

# Theology of Fundraising

## Global Missions Conference

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## I. Introduction

- A. Acknowledgement – Much of my material comes from the book People Raising by William P. Dillon
- B. Quote – D.L. Moody (Evangelist and Christian fundraiser) – “Blessed are the money raisers, for in heaven they shall stand next to the martyrs.”
- C. Three models of funding for missions
  - 1. George Mueller (Founder and director of orphans homes in England)
    - a. Philosophy – God will provide
    - b. Quote – “It is not enough to obtain means for the work of God, but that these means should be obtained in God’s way. To ask unbelievers for means is not God’s way. To press even believers to give is not God’s way; but the duty and privilege of being allowed to contribute to the work of God should be pointed out, and this should be followed up with earnest prayer, believing prayer, and will result in the desired end.”
    - c. Strategy – Prayer alone, with minimal information and no solicitation
    - d. Results – God provided
  - 2. Hudson Taylor (Founder of the China Inland Mission – himself a missionary to China and recruiter of missionaries to China)
    - a. Philosophy – God will provide
    - b. Quote – “The apostolic plan was not to raise ways and means but to go and do the work, trusting His promise who said, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.’”
    - c. Strategy - Prayer, full information and no solicitation
    - d. Results – God provided
  - 3. D.L. Moody (Evangelist and founder of the Moody Bible Institute and the Moody Church in Chicago)
    - a. Philosophy – God will provide
    - b. Quotes – “I show my faith when I go to men and state to them the needs of the Lord’s work and ask them to give to it.” AND Lyman Abbott (Moody’s friend) – “All money belongs to the Lord, and it can be had for the Lord’s work, if one goes about in the right way to get it.”
    - c. Strategy – Prayer, full information and full solicitation
    - d. Results – God provided
- D. Four Essential Beliefs for Missions Fundraisers
  - 1. God’s wills that “all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.” - 1 Timothy 2:4
  - 2. God is capable of providing all the funding necessary – Psalms 50:9-16
  - 3. God has promised to provide for the needs of those who seek His Kingdom first in their lives. – Matthew 6:33
  - 4. God has commanded that “those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” – 1 Corinthians 9:14

## II. A closer examination of these four essential beliefs

- A. It is God's will that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.
1. This speaks to motivation for missions fundraising.
  2. Fundraising for missions is not a selfish enterprise.
  3. Fundraising for missions is done in God's name, in obedience to His will.
  4. Because fundraising for missions is done in God's name, the way in which it is done has a direct reflection on God. Therefore, it should be done ethically, honorably and with diligence.
- B. God is capable of providing all the funding necessary. – Psalms 50:9-16
1. Finances in God's Kingdom are not a zero sum game. In other words, we do not have a finite number of dollars that, if we increase spending in one area of Kingdom work, we must necessarily lower spending in another.
  2. Psalms 50:9, 10, 12, 15 – "I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."
  3. Luke 18:27 – "What is impossible with men is possible with God."
  4. Ephesians 3:20 – "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us . . ."
  5. John 14:12-14 – "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."
  6. Matthew 7:7-8 – "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."
  7. James 4:2-3 – "You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."
  8. Malachi 3:9-10 – "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."
  9. Conclusions:
    - a. God has no lack of resources.
    - b. God, as His power works within us, can do what is impossible for man, and it will likely be far more than we can ask or imagine.
    - c. God has promised to do great things through us. Our role is to ask Him to act.
    - d. When we do not have, it is often because we do not ask. And when we do ask, we often ask for selfish, rather than for godly motives.
    - e. One reason why there is a shortage of funding for missions may be that we are robbing God in our giving. We have let our teaching against mandatory tithing become an excuse to give little or nothing.
  10. Story of the feeding of the 5,000 – Matthew 14 and Mark 6
    - a. In both Jesus said to the disciples – "You give them something to eat."
    - b. Wasn't the lesson that When you act in the authority of my name, in obedience to my will, you can do amazing things?
    - c. Immediately afterwards, in both gospels, the disciples cross the lake alone at night, and a storm blows up.
    - d. Jesus comes walking across the lake and they think he is a ghost.
    - e. In Mark 6: 51 it says, "The he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened."
    - f. What had they not understood? Could it be that they had not understood that with the power of God acting in and through them they could handle any situation thrown at them.
      - i. Feed 5,000 with only five loaves and two fish – impossible. But if you offer God the little that you have, He can take it and do amazing things with it.

- ii. Confronted by a life-threatening storm and you want to calm things down – impossible. But if you offer God the little bit of faith you have, He can do amazing things with it.
    - In Matthew’s account, is it possible that Peter, for a few moments, did understand the lesson of the loaves – that if you offer the little bit of faith you have to Jesus, you can do miraculous things – like walk on the water?
    - What might God do for our missions funding if we offered Him the inadequate little bit that we have, coupled with faith in Him, to take it, multiply it and make it enough?
- C. The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.
1. This has always been God’s pattern, beginning with the OT.
    - a. The priests and the Levites – Numbers 8:14 and 18:20-24
      - i. Vs. 14 – “the Levites will be mine”
      - ii. In an agricultural society how did someone survive? Land
      - iii. Vs. 20 – “I am your share and your inheritance”
      - iv. Vs. 24 – “I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the Lord.”
    - b. With the prophets – Elijah – 1 Kings 17:1-16
      - i. A lot of people will say that Elijah was a typical missionary fundraiser, taking food out of the mouths of starving widows and their children!
      - ii. But notice verse nine. It is the key verse to understand the passage. – “I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.”
      - iii. The widow had probably been looking over her shoulder for days dreading the arrival of the prophet.
      - iv. When given the opportunity, she responded in an unfaithful manner.
      - v. Elijah could have backed off. This must be the wrong town. Obviously I have the wrong woman.
      - vi. Instead, understanding God’s will to care for his needs through his faithful people, Elijah challenged her to faithfulness.
      - vii. The result is that the woman and her son were blessed.
      - viii. We don’t know what would have happened to them if she had refused to respond to the challenge in faith. She and her son might have starved.
      - ix. LESSON FOR MISSIONARY FUNDRAISERS – When you challenge Christians to give, you are calling them to faithfulness to God’s plan. And they will be blessed if they respond in faith.
  2. It continues to be God’s pattern in the New Testament
    - a. How did Jesus pay his bills?
 

Luke 8:1-3 – The women helped to support them out of their own means.
    - b. Matthew 10:5-15 – When Jesus sent out the 12
      - i. Vs. 9 – Do not take money with you – “for the worker is worth his keep.”
      - ii. Vs. 6 - Notice to whom they were sent – “the lost sheep of Israel.”
      - iii. Jesus relied on faithful people in Israel to follow God’s pattern and care for those who came to them in God’s name.
      - iv. Vss. 14-15 – “If anyone does not welcome you or listen to your words . . . it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”
      - v. I had always placed more emphasis on the phrase “listen to your words.”
      - vi. But the first half is just as important.
      - vii. I’m not sure missionary fundraisers can afford to preach this, but it is the truth.
    - c. The apostolic pattern
      - i. Galatians 6:6 – “Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.”
      - ii. 1 Corinthians 9:3-6 – “This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don’t we have the right to food and drink? Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s

brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?"

- D. God has promised to provide for the needs of those who preach the gospel.
  - 1. This is one of the biggest challenges of the missionary fundraiser.
  - 2. It is the wrong attitude to say "If God provides the funds I will go."
  - 3. The right attitude is to say "I believe God has called me to go and I will go, trusting that He will provide the funds."
  - 4. If the missionary can't trust God in this small matter, he will be unable to trust Him in greater and more important matters.
  - 5. God's provision, except in special circumstances, will not be just "bread and water" level subsistence support. - 1 Timothy 6:17 - "God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."
  - 6. Missionaries should put their hope, not in wealth, but in God.
    - a. We need more faith-supported missionaries because we need more missionaries with more faith.
    - b. It may well be that the small results we see in too many of our missions efforts are a result of the small faith that is fostered by our missions fundraising methods.

### **III. Conclusion – Growth of missions at Highland**

- A. 10 years ago missions was at a low point at Highland
  - 1. The church of approximately 2,000 members supported only one full time missionary.
  - 2. The missions budget was about \$50,000 per year.
  - 3. One missionary family had recently been brought home from the field because a poll of Highland members had revealed a lack of interest in missions at Highland.
  - 4. Giving to the annual Missions Special Contribution was about \$20,000.
- B. About 15 members of an adult class, mostly couples, went on a short-term trip to Mexico.
- C. The next year the size of the group doubled.
- D. After a third adult-only trip to Mexico, one of the couples said they would not go on another trip unless they could take their children.
- E. In 2000 10 families, 41 Highland members, went on a short-term trip to Brazil.
- F. In 2002 116 Highland members, representing approximately 35 Highland families, went on a short-term trip to Brazil.
- G. This year, 450 Highland members went on short-term trips to more than a dozen sites around the world. These groups raised or gave themselves \$335,000 for these trips.
- H. Today Highland:
  - 1. Supports four full time missionaries
  - 2. Has a missions budget of \$135,000
  - 3. Gave \$190,000 to the annual Missions Special Contribution this year.
- I. What has been the secret?
  - 1. Members of the congregation began to take seriously the idea that God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.
  - 2. The church began to trust God that He had the resources necessary to fund a greatly expanded missions program.
  - 3. Members of the congregation began to test God's promise that if they would seek His Kingdom in first place, He would provide for their needs.
  - 4. The congregation took seriously God's command to provide for the material needs of those who preach the Gospel.

- J. God is searching for churches who will take Him at His word, who will offer the little that they have in faith, and trust Him to multiply it far beyond what they can ask or imagine.

Handout

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### Three Models for Missions Funding

1. George Mueller
  - Belief – God will provide
  - Strategy – Prayer alone, with minimal information and no solicitation
  - Results – God provided
2. Hudson Taylor
  - Belief – God will provide
  - Strategy – Prayer, full information and no solicitation
  - Results – God provided
3. Dwight L. Moody
  - Belief – God will provide
  - Strategy – Prayer, full information and full solicitation
  - Results – God provided

### Four Essential Beliefs for Missions Fundraisers

1. God wills that “all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.” – 1 Tim. 2:4
2. God is capable of providing all the necessary funding – Psalms 50:9-16
3. God has promised to provide for the needs of those who seek His Kingdom first in their lives – Matthew 6:33
4. God has commanded that “those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel.” – 1 Corinthians 9:14

### Important Scriptural Principles that Relate to Missions Fundraising

1. God has no lack of resources.
2. God, as His power works within and through us, can do what is impossible for man to accomplish. It will almost always be far more than we could ask or imagine.
3. God has promised to do great things through us. Our role is to invite Him to act.
4. When we do not have, it is often because we do not ask. Or, when we do ask, we ask for selfish, rather than for godly motives.
5. One reason for a shortage of missions funding may be that we are robbing God in our giving. We have allowed our teaching against mandatory tithing to become an excuse for giving little or nothing.