



Financial Guidelines & Support Raising

Dear Great Commission Christian,

We are excited that you desire to join us on an exciting outreach to share the love of Jesus to people in other parts of the world. We have put this packet together to help you as you prepare the funds necessary for your trip. It includes a sample support raising letter and some tips for support raising for those who will be funding their trip through donations. In addition, here are a few things to know regarding trip finances:

- MaxPoint is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization and donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Donors will be sent a tax receipt.
- Your deposit is non-refundable, as well as any funds needed to cover expenses occurred on your behalf should you be unable to participate.
- Funds donated on your behalf are non-refundable. Should you be unable to participate, those funds will be used for other missions outreaches. Please see the sample support raising letter for verbiage on explaining this to potential donors.
- Checks should be made payable to MaxPoint but sent to you so that you can note who sent them, how much you have raised, and so that you can send thank you notes. Once a week you should forward those checks to MaxPoint, P.O. Box 631, Wylie, TX 75098.
- Be sure that any checks sent to MaxPoint include a separate note with the trip code and the name of the person being supported. It is preferable that the trip participant's name NOT appear on the check itself.
- Credit card donations can be made on your behalf at www.maxpoint.org. Although checks are preferred, we can accept credit cards on the website. During the donation check-out process there is a comments/instructions box. The donor should use this box to indicate your name and the trip code.
- Be aware of financial deadlines. Airline tickets and other items have to be purchased and failing to meet the deadlines could jeopardize your participation. If a deadline is approaching and you are struggling to get the necessary funds, please let your team leader know this. He or she will work with you as best they can.
- While we do our very best to anticipate the trip's cost, the price is subject to airfare increases or other unexpected cost increases. The trip price is based on airfare from the team departure city as noted on the trip information flyer or website. There may be additional cost if you depart or return to a different city.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your trip leader. Thank you again for your participation in this missions outreach. We wish you God's richest blessings as you embark on this life-changing journey.

Yours for the Harvest,

MaxPoint Missions

Sample Support Raising Letter

Dear _____ (Use a mail merge program if possible and make each letter personal),

Like me, you have probably seen pictures on TV of the incredible poverty, disease and desperation in Africa. You also probably know that there are deep spiritual needs in Africa as many people there have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like me, you probably have wondered what, if anything, can be done about all of this. Is there really hope for Africa?

Well, I'm excited to share that there is good news. Today, entire African communities are emerging from poverty and spiritual darkness, and God has given me—and you--the opportunity to be a part of it!

This August (insert campaign month) I will be going with MaxPoint Missions to work in a village in Tanzania, East Africa. We will do medical outreaches, tell people about Jesus, help new Christians grow in their faith, and begin community development. Most of all, we will engage Africans with hope.

This trip is part of a long-term ministry focus to transform impoverished villages by establishing churches and empowering villagers to discover ways to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We will be praying and working toward community transformation that breaks the cycle of poverty and shows people how to use the resources God has already given them. We are taking a holistic approach to help meet village needs.

Will you be a part of my prayer and financial support team? The total trip cost is \$3,800 [insert your trip price] plus expenses for shots and supplies. I'm asking for friends like you to join in helping me raise the funds necessary for this outreach. Although the trip is still a little ways off, I have to get the funds in right away so that airfare and other items can be purchased in time.

If you are able to financially support me in this mission, please make your check payable to MaxPoint and return it to me in the enclosed envelope. You can also give online by going to www.maxpoint.org then click on the donations tab and follow the instructions for giving to a mission trip. MaxPoint will send you a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution. For some reason if I am unable to participate in the trip, your gift will be used to support MaxPoint's Africa missions program.

Thank you in advance for joining with me in this effort to transform an African village through your prayers and support. If you have any additional questions about the trip, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Money for Your Mission Trip By Frank Banfill

You leave the information meeting excited. In fact, you may have never been as excited about anything in your life as you are about this. It is an opportunity to touch lives and make a difference in the world through a mission trip. You can picture yourself there—serving, helping, sharing. With the volunteer application form in one hand and the trip brochure in the other, you sit down to read through the materials. Everything is great except for one part of the brochure—the part with the dollar sign in it.

“How can I ever come up with that much money,” you ask yourself. They talked about fund raising in your meeting, and you know other people who have done this, but still—it’s a lot of money! Where do you start?

First, take a deep breath and then pray! The saying, “Where God guides, God provides,” has proven true countless times over. Second, come up with a fund raising plan. God does provide, but He also expects us to demonstrate our commitment. Consider creating a plan with five parts: the support letter, friend involvement, fund raisers, social media and personal sacrifices.

For many mission trip volunteers, the first—and sometimes only—tool they use to raise funds is the support letter. This is a letter sent to family and friends outlining the mission you are undertaking and inviting them to consider supporting you. In the day of electronic everything, many people have abandoned the hard-copy support letter for email versions. After all, you can put together an email campaign quickly and you save all that money on postage. My suggestion, however, is to stick to snail mail.

There are several reasons why “old fashioned” just might be better. First, people are so inundated with email today that your message can easily be lost or ignored. Second, there is something special about getting a personal letter in the mail. It is a rarity these days! Also, people typically don’t make the decision to give support the moment they hear about the need. They ponder it, talk about it with their spouse, etc. Your hard copy letter is a physical reminder that they need to make a decision. Chances are it will lie around their house for a couple days before action is taken, but it will be visible. Not so if it’s an email sitting in their in-box. They may never see it again or think to come back to it.

So what makes for an effective support letter? Three things: brevity, clarity and a response mechanism. Brevity—keep the letter to one page. People have short attention spans plus keeping it to one page forces you to be a better writer. Clarity—tell why you decided to go on this trip and exactly what you will be doing. Response—ask the person for their support and give them a means to send it by providing a return envelope. If they can give online, make sure that information is include as well.

What about people for whom you only have an email address? Go ahead and put your support letter verbiage in an email. Just make sure it includes the elements mentioned above. Since you can’t email a physical envelope, the message should include a link where they can give instantly or where they can print out mailing instructions (instant is best!). Also, email should be even shorter than a traditional letter. You can include a link in it to more information if necessary.

The second part of your funding strategy should include your friends. Yes, you want to talk to them about supporting you, but also ask some of them to be part of your fund raising team. Brainstorm funding ideas together. Encourage them to help you find the funds. Sometimes this means they help with fundraisers (see the next point) or they ask people they know to help you. Sometimes this means introducing you to people they feel would be excited about sharing in your trip. Also, your friends may be willing to donate airline miles or materials that could offset some of the trip’s cost.

Third, consider a variety of fund raisers. Many restaurants, for example, will donate a portion of their sales for a day if you bring in extra traffic. The same may be true for other types of businesses. Another fund raiser is to

offer services, either for a fee or a donation. These may be services that you do, or that a friend would do for you. Everything from babysitting to car washes to a variety of professional services. Garage sales are another great fund raiser.

One final fund raiser to consider is selling items from the country that you will visit. I recently saw this announcement on the social media site Twitter: “Selling bracelets for \$2. Made in the Philippines! \$1 goes to a girl’s mission trip. \$1 goes to the Philippines! Get one!”

Fourth, use your blog, Facebook and other social media outlets to let people know about your trip, but do it with tact. I’ve seen a lot of posts where people almost “demand” donations. Big turn off! I saw one post that said, “I hadn’t heard from this guy since high school and now he’s hitting me up on Facebook to fund his mission trip.” The reality is that people who don’t have a clue who you are aren’t likely to give, and neither are those who do know you but haven’t heard from you in years. Do use social media to inform, and do provide links for people to get more information and donate. Just don’t be pushy about it!

Finally, consider what personal sacrifices you will make to fund your trip. Someone summed this up well with the following statement on Twitter: “All these people asking money for mission trips. I wonder how many of them are giving any of their own money!” Asking others to sacrifice for you is fine, as long as you have done some sacrificing yourself.

So, if you are excited about serving abroad but scared that you can’t possibly come up with the money, pray about it and create a plan. Don’t let fear keep you from doing what you feel led to do. Don’t say “no way” without giving it a shot! Write a great support letter. Mobilize your friends. Utilize fund raisers. Spread the word through social media. Make sacrifices. You can raise the money—and you will probably grow a lot in the process!

Frank Banfill is president of MaxPoint (www.maxpoint.org).