

Fundraising

Welcome to Step Four of our Faith Reliance series.

Having a strategy for local fundraising is central to overcoming dependency on foreign funding. We can talk about joining together in the Great Co-Mission of God, about being students of generosity and even about being accountable in ministry, but until we recognise that local funding must eventually replace foreign funding, the dependency issue will not actually go away.

Hello, my name is Barbara Shantz. (Global Development Liaison) Welcome to this fourth and final video in our series, "Faith Reliance." In this fourth video on Fundraising, we're going to implement the three concepts we've learned in our previous videos.

Foreign funding and any way of getting it, must be regarded as a temporary or infrequent solution to Great Commission ministry. Local funding is what keeps local ministries sustainable into the future. This difficult fact needs much prayer and careful, cultural study. But when put together with our previous three steps in this Faith Reliance series, local fundraising can be one of the most freeing aspects of ministry.

Countries with no previous tradition of local fundraising are actually at a great advantage. Instead of bringing along the unfortunate history of guilt or manipulation that often comes with thoughts of the word "fundraising," new traditions can be started to model biblical fundraising to the rest of the world.

Even in countries where traditional fundraising already does take place, our prayer and goal in this Faith Reliance step is to relate the concepts of biblical fundraising and the small bit of "science" that we know to be true about humans and their giving.

I love the little book by Henri Nouwen about spiritual fundraising. In it is found this statement: "We must not let ourselves be tricked into thinking that fund-raising is only a secular activity. As a form of ministry, fund-raising is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry."

Luke 8:1-3 tells us that those who accompanied the apostles provided for them out of their means.

"Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven

demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means."

Some people are surprised that we can look to Jesus' ministry on earth for examples on how to talk about raising resources. We must lose the idea that the Gospel is free. The Gospel needs to be "given freely," but taking the Gospel message to others is actually, particularly in media, quite expensive. And it's very important to note that Jesus allowed others to provide for ministry and personal needs.

As we saw earlier in the series, Jesus did not prevent the widow of Mark 12 from putting two copper coins, all that she had, into the offering box as her contribution to God's purposes. And as we see from this portion of Scripture in Luke 8, Jesus allowed others to contribute to the needs of the ministry. It seems that He did not presume that all of their living allowances would come from the mouths of fish, as in Matthew 17!

Being content with what is provided is Paul's focus as he talks about receiving funding in Philippians 4:

"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

During Jesus' ministry alongside the disciples, we know of miracles of provision but seem to overlook the situations which precipitated them. There were definitely times when the disciples did not have sufficient resources for their ministry. Let's look at specific examples in order to underline some basic concepts about receiving funds.

First of all, Jesus seems to ask what is available and then bless that for use in ministry. In feeding five thousand, Jesus urged faith in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes already at hand. In supplying the two-drachma tax, Jesus sent Peter by way of his occupation as a fisherman to collect the funds from the mouth of a fish.

Secondly, the resources were not just miraculously handed over. There was always an activity associated with receiving the resources. The disciples had to find some food and calm the people down

to sit in groups before the miraculous blessing and supply of food was given to the multitude. Peter had to go and fish to get the tax money. Paul had to thank his followers and in this way remind them that he would still need their help.

Thirdly, in Luke 8 and in Philippians 4, it seems to be assumed that those who had benefit from previous ministry joined in to fund ministry to others. This is the concept of multiplication, of journeying together on the bicycle of the Great Commission in the power of the Holy Spirit, that remains the basis of our Faith Reliance theory.

Let's briefly review the previous three steps covered in this series:

1. As believers, we are all on God's Great "Co-Mission." We invite others to participate in taking the Gospel message, in word and deed, to communities and nations around the world.
2. God is the owner of everything and the giver of all that we have. It is simply in response to that love that we want to generously give of ourselves to provide for others and His Kingdom mission.
3. We will prove ourselves trustworthy. We will steward whatever we are given and, furthermore, give an accounting of the resources entrusted to us so that the name of God is not compromised.

Let us clearly note here that nowhere in Scripture do we see a permanent line of resources from a wealthy ministry to a poor ministry. This phenomenon that is commonly and currently referred to as "unhealthy dependence" on foreign funding in ministry does not seem to be a biblical model. Furthermore, if a ministry's disciples cannot join together with other believers around the world in working toward the Great Commission, it would seem that they have not been truly disciplined. Biblical teaching regarding the use of money tells us that God gives us resources not for our own good but for the advancement of the Kingdom.

Luke 12 is clear in the expectations of a disciple when it says, "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning" and "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required." We need to be ready for the call of God on our lives and ready to give what He has already given us.

In biblical fundraising, the ministry donation is all about journeying together to advance the goals and purposes of the Great Commission. A potential donor should not fear that the Christian fundraiser is trying to "trick" them into giving outside of the Lord's leading.

As ministries, therefore, we need to measure the activities that fundraisers do as much as, or maybe even more than the outcome, since the outcome is actually out of our hands.

The following universal and fundamental actions can be measured:

1. Relationships with those who might fund a ministry need to be sought. You CAN measure the number of people you have contacted to “plant the seed” of information by telling them about the ministry to which God has called your organisation. Listening is a major quality of any fundraiser. Messages are constantly being passed in a cultural way to those who will listen and act on the Holy Spirit’s prompting.
2. Personal prayer and thanking ministry to those who are called to join your organisation in giving towards its Great Commission principles is another thing that can be measured. How well do you know those who give to your organisation? What strategy do you have to pray for them and thank them for their part in the ministry? Are you treating those who give to your ministry as people who have needs for prayer? Or do you treat them like a bank machine, valued only for what you can get out of them? Those who give are more important than their donations. This is part of “watering” the seed.
3. Inform those who give about what God is doing in the ministry. Measuring how many times helpful information was communicated in a meaningful manner is important work. Remember to keep the big picture in front of co-workers and donors alike. Even when raising funds for particular people and projects, it should all connect with our journey together as believers. When informed, all can praise God for what is happening in His Great “Co-Mission.”
4. Other ministries’ input to your ministry is also important. If your ministry is not involved in an area to which a donor feels they would like to give, help them out. Yes, I’m saying send them to another Kingdom ministry if you need to do so. It will garner trust in your work, and you can be assured that they *and our Lord* – will bless you for giving informed choices.
5. Use time wisely. It’s tempting to focus on looking only for big gifts. Certainly large donations are helpful, particularly for large projects. But experience has shown that the time they take in proposals and reports mean that only about 25 percent of your time and ministry costs should be spent in the large donation area. Those dependable monthly, quarterly or annual donations allow ministries to set predictable strategies for the future. In addition, my experience is that, generally speaking, the smaller the donation, the more prayer is given for the ministry. Do we value prayer? Take the effort to measure the time you take on communicating the ministry’s vision to various levels of donors to give yourself a balanced funding mix. As this diagram indicates, spend about half your time with those who give regularly.

6. Lastly, a fundraiser can only be as good as the materials supplied for their work. Today's world demands quality in order to reflect a quality organisation. Remember that it costs a lot of money to find new donors – much more than looking after those who already give to your Great Commission ministry. New donors, however, are always needed, so make sure that you are conveying the image of a qualified organisation. Measure the quality of your materials used in communication.

Of course, there are always more tips and ideas to talk about in this fascinating area of giving and receiving funds. As we journey to the Kingdom together, let's embrace God's mission of affecting our generation for Him. We have the technology. We have the mobility. We have the knowledge. There are unlimited resources available from God's supply. Let's work together to get our generation's Great Commission job done.

On our Faith Reliance Web page, www.twr.org/faith-reliance, you can see a list of books, videos and articles pertinent to this fourth step we've taken together regarding Faith Reliance in ministry. Share your own tips and ideas to the Faith Reliance community.

Any comments, questions or critiques are welcome at faith-reliance@twr.org

I look forward to seeing you there!