

Mission to North America – Fund Raising 101 – Fred Marsh

Introduction: Ministry leadership, whether at the church, presbytery or General Assembly level, is mainly about **Mission, Men and Money**. That's putting it in the easiest terms to remember; actually, here's our real job description:

1. Defining the **mission**, goals and strategy for Kingdom advancement;
2. Finding, developing and equipping the **men and women** who will do the work;
3. Developing the **prayer, funding and other resources** to do the work.

Let's address the one that is most intimidating – fund raising. It's not a necessary evil, but an essential part of leadership; **as you develop support, you are enlisting a team of prayer and other resource providers for your ministry**. *Are you seeing all of the funding that is necessary for the projects you lead or are associated with?* If so, give the Lord thanks – you are in rare company! **If not, use page 3 of this presentation as a simple checklist and guide for your fund raising. If you follow the steps here carefully, you will see success, by God's grace.** Successful funding rarely happens if any of these steps are omitted. The MNA fund raising manual fills out the details. **MNA will supply a copy of this manual to anyone who requests it.**

Steps to effective Fund Raising (Note that these don't necessarily happen in chronological order)

Step 1. Define your mission, goals and strategy. Words on paper commit us to a course of action; putting it in writing means we have to define and refine. Your project needs to have a detailed plan, including the steps you expect to accomplish and on what timetable. Define clearly the resources needed to make it happen. If you are leading a ministry or project with a number of phases or sub-projects, each must be fully defined in writing.

Step 2. Prepare a written proposal for fund raising purposes. This is different from the document of Step 1. It is a much shorter summary that presents the mission, the man and the money in a way that a prospective donor will understand. For church planters, we recommend 3-4 pages, 8.5 x 11. This format works very well for most fund raising projects. **Throughout history, all great advances are led and confirmed by written documents. In this electronic age, we generate more documents than ever. People need something in their hands to define the project and remind them of how they can be involved.** The document must present the financial goal clearly and define the levels of giving, number of donors and duration of support necessary for the project to succeed.

Step 3. Identify prospective donors. Make a very specific list of individuals and churches whom you believe will consider a commitment to your project – those who identify with your mission, have the ability to give, and have the spirit of liberality. If your list includes everyone you know, then you are considering only a one-time project. If

you are responsible for seeking funding for multiple projects, you will have a separate list for each project. For major gifts, the prospect list is relatively short. For smaller gifts, the prospect list should be quite long. ***To increase your list, work with fellow presbyters, board members, any other key leaders who can connect you with others.***

Step 4. Make estimates of what each of your prospective donors might be able to give. Do you have more prospects than you need in order to meet the goal? If not, your task is to develop new relationships with potential donors until you have sufficient prospects – *with whom you have a personal relationship* – to meet the goal. **Not everyone will give, so the total of your prospective gifts must exceed your funding goal.**

Step 5. Define a structured process for approaching and following up donors. Your follow-up must be systematic and disciplined to reach your goal. Written records in a data base are essential. Keep careful track of each contact and create alerts to remind you of when it is time to take the next step with the donor. ***Church support requires affirmation from the missions chair, missions committee, key lay leader(s), pastor, and sometimes others; therefore it is an extended process often requiring many contacts.***

Step 6. Personalize your approach to each donor. Donors who have the potential to give \$5000 or more total giving to a project should always be met face to face. Often, it is effective to take a one-to-one approach for potential gifts as low as \$2500. In the \$500 to \$2500 potential giving range, group gatherings such as coffees or dinners can be effective. Do not use such a group gathering for donors higher than this level; either they will not participate at all, or they will give at a lower level than they will if approached individually. Below \$2500, decide which donors you will mail to and follow up with a phone call; time your mailings so that you can actually make the calls in a timely manner. There will be a certain number to whom you mail with no phone call.

Step 7. Make it easy to respond. Include pledge cards, envelopes and other response devices that make it easy to know where to send the check or pledge card. **Use MNA's precise wording on the pledge card; do not change it. Ask for personal involvement in the project when possible. Ask for prayer along with giving, and always ask people to pray, even if they cannot afford to give.**

Step 8. Be faithful in follow-up with your donors and prayer support people. Send them a newsletter or update letter at least quarterly. ***Love them. Attend to them. They are using their calling and giftedness just as much as those who labor at the front lines.*** Be faithful to them, as they have been faithful to you.

Conclusion: Is your current ministry fully funded? If not, look at the steps above and make note of how many you are carrying out reasonably well. Most projects that seem to represent a real calling from the Lord, yet are under-funded, are omitting one or more of the above steps. ***Take these steps boldly and in faith – and may God bless as you seek the sources for the ministry to which He has called you – for His praise!***

Mission to North America – Fund Raising 101 Checklist
Project:_____

Step 1. Define the mission, goals and strategy.

Target Date:_____

Date Completed:_____

Step 2. Prepare a written proposal for fund raising purposes.

Target Date:_____

Date Completed:_____

Step 3. Identify prospective donors. Work through board members and other key leaders.

Target Date:_____

Date Completed:_____

Step 4. Make estimates of what each of your prospective donors might give. If your prospective gifts do not significantly exceed your goal, keep developing more prospects.

Target Date:_____

Date Completed:_____

Step 5. Define a structured process for approaching and following up donors.

Target Date:_____

Date Completed:_____

Step 6. Personalize your approach to each donor.

Step 7. Make it easy to respond. If seeking pledges, use the MNA pledge card format.

Step 8. Communicate, communicate, communicate! Faithfully follow up with your donors and prayer supporters. Send regular newsletters. Keep your web site up to date.