

# SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

Welcome to one of the most exciting adventures you will ever take - Seeing God provide the financial resources you need in order to participate in a short term mission trip.

As you begin your support development, it is very important that your focus be in the right place and the right place is upon God. As Jehoshaphat says **2 Chronicles 20:12** <sup>12</sup>O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee. If God is calling you to participate in a project, He will provide the resources you need to go. However, that does not mean that you do nothing. Somehow in God's plan He wants people to contact people... one with a need, one with a supply... to accomplish His plan. He is as much interested in the process as He is in the result.

In addition to financial support, you will need to have prayer support. **Prayer is the key.**

This support development material is designed to give us two perspectives. The first is a proper biblical understanding of support development. The second is a practical approach to contacting and challenging people. May God use this training to involve you in the lives of new people, show you His ability to provide, and increase your faith dramatically.

## 2. Two-Fold Approach

A. Proper Biblical Understanding - Complete the "Three Secrets of Successful Support Development"

B. Practical Steps to Contacting and Challenging Others

**1. Pray daily for yourself your potential supporters and your needs.**

**2. Complete "Namestorm".**

**3. Write Project letter.**

**5. Send "thank you" notes.**

**6. Make personal presentations.**

**7. Mail in checks to Decatur Baptist Church designated to your account.**

## THREE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

Part I - The Biblical Foundation

Part II - Questions and Objectives

Part III - Personal Application

Deciding to go on a short term mission trip has no doubt taken a big step of faith.

Because you have trusted God's leading, you can expect His wisdom and provision as you prepare to serve Him. After you complete this study you will:

- Discover the biblical foundation for raising support
- Be able to answer questions and objections most often raised about support raising
- Begin to step out in faith to raise your support

So get your Bible, set aside 45 minutes and discover what God has to say about the decision you have made. As you dig into God's Word, you will discover firsthand...

The most important promise ever made

- How going on a short term mission trip is part of keeping that promise
- How developing support is one of God's ways of financing that promise

## The Biblical Foundation

Part I: God's Promise and Plan for the World?

What is God's Promise and Plan for the World?

1. Genesis has been called "Chapter One" in the history of the world. It is here that God first revealed His promise and plan for the world. Read Genesis 12:1-3. What two things does God promise Abraham?

What reason does God give for these promises?

2. God's promise to Abraham was not an end in itself. It was part of God's plan to bless the peoples of the world through Him. God's promise didn't end with Abraham, but He renewed His promise with each succeeding generation. Read Genesis 26:1-5 and 32:9-12. Who else was given God's promise?

3. Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise. Read Luke 19:9-10. Restate in your own words how Christ's coming to the world fulfilled God's promise.

4. In Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8, Christ made His Father's promise and plan ours. What are some ways these passages relate to those we read in Genesis? What part does He ask us to play in fulfilling the plan?

### **How does my involvement in a short term mission trip fit in with God's promise and plan for the world?**

5. Through a short term mission trip you can make a significant impact for Christ in a short period of time. How do you feel your plans for a trip fit in light of God's promise and plan?

How important is a short-term trip? Very important! By going on a trip you can be an integral part of God's continuing promise to bless all the peoples of the world... a promise which began with Abraham, and continues to be fulfilled through our witness for Christ.

How do others fit in with God's promise and plan?

6. God's promise and plan is monumental. You cannot make a significant contribution to a task this large alone. As you prepare to go on a trip, what are some ways in which others can play a part in what you will be doing? (Read James 5:16, Colossians 4:2, Colossians 1:9, Philippians 4:17-19, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Luke 6:38)

7. Prayer support is essential. Ask people at home to pray for you regularly as you minister to others on your trip. Significant things will happen as they believe God to work through you. In turn, they will be excited to be involved in this way. Think of ten people you will ask to pray for you every day of the trip. List these names below and begin challenging them to support you in prayer.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9
- 10.

8. Financial support is also essential. You may have some questions and concerns in this regard. Take a few minutes to list any unresolved feelings in this area.

Because of its importance and since many people have misconceptions about support raising, the remainder of this study will be spent discovering what God has to say about wealth and giving, and addressing some of the most often asked questions and concerns in this area.

## **Part II: Questions and Objections**

Work through the following questions, studying the Scripture passages listed and reading carefully the material provided.

1. I don't want to beg for money. It seems like asking people for a handout and I won't do that.  
Read 2 Corinthians 5:20. What does this verse have to say about who you are? Who are you representing?  
Read John 15:16. How did you get the job of representing Christ as His ambassador?

1. You are giving people an opportunity to participate in fulfilling God's promise and plan for the world. That isn't begging. You will probably be meeting some people who have had this type of opportunity before and will be greatly encouraged by being able to have a part in your ministry.

2. People get so many requests for money. They're tired of giving. They won't want to help me!

We must remember that what God calls to happen, He promises to provide for.

If God has called you to go, He will work with you to provide the necessary finances.

Let's look at some examples found in the Word to see how people respond to God's projects.

Read 1 Chronicles 28 & 29.

What does David want to do (28:1,2)? David had a great task before him.

However, he did not attempt to complete it alone. How did the people help (28:19-21, 29:6-9)?

The people gave time, talents, and money. What was their attitude and motivation?

In 1 Chronicles 29:11,12 we see part of the reason for their response. They had a proper perspective of ownership and riches. They knew that all they had belonged to and came from whom?

Read 2 Corinthians 8 & 9. What was the New Testament Church's attitude toward giving money to further the gospel (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)?

3. I could never ask a non-Christian for money!

Read Nehemiah 1:1 - 11. What was Nehemiah's situation?

To whom did he turn for help (2:1-8)?

What response did he get?

4. People are bombarded with requests for money and, frankly, won't be interested... they're too "burned out" to respond.

Wrong! People who have developed funds for projects before you have often found that 50% to 75% respond to their invitation to give. That does mean that 25% to 50% will say no. Expect that. Don't become discouraged because not everyone is interested.

5.1 just don't feel comfortable asking for money.

Read Matthew 6:19-21. How does Jesus describe the relationship between a person's heart and their wealth?

Because money is so important to people, it will tend to be an uncomfortable subject of discussion. Expect this!

However, we talk with people about uncomfortable issues all the time as we present the gospel. Just as there is conflict then, we can expect conflict when we challenge people to give to the cause of Christ. What are some reasons for this?

Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

Be prepared for spiritual battle as you develop support. As you begin to gather financial resources to further the cause of Christ, you enter into the arena of supernatural battle, a struggle between the forces of God and Satan in which they are vying not only for men's hearts but for the stewardship of their treasure as well... (Matthew 6:21).

The last thing the Enemy wants is God's people using their financial resources to more effectively penetrate the world with the gospel.

Just as the Enemy doesn't want us to ask uncomfortable questions when sharing our faith, be assured he doesn't want you to challenge individuals regarding their treasure. He would take great delight if you keep silent about your financial needs. Expect the battle to be the most intense when your challenge is the most direct.

The Apostle Paul in defining our role as an "ambassador for Christ" said, "God has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:20).

To the extent that proclaiming God's Word requires money, our role as ambassadors may even include raising support. A soldier would not expect comfort in battle. So as you ask individuals to give to the cause of Christ, don't become discouraged when you encounter resistance. Realize you're on the very cutting edge of spiritual battle. It's the strategic nature of what you're doing (raising support to spread the gospel) that makes the battle so intense.

6. Doesn't the Bible say God helps those who help themselves?

No. Throughout the Bible God has chosen to give man the privilege of participating in God's promise and plan for the ages. He wants to use you to win others to Christ.

Review again 1 Chronicles 29 and you'll notice that King David was instrumental in channeling the resources of God's people toward the goal of building a physical testimony - a temple - to the Lord. How does asking individuals to become short term trip sponsors compare with what David did?

7. Isn't it enough to simply ask God to supply my finances and then wait patiently for His provision'?

Yes and No.

Yes. Read Habakkuk 2:4. What contrast is made in this passage?

Above all, it is our first responsibility to trust the Lord. He delights in us as we exercise child-like faith.

No. Exodus 14:15-18 illustrates that in addition to praying and trusting the Lord, we must also respond by taking personal initiative. As the Egyptian army chased the people of Israel, they found themselves caught between the advancing troops and the Red Sea. In this context, note God's instructions to Moses:

**Exodus 14:15 - 18** <sup>15</sup>And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: <sup>16</sup>But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. <sup>17</sup>And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. <sup>18</sup>And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

What initiative did God ask Moses to take?

What did God do?

What were the results?

8. I feel that for me to ask others for support would be the equivalent of "working in the power of the flesh."

Asking others to become financial partners with you in ministry in no way negates the fact that God is our ultimate provider. However, it does clarify our responsibility, as Christ's ambassadors, in asking others to help fund the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

As the Israelites wandered between Egypt and the Promised Land, God chose to miraculously provide manna (bread) from heaven to sustain them. Then upon entering the land He expected them to plant and harvest in order to feed themselves. A portion of their crops was given to support the priests who served God full-time. Had Israel continued to expect manna in Canaan, it would have been an affront to God, since His new means of provision was through the land He had given them.

It is certainly possible that God could choose to miraculously meet your financial needs through unusual circumstances. However, don't expect money to fall from heaven like manna. Rather, expect God to provide your trip funds as you observe the laws of sowing and reaping in the area of human relations. Just as the Israelites had to plant in order to reap a harvest, in order to raise trip funds you must ASK others to give.

9. My parents are uneasy about my asking for money. They don't want me coming across like one of those cult members who sells flowers in airports and on street corners.

Neither do we. Unfortunately the bad image of such cults has made it difficult of those with worthy causes to develop support. The reputation of your church, however, speaks for itself.

10. I don't want others to see me raising money. No one I know would be caught dead doing something like this!

But wait a minute. A lot of groups are involved in raising support. Look at the following list. A wide variety of groups raise funds to help meet their needs.

Compare your project with the following:

Group Method Cause

Girl Scouts Cookie Sales Camping trips

Christian Schools Magazine sales School budget

Youth Groups Car Washes Field trips

Athletic teams Cash donations Sports equip.

Bands Cash donations Uniforms

Choirs Cash donations Concert tours

Politicians Cash donations Election campaign

You see, as you raise support you are not doing anything different than what millions of Americans do all the time for their favorite group or charity. In fact, I

bet you have raised money for at least one of the organizations listed above. Their causes have little value when compared to the infinite worth of the message of God's love and forgiveness in Christ.

Why is it then, that many of us would wholeheartedly work for them, but would shy away from raising support for a short term trip?

11. Mom and Dad think if I need something, I should earn it myself. They don't want others to think I'm trying to get a free ride.

Again, you are not raising money for yourself. You are raising funds for Decatur Baptist Church so it can in turn pay your trip expenses. Therefore, they shouldn't fear that by asking others to support you it will reflect negatively on them, as if they cannot provide for your needs. Rather, you are asking others to give (as you are with your time, talent, and treasure) to the cause of Christ.

### **Part III: Personal Application**

You may have other questions or concerns that have not been addressed in this study. If you do, keep thinking. Search the Scriptures to discover God's perspective.

There are two important things you can do to apply the things you've learned.

1. What is the biggest hurdle you have to trust God for?

What does God say about it?

Claim a passage regarding God's perspective in this area. Memorize the passage. Share this area with a relative, roommate, or close friend. Believe God together to see victory.

2. What is one thing you can begin doing now to help make your support raising time successful?

Share this with a relative, roommate, or close friend so they can encourage you as you begin stepping out in faith, believing God will provide for you.

In raising support, the most important step, the most difficult one, is to begin!

Note: The practical how-to's included in this material have proven to be very effective in helping people raise money for short term trips. As you study these strategy papers, several action steps will come to mind.

William Carey, the pioneer of the modern missionary movement, said "Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God!" In a unique way, throughout history God has chosen to use people just like you as catalysts for revival and for furthering the cause of Christ. What an honor and an awesome responsibility it is to be in the vanguard of such tradition! As you are available to God, you can be a significant part of His promise and plan.

Practical Steps to Contacting and Challenging Others

Step 1: Pray Daily

Step 2: Namestorm

Start by developing an initial list of potential supporters. As with brainstorming, in namestorming, there is one cardinal rule - anything goes. No name is unqualified. Just mentally erase any clouds of doubt from your mind and let there be "blue sky". Don't decide for an individual whether or not he or she will be interested. If you limit yourself to those you feel will or can give, you may be prematurely disqualifying those God wants to become supporters. Later you will need to prioritize who to contact first, but for now, don't disqualify anyone! You may be thinking you could never generate more than a handful of names, but research has shown the average individual has a personal network of at least 400 friends and acquaintances. So you should easily be able to develop a list of at least 100 potential supporters. For instance, you've probably had at least ten teachers alone. If you've ever had a toothache or a cavity, you know a dentist. If you've ever been sick, you've probably been to a doctor. As you think about your hometown's business district, no doubt the cleaner's, the bakery, the hardware store, and numerous other sources of contacts come to mind.

As you name storm, associate various professions, businesses and places with any friends and acquaintances they bring to mind. To aid you, we have provided 92 thought-provokers in the attached list.

Take plenty of time - an hour or more - to mull over these categories. Push yourself - see how many names you can come up with!

After taking an hour or so for the free-wheeling name storming", label each contact either "H" for high priority, "M" for medium priority, or "L" for low priority. These designations refer to your evaluation of how likely they are to give.

Start contacting your high priority people first and then work through your medium and low priority people (using the letter strategy).

### **Those who have influenced you spiritually.**

#### **Step 3: Write**

You can see much success by writing a letter presenting your needs and to ask potential supporters to join your team. Handwriting a note on each letter as you sign them adds a personal touch. If you come up with a list of over 100 potential supporters, you should write a personal note on your letter to your high priority list and send the letter without a note to the others. You should personally sign each letter.

The body of the letter could be copied substantially "as is". The following are

items that all support letters should include:

1. Give your letter a specific date.
2. Your greeting should be specifically addressed to an individual or couple - not "Dear Friend!"
3. Bring your reader up-to-date on what you're doing.
4. Educate your reader. Explain where your short term trip is to, the purpose of the trip, why you have decided to participate, and what you hope to accomplish.
5. Explain your need. The purpose of your letter is to give your reader an opportunity to help. Make sure you explain exactly what you need.
6. Then involve your reader by asking him/her for specific action, based on the needs you have shared. This can include challenging him/her to cover part or all of the cost of the project, stating the deadline by which you need the money, sharing benefits to you and to the reader as the need is met.
7. Acknowledge your thanks, appreciation, gratitude, partnership and commitment.
8. Close the letter and sign it.
9. Add a "P.S." Commit yourself to a specific action you will be taking.
10. Enclose a Response Form and an envelope (if available).

Sample Letter - Note numbered sections from Step 3

- Write

(1) April 1, 2001

(2) Dear Mr. & Mrs. Johnson:

(3) How are you? It's exciting to bring you up to date on what is happening in my life. As you know I am living and working in Atlanta and am very active in my local church.

(4) This summer I have an opportunity to take part in a short term mission trip with my church. I will be going to Albania July 1-15, where I will be part of a team who will be sharing the gospel and following up people in the villages in southwestern Albania. We will be using translators and we will be there for two weeks.

(5) In order to make this all possible, I need to develop a prayer and financial support team... a group of people that would be going with me and others on my trip in our ministry. The total cost of the project is \$1850. In order to meet this need as quickly as possible I am looking for one-time investments of \$50, \$100, \$200 or more.

(6) I have enclosed a Response Form and an envelope for your response. Please read it and pray whether God would have you take part. I need to have my support team completed by June 1, 2001.

If you would like to be part of my support team, simply mail your check, made payable to (your church) Church, in the envelope I've provided. I can answer any questions you may have.

(7) I appreciate your friendship. Thanks for considering joining my team.

(8) Sincerely, John Doe

(9) P.S. I wish it were possible to visit with you personally, but I hope this letter will give you a good idea of what I'm doing.

Here is a copy of an actual letter sent out by a Decatur Baptist Church member:

## EXAMPLES ONLY

Send one of these, or a combination of the two, to family and friends (not church wide) and watch God work through other people.

April 29, 2000

Dear,

Just after I was saved, in June 1992, the Lord really impressed upon my heart that I was to "look on the fields".

**John 4:35**

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

**John 4:36**

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

My church, Decatur Baptist, sends out short term mission teams each year, at our own expense, to see those fields. In March, 1993 the Lord made it possible for both my wife and I to go to the Philippines and help teach our Discipleship program to many Philippine pastors and we have seen their churches grow and not only grow, but keep those that they have won.

I have been corresponding with one missionary in Brazil for five years and with another for four years. For almost two years I have had a desire in my heart to see the "field" of Brazil, but we have not sent a team there, yet.

From June 28, 2000 until July 8, 2000, Decatur Baptist Church will have a team of fifteen people in Sao Paulo, Brazil; training national pastors how to use our Discipleship program. Lord willing, I plan to be a part of that team! I have already committed to go, but I need your help. First and foremost I need and covet your prayers. If the Lord touches your heart to help me financially to be able to make this trip that would also be a blessing. As I mentioned earlier, we each pay our own expenses and this trip will cost about \$1,500.00.

Because of my strong desire to go on this trip I had asked my family to make a donation to my trip account in lieu of a Christmas gift. With those gifts and a bonus I received at work, I have about half of what I need for the trip.

A gift of any amount will be greatly appreciated and it can be sent directly to Decatur Baptist Church, 2527 Danville Road SW, Decatur, Alabama 35603 and they will send you a receipt as it is a tax deductible donation. Simply note on your check, or include a note that says "John Doe's trip account". I don't care to know the amount of any gift, but I would like to know that you gave so I can thank you personally.

The Lord has promised that both they that go and those that "stay by the stuff" will share equally in the Heavenly Rewards.

**1 Samuel 30:24**

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

In Christ's Service,  
John Doe  
2 Timothy 2:2

*Dear Friends & Family,*

9-20-09

**God is good.** Over the past 17 years I've had the privilege to walk with Him and to learn much about life, for now and eternity; through this journey I have grown a lot. Scripture reveals the God who is responsible for creation and the crown of that creation is mankind. As God sought a relationship with humanity, sin eternally separated man from God. The Bible declares God loves everyone so much, He was willing to provide the payment for our sins; and that payment was Jesus' sacrifice on an old rugged cross. Thankfully that is not the end of the story as Jesus conquered the grave and rose on the third day, according to the scriptures. Now, man can once again be reconciled with God.

While I am confident this Good News is not new to any of you, I am confident there are many people near and far, who cannot accurately answer 2 simple questions.

1) Who is Jesus Christ?      2) How do you get to Heaven?

Sure people may guess or give their opinion, but how close will their answer be to the Jesus found alive and well within the Bible? With that, I have a burden to find out.

A couple of weeks ago, I was approached about going on a mission journey to Managua Nicaragua on November 28th - December 4. While there have been numerous opportunities to go on the foreign mission field, I have never been called of God to serve there. I have financially supported foreign missions through the years, as I believe God's word is clear in Acts 1:8 to take the good news of Jesus Christ, across the street and around the world. If asked, why me and why now, I am not sure I have the answers. I simply want to be obedient to go.

I am writing asking you to partner with me on this Central America outreach. This is the first letter of this kind for me and I am filled with a mixture of emotion. I can remember a time when God spoke to my wife and I clearly about supporting a foreign missionary financially. I vividly remember the "joy" of doing so, as we were being obedient and we knew it. I know how God works and He will let you know if He is leading you to support this effort. Even though economic times are tough, we still live in a blessed nation and better yet, serve a God of promise and provision. In short, please do whatever God leads you to do. I really feel like this is His will, and I am happy with that.

Most support letters I receive start with prayer and end with finances. I am going in reverse order as I believe I have asked for the easy part first. Life is so busy these days, it is a discipline to spend time with God in prayer; taking time to pour our hearts out to Him, takes intentional effort. With that, I know if you would pray for the dates listed above, you will be giving one of your most precious resources... time. I can only pray you will be enriched in your soul and spirit as you meet and fellowship with our loving God.

As Paul was a man on a mission, God spoke through him in Acts 20:35, "**I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of**

**the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."** I am not sure how God is going to do this in your lives, but this is my prayer.

In Managua we will be assisting one of our Strategic Mission Partners, Steve Kern. We will do a massive evangelism sweep using movies and tract campaigns, in selected neighborhoods, villages, and open markets. On a similar trip last year, hundreds of souls were added to the Kingdom! Praise the Lord! There is a continual effort to disciple all of those who accept Christ, to help them in their new walk with God. Steve recently spoke at our church and had a question and answer session. I was unable to make this meeting but my son did. God spoke to my son and he feels led to join this team as well. Unlike most of us going, my son will not need a translator, as he is proficient in Spanish. We will likely pair up and minister as a team.

We are trusting God and feel great peace about this journey. If you feel led to give an offering to the Lord on our behalf, please send the funding directly to Decatur Baptist Church. Write a separate note and include it with your check stating who and which journey the funds are for. This will ensure a tax deductible receipt, should you need one.

If you have any questions, please give us a call or send an email. It is good to be a part of the family of God!

*Your Brothers in Christ,*

(your signature here)

Note – you will be allowed to send letters to Decatur Baptist Church members. You must follow these rules:

1. If you send out 50 letters only 25 (50%) of those may be sent to Decatur Baptist Church members.
2. You are **not** to follow-up with a personal contact (phone call, face to face, etc.). If they give OK and if they do not give OK. They will give as the Lord leads.

### **Things to Avoid When Writing Support Letters:**

1. Never apologize for writing a person whom you wish to involve in helping you meet a need. You are providing him/her with an opportunity to be involved in a spiritual ministry through his resources. Remember, the giver needs to give far more than any other person or cause needs to receive a gift. **Philippians 4:17**  
17Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. When you apologize, you end up appearing to be a beggar rather than a child of the King!

2. Never ask for a donation, with no time frame in which to take action.

Preparing to Mail Your Letters:

Photocopy your letter. Make sure you have enough envelopes and stamps.

Enclose a self-addressed, stamped return envelope for a quick and easy response.

#### **Step 4: Thank You**

Send a thank-you note the same day you find out they have contributed. Be sure to keep a record of this so you'll know to whom you've sent one and so you'll not send two to the same person.

This thank-you letter is an important part of developing a relationship with your supporter. This should be a personal, handwritten letter. DO NOT print or copy a form letter. Always include something personal in your note to show specifically how you and Christ's cause have been benefited by their generosity. You owe them a good thank-you note.

#### **Sample Thank-You Note**

May 1, 2001

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for your decision to become part of my support team. Your prayers and finances are greatly appreciated. Your investment will have far-reaching results as I go to Albania to help reach people for Christ.

Please join me in praying that God would continually deepen my commitment to the cause of Christ. Your prayers are most important. Thanks again for your gracious help.

Sincerely,  
John Doe

#### **Step 5: Mail In Checks**

1. Ask them to make their check payable to Decatur Baptist Church (not to you) so they can get a tax deductible receipt.

2. Collect the checks (either in person or through the mail) and mail them to the church.

#### **Step 6: Begin Now!!!!**