

MAKING THE ASK  
**RAISING MONEY**  
**FOR SUMMER**  
**MISSIONS TRIPS**





Asking people for money! Aside from snakes, spiders, clowns and heights, asking people for money must one of the biggest fears humankind has ever known. Sure, that might be a slight exaggeration, but have you ever met anyone (other than your 13-year-old) who actually likes asking people for money?

**BUT SOMETIMES, IT SIMPLY HAS TO BE DONE.**

**A SUMMER MISSIONS TRIP IS ONE OF THOSE TIMES.**

When preparing for a Summer Missions Trip, fundraising is an essential part of team preparation. But why? What makes the unusual, often frightening and seemingly uncomfortable activity of fundraising such a key element in what might already be a Trip that is pushing people outside their comfort zone? Essentially, there are two reasons Missions Team Members utilize (and require!) fundraising to cover Trip costs, no matter the total expense incurred for the Trip.

# WHY FUNDRAISING?

## A SUMMER MISSIONS TRIP ESSENTIAL

**Involve Others in God's Mission:** First, and most importantly, fundraising allows Missions Team Members to involve others in the Mission of God and the missions strategy of their church. There are many roles for people to play in the expansion of God's Kingdom at home and around the world. The Holy Spirit has gifted us all differently. Some have been gifted to GO and be teachers, to GO and encourage, to GO and be pastors. Others, however, have been gifted to STAY HOME and give. These people have been given the material resources by God so they can intentionally and generously bless others for the sake of furthering God's Kingdom and glorifying Jesus. Asking these divinely gifted people for money allows them to exercise their spiritual gift. Who are we, then, to deny them this opportunity? Plus, along with their dollars come their prayers. The more prayers, the better!

**Cover Increased Costs:** Second, and more practically, Missions Trips usually come with a high price tag. Higher than a family vacation or personal business trip. There are costs that are unique to a Missions Trip that may not be included in other kinds of trips that people may enjoy. Such costs include:

- Pre-trip Training expenses
- "Middle-of-the-Road" airfare cost that's best for the team (not the cheapest available fares)
- Travel insurance
- Touring expenses during long flight layovers
- On-field Ministry costs (for supplies, equipment, printing)
- On-field Group outing/debriefing costs
- Contribution to the partner ministry
- Covering the cost of leadership team members or pastors (if applicable)
- Contingencies (medical expense, emergency funds)

Many prospective team members may balk initially at the overall high cost of the Trip. But, allowing Team Members to raise funds for the Trip in part or in full, decreases the pressure Team Members may feel. Those who are called and qualified to serve as members of the Trip can move forward in confidence, even if they are unable to cover the complete Trip cost out-of-pocket.

Since we now know it is so important to include fundraising in the life and times of a Summer Missions Trip, how exactly does each team member go about the process of raising the funds required for their Trip? It is not a short, simple, or easy process. But with some intentional thought, preparation, effort and follow up, fundraising can be extremely effective and successful, as well as a God-honoring activity.

# FUNDRAISING FOR SUMMER MISSIONS TRIPS: HOW IT'S DONE!

There is a tested and tried process of fundraising that has been proven to work effectively for decades of Summer Missions Trip participants. Follow the path and the funds will be realized.

However, before beginning the process, each team member must individually **adopt and fully own the right mindset and attitude about fundraising**. So many believe, rightly, that God will provide for all our needs. Absolutely. Yes, He will. However, we must also believe that God requires our participation in His provision from time to time. In asking people for money to fund the Summer Missions Trip, team members are both playing their part in God's plan, and they are also involving others in the work of God that will be accomplished on the Trip. **Those being asked to join as financial partners are being given a chance to invest in the building of God's Kingdom**. They are allowed to follow a biblical mandate to provide for the needs of others.

Theologian Henry Nouwen wrote in his book "The Spirituality of Fundraising", "Fundraising is, first and foremost, a form of ministry." He goes on to say, "Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission." **By asking people to share in the financial burden of a trip, the team members are ministering to those who are interested in the ministry but cannot join in the "going"**. This ministry sees people for who God has made them to be. It truly listens to people and the desires of their hearts. It allows people to play a significant part in something meaningful and be blessed because of it.

**The Bible gives team members plenty of good examples** of how important and how God-ordained fundraising is for Kingdom work.

- **Moses** asked the people to fund the building of the Tabernacle (Ex. 25, 35, 36)
- **David** asked the leaders and the people to fund the building of the Temple (1 Chron. 29)
- **Hezekiah** asked the people to fund the priests' work in the Temple (2 Chron. 31)
- **Nehemiah** asked government officials to fund the rebuilding of the Wall (Neh. 1, 2)
- **Paul** asked the Corinthian church and Philippian church to fund his work and instructed Timothy on how to raise funds (1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 8, 9; Phil. 4; 1 Tim. 6)

**God wanted His people of all ages to know that asking for money is part of His plan**. He recorded examples in His word and wants His servants to model their lives and ministry after these Biblical heroes. As a prospective Summer Missions Trip Team member, individuals can form their personal fundraising theology around the Biblical mandate, as well as the practicalities of what fundraising can bring to ministry and the enrichment of any Missions Team.



# THE FUNDRAISING PROCESS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Follow these Steps for Summer Missions Trip fundraising success!

## 1. Personal Vision Statement.

After clarifying a theology of fundraising, but before asking anyone for money, take some time to clarify a personal vision statement for the trip. A Vision Statement is an essential foundation stone to any fundraising endeavor. Each trip participant must know and understand the motivation for their participation on this particular trip. Each person should ask themselves key questions: Why are you going? What makes this trip especially meaningful to you? What connects you and your personal spiritual journey to the mission of the ministry partner? Specifically, in preparing to pen a statement, think purposefully about these things:

- What are your hopes and dreams for the Trip?
- What problem will the Trip and your participation seek to solve?
- Who/what are you trying to change?
- Why you?
- Why now?
- Why this ministry partner?

After taking intentional time to consider these important questions, craft a written statement using present tense verbs (not future tense!) that will be the guiding force for participation in the Trip moving forward. Once the Vision Statement is crafted, learn it, remember it, and be able to communicate it clearly. Share it with family members or a close friend and be sure that they understand it. Once this challenging work is complete, it's time to start putting that Vision into action in the fundraising plan.



## 2. Become An Expert.

Team members can prepare to ask others to support their involvement on the trip by learning all the detailed information about the Trip. Absolutely everything. Potential donors will have questions. Lots of questions! It is imperative that team members know how to answer those questions well (or know how to get the answers) so donations are not delayed in coming. Some pieces of information team members should know include, but are not limited to:

- Missions Strategy of the sending church
- Philosophy of and Strategies of the missions partner
- Dates of the trip, Travel details
- Number of team members, names of some other team members
- Team leadership
- Team activities on the field
- Trip cost, funding deadlines, giving opportunities
- Safety precautions, medical care provided

In addition, **a very important part of a team member's pre-trip learning is absorbing as much knowledge as possible about the culture the team will visit** (whether at home or abroad), and then being able to communicate about that culture in a way that will draw potential donors in and make them care deeply about this culture. Culture is a beautiful part of any Summer Missions Trip. It enriches everyone as they are drawn out of their own comfort zones and placed into something uncomfortable that challenges them in new and exciting ways that changes their lives forever. Members of the financial support team can also experience this culture vicariously through the traveling team members when those team members learn genuinely about the culture and share that learning with their donors. Everyone is eternally enriched.







### 3. Create a Prayer Team.

The first “big ask” any Summer Missions Team must make is the creation of a group of 5-10 people to become their Prayer Team. But this is no ordinary Prayer Team. This is a team of precious people **dedicated specifically to pray daily** that “their” Summer Missions Trip Team Member would be able to **raise all the funds to cover the cost of the trip**. These are specific and important prayers to support a specific and important process. This is so important that Missions Pastors and/or Team Leaders may consider making this kind of Prayer Team a requirement for every team member. Prayer Team member names can be collected and recorded in a central online database for ease of use and follow up for future items and activities.

Once the Prayer Team is formed, Trip Team Members can spend time telling them about the trip, their role on the trip, their funding needs, their fundraising strategy and activities, and what they hope God will do in and through them in both the Trip experience and the fundraising experience. Weekly prayer requests and consistent communication will help the Prayer Team members stay engaged in daily prayer. During the actual Trip, special notes to the Prayer Team will be a great encouragement to them, as well as inform their prayers even more deeply. This group of prayer warriors is essential and will help the Summer Missions Trip Team Member to stand against the fiery arrows of the evil one who does not want the Team Member to raise their funds or have a life changing experience on the Trip. Prayer changes things and these Prayer Team members can be these crucial agents of that change.



## 4. Make THE LIST.

Now the “real” work starts. Who will you ask for money? Many people think they don’t know anyone who would want to give or have the capacity to give. The reality? We are all surprised at who can give and who will give when asked. It is a thrill to see what God will move people to do when they are asked by someone with a Kingdom vision and on a Mission from the Lord. How, then, do we find these people?

### We make a list. THE LIST.

Team members should carve out dedicated time, sit down, and make a written list of everyone they know. Everyone. Leave no one out. This is also called examining the “Sphere of Influence”. Who do you know that loves you, cares for you, or otherwise takes an interest in your life and activities? Start with family: Parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents. Move on to friends. Then colleagues. Fellow churchgoers. Professional service providers like doctors, dentists, chiropractors. The list could go on and on. Sometimes social media is helpful. Go through your “Friends” or “Followers” and add appropriate/accessible people to the list. Many times, the list reaches 100-200 people or more. It’s amazing how many people we know! What a blessing that God has connected us with so many souls.

#### Once the list is made, begin categorizing.

- **Category One:** Includes everyone you’re sure will give to you if you ask them. This could be a gift of \$10 or \$1,000. The amount doesn’t matter. Just the fact that you believe they will give. This might be 10-20 people.
- **Category Two:** Includes everyone you believe “should” give to you based on the closeness of your relationship with them.
- **Category Three:** Includes everyone you believe “should” give to you based on their passion for the type of ministry the partner ministry does or the location of the ministry (whether at home or abroad).
- **Category Four:** Includes people you believe have the capacity to give a large amount to you, but you are uncertain they would give. You must ask and leave it in God’s hands.
- **Category Five:** Includes people you don’t believe will give to you, but they’re on the list anyway.

**Congratulations! The list is complete!**  
Now, with these people in their categories in mind, it’s time to start working The List.





## 5. Send Support Letters.

In today's digital age, letter writing seems to have become a lost art. Most of the mail we receive in our mailboxes is junk. We get all our bills online. We get school notices online. We get medical reports online. And email or text messages are the main way to communicate with loved ones. But when it comes to raising support for Summer Missions Trips? The seemingly old-fashioned practice of sending paper support letters still reigns supreme. It is a decades-old, tested-and-true technique that, when done well and in the right manner, communicates effectively, draws potential donors' attention to you and the ministry partner being served, and compels people to send generous donations on your behalf enabling the Missions Team to move forward in confidence.

Step One? Write a compelling letter. The key to an effective Support Letter is making sure people want to read it. Start out with a catchy, eye-grabbing headline. Tell a captivating and detailed story about someone who will be served by the Missions Team through the Trip. Communicate your personal vision statement for going on the trip. Be clear about the amount of money to be raised, the deadline for raising it, and how the person receiving the letter can donate. Once you think it's ready to go? Have someone proofread the letter! Do not send it out with typos.

When the final letter is ready, choose the top 50 prospects from your list of people, most likely from Categories One and Two, and mail them a copy of the letter. Hand address the letters to personalize the process. Put First Class stamps on every envelope. Consider sending an email to everyone to whom you've mailed a letter to alert them that a very special piece of mail is coming their way.

Last, but certainly not least, offer up some serious prayer with every letter that goes out. Ask God to bless your efforts, to bless every person who receives a letter, and to open their hearts in generosity to the mission and the Trip.

(A helpful P.S.: Team Leaders may want to keep a copy of every Team Member's Prayer Letter in an online database. This will be helpful for future Teams, as well as for accountability for present Team Members.)



## 6. Passionate Follow Up.

The fundraising job is not done once the support letters are in the mailbox. This is when the challenging and intentional work begins. Ten days to two weeks after mailing the support letters, the follow up begins. The follow up must be enthusiastic and passionate. **The follow up is just as essential as the Trip itself.** And it might be just as challenging. Establishing the right mindset going into the follow up process is crucial. It's all about people.

The goal is to speak on the phone or in person with everyone who received a support letter. This personal contact is what will make the difference in building personal relationships with every prospective donor. While the raising of funds is definitely important and the reason for engaging with people at this point in time, **personal relationship with every individual is the ultimate goal.** Sure, you might know many of these people well. **But now is the time to take every relationship to the next level.** How to do that?

Everyone wants to be seen, heard, and understood. **The fundraising process gives Summer Missions Trip Team Members the divine opportunity to minister to prospective donors in a special way.** Take time to meet up with every person. Ask about their family. Ask about their health, their hobbies, and their home. Pay attention to their likes, their dislikes, their interests. Make the meeting as much about them as possible. The more you pay attention to them, the more they will want to take an interest in what God has called you to do through the Summer Missions Trip.

During the time with your prospective donor, there will be the opportunity to make a direct ask for money to fund the Missions Trip. If making a direct ask causes anxiety, **plan what to say and practice.** Communicate your vision for the trip, talk a bit about logistics, and then talk about financial partnership. Here are some tips on making the ask in person.

- Create a short ask phrase and then practice the ask phrase! Some sample phrases include:
  - “Would you please make a donation to help fund my trip?”
  - “Do you feel God is leading you to make a donation toward my trip costs?”
  - “How much do you think you’ll be able to contribute to my trip costs at this time?”
  - “Will you become my financial partner today?”
- After using the ask phrase, **WAIT for the person to respond.** It might be awkward. Allow that awkward silence. Avoid the temptation to fill the silence with explanations or other conversation.
- Suggest specific amounts or giving levels from which to choose. \$20 gifts are extremely popular, as are \$100 gifts. Be prepared to challenge highly interested people to larger gifts as well at the \$250 or \$500 level. Don’t underestimate what God may be doing in people’s hearts.
- Let people know how much you have left to raise and how their gift can make an impact. Some people balk at a large total amount and feel their relatively small gift will not truly help the cause. However, closing in on the goal makes all gifts seem more meaningful.
- Give clear instructions on how to give (check, online, credit card, cash, mailing address). People may not give if they are left wondering how to give. Make the whole process as easy as possible. Consider creating a card or half-sheet with all the relevant giving information on it as a reminder. Email the giving information as a follow up.

Follow up is tough. But **follow up produces results.** The money will come in.





## 7. Small Group Fundraising Meetings.

Another opportunity for Summer Missions Trip fundraising in addition to sending support letters and rigorous follow up are small group gatherings. These gatherings of 10-12 people occur in homes over dinner or dessert. They offer Team Members an excellent occasion to communicate their personal vision about the Trip and then ask people personally to contribute financially. Here are the steps to a successful evening event.

- Secure a host who knows about the Trip, is committed to your personal vision, and has an interest in the ministry partner the Trip will be serving. Ask them to provide the venue (their home), the food and beverages, and enough seating for 10-12 people.
- In cooperation with the host, invite 20-30 people to the event, hoping that at least 10-12 people will be able to accept the invitation. These can be people to whom support letters have been sent, or they can be others on The List who have not yet been approached to become Financial Partners. The invitation can go out by email, mailed invitation card, or phone call. Use whatever invitation method works best for the audience.
- On the evening itself, allow people to arrive and enjoy food and beverages for the first 45-60 minutes. Talk to all the people individually, getting to know them better, and focusing on them and their interests. Be a good listener and ask good questions. Try to remember small details about everyone.
- After 45-60 minutes, gather everyone together and begin the fundraising presentation about the Summer Missions Trip. Communicate your personal vision for the trip. Talk about all the details of the trip including dates, logistics, travel, Team activities, the partner ministry, and trip cost. Talk about practical ways people can give financially and methods of giving. Then invite everyone to make a donation that evening itself. Say something like "I've gathered you all here tonight hoping you'll make a donation tonight. I'm here to take those donations right now." Take questions and end the presentation. Distribute any available handouts and let people know you'll stay as late as needed to talk to them, answer more questions, and facilitate their giving.
- After the presentation, spend as much time with people as possible. Ask people directly if they will donate. Answer their questions. Ask if they need more information. Ask how you can pray for people. Thank them for coming. Thank your host for hosting. Help the host clean up. Thank the Lord for a successful evening.

While sending support letters is still the primary way to raise Summer Missions Trip funding, Small Group Meetings can be a personal way to connect with others and raise some additional funds.

## 8. Consider Social Media Fundraising.

You've seen them in your Facebook Feeds. You've seen celebrities raise millions. You've marveled at how easy it seems to do. Social Media Fundraising. Why not just put up a few posts and watch the money roll in? The truth? It's not actually that easy. Truly effective Digital Fundraising is a science that requires research, analytics, follow up, influence, thousands of followers, a bit of luck, and time. To rely only on Social Media to raise all the money for Summer Missions Trips may not be the best strategy.

However, there is no harm in putting some information on your Social Media feeds to create awareness about the Trip and generate interest. Some people may indeed give directly to an online fundraiser. Post information about the trip in a catchy and compelling way. Add photos or relevant videos. Entice people to click for more information. The greatest opportunity? The personal follow up that can be done with those who interact in some way with the Social posts that are made. If someone likes a Facebook post or drops an encouraging comment, send them a direct message or text them and ask if you can tell them more about the Trip personally over coffee. Use Social Media as a fundraising tool, but not the ultimate fundraising solution.

Please note: Use Social Media and the internet carefully or not at all if the Summer Missions Trip is traveling to a restricted access country. The protection of the partner ministry is of utmost and primary importance.







## 9. Consider A Second Support Letter.

Four to six weeks before trip departure, if there are still a good number of people on The List who have not yet given toward Trip costs and if there is still a hefty Trip cost balance to be covered, consider mailing or emailing a second support letter to two groups of people: 1) anyone of the original 50 who has not yet given; plus 2) others from Categories Three and Four on The List who were not included in the first mailing. Use this second letter to include some important and timely information:

- Give an update on Summer Missions Trip training
- Provide an update on Team Members and Team activities
- Offer an update on how much funding is left to be raised
- Suggest giving levels that will be most helpful to reach the funding goal
- Remind prospective donors of the final deadline for funds to be received

This second letter can be mailed or emailed since time will now be fleeting. Be sure, however, to follow up with phone calls, texts, emails, or personal visits. Remember: **Follow up makes the funds come in.**

## 10. Say Thank You!

Gratitude is a fundamental key to fundraising. Fundraisers cannot ask people for money, receive gifts, and then not thank donors. That is a fatal flaw. **Thanking donors is of the utmost and highest priority.** Here are the best practices concerning thanking generous donors who have partnered financially with Summer Missions Trips.

- Offer a timely thank you. On the day you discover someone has given a gift, thank them. Do not wait until the end. Thanks should be given immediately.
- Write handwritten thank you notes and mail them. Get a supply of professional yet friendly thank you cards and hand-write every note. People will appreciate the extra effort and the handwritten note will stand out from other junk mail they receive every day.
- Include a small bit of personal commentary about the donor in the note. Comment on their kids or their upcoming vacation. Mention their health concerns or a prayer request they had. Show to them you've been listening to them, paying attention to their life, and that you care.
- Use casual, friendly language. No need to use overly formal or flowery language in your note. Write as you speak and keep your note "normal". Let them hear from you, who you are on an everyday level.

Remember that the job of fundraising isn't complete even when the money comes in.

Thanking donors is just as important as making the ask. It is a crucial part of the cycle which donors expect and appreciate.





# WOW! IT'S DONE!

## Funds are raised, the Summer Missions Trip is underway.

The airplane takes off and everyone begins serving the partner ministry with excitement and enthusiasm. God does amazing and unexpected things. He answers prayers, moves in people's lives, and His Kingdom is built stronger for eternity.

Here are just two more things that Summer Missions Trip Team Members can do to help their financial partners stay connected to all that God is doing through the work of the Team.

- Take time to send updates via email from the field. Carve out time to send one or two emails to both your financial support team and your prayer team. These folks are interested and invested in what is happening. They are curious and are waiting to hear what's going on. Report on their investment. Send stories. Let them know how team members are doing. Boast about God's answers to their prayers. Thank them for all that they've done to make the Trip possible.
- After the Team returns home, consider sending one final letter by email or regular mail as a final report and word of thanks. Offer final "results" from the team which can include stories, statistics, outcomes, and anything else that seems important. The letter could also give partners an opportunity to get involved in personally supporting the partner ministry financially, through expert resourcing, or through prayer.

Fundraising might seem like a frightening thing for most people. However, in the end, it can be rewarding, a huge blessing, and an important ministry to Summer Missions Trip Team Members, as well as the financial partners who get involved. It is thrilling to see what God can do when Team Members step out in faith and let Him work through them. Make the ask! See what happens. Certainly, it will be good.



# Choosing the Right Ministry Partner

## **The know-how you need from experts you trust.**

ACS Technologies is the original pioneer of Church Management Software (ChMS). We are firmly dedicated to serving local churches all over North America by providing the best-in-class ministry software and service solutions that help you fulfill Christ's mission for your Church.

## **Tools and support to strengthen churches.**

We build great software, but we don't stop there. We have a "service-first" approach that truly sets us apart. With hundreds of dedicated support and consulting personnel, your staff can reach our team 24/7. We're in your corner to help you with the ministry challenges you face every day.

## **Ideas and solutions powered by integrity.**

Integrity is real for us, and it means consistently being faithful stewards by doing the right thing for church success. We have earned the trust of pastors, church staff, congregants, our employees, and colleagues for over 40 years.

## **A plan to meet your needs and move your ministry.**


We're not just interested in satisfied customers. We see ourselves as your real ministry partner and will work with you to make disciples that will last for an eternity. We're excited to talk about your goals, create a plan together, and set you up with the software, service, and resources you need.

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We know the challenges of switching or implementing new technology and how that can be intimidating. But we also know the unbelievable changes that have happened within churches that have partnered with us for their ministry needs. Let's connect and see how we can assist you in the greatest thing you do - grow God's Kingdom.

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