

BIBLICAL APOLOGETIC FOR MINISTRY PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

I. Introduction

- A. God has called you to be a missionary. Because of that call, He will provide what you need to carry out the mission.
1. Raising support is not the issue of the missionary being worthy of that support. Raising support is not about you trying to convince someone to give money to you. Rather it is about involving people with what is on God's heart- "*to seek and save that which was lost.*" Raising support is not about your wonderful ability to convince people to give to you. It is about what God wants to do in the lives of the individuals that God has called to support His work.
 2. Is support raising an invention by modern American Evangelicalism? You may have family, friends, neighbors and business associates scratching their heads about you raising support. Raising support may make no sense to them.
 3. Well meaning Christians may have said to you, "*Paul was a tent maker. Why can't you work and have a ministry on the side?*"
 4. If you were asked to write a 2-page paper on what the Scriptures teach about raising support, could you do it?
- B. We'll begin by looking at the Old Testament model for how God provided for His people, then look at the life of Jesus, His disciples, Paul and then John.

Before we go on, what are some biblical questions you may have been thinking about regarding support raising?

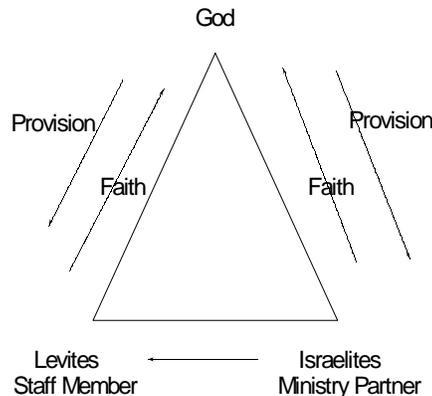
II. Example of the Levites

- A. The Levites are set apart (Numbers 1:1-3,47-53)**
1. (2-3) Moses was to take a census of all the Israelites for the purpose of raising up an army.
 2. (47-53) The Levites were to be exempted from the draft. They were to be set apart to meet the spiritual needs of the people. Each of the tribes was given land to farm. The Levites were given no means of support. How was God to provide their needs?
- B. Giving and receiving are in a vertical relationship with the Lord, not a horizontal one.** What do I mean by that?

God would provide for the Levites through the Israelites. (Numbers 18:8-32; Deut. 10:8-9;14:27-28;18:1-8)

1. The path of God's provision. (Num. 18:8-32)

Israel was to present offerings to the Lord. In turn He would give those offerings to the Levites. (Draw triangle on overhead.)



- a) Israel and the Levites were each in a vertical relationship with the Lord. Israel could not give her gifts directly to the Levites. Each gift had to go through the Lord. Therefore, the only way for the Levites to receive these gifts were from the Lord, not from man. God is the One who gave the Levites their provision.

The relationship that Israel had with the Levites was a partnership. As you read through Num. 18:8-32 you will find the concept “*I give to you*” or “*This part is yours*” 12 times. (8,9a,b,11,12,13,14,15,18,19,21,24.

This is a critical principle to catch. Giving and receiving are vertical relationships. Christian workers do not receive their support from other believers. Their support comes from the Lord.

- b) MPD Mission Statement, “*Linking staff members and ministry partners together through the Lord to turn the lost into Christ-centered laborers.*”

2. The quality of God's provision. (12) They were to be given the *"finest."* (Num. 18:12-15A)

a) *"I feel like I am begging."*

(1) The Christian worker is not a beggar. God has called you to a very sacred calling. It is the position called a missionary. This calling is not dependent upon your self worth. He is the one who has set you apart from others who are in secular work. Because this is His calling, it is worth raising funds for. We do not beg. We give people an opportunity to participate in God's work.

(2) You are not a salesman. You are not trying to negotiate a contract. Selling is a negotiation process where the salesman tries to convince someone that his product is needed. There is nothing wrong with this. But MPD is much more than that. We are in partnership with the Lord trying to align people with God's purposes. We want people to give to the Lord because they want to see His work accomplished. He is the One who then gives to us.

(3) Our job is to cast a vision so the prospective ministry partner can feel the need for our ministry (vision casting).

b) *"I feel awkward asking this person to support me or to increase his giving because I earn more than he does."*

(1) It is quite conceivable that some Israelites complained that they had given their best to the Levites, which meant that the Levites were living better than they were.

(2) Since giving and receiving is primarily a vertical relationship, our focus is incorrect if we are comparing incomes or lifestyles. Our focus needs to be upon God and His provision for us. I do believe that when we compare in this way, God says, *"Mind your own business. My provision for each of you is my business."*

3. The worth of God's provision. (20-21)

"You will have no inheritance in their land...I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites."

a) Look at a map in your Bibles of Israel divided among the 12 tribes. Notice who is missing. It's Levi. How would you like to be Levi?

You ask your father, “*Where’s my land?*” He replies, “*You don’t get any. Instead you get a promise that your brothers will give you 10% of what is theirs.*” What do you know about the Israelites? Would you have entrusted your lives to them? They complained; they grumbled. Imagine how insecure the Levites could have been.

- b) God gave them no means by which they could support themselves. He didn't allow them to have a job that would enable them to support themselves. This is another pivotal principle. The Levites did not receive a paycheck. They received God's provision.
- c) Missionaries and Christian workers do not receive a paycheck. They receive God's provision. Your motivation for being in Christian service is not to earn a paycheck. Your motivation is to serve the Lord by allowing Him to seek and save the lost through you. You don't receive a salary; you receive God's provision because He has called you to serve Him full-time.
- d) There can be a tendency for Christian workers to be insecure about where their provision will be coming from. How much more secure could the Levites have been? How much more secure can we, as Christian workers, be when God says, “*I am your share and your inheritance*”?

4. The importance of God’s provision. (31)

“*It is your wages for your work*” Underline that verse in your Bibles. The other tribes had to farm their land and care for their herds. The Israelites could have said, “*The Levites are leeches. Why should we give to them? They don't work.*” Wrong! God considers their work of meeting the spiritual needs of the people to be work, and they should be compensated for it.

5. The responsibility of God’s provision. (Deut. 14:27-28;18:1-8)

“*Do not neglect the Levites.*” God continued to remind the Israelites of their moral and spiritual responsibility to provide for the Levites.

- C. In the Old Testament, God called the Levites to come apart from Israel to serve Him. The Lord expected Israel to give a portion of what He gave them back to Him. In turn He would then give those offerings to the Levites for their provision.

III. Example of Jesus

A. Did Jesus always divide up the loaves and fishes to provide for his disciples?

Have you ever stopped to ask, “*How did Jesus come up with the money for food? How did He feed His disciples? Did Jesus always divide up loaves and fishes to provide for His disciples?*”

B. “These women were helping to support them out of their own mean.” (Luke 8:1-3)

1. While Jesus had the authority and power to provide miraculously, He chose to allow Himself and His disciples to be supported through the generosity of others. Obviously, this was kosher with the Lord.
2. Ask the group: “*Why did Jesus allow Himself to be supported in this manner?*” Jesus was a carpenter. He could have repaired wagons and made furniture. When people came to him for a job, He could have witnessed to them.
 - a) Giving gave the women a genuine way to be a part of His ministry.
 - b) It gave them a way to tangibly demonstrate their love and commitment to the Lord.
 - c) God the Father wanted Jesus to use all of His time for ministry. When God the Father called Jesus into His full time earthly ministry, Jesus never went back to carpentry. We see the Old Testament concept of how God provided for His called out people in Jesus' life.

C. The sending of the 70 (72). (Luke 10:1-16)

1. (1-3) Thrust was to send out workers in the harvest.
2. (4-7) How they were supported.
 - a) (4) Do not take any provision. Do not take a bag and beg like a beggar.
 - b) (5-7) Find someone who will provide for you. Pretty aggressive.
 - (1) In order to fully understand this passage we have to know something about the hospitality culture of the mid-east. If a

guest comes to your house, it doesn't matter what time it is or what you are doing, you are obligated to take him in.

- (2) In Jesus' time it was the custom to take in a traveling rabbi up to three days. This is an indirect appeal. He was to be given lodging, provision-some kind of help. Nothing verbal needed to be said.
 - (3) Showing up at the door was the same as an ask.
- c) Tell story of Moishe and Tevya, 2 of the 72.
- (1) Jesus had a strategy planning session with the 72. Moishe and Tevya, 2 of the 72, were given their assignment. They were sent to a small village of 500. Moishe was not the aggressive type. He said, *"Let's go to the town well and see if any of the women who come for water will invite us to their homes"*
 - (2) Tevya, *"I don't think so, Moishe. I think Y'shua wants us to go up to someone's house and knock on the door. Then we are to expect them to put us up and provide meals for us."*
 - (3) Moishe, *"You're meshuagah (Yiddish for crazy in the head)." There is no way that I can do that!"*
 - (4) Tevya, *"Moishe, what are you afraid of? You are so stubborn. Alright. We'll wait by the well and see what happens."*
 - (5) 4 hours go by. It's getting very dark! Tevya, *"Okay, Moishe. It's dark, we're hungry, and no one has even come to smooze with us! I am not going to wait all night until the women come to get water in the morning. I don't like sleeping outside while creepy, crawly things crawl on my body."*
 - (6) Moishe reluctantly follows Tevya as he walks up to someone's house. Moishe is mumbling under his breath (just like his forefathers did!). Tevya knocks on the door, and a Jewish mother answers, *"Boys, how can I help you?"* Tevya replies, *"Y'shua sent us. Will you put us up for a few days and feed us."* She says, *"Uh, you should have come 4 hours ago. I had just made a fresh pot of matzoth ball soup! Come on in anyway. I'll find you something too eat. You look hungry."*

- (7) Tevya, looking at Moishe as they walk into the house,
"Told you so!"
3. Not only did Jesus have others support Him, but applied the principle to His disciples.

IV. Example of Paul

A. Paul's practice. (II Corinthians 11:7-9)

1. (7) To those whom Paul ministered to he did not seek support.
2. (8) To be freed up to minister other churches supported him.
3. (9) The Macedonians supported him.
4. Paul followed Jesus' principle of having others involved in his ministry, so his time was not tied up in making a living.

B. The right not demanded. (I Corinthians 9:1-18)

1. **(1-6) Paul's apostleship is questioned.**
2. **(7-14) Paul's defense of his apostleship. He appeals to:** (give credit to Scott Morton of the Navigators.)
 - a) **(7) Logic.**
 - (1) Soldier--at his own expense.
 - (2) Vineyard--and does not eat the grapes.
 - (3) Flock--and does not drink milk.
 - b) **(8-10) The Law.** He quotes Deut. 25:4.
 - c) **(11-12) The position of spiritual leadership.**
 - d) **(13) Levites.**
 - (1) Those in the Temple--food from the temple
 - (2) Those who serve at the altar--share what is offered
 - e) **(14) The Lord.**

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel. This is the norm. It is the Old Testament pattern.

3. (12,15-18) The guideline: To offer the Gospel free of charge.

C. Paul's exception of tent making

1. There are three possible occasions where Paul supported himself through tent making.

- a) **Thessalonica** The first was in (**Acts 17**). This was a young church that had many Greeks. It wasn't a good idea for Paul, a Jew, to seek support from this young group of Gentile believers.

The Thessalonian church became lazy and idle waiting around for the Lord to return. Paul did not seek support from because he wanted to model physical labor to them. **II Thess. 3:8-9**, "... *with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; not because we do not have the right to do this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model.*"

- b) The second occasion where Paul worked instead of receiving support from the church was **Corinth. (Acts 18)** Corinth was a problem filled church, moral, theological, party spirit and legalistic issues. Paul probably felt that it would be improper to receive support from them.

(1) (Read 1-5) Look at verse 5. Why did Paul stop making tents when Silas and Timothy arrived,?

(2) They brought financial support from the Macedonian Church. Philippians is considered to be Paul's thank you letter to the Macedonian Church for this financial support.

(3) He immediately stopped work when the money came.

- c) The third occasion was in **Ephesus. Acts 20:33-35**

"I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes ... these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me."

Why did Paul choose to support himself here? Silversmiths and others made their living by selling idols of Diana. They felt Paul was trying to put them out of business. New believers stop buying the idols. They were losing business. It would not have been a

good idea for it to look like Paul was taking money from the believers, which other wise would have gone to buying of idols.

2. **(II Cor. 11:7-9)** The reason Paul was involved in tent making was that he did not want to be a burden to them.
3. **(I Cor. 9)** In I Corinthians 9, Paul is defending his right to be an Apostle. He worked as a tent maker so as not to be a stumbling block to them. There were all sorts of false prophets who were trying to free load off of this new "religion." Paul wanted to be careful that they would not see him as one of these free loaders.
4. **Paul's preferred mode was being supported by gifts from God's people.**

D. Paul's reasons

Why he urged others to participate in the Gospel through their giving.

1. **People need to give (Philippians 4:10-19)**

- a) **(10)** The Philippians wanted to give to Paul, but had no opportunity. **People are more willing to give, than you are willing to ask.**
- b) **(11-13) Paul's need wasn't his primary concern.** He could trust God for whether he had plenty or little.
- c) **(14-17) Example of the Philippian Church.** Looking for what may be credited to your account. There was a benefit in the Philippians giving to Paul. Paul knew how important it was for them to give.
- d) **(18) Giving is an act of worship.** Paul is using Old Testament metaphor. "I'm giving because I love you, Lord."
- e) **(19) Promise with conditions**

As the Philippians gave, their ability to trust God grew. Your ministry partners need to give. So do you. Are you giving?

Heather loved to give. She saved her tithe so she could help high school students go to Student Venture conferences.

2. **People give because it is fun to give (II Corinthians 9:7-9)**

(7-9) Hilarious giving. "People want to give to you, more than you are willing to ask."

V. Example of III John 5-8

"We ought to support such men." We are at the end of the New Testament. Supporting Christian workers had become the norm. In a similar way as people gave some type of assistance to traveling rabbis, now Christians were expected to provide some type of support for Christian workers. Supporting Christian workers is not only right, it is the church's obligation.

VI. Conclusion: Questions you sometimes run into

A. Doesn't Malachi 3:10 teach that all giving should be given to the local church?

1. A recurring theme throughout Malachi is Israel asking, *"How have we sinned."* The Lord goes onto answer specifically where they have sinned.
2. (Mal. 3:6-12) *"I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,"* says the Lord Almighty. *"But you ask, 'How are we to return?' Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse -- the whole nation of you -- because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,"* says the Lord Almighty, *"and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,"* says the Lord Almighty. *"Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,"* says the Lord Almighty."
3. Israel was in a state of rebellion. God was admonishing her to turn back. They were blind to their sin, so He pointed it out to them. In this passage, God tells them they were cheating Him in their giving.
4. Israel had only one place to bring her offerings -- the Temple. In the Temple was a storehouse where the offerings were kept. I get upset, being Jewish, when people take the Old Testament out of context. A number of Christians incorrectly say that the church is now God's storehouse. This is wrong. Israel had only one place to bring her offerings -- the Temple. The church today is not just a local body that meets in a building. The Church universal has a number of different manifestations-local bodies, Christian organizations, missions' agencies, etc.
5. The principle from this passage is that Israel was to give her best to the Lord. He would show them that they could not out give Him. The principle

is the same for us.

6. Our giving can be divided up among various organizations and churches.

B. Is it Biblical to ask for funds?

1. Three philosophies for trusting God to raise up funds for missionaries.

- a) Don't tell-don't ask.
- b) Tell-don't ask.
- c) Tell-ask.

Guess which one is us!

2. George Mueller was well known for his orphanages. He raised thousands of dollars for his orphanages by never directly asking others for money. He relied upon God alone. He felt it was wrong to ask others for money. A number of missionaries have adopted his view and some think it is wrong to ask for funds. How did he come to hold this view?

- a) Before he became a Christian, he was materialistic and a con-artist. He was manipulative and a thief.
- b) As a boy he stole money to spend on drinking.
- c) His father laid an elaborate trap to catch his son stealing out of his desk drawer.
- d) He would check into hotels wearing expensive clothing, giving the impression he could pay. Instead he would duck out and never pay.
- e) He became a Christian, and then became a pastor. He became dissatisfied with the custom that existed in the churches of his day. Pews were rented out to parishioners. The high priced ones were in front of the church. He felt this was in violation of James 2 where it is taught that it is wrong to show partiality.
- f) He requested that a chest be placed in back of the church so people could give free-will offerings without being noticed. He wouldn't even look into the chest to see how much money had been given. He had his secretary do it.
- g) When you consider his background (being materialistic, manipulative and a thief), you can see how he came to adopt this point of view of telling only God. He felt that if God was going to

provide, he would do it without George calling attention to his needs.

h) However, he did explain how God answered his prayers in public speeches to give glory to God. But the people hearing these stories would find out how they could give also. His motives were pure. He was not trying to manipulate them into giving. But the people did discover opportunities to give through his stories. While not intending to ask, he did.

3. (Rom. 15:20-25) *“I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.”*

a) (20) Paul’s dazzling vision. This was his passion, his life aim.

b) (21) The promise.

c) (24) The appeal.

The crucial word in Romans 15:24, **propempe**, is one that can either mean "accompany on the way" or "assist on the way." Many commentators believe the meaning of the word in this passage and in other places in the New Testament has the meaning "to assist on the way." This may refer to such things as providing food, money, traveling companions, means of travel, and persons with whom to stay on the journey. Irving Jensen in his Romans study said it was customary to provide room and board to visiting evangelists during their stay and then to pay their expenses to the next place of ministry.

Paul has never been to Rome. He's writing ahead and may be asking them for support for his journey to Spain.

4. It is clear from the Old Testament pattern and the New Testament pattern that believers were to provide for the Levites and Christian workers. I believe it can be understood from Luke 10:1-16, the sending of the 70, that they needed to ask for room and board. Jesus told them to take nothing with them, but to find help from those they were going to. Since it was customary for rabbis to be supported, it seems logical that this practice would also have been carried over to the early Christian workers.

C. Is it Biblical to raise support from non-believers?

1. Exodus 12:33- 36, *“The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. ‘For otherwise,’ they said, ‘we will all die!’ So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders*

in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.”

The Israelites used the silver and gold to build the Tabernacle.

2. When Nehemiah became aware of the desperate plight of the Israelites in Jerusalem, he decided to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. He asked Artaxeres, a pagan king, for lumber for the project.
 3. An old missionary said, *“I will take the money of any sinner and wash it clean with the blood of Christ.”*
 4. The Lord does not say it is wrong to ask unbelievers for funds for His work. I normally go to believers for support, for they would be more favorably disposed to the Lord's work. Support from non-believers may be inconsistent.
- D. *“Should churches or individuals be giving their money to missions projects outside of their local areas when the local needs are so great?”* Paul praised the Philippians (Phil. 4) for their giving to needs located in other areas. Paul wouldn't have done this if God's pattern was for the church or an individual to confine his giving to the local area.

GIVING PERCENTAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

10% IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE LEVITES

Lev. 27:30-33 *A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord: it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock - every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod - will be holy to the Lord. He must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.*

Numbers 18:21 *I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.*

A SECOND TITHE SET APART AND EATEN IN A SACRED MEAL IN JERUSALEM

Deut. 12:5-6,11,18 *But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put His Name there for His dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.*

These verses tell the Israelites to eat their offerings in a sacred meal. In the previous verses they were commanded to give their tithes to the Levites. So it seems to indicate a second tithe.

Numbers 14:22-27 indicate the second tithe also, but add that if they are too far from Jerusalem, they are to exchange their tithe for silver and bring that to Jerusalem.

EVERY THIRD YEAR ANOTHER TITHE IS TO BE GIVEN FOR THE LEVITES ALIENS, FATHERLESS AND WIDOW.

Deut 14:28-29 *At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.*