

Raising funds for your Seminary

By Peter Sumner, Foundation Director, Cape Town Baptist Seminary

1. Separate the functions

The President/Principal runs the Seminary and the Fund Raiser raises funds. The Principal has enough on his plate without having to look for money. This does not mean the Principal is disinterested. He has contacts that can be passed on to the Fund Raiser. At CTBS we established the CTBS Foundation over 20 years ago. It is a committee of businessmen charged with ensuring the viability and continuity of the Seminary. A Director was appointed to create a financial plan and to execute it. I am the third such Director, and the financial success of the Seminary is dependent on the collective efforts of the Director and Foundation and the faithfulness of the Lord.

2. Fund raiser is responsible for financial health of the Seminary

At CTBS, many students cannot afford what it costs to train them, so their fees have to be subsidized. Even including the subsidy, some struggle to meet their commitments. Student fees meet a significant portion of the costs, but there is a large deficit to be raised annually.

So now you have a fund raiser, where does he start?

A. Use the pyramid

Successful fund raising depends on a plan. You need a number of major donors, some medium level donors and a large base of smaller donors. Donors drop out from time to time so you constantly have to be on the lookout for additional donors of all levels. You need to try especially to guard against major donors dropping out so you need to treat them well.

B. The birth of the Foundation

Initially the Seminary held a breakfast and invited as many potential donors as possible to attend, and shared the need. Many people of means came forward and elected a Foundation Committee and the Foundation started to function.

So now you have a Foundation, where does it get money to continue?

A. Baptist Churches

In South Africa, many churches donate to the Seminaries on a monthly, annual or ad hoc basis. It is a voluntary donation recommended by the SA Baptist Union. These donations form a large part of the base of the pyramid.

B. Individuals

We established the Foundation which is registered as a tax free NPO, so that individuals who donate to it receive tax relief on their donations. Many individuals and businessmen with an interest in the Seminary donate, and we have some small business owners who donate via their businesses. There are many financial distractions for individuals though, as we live in a materialistic age, where peer pressure, particularly among the younger generation, occurs. Cars, cell phones, clothing and many other gadgets interfere with giving which is very frustrating.

C. Overseas

We have a small number of donors in the USA. The U\$D goes far against our currency, but this requires a lot of time, effort and money because first you have to do friend building before fund raising. If you arrive in the US and say "Hello, I am Sam Smith from ABC Seminary, please donate \$1000", you get nowhere. It is through repeat visits and building up trust, relationships and friendships that there is limited success. A major factor is that in the US there are co-operative programs that are a priority for churches and people donate to those. IMB of Southern Baptist Convention is exactly that.

D. Trusts and Foundations

Use Internet to find trusts that are likely to donate to the Seminary. This can be quite a time consuming process, because most philanthropic outfits don't donate to religious organizations, but if you are successful it could mean a significant amount to the Seminary.

So what does your fund raiser do to get money?

A. Promote the Seminary

People usually only donate to causes they are interested in, alternatively people won't give to something they know nothing about, so you need to familiarize them with your Seminary, and continually remind them you are around.

How do we do that?

1. Create a 'Case for Support' document that details why the Seminary is in existence, what needs it is meeting, its mission, the courses it offers, its vision for the future and its successes and why it is a great cause to support.
2. Get to know the pastors of churches in your country and visit those you can, and ask if you can take or participate in services. Those you cannot get to, maintain contact via newsletters, phone calls etc. Many of the pastors in our country are alumni of the Seminary and are already on our side.

3. Social media. Make sure you have a web site where people can look up your seminary's static information, even if you don't have the resources to freshen it up regularly. Get onto Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others that many people are never far from. Keep adding information and photos to your pages, because this is where younger people especially spend a lot of time. You can make events and needs known here. It is also where many prospective students ask for information. Every student that you have at the Seminary reduces the deficit that you have to raise.
4. Use the successes of alumni to showcase the quality of your teaching and the impact that graduates are making for the Kingdom. **Jonathan Clayton. Salwyn.**

B. Visit influential Baptist lay people and businessmen for donations

As stated before, donations to the Foundation are tax deductible at marginal rates, so people who are earning good money will get better tax relief on donations than those earning less. Business owners can also donate via their businesses to reduce their tax as well.

C. Ensure you have a bequest programme

This is a sensitive issue and needs to be handled with tact. It is an opportunity for donors to give a 'final donation' in investing in the Kingdom. But it needs serious relationship building and must not compete with the needs of the family. Lump sums can inject capital into the Seminary. Long term relationships are worth cultivating.

D. Promotional Items

We have created a number of promotional items for the Seminary. Apart from giving them to influential visitors, we sell them to students, staff and the general public at events. They can advertise your seminary for you anywhere that they are taken.

E. Fund raising events

People like to get something for a donation, so do something that gives value for their donation or attract people who wouldn't normally donate. We have a golf day. Other things might work for you like cake sales, quiz evenings, concerts, sponsorships etc. These events need committed volunteers.

F. Yearly events

Use annual events to ask for donations.

1. Many companies give an annual bonus, mostly paid at the end of November. I have my regulars who donate around that time that I call, and others just before the end of the tax year in February.
2. A major annual event is the Seminary Month in August, when the Seminary asks local churches if we can take a service to promote the Seminary. We send teams of students and faculty to the churches that invite us, where we preach, give testimonies, sing items, promote donations to the Foundation and canvass for prospective students. Promo items are on sale afterwards.
3. Baptist assembly. Most of our students are recommended by their pastor, and this is an opportunity to bring the Seminary in front of all the churches in the country. We also sell promo items there.
4. Commencement Service. Very early in the academic year, the Seminary is invited by a local church to take the service. We usually benefit from the offering or part thereof for the morning. Once again it is an opportunity to sell promo items.
5. Graduation is our shop window. It is where our latest products are on show. Graduands are given a short time to speak, and showcase their zeal for the Lord and how prepared for ministry they are because of our training. It is an opportunity to reach a large number of supporters of the students and interested parties. You guessed it. Promo items again.

5. Innovation and complementary activities

Innovation is highly recommended by fundraising experts

A. Debit order donors

This group makes up the body of your lowest part of the pyramid. We have had debit order donors for many years with moderate success, but recently we started what we call the 'Cheeseburger Challenge'. We challenge people to give up a cheeseburger and cooldrink per month at their favourite restaurant and donate the money (in our case R100) to the Foundation via debit order. This is not a large amount but it is affordable for many people. We advertise it widely and the number of donors is growing towards significant support. It is also tax deductible.

B. Patron

Find a public figure who will align themselves with the Seminary, and grow their commitment in order that they can use their popularity to advertise the work of the Seminary like no ordinary person can, and this could lead to significant donations and

publicity. We are still looking for such a person but I have seen it work well with the right individual.

C. Seminary Safari

The style of innovation is dependent on the personalities involved. We have recently launched what we call the Seminary Safari. The chairman of the Foundation and I have been privileged to visit our major national parks many times and are avid wildlife fans. I am also a qualified tour guide. Our plan is to invite guests to take advantage of our knowledge and experience in the Kruger National Park. It would cost a little more than it would to organise it themselves, but we are entitled to some discounts and we would add on a small 'profit' that would be for the Foundation. I am itching to test drive it.

D. Student Sponsorship Scheme

We calculated how much it costs the Seminary to train one student per year, and used that amount to try to get a donor or group like a cell group, to pay the total cost to Seminary of a student for a year. The student's fees would be paid out of the total and the remainder would go to the Foundation. The donor could choose the student they would like to sponsor, from profiles sent to them. They would be given the opportunity to have access to their student if they liked, to monitor progress. The student would not be permitted to ask the donor for more money.

E. Projects

Have a list of ad hoc projects of multiple values and variety with associated costs. One of our current ones is to harvest rain water. Some trusts and individuals would rather give to a project that takes their fancy rather than to daily running costs.

F. Capital Fund

The long term future of your Seminary will probably depend on having capital reserves. Living from hand to mouth causes all kinds of stress, but if you can, build capital, which probably would come from trusts, foundations and bequests. If these funds are invested wisely, they give the Seminary choices, like building projects, chair funding, course expansion or whatever fits your local circumstances.

G. Third Stream Income

First stream income is from fees, and second stream is via fund raising. Third stream income is from passive income. A saying that I learnt a few years ago was "You can work for your money or your money can work for you". I still haven't found that in any Bible verse, but it makes sense. If you have the capital to invest in rental property, low-risk investments and

the like, it could give you a regular third stream income. Other ways could be unrelated activities like utilising Seminary land to do farming, and sell the produce.

6. Conclusion

I would like to leave you with what I call the **5 Ps** of the Seminary.

PRAY for the Seminary. This has been a practical presentation, but the most important aspect of fund raising is prayer.

PERUSE the Seminary's web site **www.ctbs.org.za** To find out about the Seminary.

PROMOTE the Seminary. **LIKE** and **SHARE** the Seminary Facebook page **CAPE TOWN BAPTIST SEMINARY** To find out about the day to day happenings at the Seminary, and to see photos.

PARTNER with the Seminary. Become a donor and ensure that men and women are trained to win people for Jesus.

PAY US A VISIT When you are in the area we would love you to come and see the work that is being done here.

And Jesus said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest'. Luke 10:2

That is the whole purpose of our fund raising. It is our privilege and challenge to prepare those labourers for the harvest.