

## **SUPPORTING MISSIONARIES / EVANGELISTS**

### **Introduction:**

“Missionary” is an *accommodated* word referring to someone sent on a “mission” of carrying the Gospel to those in need. (The closest Scriptural equivalent is “apostle,” which means, “one sent on a mission.”).

No one questions the importance of preaching and teaching the Gospel to those in need. It seems further evident that those spending their full time in doing this (“missionaries” or evangelists) would also require some source of income for meeting their personal physical needs. This brings us to the question of how “missionaries” or evangelists are to have these needs provided while engaged in this important work.

It seems the choice would have to be one of the following: 1) They should obtain a living by the pursuit of regular secular employment, with preaching, teaching and church planting and nurturing to be done on the side, as time and energy allowed. Or, 2) They should receive financial support from others while engaged in preaching, teaching and church planting and nurturing. Or, 3) They should receive their support from a combination of the two preceding means.

The New Testament indicates that it is proper and desirable for those engaged in the work of an evangelist (“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, *do the work of an evangelist*, fulfill your ministry.” II Tim. 4:5), or that of a “missionary” on a full time basis to receive their income from others while doing their work. Let us look at the principles which teach this.

### **I. THE PRINCIPLE IS REASONABLE**

\* People in secular pursuits were entitled to benefit materially from their efforts...I Cor. 9:3-14

### **II. THE PRINCIPLE IS FAIR**

\* People are deserving of material help for providing spiritual service...I Tim. 5:17-18

### **III. THE PRINCIPLE WAS PRACTICED IN NT TIMES**

\* Paul received help repeatedly from churches while traveling and ministering..Phil. 4:14-16; II Cor. 11:7-9

### **IV. THE PRINCIPLE WAS ENCOURAGED IN NT TIMES**

\* John encourages his friend Gaius to “send on their way” (furnish with food/lodging/travel expenses) certain brothers who were engaged in a ministry...III John 5-8

\* Timothy was to be “sent on his way” by the Corinthian church...I Cor. 16:10-11

\* Paul hoped that he could be “sent on his way” by the Corinthian church...II Cor. 1:15-16

## **V. THE PRINCIPLE WAS REQUIRED IN NT TIMES**

\* The Galatian churches were informed that this was their responsibility...Gal. 6:6

### **Conclusion:**

\* Some practical problems involved with the practice of this principle:

- Some people will take advantage of those providing their financial support by not doing the work.
- Those receiving financial help are open to being criticized as undeserving beggars.
- Those receiving such financial help, even though they may be in need, are not expected to petition for increases or show undue satisfaction with the money received because of being viewed as mercenary.
- There is the danger of some of those involved in providing the finances feeling they have a major say in what work should be done or how it should be done.
- There is the temptation on the part of some who provide the support to dictate how the money should be spent.
- A somewhat double standard exists: Evangelists working with an established church in the U.S. are normally provided with a set monthly income; Foreign or domestic “missionaries,” on the other hand, must travel to supporting churches soliciting funds.
- Some who provide the support may be tempted to try to control the “missionary’s” or evangelist’s ministry by withholding their financial support.