

RAISING PERSONAL SUPPORT IN LATIN AMERICA

By Armando Tamayo

My area of responsibility covers 23 countries with a broad variety of languages and cultures. Raising our financial support in this part of the world is difficult since most of our cultures have been conditioned to only receive and never taught to give. I coordinate the support raising training of over 300 full-time Campus Crusade staff and over 200 Pastors in a movement called CENFOL. They all are nationals and we have made a strong emphasis on these Christian leaders disciplining themselves to focus on generating local resources to fund their personal and ministry expenses. So, experience has taught us to do our support raising within our own continent, and try not to depend upon outside help.

- Generally, full-time Christian workers here are ashamed to ask for funds and at times the attitude of a beggar controls their minds. Even though we emphasize to them how crucial it is to proceed in faith and depend on God, they sometimes find it difficult to put that into practice. They have a strong theoretical conviction of what it means to have confidence God will provide, but sometimes fear takes over. We're seeking to help them understand this is a test of faith, and they need to trust God in a supernatural way to provide their support.

We look to the Word of God to show us the Biblical basis for support raising. And even though most of our staff is taking home at least 90% of their support budget each month, many find it challenging to manage their finances. Properly stewarding God's resources is a problem in this culture, and even many Christian workers have a lot of debt and financial problems. This limits the freedoms they have with their families and ministries.

The key to effective support raising in this culture is a change of attitude in three critical areas:

- A strong conviction that God will provide
- A more serious and permanent discipline to raise up resources
- A commitment to properly manage those resources

A big reason for our success is we consider support raising training a form of discipleship. We spend lots of time showing them how to make a call or have an appointment, then we immediately turn them loose to go put it into practice. We have our coaches go on individual appointments with the trainees to observe and critique. On top of this, we have numerous tapes the new staff listen to that give them the proper Biblical perspective. There are Spanish versions of these tapes at www.dmpdccc.org.

As I've observed the Latin American (and Caribbean) cultures over the years, it has shown me people really do want to give, if provided with the opportunity. Even though most of the other mission organizations in our part of the world do not use this model of personal fund-raising, we have found success in it. In fact, it gives us and our organization greater credibility, not less.

Right now, the average monthly gift our workers receive is about \$30. That's a lot in most of our countries, and for some workers this seemed impossible to believe people would actually give that much. But our ministry partners do so with pleasure when they are personally convinced of

a good cause. And even though people in our countries cannot deduct contributions from their taxes, they give selflessly because of a deep love for missions. Please pray many more workers will be raised up and fully funded to join our mission efforts in different parts of Latin America.

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