

Church Support: Christian Nonprofits Share Their Joys and Frustrations

By Mike Buwalda

Did you ever wonder how successful other Christian organizations are in raising financial support from churches?

Below is a compilation of responses I received from a recent survey of numerous ministries and Christian schools of every shape and size. Responders shared their joys and frustrations with building support relationships with churches. Although six out of 10 ministries expressed frustration in this area, 43% said they were happy with their support from churches. Six major themes emerged among the responses:

1. Visibility. Establish multiple contacts with current and future supporting churches (e.g., traveling music teams, preaching, Sunday School classes, attending mission conferences).

2. Pastor contact. Have regular, face-to-face meetings with pastors (not support staff) from supporting churches.

3. Persistence. Hang in there. It's hard work getting on a church's list, but once you're on the list, churches tend to keep you on.

4. Denomination. A number of organizations that are happy with their church support share a denominational connection and have some level of loyalty with an established network of churches.

5. Individuals. There is a growing trend among churches to support individuals rather than organizations. Consider how a person from your organization can develop a one-to-one relationship with supporting churches.

6. Partnerships. Approach churches and let them know that you want to serve their need and become an integral part of their ministry, beyond the dollars. Involve individuals from churches in your ministry.

Mike Buwalda is the president of Money for Ministry (www.MoneyforMinistry.com) and wrote this article in cooperation with the Christian Stewardship Association (now Christian Leadership Alliance www.ChristianLeadershipAlliance.com)