

RAISING PERSONAL SUPPORT IN INDIA

By Ramesh Gupta

In India and South Asia, about 50% of the people we challenge become ministry partners, but then there's almost a 50% drop-out rate of those supporters after 3-6 months. People are not often committed or consistent in their giving, so the Christian worker on support has to continuously generate new contacts and challenge more people to invest, as well as maintain ongoing relationship with their ministry partners. To begin our overview, let's start with the 10/80/10 principle I have observed over the years at work here:

- 10% are Christians who are eager to give, are internally motivated, and looking for opportunities to invest in God's work and expand the Kingdom.
- 80% are potential givers who will make a giving commitment based if they find the need a worthy one, and how well the need is presented to them.
- 10% never give, no matter what the circumstances or how good the presentation or the need.

These percentage breakdowns are found in every church and denomination, irrespective of socio-economic status: it's the common mind-set. By far the biggest group (the middle 80%) are those who have a potential to give, but have never personally been challenged. Most are average churchgoers whose only involvement is giving their tithes and offerings to their local congregation, but have little awareness of Christian ministry or missions going on outside their church. They are waiting on someone to individually share a compelling vision with them.

But churches here view Christian ministry and workers differently. I have observed three types of churches:

- One group has little interest in missions and doesn't encourage its members to only give to the church.
- The second category puts great emphasis on missions and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. These pastors/leaders are more favorable toward Christian ministries/workers, even seeking out ways to partner.
- The third set of churches have their own mission programs and missionaries and don't usually encourage members to give to outside missions or missionaries.

Interestingly, I have also observed three types of givers:

- Those who get excited to invest, continue giving, and even increase the amounts over time.
- Those who give substantially, but sadly, over time, it declines or becomes inconsistent. Unless the Christian worker is able to work hard to maintain a good relationship with them (and updating them regularly to keep their interest) the giver will not maintain consistency.
- The third type are those who start giving because they are excited, but then stop completely. Even though the Christian worker has done everything right in caring for his supporters, they quit giving, simply for personal reasons.

Here are some practical helps on raising support in India and this part of the world:

- Since we can't approach everyone, maximize your time by putting a priority on meeting personally with Christians who have a biblical attitude about giving, as well as adequate resources to invest.

- Like witnessing, share the need in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God. Embrace the right attitude, understanding support raising is not about us. God will supply all our needs. Our responsibility is to simply offer people the privilege and opportunity to invest in God's Kingdom—the decision is then between them and God.
- Challenge people to invest their L.I.F.E. to help God's work. This acronym spells out "Labor", "Influence", "Finance", and "Expertise." I've observed that if a Christian worker is just focused on "getting money out of them", the potential giver is not motivated, and even clams up. But if you will show them that God wants their entire "LIFE" to accomplish His purposes, they are much more eager to give, not just their finances, but everything!

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