

Development in Our Lutheran High Schools ... Conflict or Complement?

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INTRODUCTION

We can't predict or invent the future but we can certainly plan for it. That's the purpose of this Resource Development Conference prepared for the Association of Lutheran High Schools by Growth Design Corporation. Ideas and concepts I'll present may seem to be contrary to concepts, previously mentioned by Byron Tweetin during our lunch hour or that may be presented by workshop leaders during this conference. But this is not necessarily true. Let me explain. You see, man still has two natures – physical and spiritual. So the person in the hospital needs both the services of his doctor and his pastor. So in the ministry of stewardship there are practical skills, concepts, and strategies which can be learned in the context of concepts revealed in God's Word. This dichotomy has probably prompted the question given to me to be addressed in this keynote presentation: Development in Our Lutheran High Schools - Conflict or Complement?

To my knowledge only three of our Lutheran high schools have full-time development officers. What is a development officer? The secular world calls them fundraisers. Their professional organization is called the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE). Their 1991 National Education Conference will be held in San Antonio during the first week in March.

In Lutheran circles they are known as development officers or directors. Their professional organization is known as the Association of Lutheran Development Executives (ALDE). Their national education conference this year will be held in San Diego during the first week in April.

In our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod we have used such terms as planned giving counselors, special gifts counselors, donor relations officers, Director of Institutional Advancement, Director of Resource Development.

If we can define “development” in one word, it would be LOVE. And love breeds love. We love, only because Christ first loved us. True love is selfless. By its very nature it has to give away its very essence, love itself. And the more it gives, the more it grows.

I don’t know if you realize it but in 1989 (1990 statistics are not available yet):

1. Giving increased by 10.4% over 1988 for a total of 114.7 billion dollars - Why?
2. Of these gifts, 84.1% were given by individuals - 96.4 billion dollars - Why?
3. Religious organizations received the largest share - 54.32 billion dollars almost half of the total amount 47.4% - Why?

Results of a study conducted by the Gallup Organization in the Spring of 1990 have been analyzed and published by the Independent Sector. Gallup’s interviews with 2,727 Americans last Spring form the basis of their findings that:

- The average household in America gave \$734 in 1989, a whopping increase of 31 percent over the average of \$562 in 1987 for a total of \$96.4 billion.
- 86 percent of the baby boomer households (in the 35-44 age group) gave to charities in 1989 compared to 76 percent of the same age group in 1987.
- Affluent Americans whose household incomes ranged from \$75,000 to \$100,000 showed the highest increase in the number of charitable gifts: 92.1 percent gave in 1989 vs. 75 percent in 1987.

We may disagree on the reasons for giving or the purpose for the gifts, but we can’t dispute the basic facts:

1. Charitable giving is increasing.
2. Individuals lead in charitable giving.
3. Religious organizations are the chief recipient.

WHY? – Why should we even ask why? As we answer this question, why, we will better know whether a development program in our schools will become a complement or a conflict – whether it is just meeting a crisis or resulting in a true value.

Organized development programs are becoming the “life-line” for charitable organizations. What does this mean for our church and our church-related organizations?

The facts are self evident. Giving has increased at a rate greater than the average salary increase for the same period of time. Individuals give eight times more than foundations and corporations. Religious organizations receive almost as much as all other charitable groups combined.

Amazing! Isn’t it? Maybe it isn’t so amazing at all when we recall Paul’s words to the Christians at Corinth in his second letter, chapter 8, verses 1-5; IOb and 11: “For I testify that they (Macedonians, Philippians, Thessalonians, & Bereans) gave as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own they pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to us in keeping with God’s will . . . And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first, not only to give, but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it, may be matched by your completion of it according to your means.”

That is the foundation of a development program – and I think we could say the topic has been exhausted! CHRISTIANS PLEADING TO BE INCLUDED IN SHARING THEIR GIFTS WITH OTHERS.

Pastor Donald Meier, our synod's Deferred Giving Counselor, speaks of many experiences of people pleading and then thanking him over and over for including them in the rich experience of true giving.

Let me share a portion of a letter recently received by our agency:

"Would the nursing home in Milwaukee be interested in becoming the beneficiary of this insurance policy, hopefully under the following conditions: 1. That only the interest from the policy be used . . . etc." But what was interesting was the post script:

"Should the sum be considered too small to warrant acceptance under the conditions, or similar ones described above, I shall understand." The gift was in the thousands of dollars, and can you imagine, he was afraid it might be too small.

II. CONFLICT/COMPLEMENT

Before we paint a rosy picture of sitting back and watching the money roll in without any problems, without the danger of conflict, we turn to Scripture again and read the 20th verse of this same 8th chapter of Second Corinthians. "We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the *eyes of men*."

It's probably in the "eyes of men" where the greatest conflict may occur. And I believe most of the conflict occurs over the method of seeking gifts and the strategies of obtaining these shared blessings. Such conflict is the result of the viewing by the eyes of men rather than by God. Nevertheless, Paul still warns that we must be careful to do what is right in the eyes of men. Thus, in many cases we must educate them as to: "What is right in the eyes of God should also be viewed as right in the eyes of men."

A. Adding Conflict

Conflict arises from what I believe is a misunderstanding of 1. *concepts*, and 2. *foci*. Much misunderstanding occurs in the *concepts* of fund raising, development, marketing, and selling. Development is a long term process, whereas fund raising is a short term strategy, aimed merely at asking for money. Development is NOT using people, nor applying high pressure sales tactics, nor playing on archaic guilt feelings. Development facilitates giving. And giving is the final realization of selflessness. It's a reorder of priorities in life. Only when such understanding of these concepts and such attitudes toward giving is achieved will development be a complement and not a conflict in our Lutheran high schools.

A wrong *focus* of a development program will result in a misunderstanding of ministry and result in conflict. When a development program focuses on the need of the institution or school, it becomes a fund raising program for the agency and not a ministry for the development of the stewardship life of our people and the faith life of our donors. The Macedonians pleaded to give because their faith was functioning in high gear. The Word had been planted and the seed was bearing fruit. But the danger is always present to focus on the need of the institution or school at the expense of helping the donor. Sometimes to accept and understand a "NO" to a request for a gift may create less conflict in the Spirit's work on the sanctification of the donor than a "high pressure" selling job. The focus must always be on the needs of the giver and not on the institution. And may we never forget "NO" means "NO." I have a poster in my office which constantly reminds me of this. It says: "What part of NO don't you understand."

Sometimes it may mean that a bequest will be given to another agency of our synod, maybe to the local congregation, the synod or Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service instead of your school.

Nevertheless the focus must remain on the donor if your development program is to complement your ministry. Recall Paul's words again: "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints."

This service was for the saints – the believers. Remember Paul’s advice to the Galatians? “Do good to all men but especially to those who are of the family of faith!” That becomes an important passage when you realize that many of our people are giving to the United Way, Red Cross, Girl Scout cookies, the arts, etc. Our people must be reminded that we must do good to all men, yes, but ESPECIALLY to those of the household of faith. They don’t know this. They have to be told this. Permit me to relate an incident which occurred in the Milwaukee area. A member of one of our WELS churches died and his will was read in probate court. The pastor of the congregation was present because his congregation was named as a beneficiary for the sum of \$5,000 – but the Boy Scouts received \$75,000! The pastor questioned why this happened. The deceased’s son said that his lawyer suggested the Boy Scouts be named for the residue of the estate.

B. Providing Complement

Yes! There is a ministry to our people that is necessary toward development. Any questions why religious organizations lead in the recipient category of charitable giving? Scripture provides the real answers to why and to whom. Paul continues: “And they did not do as we expected, but gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with the Lord’s will.” But we first must know what that will of the Lord is. Verse 10B continues: “Last year you were the first, not only to give, but also to have the desire to do so. Now, finish the work so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means!”

Development is *ministry of stewardship* to Christians. True, it is totally in the area of sanctification, but it is a ministry of assisting those, fellow-redeemed in carrying out their functions of faith and their acts of love which really are not completed until they appear in glory, thanking God for such grace in their final last will and testament. Their final thank-offering on earth will be read and distributed while they experience their climax of blessings – the eternal joys of heaven.

If one of the purposes of our school is to reach out to people and help them in some of their basic needs, our program is not complete unless we help them in one of their very basic functions of faith – GIVING! – giving of their time, their talent, and their treasures.

Why did the Synod include in their job description for its Special Gift counselor, “. . . the counselor will devote 80% of his time with prospects that rank in the top 20% of those in the listing?” Doesn’t it appear that the focus here is on the gift and *NOT* the giver? – Upon the money and *NOT* the act of love. I suppose it could appear that way. But again a lack of understanding motives and concepts can cause conflict – even conflict in our regular stewardship program. But a correct understanding of the program results in a rich complement to our entire stewardship program. Didn’t our gracious Lord tell us in Luke 12:48: “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required and to whom men have committed much of him they will ask the more.”

In any ministry the most time will be spent with those in greatest need. Thus, the gift counselor will spend the greatest amount of time with those who have the greatest need to give. Who has the greatest need to give? Those who have been blessed more abundantly. Those with greater gifts have greater needs to share. Let us not neglect the need of our people—if we truly want to complement the work of our schools and have a complete ministry.

III. NEED/VALUE

A number of questions emerged when I began to think about these seemingly contrasting concepts. When I asked myself - need? or value? My response was YES! And I still believe that to be the correct answer, if properly understood. That is – *not* exclusive of each other, as if one is negative and the other positive. These two concepts need not be treated exclusively of each other – according to the misunderstood concept that when you give to a need, it’s not given out of love. This past Christmas when you noticed that your child needed a new coat and you gave him one as a Christmas gift, plus, perhaps, the latest super Nintendo game cartridge, is

the gift of a coat given with any less love from the heart than the new Nintendo game because of a need by the child for a coat? How long haven't we lived under that miscomprehension?

A. Meeting a Need

There may be a great value in presenting a need to your donors, if that need is the need of the people you serve. The only ministry that exists is a ministry to people, not a ministry to institutions, schools or organizations.

Our synod has given the men in its development office the titles: Planned Giving Counselor, Deferred Giving Counselor, Special Gifts Counselor rather than Development Director. A counselor helps people – and to help God's people our counseling will need to avoid confusing “knowing” with “doing.” Remember the debate which took place a number of years ago on the floor of the United Nations in New York when the Arabs and the Jews were locked in their age old arguments? Finally in desperation an American representative shouted, “Why don't you men act like Christians?” Well, probably because they weren't Christians. They were Arabs and Jews. This simple incident shows how unthinking we can be. We assume that if members of our supporting congregations know what God wants of them, they will do it. How often haven't you heard the misleading argument, “Let the Christian people know the need (perhaps, some financial need) and they will meet that need.” We have to guard against confusing knowing with doing in order to help our people bridge the gap between what they are and what God wants them to be.

How easy it is for development officers to focus on guilt, need, or emergencies to motivate people. When viewing the development officer as a catalyst to meet the need for increased giving, how easy it becomes to refer to the gifts for the Lord's work from God's people as though they were financial transactions, tax planning strategies, instead of a function of faith. Many development offices a few months ago had stacks of brochures on the latest tax reforms and what they mean for charitable giving. Studies declare that charitable giving for religious organizations will be hardest hit. Giving will be reduced because of the new tax reform. If that is the case, we are among the most miserable people on earth. Statistics previously mentioned has proven different.

Professor John Jeske, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in a paper entitled, *The Congregation's Stewardship Education Program*, notes,

“How naturally we have gotten to use motivations which though they may be hallowed by long years of use, cannot stand up under the scrutiny of God's Word. What do you think of this appeal to a Christian? ‘Remember that Christ died for you – you ought to be grateful that he died, and out of gratitude you should produce fruits of faith and love.’ Sound vaguely familiar? That type of motivation has hoary precedent, but the Scriptures are quite silent about it. When Scriptures speak to the Christian, the basic mood is indicative, not imperative. Simply to tell a member, ‘You ought to be grateful, now get grateful,’ is not helping him solve his problem. Don't confuse gratitude with motivation. Gratitude is our response to God's mercy. It's a fruit, not a root. The motivating force in a Christian's life is God's love for man, *not* man's love for Christ. The love of Christ that constrains us is Christ's love for us, *not* our love for Christ.”

Thus, if we minister to that need of our people, development can be of value to our educational ministry. The focus must be people's needs, not institutional needs. Really then we must be the giver, not the recipient. Christ did not die for the church or the school, he died for people. People have needs, and to those needs we must minister, even as development officers. Keeping that focus will help us also realize that people give to people, not to organizations or institutions.

People Needs – not institutional needs – and the ministry was established to meet those individual needs – even the need to give!

The focus of a development ministry should be to provide ample opportunities for our people to express their love for their Savior and their fellow believers who have special needs. One person in great need is revealed to us in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is interesting to note the different attitudes of stewardship displayed in this parable:

1. That which is mine is mine and I think I'll keep. Attitude of the priest and Levite.
2. That which is mine can be yours, if you pay for it. Attitude of the innkeeper.
3. That which is yours can be mine, if I take it from you. Attitude of the thief.
4. That which is mine is yours, for I have only received it as a steward. Attitude of the Good Samaritan.

There are many Good Samaritans in our Christian congregations. All we have to do is find them and provide them with various opportunities to practice their faith through exercises of stewardship and giving.

B. Realizing Some Value

Needs need not be exclusive of value to a development ministry. God holds us accountable for teaching his people that he looks upon them, not as receptacles into which he can pour his love and forgiveness, but as channels through whom he wants to affect others.

He has given us these channels to use in our ministry to others. What a value God has provided. It is our responsibility to develop these channels, enlarge them, open them up and maintain them so they remain free flowing vessels for the spreading of God's love to all people.

The specific blessings which flow through these channels are to be shared with others. They are, of course, time, talent and treasures! The development minister has the responsibility to provide opportunities and means for the free flowage of time, talent, and treasures for the Lord's work—and in that order to be most effective: Time first; then talents, and finally treasures.

The first and best way for a development minister to help a Christian use his time for one of our institutions would be to make use of that time to inform him about the institution, to help him devote his time listening and learning about your vital ministry to the young people in your area.

If this gift of time is not properly utilized by your schools with their constituents, very likely there will be no additional gift of talent or treasure, or such gifts of talent and treasure will have no meaning or purpose for the donor and probably will not be repeated.

Your informed faithful volunteers are your repeaters. Your informed donors are your repeaters. Faithfulness results from proper use of time. Faithfulness is the key. And development simply and essentially is developing faithfulness, commitment and dedication.

Most people do not understand that true giving adds real meaning to life. Development is an excellent means of helping a friend find that meaning. This lack of understanding probably has developed from the myths that harm the ministry of development. Such myths as:

1. Development is setting up people to get money from them.
2. Development is simply getting a person to give his/her fair share.
3. Development is talking someone into doing something he/she does not want to do.
4. Development is just another tax loop or tax dodge.

Speaking of taxes, I'd like to point out a vital difference between tax evasion and tax avoidance. In Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota there is a toll bridge across the Mississippi River. You can travel from Inver Grove Heights to Saint Paul Park in just a few minutes, if you cross the toll bridge.

If you go through the toll gate without paying the toll, you evade the toll. This is tax evasion; it is illegal.

There is another bridge over the river in South Saint Paul that is toll free. You may take that bridge and by going the longer way, cross the river without a toll. This is tax avoidance, which is entirely legal!

It is simply good stewardship for donors to plan their charitable giving to avoid but not evade unnecessary taxes.

So you see development may be both a need and a value to our ministry when the concept of need is properly understood. Note the three basic needs of every Christian who wants to exercise that function of faith, namely to give:

1. Need to know
2. Need to help
3. Need to feel appreciated

Thus, a development program is a ministry for:

1. Providing Information
2. Providing Opportunity
3. Providing Appreciation

So a properly administered development program will complement your school's mission and by the grace of God alone it will be a tremendous value by providing a rich spiritual experience for all the participants.

QUESTIONS?