

The Likelihood of Risk - Reduction in Donations

This is a subject very close to the heart of most mission workers!

Income may decrease for several reasons. Some of these reasons are obvious, but some are hidden from sight and may be overlooked in the rush to get on with the things in hand. Here are some possible reasons:

- A shaky beginning. Healthy beginnings are important because a reduction in income from a minimal baseline amount can be quite upsetting and hard to deal with, and may jeopardise future service. An unhealthy start may be because your support base isn't broad enough, or the home church was not in favour of your going and therefore their full-hearted support isn't present.
- Lack of attention to budgeting. Costs are overlooked or ignored and yet they are bound to occur. Some workers find it hard to anticipate costs. We understand that you cannot precisely budget for your freewill support of individuals, churches or projects you are involved with. Expenses of this kind are inevitable, setting aside maybe a percentage of your pledged income in advance is sensible. You could even fix a definite annual amount for this purpose, and divide it by twelve to give your anticipated monthly outgoing.
- Financial need may not be communicated because of a doctrinal position, or because mentioning it is embarrassing or awkward. This can lead to a steady erosion of funding or a complete disaster.
- A weakened currency can sometimes have a negative effect on income. The world economic situations is not something we can anticipate; on the other hand sometimes these rates fluctuate in your favour!
- The number of faithful, regular supporters may dwindle due to death, illness, loss of work or retirement.
- Changes may arise in your sending church; for example, a split occurs or a new leader takes charge.
- Donor fatigue is a phrase used in regard to income reduction. It can have an adverse effect on donor appetite, even in a Christian context.

Any one of the above factors should be considered as possible reasons for current or potential donor reductions.

Where can we find hope and fulfilment?

Firstly, let us assure ourselves of the Lord's promise that He will supply all our needs. Is it possible for the Lord fail or desert us? Surely not. But it is right to prepare for the likelihood of a reduction and find ways to counter it. Have we done enough to bring the church and individuals to understand and willingly support our cause and thereby feel part of our service? This can be quite a challenge, but it is very important. An independent, individualistic stance may be admired but is not always respected, and definitely doesn't encourage co-workers to donate.

The value of honest and balanced communication regarding finance cannot be overestimated. For example. Do we think of telling our supporters that their support helps to covers our personal and ministry needs? Hopefully these thoughts will help you score more realistically and ease the pain!