

Fundraising or Team-building?

Johanna's new role in Wycliffe

I now have a new role in Wycliffe as a **Partnership Development consultant**. This means helping colleagues find the supporters they need to carry out their God-given assignment.

*Someone asked me how I raise funds to help fellow Wycliffe members. Actually, I don't **raise funds** for other Wycliffe members. I help them find ways to **build their own team** of supporters.*

Fundraising is finding money for a good cause. The good cause, in many cases, is to provide people with something they need. In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus encouraged us to share our possessions. And in Corinthians Chs. 8 and 9 Paul looks for the willingness of the church to share with needy Christians, "so there may be *equality [of provision]*" (2 Cor 8:13-14).

But I see this as somewhat different from financing those who work full-time for the extension of God's Kingdom. Financing full-time Christian workers is a way for people to be more directly involved in the extension of His kingdom worldwide. Being part of a missionary or Christian worker's support team leads to *equality of involvement* in the Greatest Commission of all time—and *equality of joy* in serving Him! I prefer to describe what I do as **team-building**.



In the New Testament we see the ministry of Jesus funded by... *women*, out of their own means (Luke 8:1-3). Jesus had the humility to accept being supported by women. He had asked the disciples to leave their fishing nets behind. He could easily have provided in miraculous ways. On some occasions He did: feeding large crowds, or paying taxes on one occasion by getting a gold coin from a fish! But that was not His normal pattern. He involved women in His ministry and relied on them for his daily needs. In this way the women became the enablers, and partners, of the work He and his disciples did. How much it must have meant to them to play such a crucial role in the preaching of the Kingdom!

A similar pattern was later followed by Paul, as we can read in his letters: he was supported by individuals and churches. In this way a **partnership** was established. The letter to the Philippians shows a loving giving-receiving relationship, even though Paul had spent little time with them. He says: "Not that I am looking for the gift, but I am looking to what may be credited to your account". "The gifts you sent ... are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (Phil. 4: 17, 18). He knew that their giving would result in great blessing for them. They would know the eternal joy of having been co-workers in His Kingdom through what they gave, serving God with "pleasing sacrifices".

When I come alongside colleagues whose support is insufficient, we work on this basis. I help them see that we are not beggars asking for money (though it can sometimes feel that way!); on the contrary, we are inviting others to share our joy in serving God. I encourage colleagues to look at all the contacts they have, in faith, believing that He has already picked out those who will be their "partners in the gospel". Their enablers. *The true richness is in the **relationship** of serving God together.* The money that flows out of it is just an expression of the partner's involvement, though it is also a blessing to both the giver and the receiver, and a "pleasing sacrifice to God". Sometimes God leads us to invite people directly. At other times He lays it on the heart of individuals to support without being asked. It is all about inviting people to move, if that's what God wants, from knowing a little about what we do, to becoming partners in giving, befriending, and praying. By so doing they not only enable us, but play a vital role themselves in extending God's Kingdom.

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So, friends, we invite you to share our joy every time a New Testament or Bible is ready for publication; every time I help colleagues find new supporters. Our ministry flows out of your giving. And so does our thanksgiving to Him when we are provided for! In so many ways!!

Giving is such a joy. I would like to see all of us, including us full-time Christian workers, receiving enough to be generous givers. And so being fully part of the giving and receiving cycle (of money and other blessings!) which I believe He intends for us.

Let me finish by pointing out that it is to **givers** that Paul says, "And my God will meet all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus"! (Phil. 4:19.)