



# RAISING FUNDS FOR CONFERENCES

## THE SUPPORT LETTER

If God is leading you to attend a conference or retreat, you can trust him to provide the finances for you to get there. On our end, we need to be faithful. We need to be willing to step out in faith and seek out God's provisions, "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). God will provide but we need to be faithful and ask. What follows is description of a time-tested method for making your financial need known to others—the support letter.

### MOTIVATION

*"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 1:6)

*"And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:19)

You're giving donors the privilege of investing in your life and the lives of those reached through you. As you raise scholarship funds, you're not going around holding a tin cup. Don't apologize for asking for financial assistance. Remember, you are a child of the King!

### NAMESTORM

Start by developing an initial list of potential ministry partners. As with brainstorming, in namestorming there is one cardinal rule – anything goes. No name is unqualified. Don't decide for an individual whether or not he or she is interested. If you limit yourself to those you feel will or give, you may prematurely disqualify those whom God wants to become ministry partners.

Later you will want to prioritize whom to contact first, but for now, don't disqualify anyone. You may be thinking you could never generate more than a handful of names, but research has shown the average individual has a personal network of at least 400 friends and acquaintances. So, you should easily be able to develop a list of at least 50 potential ministry partners.

For instance, you've probably had at least a dozen teachers alone. At the church you regularly attend you probably know Sunday school teachers, elders, deacons, and other friends who attend church. The idea is to think through the people you interact with in life. Here are some categories to get you started:

- Family and other relatives
- Friends
- Friends of your parents
- Businessmen (Christian and non-Christian)
- Church (talk to the pastor first!):
- Sunday school classes
- Men's and women's groups
- Missionary committee
- Youth group
- Campus Crusade for Christ staff
- Faculty
- Referrals given to you by these sources

Develop a 3 x 5 card file, one card for each potential investor. List each name, address, phone number (home and office) and other important data. Use this as a working file from which to make contacts. Add new names and keep track of investments in this file.

### WRITING THE LETTER

From your list of names, write first to those you feel



most likely to give.

The ideal is a handwritten personal letter that presents your needs. While it would be best to send a handwritten note to each contact, it's not always feasible if you come up with a list of 100 names. Since most people have access to a computer, you can write the same letter to each person and personalize the salutation. Sending people photocopied letters would not be the best, try to make the letters personal.

The following is a basic format you can use to compose your letter (see sample on last page):

- Give your letter a specific date.
- Your greeting should be personalized. If you use a form printed letter, hand-write the name instead of using "Dear friend."
- Acknowledge your relationship with the reader. What can you say that will help the person identify with you? Refer to your last visit or letter, business concerns, sports interests, hobbies, etc., to help him say, "I know who you are."
- Bring your reader up to date on what you're doing.
- Educate your reader. Share how you became involved in Campus Crusade for Christ, and how the Lord has given you a desire to reach people for Christ. Explain how you hope the Lord will use the BWC in your future ministry.
- Explain your need. The purpose of your letter is to give your reader an opportunity to help. Make sure you explain exactly what you need.
- Involve your reader by asking him/her for specific action, based on the needs you have shared. This can include challenging them to help cover part or all of the cost of the conference. State the deadline by which you need the money.
- Acknowledge your relationship again with an emphasis on thanks, appreciation, gratitude, partnership and commitment. This ties your opening acknowledgment to your request.
- Close the letter and sign it.
- Enclose a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

Be sure to ask each person for specific amounts (see sample letter); make sure to ask donors to make checks payable to "**Campus Crusade for Christ**" and remember to include a return envelope.

## LETTER WRITING PARTY

If there are a lot of students in the ministry who

need money for the conference, a letter writing party is a nice way to accomplish the task, have some fellowship, and ensure everyone gets their letters written. Each person should bring their list of names, photocopied letters, and a sufficient amount of stamps. Have food, music, soda, coffee, and a ton of envelopes—enough for everyone. Take time to pray together as a group and then jump in.

## FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALL

Making follow-up phone calls can be intimidating for students new to raising support, especially if they are alone. So, if possible, a week after the letters have reached the potential donors, call the group of students back together (be sure this is a time when the majority of the donors are home). Pray together for the ministry and each student's time on the phone that evening. Next, pair up and go to an apartment or dorm where students can make their calls. While one is making phone calls, the other can pray or cheer on the caller. After students have had time to make their calls gather back together to share what happened. Pray again leaving the results to God.

## THE PHONE CONVERSATION

Be sure to establish a specific time in the letter to get their decision.

When you ask for a response, do so directly. Then remain quiet until the person responds. Talking more at this point will distract the person from making a decision. Don't ramble.

When you call, if your potential ministry partner has not made a decision, set another time to call within a day or two.

1. Introduce yourself. "Hello, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. This is \_\_\_\_\_ calling. How are you?" Let him respond. Take a few moments to establish rapport, but be brief.

2. Refer to your letter and explain your summer plans. "As I mentioned in my letter, I am planning to attend the Boston Winter Conference sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ."

3. Share what you hope to see God do as a result of your time at the conference.

4. Be very specific to ask for a definite response. "In my letter I asked if you would be in a position to



support me financially for the Winter Conference. Have you had a chance to think about that?" (wait)

5. Ask to have the check mailed in the self-addressed stamped envelope you enclosed with your letter.

6. Remind them to make their check payable to "Campus Crusade for Christ."

## ALWAYS SAY THANK YOU

Send a thank-you note the same day the ministry partner gives you her decision. Be sure to keep a record of this so you'll know to whom you've sent one and so you won't send two to the same person—that would be bad. This thank-you letter is an important part of developing a relationship with your ministry partner. This should be a personal, handwritten note or letter. Do not print or copy a form letter or send an e-mail. Always include something personal in your note to show specifically how you and Christ's cause have benefited from their generosity. You owe them a good thank-you note.

### SAMPLE THANK-YOU NOTE

November 24, 2009

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Celentano,

Thank you for your gift of \$100 to support my going to the Winter Conference. Your prayers and finances are greatly appreciated. Your investment will have far-reaching results as I help reach people for Christ!

Please join me in praying that God would continually deepen my commitment to the cause of Christ. Your prayers are very important. Thanks again for your help.

In Christ,  
Richard M. Nixon

[See attached page for a sample support letter]

CRU PRESS

GREEN



November 25, 2009  
[use a specific date]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. BLANK,

How are you? I am doing well, and I hope to see you the next time I'm home. (can expand more if you like) I want to bring you up to date on what is happening in my life. As you know, I'm a student at the University of Connecticut. While there, I have been active with Campus Crusade for Christ. As a Christian, my highest priority has been to grow in my relationship with the Lord, and my involvement with Campus Crusade has been incredibly helpful.

This coming January, I have a unique opportunity to participate in a Campus Crusade for Christ conference in Boston, Massachusetts. The BWC will be a time where we hear the word of God without the distractions of daily life. It will also be a time to worship God in love and gratitude.

Finally it will be a time when we spend a day reaching out to people in the city of Boston. During this four day conference I will not only be trained in many areas, but will also be able to put my training into action. We will be engaging in evangelism in the city of Boston partnered with local churches.

In order to attend, I need to develop a financial sponsorship team: a group of people who will help me attend the conference. My total need is \$\_\_\_\_. Would you prayerfully consider making an investment of \$\_\_\_\_ toward helping me reach my goal?

I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope to speed your reply. If the Lord leads you to help, please make your gift check out to "Campus Crusade for Christ." Of course, all gifts are tax deductible.

I will give you a call in a week to see what you have decided. I can answer any questions you may have then.

I appreciate your friendship, Mr. and Mrs. BLANK. Thank you for considering what your role might be in helping make this missions trip a reality for me.

Sincerely,  
[sign here]  
Jose D. Student

P.S. I wish it were possible to visit with you personally, but I hope this letter will give you some idea of what I'm doing. I'm looking forward to speaking with you when I call.