



August 2007

Development Directions

A free resource for pastors, principals, development directors, volunteers and anyone engaged in the ministry of Catholic development.

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UNDERSTANDING CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT "DISCONNECTS"

By Frank Donaldson, President

August is always an interesting time of year - hot summer days are coming to a close as Fall is peeking around the corner; families are excited about a new school year - mainly parents and some children; even families without children in school are aware that something new is beginning again; the parish Religious Education program is gearing up for a new year; ministries that have been dormant for the summer are kicking in again. And, in south Louisiana we are always on the lookout for what is happening in the tropics.

On the development side of the equation, new processes and new positions are beginning to come alive. Schools and parishes that never had a development and/or stewardship office are now on the cusp of a new era. Annual Fund leaders are getting ready and literature is being created. In many parishes and schools there are new themes that have been developed for the year. Total Stewardship plans are being put on the calendar, and fund-raising events are scrambling for space and time. Enrollment for the 2008-2009 academic year is tops in the minds of many Catholic schools across the country. The wheels of new and old motion are gradually beginning to turn at a faster pace than they have been in the past three months.

Here at ISPD, we usually see the month of August as a "teachable moment." Those working in the field of Catholic development - directly or indirectly - are much more receptive at this time of the year to understanding how and why processes can work better than in the past. With the above in mind, we would like to use this moment of newsletter reading to highlight five "disconnects" that we encourage all to simply use as a checklist to avoid.

1. The first "disconnect" is with the word "**stewardship**". All across the country, many Catholic parishes teach the meaning of the word in the right manner - that stewardship is a way of life. Parish and school leaders invite all to share their many God-given gifts of prayer, involvement, wisdom, expertise and finance. They hold ministry fairs and invite people to attend educational sessions and read materials on what it means to be a true steward in the Catholic Church. And then, the "disconnect" happens, because in the Sunday Bulletin there is a box titled "Stewardship " and there it is reported the amount of money collected the previous weekend and how that corresponds to the budget - above or below. Or, "Stewardship Sunday" is when pledge cards are handed out and people are asked to commit to certain amounts of money. There is a major "disconnect" in the message and the meaning and what is presented in that bulletin.
2. The second "disconnect" is with the words "**quality Catholic education.**" Many Catholic schools do an outstanding job of reaching out and working with students and families in a Christ-centered environment. Indeed, they do have a "quality" tone that permeates throughout the curriculum and faculty and staff. And then a "disconnect" occurs. A parent (the "customer" in a quality environment) is met with a less than pleasing tone from the receptionist or from a teacher or from a coach when they seek answers to questions, and the word "quality" is left hanging out there. This is the same parent that pays \$4,000 per year in tuition, supports the fund-raisers throughout the year, gives money to the Annual Fund, handles the plant booth at the Fair, and participates in parish life. The "disconnect" occurs primarily because there needs to be a greater understanding of "customer service" and what it means.
3. The third "disconnect" is the capital campaign at the parish and school where \$3.0 million is being sought, and after all is said and done only 35% of the parish and school families participate. The Campaign leaders evaluate after it is over and bemoan the fact that 65% did nothing - even though they were mailed letters, spoken to at all Masses, and received copies of the Campaign materials. This "disconnect" is about two things - the only gift asked for in the Campaign is a gift of money, and secondly, very few people were personally invited to sit down over a cup of coffee and share their thoughts and ideas about the parish and the Campaign. The "disconnect" occurs because the Campaign should have invited Gifts of Prayer, Gifts of Involvement and Gifts of Financial Participation, and the Campaign should have been positioned to get to know more families - personally - so as to invite them to celebrate Liturgy and become part of that faith community. Instead, the "disconnect" is that the Campaign is ALL about money and nothing else. *"Belonging leads to believing."* How can people be expected to believe when they do not feel like they belong?
4. The fourth "disconnect" occurs with the alumni(ae) of a Catholic school. The development director, president, principal and finance council bemoan the fact that only 7% of their 5,000 alums participate in the Annual Fund or give money to the school. The "disconnect" occurs because in some cases, the only time an alum ever hears from the school is to ask for money or come to a reunion. The "disconnect" occurs because the key question has not been answered: What is that Catholic school doing for that alum? What ways of personal invitation and relationship building are being done on a regular basis? What gifts does that alum have that she/he would enjoy sharing with the school - gifts that relate their vocation, hobbies, talent, interests, etc.? What a wonderful opportunity to build that alum component around relationships and not just money!

5. The last "disconnect" is with the parish communication system. Many parish leaders want more and more people to know what is going on about many things, so they have announcements and presentations at Mass and put articles in the parish bulletin. Good strategies, but there is a major "disconnect." The only people who hear the message are those that come to Mass, and that usually is 30% of the parish families on the database. The parish bulletin has great information, but if a family does not come to Mass, they do not get the bulletin, because in most parishes, the bulletin is seldom mailed home to ALL families. And yet, the "disconnect" is that parish leaders depend upon the bulletin to deliver the messages and the audience is not even there. Therefore, the Ministry Fair after Mass turns into a "recycling" of the same people.

Just some thoughts to think about as we begin this new venture called a new educational year, usually beginning in August and ending in May or early June. It is a wonderful time to connect and correct if any of the above is applicable.

ISPD SEEKS RESUMES FOR NEW ASSOCIATE

As our company continues to reach out to Catholic parishes and schools with our on-site consulting, mainly in the areas of planning, capital campaigns, people involvement and engagement, total stewardship efforts, and enrollment management, we find ourselves seeking resumes for 1-2 new associates who would like to be part of the ISPD Team and our philosophy of Catholic Development. ***Bringing people, process and ministry together to Build the Kingdom of God*** is our mission statement, and everything we do revolves around advancing that mission.

If you would like to submit a resume for us to review confidentially, then we do invite you to send it by email to Frank Donaldson, President, at ispd@aol.com.

Thank you and please pass this message along.

UPCOMING FALL 2007 WORKSHOPS

Dynamic presenters share proven strategies and discuss development issues during one and two day seminars for Catholic parishes and schools. These workshops are conveniently held across the country at an affordable price of \$69-\$250 .

We hope you'll join us soon!

Topics Include:

- ** Become a More Welcoming, Engaging & Affirming Catholic Parish **
- ** Best First Steps to Take in Beginning Your Catholic Development Efforts **
 - ** Capital Campaigns That Produce Results **
- ** Catholic School Enrollment Solutions - One and Two Day Seminars **
 - ** Customer Service in Your Catholic School **

** Long Range Planning **

Scheduled Locations:

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Cleveland, OH ** Houston, TX ** Lafayette, LA
Milwaukee, WI ** Orlando, FL ** Philadelphia, PA
South Bend, IN ** Toledo, OH ** Washington, DC

ISPD Also Conducts On-Site Workshops

Offered to Catholic schools and parishes within a single diocese, these workshops are designed to meet your specific needs.

- [Check Here for More Information on ISPD Development Workshops](#)

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Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think could benefit from this information. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please contact us.

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