ Belt(s)
 - _____ Ties – It is not required that men wear ties, unless preaching. If you will be preaching, you should take a suit or sport coat and tie(s) to wear when preaching. Others may wish to wear a tie, but a sport shirt without a tie is acceptable for church.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST (CONT'D)

NOTE: If it is too hot, preachers can preach without wearing a coat or sport jacket, even without wearing a tie, but they need to make sure they ask permission from the pastor of the Romanian congregation first.

_____ Sweater or light jacket

_____ Raincoat or poncho (Small travel-size that fits in its own small bag or pouch would be best – available at Wal-Mart).

_____ Shower cap

_____ Handbag (Don't carry a large purse. A small one that can be securely placed over the shoulder would be best. You should consider substituting a backpack for your purse.)

_____ "Fanny" pack (Women may want to use it rather than a purse. Men will find it useful also).

_____ Backpack or tote bag (This is essential. You will use it everyday to carry tracts to distribute, toilet paper, tissues, snacks, water bottle, etc.)

_____ Hand-held battery operated fan ("fan on a rope")

_____ Electric converter (This is necessary if you have anything that requires electricity, since voltage in Romania is 220-250 volts instead of 110-115 as in the U.S. You will need adapter plugs and, possibly, transformers. These are available at Wal-Mart, Brookstone, Eddie Bauer, L.L. Bean, most luggage stores, etc.)

_____ Washcloths (As is the European custom, in the hotel you will be provided with bath towels and what we call "hand towels". They usually do not provide small bathcloths or washcloths. If you are accustomed to using a bathcloth, then you may want to take along some inexpensive ones that could be considered "disposable".)

_____ Personal journal or diary (This trip will be an exciting, unique experience. Expect to grow in your Christian walk through ministering to others. Recording events and details of the trip everyday might be something you would enjoy doing and having to read after you get home.)

B. ADDITIONAL TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS

1. Wear a travel security belt – a pouch made of lightweight thin material that can be worn under your clothes, either around your neck or waist. These are available at Wal-Mart, Brookstone, Eddie Bauer, L.L. Bean, most luggage stores, etc. You should wear this **at all times** except when in the shower! In this you should keep your passport, plane ticket and money. This is NOT an option - it is the best way to keep those valuable items safe.
2. Your passport must be in your possession **AT ALL TIMES!!**
3. Leave with family, friends or in your office the following:
 - A. Your itinerary, including flight numbers and times of departure. (This will be provided to you close to time of departure.)
 - B. A photocopy of your airline ticket (especially note the ticket number in case it is lost and you must seek a replacement - - NOTE: This won't happen if you wear your security belt at all times!)
 - C. A photocopy of your passport (same NOTE as above!).
 - D. A record of your blood type and Rh factor
 - E. A list of any special health conditions or medical restrictions (including the name and phone number of your family doctor and health plan emergency details)
 - F. Your eyeglass prescription
 - G. A record of your immunizations
 - H. If you carry traveler's checks, a list of check numbers

TIPS FOR THE AIRPLANE TRIP:

4. In your carry-on bag, carry a light jacket or sweater since planes are often cold, prescription medicines, a set or two of underwear, headphone and portable music player, and light snacks.
5. Rest, or sleep, as much as possible.
6. During the flight, drink plenty of fluids, preferably water or fruit juice (provided to you by the flight attendant) to offset possible dehydration caused by the low humidity and lowered atmospheric pressure onboard planes.

IV. HEALTH HINTS

IMMUNIZATIONS:

See Page 4, Section B.

AVOID JET LAG:

Everyone will be affected to some degree by jet lag, but there are some things you can do to lessen the effects. Go to bed a little earlier each night before your departure to help you adjust to the difference in time zones. It is eight hours later (or ahead) in Romania than Central Standard Time (8:00 a.m. is 4:00 p.m. in Romania) or seven hours later (or ahead) in Romania than Eastern Standard Time (8:00 a.m. is 3:00 p.m. in Romania). Prepare yourself psychologically by setting your watch to Romanian time once onboard the plane. Rest as much as possible on the plane. Upon arriving in Romania, even though you will feel like going to bed to sleep, stay awake and active. Get some exercise, if possible. Shower, relax and go to bed at your normal time (as per Romanian time). This will help to reset your body clock to a new time zone. Expect to wake up at odd times, and perhaps be hungry at the “wrong” times for the first couple of days. Try making yourself stay in bed and rest even if you can’t sleep, and eat light snacks between meals if needed. You should be well adjusted soon. When you come back home, of course, you get to do this all over again!

Melatonin is an over-the-counter supplement that can help with jet lag. Take two 5 mg tablets on the day of your departure (at 10:00 PM Romanian time). Take one tablet a day for the next three days (the first three days of your stay in Romania), again at 10:00 PM Romanian time. Stop taking the medication for the rest of your stay in Romania.

Repeat the procedure as you come back. Start by taking two tablets of Melatonin the day you fly back to the U.S., at 10:00 PM (your residence local time). Continue taking one tablet a day for the following three days at 10:00 PM. Stop taking the drug after your first three days back home.

MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLIES:

Take with you any prescription medications you require, as well as any over-the-counter drugs you think you might need. You should take medicine with you for headache, diarrhea and sunburn. Also, you should ask your doctor for a prescription for an all-purpose antibiotic. Have it filled and take with you. The medical team with us will be able to treat common ailments that might strike.

TRAVELERS DIARRHEA:

This is a common problem. You may want to take Pepto Bismol as a precaution. Take one tablet the day before you depart, at least one tablet each morning while there and continue until two days after you return.

This problem can usually be prevented, however, by taking special precautions about what you eat and drink. A good rule to follow is, "If you peel it, you can eat it." (Example: bananas, oranges, etc.) Do not eat anything that has been washed but not cooked, such as green salads, raw fruit that cannot be peeled, etc. Tap water should be considered UNSAFE. Bottled soft drinks, hot coffee and hot tea are safe beverages. You should ONLY drink water that is bottled or that has been purified by boiling.

This applies even to the water you brush your teeth with!

RAM will provide you with bottled water upon arrival on the mission field. It is a good idea to take with you from home a six-pack of small bottles of water. You can use this for the trip over and then refill the small bottles for carrying water in your backpack each day. Bottled water, referred to as apa minerala, is available in most restaurants and shops. Drinks containing ice which has not been made with purified water are not safe to drink. You may want to bring a "hot pot" – plastic, electric pot to boil water in, or a gadget that will boil water when immersed in a cup. Both of these are available at Wal-Mart.

Take these precautions seriously. THINK before you eat or drink! Your trip can be ruined if you have to spend the entire time sick in the bathroom!

INSECT BITES:

Protect yourself against insect bites, especially mosquitoes. Bring insect repellent and always wear it! You might want to spray your hotel room curtains at night also, since there may be no screens on windows and you might need to sleep with the windows open.

V. ENGAGING THE CULTURE

ATTITUDE IN A DIFFERENT CULTURE:

Be flexible and exhibit a sweet Christian spirit! This will be a taxing trip in some ways. You will get hot and tired. Things will not always work like they do at home. Plans made one day may have to be scrapped and replaced with alternate plans. Do not get uptight! So long as you remember that God has everything under control, everything will work out.

Life overseas will be different from life in the United States. Learning about another culture can be one of the most exciting things about the trip. Don't constantly compare with how things are done at home. "Go with the flow". Maintain a positive attitude, adapt and accept the differences. If nothing else, you will come away with a greater appreciation for the luxuries we enjoy in the U.S.

Cultivate relationships with the local people you will be working alongside and ministering to. Almost without exception, you will find that they will be extremely gracious and friendly. They will do their best to make you feel at home.

Be courteous and kind to each person you meet. Cooperate in obeying local and national laws. Respect local customs. Never ridicule or criticize their views, even if different from your own.

If you have learned a bit of Romanian, use it. Although many Romanians (especially children and youth) speak English, it pleases them when foreigners are interested enough to learn their language.

Respect other worshipers and be reverent in churches you visit. Many congregations bow in silent prayer while waiting for the service to begin. Remember that you are there as a fellow worshiper, not as a spectator.

DO NOT SMOKE! Romanian Christians do not smoke, and smoking is not tolerated within the church membership. To smoke would be to cancel any opportunity of witness you might have.

Typically, Romanians are accustomed to less "people space" than we Americans are. So, do not be surprised if they stand closer when conversing with you and sit closer in church.

Most Romanians do not like to have movement of air around them, and consider it unhealthy. Thus, most of the time windows will not be opened to catch a breeze like they would be at home. Be prepared for this, especially during worship services. Dress lightly, though modestly.

You will probably encounter beggars, maybe even children who beg for their family. Avoid giving money or gifts on the street or in large crowds, or you may be pursued. The “street people” who beg can be a big nuisance. They may attempt to surround and distract you while their cohorts try to rob you. This is a good reason to stay with your group. Watch out for each other.

It will be a blessing to discreetly give gifts to those people you get to know. You might want to pack some small gifts to give to your interpreters and families you might be invited to share a meal with. Most are very poor and even small items will be appreciated, especially by the children (t-shirts, storybooks, dolls, “matchbox” cars, balloons, puzzles, etc.) As an alternative to taking gifts, you might want to take some Christian cards in which you enclose a small gift of money.

Much of the time, you will be accompanied by an interpreter. When speaking through an interpreter, do not say, “Tell them this . . . or tell them that”, but rather speak directly to the person you are talking to. Pause after sentences or phrases. It will seem a little awkward at first, but with practice you will get the hang of it. Be sure to use RAM provided interpreters as they are assigned to you and your team to help you communicate throughout the mission trip.

The ultimate aim for the mission trip is to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The best way to accomplish this is to avoid letting cultural considerations muddle communications.

MONEY:

All expenses for your trip will be covered including transportation, meals while in Romania and lodging. The only items for which you will need money are snacks or meals in the airports going and coming, souvenirs, snacks and drinks in Romania other than at mealtime and any money you might want to give as gifts.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that you keep your money in a safe place, preferably in a money pouch under your clothing AT ALL TIMES.

Romanian lei (leu in the singular), the national currency, are issued in coins and notes. For the US dollar exchange rate, please check the Romanian National Bank’s website www.bnr.ro before going on the mission trip.

Usually one of our Romanian leaders or interpreters will exchange money for the whole group. See your team leader if you need extra cash converted.

It is best to exchange money at local exchange offices available at almost every street corner in larger towns or at local banks. Be sure to hang on to your receipt to change your money back at the end of the trip, as it is needed to prove you

didn't trade on the black market. **Avoid black market moneychangers, who will approach you on the street! This can be very dangerous!** Some of the unscrupulous methods still used by professional thieves include shortchanging the unsuspecting traveler by wrapping new bills around wads of worthless or counterfeit ones or shouting to the police in the street after the transaction and running off with the hard currency.

Take new crisp American money in small denominations. Carry most of it in \$20 bills, but also take some 1's, 5's and 10's. The currency exchanges in Romania will not take old, torn or wrinkled bills or bills that have been written on.

Traveler's checks are mostly useless in Romania. They're accepted only at banks, tourist offices, major hotels and some exchange shops. You may be charged as much as 5-10% commission.

Larger hotels and upscale stores and restaurants will accept major credit cards, but most of the time you will need cash.

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

CLIMATE:

Romania has long, bitter winters and hot, humid summers. Average temperatures in Bucharest range from highs in the 80's in the summer through the 50's and 60's in spring and fall, to a low in the 20's in January. Generally the seacoast has warmer winters and cooler summers, while the mountains are cooler in summer and much colder in the winter.

Remember that there could be no air conditioning, so it may seem hotter than home even if the average temperature is lower in Romania. The climate is variable, just like we experience here. Generally, you can expect it to be quite hot in the summer. Some mission teams, however, have experienced rainy, cool weather, so be prepared with a jacket or sweater.

FACTS:

Population - The population of Romania is approximately 21 million.

Size - Romania is comparable in size to the state of Oregon.

Business Hours - Banks are usually open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Offices usually stay open Monday through Friday from 8 or 9 a.m. until 4 or 5 p.m., and they close at 12 p.m. on Saturday. Most are closed on Sunday. In cities and larger towns, shops are open Monday through Friday from 7 or 8 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. Larger stores may stay open until 8 or 9 p.m. Some stores close for a few hours in the afternoon; most are open on Saturday, but close by 1 p.m.

Language - Of all the Romance languages – Italian, Portuguese, French and Spanish – Romanian is the closest to ancient Latin. Even with its Slavic and Turkish influences, Romanian is a fairly accessible tongue for Westerners. If you know a little French, Spanish, Portuguese or Italian, you will understand some of the language. Romanian is much easier to pronounce than other Eastern European languages. Many words in Romanian are actually pronounced just as they appear.

Laundry - Coin-operated laundries are not available. Plan to take detergent for hand washing, or take enough clothes to last the entire trip, because you won't have access to a washing machine and dryer.

Mail - Although mail service has improved, it remains one of Eastern Europe's less reliable systems. Go ahead and mail postcards and letters, but don't be surprised if you beat the mail back home!

Maps – When reading maps, searching for addresses or navigating your way around Romania, you should know that **Strada** (abbreviated “Str.”) means “street”. **Calea** means “avenue”. **Bulevardul** (abbreviated “Bd.”) means “boulevard”. **Soseaua** (abbreviated “Sos.”) is an even wider avenue than a boulevard. **Piata** is a square or plaza, and **Drumul** means “lane”. Note that in Romanian addresses, street numbers follow the street name (for example, Str. Academiei 35).

Photography – You may now take photographs freely in Romania, with the exception of military objects with a NO PHOTOGRAPHY sign (a red slash over a black camera). Do not take photographs of military personnel seen in airports.

Do not take photographs of embassies, military objectives, or any other building or property guarded by guards, police or soldiers!
You may find yourself in trouble, even taken to jail!

Important Note about photographic film: Make sure that you carry your undeveloped film in your carry-on luggage. Some international airports have newer, more powerful scanning machines for check-in luggage that will destroy your film. Therefore never put your film in the check-in luggage.

Police – The national emergency number is **112** (the equivalent of the 911 in the United States).

Restrooms – Always carry toilet paper or tissues with you if you plan to use public toilets. Many public restrooms lack soap, towels and toilet paper.

Telephones - Do NOT place long distance calls from your hotel room. If you do, you will be shocked when you get the bill!!!

Cell phones for use in Romania during the mission trip will be available through RAM at a rate of \$80. Included in the phone rental rate is a prepaid calling card of \$ 20. To reserve a phone send your \$80 check as soon as possible to the RAM USA office in Decatur, AL.

Phone calls can also be placed from the post office or phone center or from a pay phone (which might be located in hotel lobby). You will need a phone card in order to place a call. Phone cards can be purchased at the post office or phone center. It can be difficult and take a long time to get a long distance connection. Faxes can be sent from phone centers, and may be the cheapest and most efficient way to communicate with loved ones in the U.S., so take with you their fax numbers.

Time – Official Romanian time is one hour ahead of Central Europe, two hours ahead of Greenwich mean time, seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, and eight hours ahead of Central Standard Time. Romania goes to daylight savings time the last Sunday in March and goes back to standard time the last Sunday in September.

Safety – NEVER strike out on your own! Always stay with a group of two or three and keep your group leader informed as to your whereabouts.

FOOD AND DRINK:

Food is abundant in Romania. The variety may not be overwhelming (summer fruit and vegetables improve the situation considerably), but eating enough is not a problem. You will probably be invited to eat in homes and will enjoy delicious meals – perhaps the best you will have on the whole trip. If you like meat and potatoes, you will not go hungry!

Soups – If you're ever in doubt about what to choose from a menu, order soup. It is especially good in Romania and you can hardly go wrong. Soups come in two main varieties – supa (a broth or cream-based soup, such as beef consommé or cream of mushroom), or the more common ciorba (a hearty sour soup base with meat and a variety of vegetables).

Main Dishes – Grilled pork or beef is the most common main course. Pork is served in endless variations, such as pork cutlets, roast loin of pork and pork schnitzel. Chicken and turkey are usually accompanied with a portion of mujdei (an intense garlic sauce). Traditional Romanian dishes include sarmale (spiced meat and rice mixture wrapped in cabbage or grape leaves), tocana (a meat stew with vegetables), musaca (meat, vegetable

and potato casserole), and mamaliga cu brinza (a cornmeal dish with unsalted feta cheese).

Fruits and Vegetables – The most common vegetables are green beans, peas and carrots. In the summer, you might be served pepper, eggplant, cucumbers and tomatoes. Potatoes are very plentiful and can be fixed many ways, all of which are tasty.

Bread – Delicious fresh bread is served with every meal.

Desserts – Try traditional Romanian desserts such as clatite (jam-filled crepes) and papanas (doughnuts drizzled with a sour-cream sauce). Ice cream is cheap and tasty; however, be sure to stick with commercially packaged ice cream products like Mars, Dove Bars, etc.

Drinks – Soft drinks such as Coke and Pepsi are widely available. Canned soft drinks are more expensive than bottled. Romanians serve mostly espresso coffee – very small and very strong.

HISTORY:

The Revolution of 1989 – After anti-Communist revolution had swept over Eastern Europe in the fall of 1989, the anger of the Romanian people finally boiled over when security forces killed hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators in the western city of Timisoura in December 1989. Protests spread across the country, and the army revolted against Ceausescu. The bitter fighting that erupted in Bucharest and other Romanian cities was some of the worst seen in Europe since World War II. A few days after the revolution began, Ceausescu was caught. On Christmas Day he and his wife Elena were executed.

Today, Romania is member of the European Union. The executive branch of the Romanian government is formed by the elected president (five-year term), and a cabinet of ministers led by a prime minister. The legislative branch is formed by a by-cameral parliament consisting of the senate and the chamber of deputies. For more current information about Romania please go to: <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ro.html>.

Famous People:

Vlad Tepes (1430-76) – Ruling prince of Wallachia from 1456 to 1462 and in 1476, Tepes is still honored in Romania as a nationalist who valiantly fought invading Ottoman Turkish armies. He was infamous for slowly torturing his victims to death by impaling them on rounded wooden stakes, earning him the name “Vlad the Impaler”. If that didn’t suit his grisly appetite, he might lop off an arm or leg and watch his victims slowly die, leaving the bodies to rot outside. His father was given the Order of the Dragon or “dracul” for fighting the Turks. As the son of dracul, he gained the name Dracula. But, he was never considered a vampire until Bram Stoker characterized him as such in the 19th century novel.

Stephen the Great (1434-1504) – Prince of Moldavia from 1457 to 1504, Stephen is remembered in Romanian history for his resistance to Ottoman Turkish invaders in Moldavia. Following each victory against the Turks, he built a beautiful frescoed monastery, leaving Romania one of its greatest cultural heritages in the Bukovina region.

King Michael of Romania (1921 -) – The last king of Romania, Michael served from 1927 to 1930 and 1940 to 1947. During the war years he was a popular symbol of resistance to the pro-Nazi iron Guard government, and he played an important role

in the 1944 coup that ended Romania's Axis alliance. Under Soviet pressure, he abdicated in 1947. Since then he has lived in exile in Switzerland. In 1990 the new government at first barred him from making his first return visit to Romania. When they finally allowed him to visit on Christmas Day, they expelled him within 12 hours.

In recent years, King Michael returned home to the first official welcome since he was banished 50 years ago. He was greeted by shouts of "Long live King Michael" and "Your Majesty, don't leave. This is your homeland!" Michael laid a wreath of white orchids to honor the heroes of 1989.

Nicolae Ceausescu (1918-89) – Communist leader of Romania for 24 years (1965-89), Nicolae Ceausescu held the titles of president, general secretary of the Communist Party, supreme commander of the armed forces and president of the State Council. He implemented a brutal, repressive society at home, but was frequently praised abroad for his strong Romanian nationalism and degree of independence from Moscow. Ceausescu and his wife were tried by a military tribunal and executed on Christmas Day in 1989.

Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) – A sculptor and pioneer of abstract art whose work exerted a tremendous influence on 20th-century art. He learned woodcarving as a peasant boy in his native village, and after studying art in Bucharest, he left for Paris (where he spent most of the rest of his life, from 1904 on). Influenced by the interest in primitive carving and the modern art movement, he produced numerous increasingly abstract sculptures, the most famous of which is Bird in Space.

Nadia Comaneci (1961 -) – The 14-year old gymnast who won the world's admiration by scoring the first perfect "10" score in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. She went on to win three gold medals at Montreal after earning seven perfect scores. In the 1980 Moscow Olympics she won two more gold medals and two silver medals. In late 1989, just a few weeks before the revolution, she fled Romania to Hungary, and then settled in the United States.

ROMANIAN GREETINGS AND EXPRESSIONS:

Yes	Da
No	Nu
Thank you	Mulțumesc
Thank you very much	Mulțumesc frumos
You're welcome	Cu plăcere
Good morning	Bună dimineața
Good afternoon	Bună ziua
Good evening	Bună seara
Good night	Noapte bună
Let's go	Hai să mergem
Please	Vă rog
Excuse me	Scuzați-mă
Glad to meet you	Încântat de cunoștință
What is your name?	Cum te cheamă?
My name is Bill!	Mă numesc Bill!
How much does it cost?	Cât costă?
I'm sorry	Îmi pare rău
You are very kind	Sunteți foarte amabil
I had a wonderful time	M-am simțit foarte bine
Good-bye	La revedere
Hello	Bună
Do you know Jesus?	Crezi în Isus Cristos?
Jesus loves you!	Isus te iubește!
I love you	Te iubesc
Do you believe in God?	Crezi în Dumnezeu?
Who is Jesus for you?	Cine crezi tu că e Isus?
Would you like to go to heaven?	Ai vrea să mergi în cer?
I don't speak Romanian	Nu vorbesc Românește
I am from the U.S.A.	Sunt din America
Jesus be with you	Isus să fie cu tine
God bless you!	Dumnezeu să te binecuvânteze!
May I take a picture of you?	Pot să te fotografiez?