

Faith in Action

First, you may decide, as a group of six young people in Australia have, to raise funds by living like communities in rural Malawi for 48 hours and asking for sponsorship. [This is a particularly relevant and helpful way to raise sponsorship, because it also helps us to better understand some of the difficulties faced by those we are seeking to help.]

Following this decision, sponsorship can then be raised by standing up in church or putting a notice on a church notice board describing what you plan to do and giving information about how the funds will be used. It should also be emphasized that you will not be going around church members asking individuals for sponsorship but if anyone is interested in supporting your efforts, they should contact you either personally or by email. In this way, you are providing information but there is absolutely no pressure for anyone to give. Instead, you are giving God the opportunity to move in peoples' hearts and to give them a desire to contribute.

In direct contrast, the second and more usual way of raising sponsorship is to approach individuals holding a form and in a way that makes it very difficult for them to refuse. This, we believe, is putting them under pressure to give.

Another example of good fund-raising, is a church in which they have a Christmas tree and

then give church members the opportunity to hang small cards on that Christmas tree in which they describe the financial gift that they will give to Jesus for Christmas. The funds collected are then given to various charities. As far as I am aware, everyone is free to contribute, and no one is pressurized to do so.

There are a few packing groups who hold Bring and Buy Sales to raise funds to pay for the transportation of their boxes. Once again it is quite possible to do this by giving a general invitation and then allowing people the freedom to attend and to buy, as they choose.

I have given these various examples in order to clarify the difference between pressurizing others for funds and merely providing information that leaves the hearers free to act as they choose, and thus to obey the guidance given by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians.

If the points raised in this brochure are not clear or you have any further questions on this important subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address given below.

Faith in Action

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Our Policy on Fund-Raising

We have no doubt whatsoever that it is God who initiated the work of Faith in Action and it is also God who continues to sustain it and provide for it. Having said this, without the amazing faithfulness, commitment and whole-hearted generosity of so many people who support our work, we would not have been able to achieve much over the last thirty years.

Within two months of my beginning to pack clothing for Tanzania, back in 1984, God spoke so clearly about three basic principles that should be the foundation of our future work: first, that everything we did should be motivated by love. Second, that we should not seek to multiply the work through our own efforts but to trust Him to do this, in just the same way that Jesus multiplied the five loaves and two fishes so that they fed a crowd of at least five thousand people. Third, that we should not ask for donations. God followed this last principle with a promise: He said that He would provide everything that we needed on the condition that we did not ask for any money from anyone.

**Working in Partnership
with the Church in Africa**

These second two principles meant that we had to trust entirely on God for both growth and funds. We have therefore learned much about His power and faithfulness through the many miracles of growth and financial provision that we have seen throughout the last thirty years. We have also many stories to tell about His protection and care as we have travelled around Africa.

Early in 1984, I started to pack clothing alone and was committed never to ask anyone to help me. All the amazing growth that we have seen has resulted from both individuals and churches throughout the UK contacting us. I have also been invited to the United States three times and Denmark once in order to start packing groups there.

Although I started to pack clothing alone, we have now sent 133 x 20ft container consignments of relief aid to East Africa together with four smaller consignments which is over 80,000 apple boxes in which all the clothing which has been washed, ironed, packed into polythene bags and labelled is packed.

We have also seen God's amazing faithfulness to fulfil His promise to provide all the finances that we need: without any fund-raising, we regularly receive between £60,000 and £100,000 each year, have never had a bill that we could not pay, and have received a total of over £2¼

million since we started our work in 1984. All these unsolicited funds are being used to set up development projects in Malawi and the transport costs are now paid for by packing groups.

Although, as trustees, we have been committed to maintain the three foundational principles that God gave us, recent events have shown that we have not clarified exactly what we mean by the phrase: 'Not asking for donations'. Some have questioned whether this principle is biblical, and I would have to answer that the Bible does not give a command exactly with these words. Our initial application of this principle came because we believed that God spoke specifically to us about it. However, the Bible does speak a great deal about money and how we should handle it.

There is one passage that gives very clear guidance about giving, and I want to use two verses from this passage to clarify our policy on this important subject. We find it in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 9, and verses 6-7. In verse 6, Paul speaks about the biblical principle of sowing and reaping. The Bible teaches us clearly that what we receive from God will relate directly on how much we give to others. Verse 7 makes it clear that God loves those who give voluntarily and not under pressure. We could therefore deduce that we, in

turn, *should* not pressurize people to give us money, because it robs them of the opportunity of choosing freely to give and thus to be loved by God.

Let me seek to clarify this principle further: We do not believe that it is wrong to provide people with information. Therefore, we will give information about various needs in our leaflets and newsheets and then explain what we are currently doing to meet those needs. However, you will never find a request for money in any of our literature. We also seek to be highly accountable for the money that is so generously given to us and it is for this reason that we give quite detailed information in our newsheets about the villages where projects have been set up and to provide photographs that show that the money has been used responsibly.

However, the questions that we have been asked relate to how this principle of not asking for funds relates to churches which support us. Although the instruction not to ask for funds was given to us personally, Paul's words about not giving under pressure were written to guide every one of us. This confirms, we believe, that it is alright to provide information but only if it is done in a way that allows people the freedom to choose how they will respond. There is, for example, a lot of difference between these two following methods of fund-raising: