

*Building Partnerships
For
Short Term Mission
Experiences*

*Mount Vernon Nazarene University
Division of Campus Ministries*

Partnering for Your Short-term Mission Experience

Finding Faithful Friends

“Oh yeah, right! You call that a mission trip? More like a vacation if you ask me.”

If the hopes and dreams of your short-term experience depended on the mindset of the one who spoke these words, not too many people would ever go on short-term mission trips. Fortunately for the work of missions around the world, this attitude is giving way to a new understanding that missions are no longer the exclusive property of those with four to eight years of specialized training. Today, many churches and individuals are willing to support short-term missionaries if they can give evidence that their mission will make a difference.

Since your participation on this short-term experience requires you to raise support, it will be necessary to look at some practical ways to raise that support. Following are some suggestions. First, let us look at some things you will want to avoid.

1. “I don’t want to beg for money!”

The emotion laden sales pitch that turns us off and often offends has victimized us all. Too often raising support for short-term mission trips is perceived to be begging with religious overtones.

Be not deceived. Raising funds for your trip is not some kind of spiritual welfare program. On the contrary, you are putting together a support team for your ministry. By enlisting the support of others you are asking people to add their prayers as well as finances to the effort of your mission team.

It is humbling to admit that you need help. In most instances, family, friends and those in the church are happy to have a part in your experience. Yes, it would be nice if we could just do it on our own; however, we probably would never go on a trip if we waited to earn enough money to go.

2. “How can I possibly consider going? I have \$13.27 in the bank!”

Think for a moment. Should we allow the “Funds Available” in our bank account to determine our availability to serve? Talk to any missionary and they will tell you that if they allowed the present amount of funds available to determine the focus of missions, little would ever be done.

Understand that if you have prayerfully sought direction on this matter, God will invade the process. In essence you are not forcing your way to the field, you are waiting on God to provide for and send you.

3. “No problem, Uncle Harvey has the money. I’m sure he will pay for this.”

Sure, you may have a rich relative or come from a well to do church. Do not be tempted to take this short cut. The integrity of your experience depends on going to God first for the plan to raise support. God may want to use your experience to impact the lives of those He will raise up to support you. The process is much more enjoyable with a support team to pray for you. When you are on the field, it is nice to know that many are lifting you up in prayer.

4. “Fine, I think I could do it if it just were not so much.”

Take a moment to listen to the stories of those who have gone. Notice the wonderful and unusual ways that God has provided funds to make the trip possible. “HE” will provide. Never give up no matter how impossible the task seems. Your responsibility is not to get money from people. Your responsibility is to wait and depend upon God.

Pray, Plan, Present

Here are some steps to take on your journey of raising support. Always remember, you are not being a burden by asking. If you continue to feel this way talk to those who have gone and those who have sent.

1. Pray. Pray. Pray. Be certain in your heart that God would have you go on this trip. An assurance of call is accompanied by an assurance from God that He will provide.

2. Plan. Plan. Plan. Read the materials provided to you on how to raise support. Ask God to guide you in developing your personal strategy. Let Him guide you in all phases. Many people have found it to be a rewarding experience to sell things they really don't need. Turning these "things" into resources to serve can be an eye opening experience.

3. Present. Present. Present. One of the most effective ways to educate people about your need and the nature of the trip is a personal presentation. If the opportunity for you to do so arises, here are some things to consider:

- Who you are
- Where you are going
- Why you are going
- Who you are going with
- What you expect from the experience
- What you will be doing
- How long will it take
- How much will it cost
- How people can pray

Tips for the Task of Raising Support

- **Don't rely solely on letters.** Follow up your letter with some kind of personal response.
- **If at all possible, make a personal visit.** Call first. Most people contacted personally respond favorably to your invitation to be part of your support team. Pay attention to the list above when going on your personal visit. Remember, these will be your partners.
- **Use the phone; it's the next best thing to being there.** The same principles apply over the phone. Be sure to follow up the call with some kind of written information. The letters and response cards we provide are a good place to start. One final thought. Don't wait. Get started early. Pray, plan and present.

Objections to Fundraising

1. Fundraising is too scary for me.
The biggest obstacle is your own misunderstanding of how important you are.
2. Wouldn't it just be cheaper to send the money?
The never-ending pie.
3. I don't want to ask people to pay for my vacation.
A well-done, effective short-term mission is no vacation!
4. People won't be interested in my trip.
Wanna bet?
5. Times are tough.
If you're feeling a pinch, someone else is feeling a squeeze.

Mission Trip Fundraising Information

Think about it! Fundraising for mission trips is so much more than just getting money from people. It's a way to invite individuals and churches to be a part of your mission and learning experience. Think of it as a **partnership!** Your church or individual supporters help through prayers and/or financial assistance while YOU participate in the mission trip and share your experience with them. If you approach it with this attitude, people will sense your excitement, confidence, and willingness to serve. This will encourage many of them to gladly share in your mission experience.

The following pages include information and instructions on how to raise money through your church and through sending support letters to individuals.

Church Support

STEP 1:	Contact the pastor and/or missions committee (NMI) chairperson in your church as soon as possible. Let them know about your upcoming mission trip and that you would like the church to "partner" with you in this experience. Explain that financial support would be very helpful but that you would also like to invite the church to pray for you. Also, be sure to mention your desire to share about your experience with the church.
STEP 2:	Write a formal letter to the missions committee (NMI) chairperson. Send a copy of this letter to the pastor as well. * The letter may be an adaptation of your individual support letter. * Invite them to send a check on your behalf to Mount Vernon Nazarene University (give them the MVNU address with your name and mission in the memo space).
STEP 3:	Call (within 7-10 days) to see if they received your letter. Feel free to ask in this call if they have any timeline on their decision process. Wait patiently!
STEP 4:	If the church has decided to support you, then . . . * Write a formal "thank you" note/letter to the church or missions committee. * Discuss with the pastor or missions committee chairperson how best to share your experience with the church after you return. (You may want to set a date to speak in front of the church or to share with one or more Sunday school classes.)

Individual Support Letters

STEP 1:	Begin gathering your list of supporters immediately! 1. Start by brainstorming and writing down a list of family, friends, church members, teachers, etc. who you think would enjoy partnering with you in this experience. (Your church directory is a good source for names.) 2. Go back through this list and narrow it to about: 10-20 names (if raising \$200-\$300) 20-30 names (if raising \$400-\$600), etc.
STEP 2:	Our office will provide paper, envelopes, and support cards.

Procedure for Support Letters

1. As soon as we have your name on our trips list, we will email a copy of a mail merge program file along with instructions on what to do next.
2. Type the names and addresses of those individuals or groups that you want to receive the letter on that mail merge program file.
3. **SAVE YOUR WORK** and email the file back to the Chaplain's office. Don't forget to make a back-up file!!
4. We will merge the names with the letter so that each letter will be personalized. Then we will print the letters on MVNU letterhead.
6. You will be notified when your letters are ready to be picked up from the Chaplain's office or send them in the U.S. mail per your request.

STEP 3:	Take only the amount that you need of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blank envelopes (put your name in the upper left corner) 2. Support covenant cards (what the recipients send back to us) WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE CARD!! 3. Return envelopes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Have MVNU's return address on them * Can be folded into thirds to fit in main envelope. * Put a stamp on them to make them more "user-friendly"
STEP 4:	Stuff your main (labeled) envelopes with the corresponding letter, support covenant card, and return envelope. BE SURE TO SIGN YOUR LETTER AND PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SUPPORT CARD!!!!
STEP 5:	DOUBLE CHECK to make sure the envelopes and letters correspond!! Then mail your letters.
STEP 6:	PRAY and trust that God will provide!!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Rochel in the Chaplain's office at Ext. 4132 or by email at rfurniss@mvnu.edu.

What Happens After Your Support Letters are Sent?

1. Pray! Faith is an important part of a fundraising process such as this. Pray that God will guide the whole process. Ask God to move in the hearts of those to whom you have sent a letter.
2. Because we are using response cards and pre-addressed return envelopes, all (or most) of the gifts will come directly to the Chaplain's office. After we receive a financial gift for you:
 - * The amount of the gift is recorded on your personal support record.
 - * The check is sent over to the university's Accounting Department.
 - * We will send you an occasional updated report of your gift income. This includes the names of any supporters who have contributed and the amount of their gift. It also includes any supporters who have agreed to pray for you.
3. Send a brief "Thank You" note to the supporters who have sent in a prayer/gift card.

Post-Trip Communication with Your Supporters:

Church:	<p>Contact your pastor and/or mission committee chairperson (NMI President) to tell them about your trip and discuss with them the best way to share about your experience with the church (Sunday service or Sunday school classes).</p> <p>Feel free to contact Joe Noonan if you want some ideas of how to present your trip to the church.</p>
Individuals:	<p>Within a few weeks after you return from your trip, write a follow-up letter to those who committed to praying for you and those who supported you financially. Use this letter as a way to thank them and to give them a report of your mission trip experience.</p> <p>The report of your experience should include things such as: what kinds of things did you do; what did you see; who did you meet and what was the culture like; how did God use the team; how did God challenge you personally; what do you hope will stick with you from this trip, etc.</p> <p>This letter should be written well and should look sharp! A good follow-up letter will encourage and challenge those who have supported you. It will also enable you to go back to these same supporters for future opportunities.</p>

**Do not under-estimate the importance of follow-up
with your partners.
This could be the most important step in the
partnership process.**

**Don't forget . . .this is a partnership!
You are doing friend-raising not just fund-raising!**