

# FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

## LETTERS AND FOLLOW-UP CALLS

As you place your trust in God and carefully implement each of these four steps, you will see success!

### 1. 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. Just erase any clouds of doubt from your mind and let there be a “blue sky.” Don’t decide for an individual whether or not they are interested. If you limit yourself to those you feel will or can give, you may be prematurely disqualifying those God wants to become partners. Later you will need 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 could easily be able to develop a list of at least 50 potential ministry partners. For instance, you have probably had at least a dozen schoolteachers alone. If you’ve ever had a toothache or a cavity, you know a dentist. If you’ve ever been sick, you’ve been to the doctor. As you think about the people in your life, there will be numerous sources of people to contact that will come to mind.

As you namestorm, think through various professions, businesses, and places for any friends and acquaintances that you may have. To aid you, we have provided over 75 thoughts provokers in the following list. Take plenty of time—at least half an hour—to mull over these categories.

After taking one hour or so for free-wheeling “namestorming” mark next to each contact, either “T” for a top priority, or “M” for medium, or “L” for low priority. These designations refer to your evaluation of how likely they are to give. Start by contacting your top priority people first, and then work through your medium and then the low priority people.

Great! Now you know how to start the process.

## LIST OF POTENTIAL MINISTRY PARTNERS

Aunts and Uncles	Foundations that give to charities
Apartment manager	Fraternity brothers
Banker	Friends
Beautician	Friends of your parents
Bible bookstore owner/Manager	High School and college friends
Bible Study Groups Members	Insurance agent
Brothers and Sisters	Missionary Societies
Christian businessmen	Neighbors
Church Directory	Neighbors at former residences
Church friends	Nieces and nephews
Church missionary budget committee	Parents
Civic clubs	Parent's associates
Coaches from your youth	Parent's employers
Cousins	Pastor (s)
Dentist	People you led to Christ
Dentist's nurse	Relatives
Doctor	Restaurant manager and workers
Doctor's nurse	Retired people
Downtown businesses	Sororities Sisters
Eye doctor	Sunday school class members
Family attorney	Tax preparer
Former customers	Teammates
Former employees	Those who have influenced you spiritually
Former employer and co-workers	Veterinarian
Former college professors	Wedding and Christmas Card list

## II. Write a Fundraising Letter

A. You can see much success by typing a personal letter representing the GCLA short-term mission trip. Then make a personal phone call to ask each potential ministry partners to support this GCLA-sponsored mission trip. Remember to tell donors that you are **raising support for GCLA** to send you on a mission trip. (As opposed to raising personal funds for you to go overseas.)

B. When writing a ministry team letter, the personal segments in the sample letter which follows obviously must be rewritten. However, the body of the letter should be copied substantially "as is" (see the sample letter below). The following are items that all ministry team letters should include:

1. Give your letter a **specific date**. (Not June, 2003)
2. Your **greeting** should be handwritten (unless you normally type your correspondence) and to a person—not "Dear Friend!"

3. **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, known struggles, hobbies, etc., to help him/her say, "I know who you are!"
4. Bring your reader up to date on what you're doing.
5. **Educate** your reader. Explain what the short-term mission trip is, the purpose of the trip, why you have decided to participate, and what you hope to accomplish.
6. **Explain the need.** The purpose of your letter is to give your reader an opportunity to help. Make sure you explain exactly what is needed. GCLA needs to raise funds to send people like you overseas on mission trips. We will be providing your team with detailed information on what you will be doing, the difference that your trip will make and how that fits in a larger scale strategy to reach the local community.
7. Then **involve** your reader by asking them for specific action. Specific action includes not only your request, but also your commitment to follow up by telephone.
8. **Acknowledge** your relationship again with an emphasis on thanks, appreciation, gratitude, partnership and commitment. This ties your opening acknowledgment to your request. \
9. **Close** the letter and sign each one personally.
10. **Add** a "P.S." Commit yourself to a specific action you will be taking. Example: "I'll be calling you in a week, if I don't hear from you by then. I look forward to hearing from you soon." If you are sending a printed letter, hand write your P.S.
11. **Emphasize the text.** Use parentheses and underlining to emphasize the most important parts of your letter (i.e. GCLA's needs, your request and the time and date you will call them for a decision).
12. **Enclose** a self-addressed, stamped return envelope for a quick and easy response. Research shows that the easier you make it, the higher the response rate will be. So, make sure to include this critical element.
13. **Enclose** a response device that allows them to choose an amount to support GCLA at. Also, have it include a space for their name and address. GCLA has provided one for you to use, if you'd like.

### C. Things to avoid when writing ministry team letters:

1. **Never apologize** for writing or calling a person whom you wish to involve in helping meet a need. You are providing them with an opportunity to be involved in a spiritual ministry through their resources. Remember, the giver needs to give far more than any person or cause needs to **receive** a gift. "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account" (Philippians 4:17). When you apologize, you end up appearing to be a beggar rather than a child of the King obeying the Great Commission.
2. **Never ask for a general amount, without a time** frame in which to take action. You should challenge people to give a specific gift, or at least give them a specific range. The specific challenge of \$100, \$75 or \$50 or whatever amount is comfortable has been included in this material. Never ask for less than this challenge. If people want to support GCLA but can't give at least \$50, they will let you know and not be offended by your request.

### Sample letter for GCLA Short-Term Mission fundraising:

Date (today's date)

Dear Mr. And Mrs. Johnson,

How are you? I thought of you a lot this last week. How was Leslie's wedding? I sure wish I could have been there. I'm looking forward to seeing the pictures when I get home next month.

As you may be aware, I am living in Columbus, Ohio and working at Nationwide Insurance Company as a computer programmer. I am also very involved with my church and spreading the good news about Jesus Christ. Over the last year I've gained a strong desire to go overseas to tell others about Christ.

This summer I will finally get an opportunity. I will be going to Choluteca, Honduras on a Short-Term Mission Trip sponsored by Great Commission Latin America (GCLA). The purpose of this trip is to share the gospel in a community where the local church is involved in the development of the families. I will also have a chance to work serving and ministering to children who are part of a Malnutrition Recovery Program. Many people in Latin America are hungry for spiritual growth and this trip will provide an incredible opportunity to partner and support the local church on this endeavor.

In order to make this possible, I need to develop a ministry team for GCLA –a group of ministry partners who will join with GCLA and myself in this effort. I am responsible to raise at least \$(amount). In order to meet this need as quick as possible, I am trusting the Lord to provide people who would like to invest gifts of \$100, \$75, \$50 or whatever amount is comfortable.

Mr. And Mrs. Johnson, will you prayerfully consider giving GCLA to meet the need and send me on this Short Term Mission Trip? You will be helping influence people for Christ by helping to send me to (name of the country). I must complete my financial support responsibilities by (date). I have enclosed a response card with information about how you can help GCLA meet this need, and also a stamped self-addressed envelope. I will give you a call in two weeks to see what you have decided. I can answer any questions you may have then.

I appreciate your friendship. Thank you for your interest in GCLA and my desire to serve the Lord in this ministry opportunity.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)

*P.S. I look forward to talking with you soon.*

Gifts to support mission trips sponsored by Great Commission Latin America, Inc. (GCLA) are tax-deductible. Checks must be made out to Great Commission Latin America. The donor may list a "mission trip" and a "missionary" by writing the names in the check memo (example: El Salvador mission trip- Marc Holtey). Should the mission trip become over-funded, GCLA will use the excess funds for mission activity to be determined by GCLA. In the unlikely event that the mission trip is changed or canceled, or the missionary is unable to make the mission trip, GCLA will use the collected funds for mission activity to be determined by GCLA.

### III. The Follow-up Phone Call

- A. The degree of your success in the letter-writing strategy depends on your follow-up phone call. The follow-up phone call is critical for three reasons:
1. **Most people suffer from “Information Overload.”** Consequently, mail is easy to ignore or forget.
  2. **Your time frame.** You have a lot to raise in a short period of time. A follow-up phone call will help you get decisions as quickly as possible.
  3. **Courtesy to potential ministry partners.** Many people will want to help GCLA, but won't unless you call to answer questions and to get their decision. Your phone call takes the burden of response off them and puts it on you.
- B. Be sure to establish a specific time to get their decision.
- C. When you call, ask directly for a response. Then be QUIET. Let the person respond. Talking more at this point will distract them from making a decision.
- D. When you call, if a potential ministry partner has not made a decision, set another time to call within a day or two.
- E. If an individual decides to become a **ministry partner**, arrange a time to stop by and pick up their gift. If they live out of town, ask them to mail it to you in the self-addressed, stamped envelope you included in your letter.
- F. If you arrange to have a ministry partner send you a gift and it doesn't come, you will need to follow up with a phone call.
- G. A ministry partner's check must be made payable to **Great Commission Latin America**.
- H. After getting a person's decision, always ask them to refer you to other people who might be interested in your short-term mission trip.

#### Sample Call for a Decision

##### 1. Introduce yourself.

*“Hello, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_. This is \_\_\_\_\_ calling. How are you?”* Let them respond. *“That's great. By the way, have I called at a convenient time?”* Take a few moments to establish rapport, but be politely brief.

##### 2. Explain your ministry training plans.

*“As I mentioned in my letter, I am planning to go on an overseas mission trip, sponsored by Great Commission Latin America.”*

##### 3. Share what you hope to see God do on the mission trip.

##### 4. Be very specific to ask for a definite response.

*“In my letter, I mentioned that I’m in the process of developing a ministry team for GCLA for the short-term mission trip to \_\_\_\_\_. I wrote asking you to consider becoming a GCLA ministry partner by investing in the short-term mission trip to \_\_\_\_\_ that I will be going on. I was wondering how God has led you in being able to give?”* Let them respond, even though the silence may seem uncomfortable for you. People will expect you to ask because of your letter.

#### IV. How to Get Additional Names

You must continue to add names to your list of potential ministry partners. Ask everyone you contact to give you names and telephone numbers of people they know that might be interested in GCLA’s ministry.

**A. Who to ask for additional names/referrals:** Ask everyone you contact. Both those that join GCLA’s ministry team and those that are unable to give will probably want to help in this way.

**B. When to ask for additional names:** Don’t ask anyone for additional names until they have first made a decision about joining GCLA’s ministry team. If you don’t wait, your request for other names will distract them from making their decision. **BUT do ask** everyone at the time they give you their decision, whether their decision is yes or no. If you get a decision on the phone, you will ask for additional names, right then, over the phone. If you get a decision while on an appointment, ask for additional names right then, in person.

**C. How to ask for additional names:**

1. Get your pencil out and be ready to write.
2. Say: *“Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, I need your help in another way. You can help me complete my GCLA ministry team responsibilities by giving me names of other people you know that I may contact.”*
3. Lead the conversation by mentioning potential categories (i.e., *“What are the names of some friends or business acquaintances you know; possibly you know some people from church.”*) Ask them to get out their church, office, and any club directories they have. When they start to slow down, probe their memory by mentioning other categories of people you think they may know. Use the categories listed in the “Namestorming” section.  
**Note:** Do not say, *“Do you know anyone”* or *“Can you tell me the names of...”* but say, *“What are the names...”* and *“Who are people that...”*
4. Assure the individual that their friends may not be able to help financially but they may know others. This gives the individual more freedom to refer you to others.

## V. Thank You Notes

- A. Send a thank-you note the same day you receive their decision or their gift.
- B. Be sure to keep a record of this so you'll know to whom you've sent one and so you'll not send two to the same person.
- C. The thank-you note is an important part of developing a relationship with a ministry partner. It should be a personal, handwritten note. Do not print or photocopy a form letter. Always include something personal in your note to show specifically how GCLA and Christ's cause has been benefited by their generosity. You owe them a good thank-you note.

### Sample Thank-You Note:

<i>Date (Today's date)</i>
<p><i>Dear (Ministry Partner's Name,</i></p> <p>Thank you for your gift to Great Commission Latin America. Your generosity helps missionaries, like myself, go on GCLA short-term mission trips. Your prayers for me and financial gifts to GCLA are greatly appreciated. Your investment will have far-reaching results. It will allow GCLA to send me as a short-term missionary to be part of reaching the world for Christ. Please join me in praying that God would continually deepen my commitment to the cause of Christ. Your prayers are most important. Thanks again for your gracious help.</p>
<p><i>Sincerely</i> <i>(Your Signature)</i></p>