

# A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO FOR THE CHURCH

## RESOURCE 2.13



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There are many dreams of human life and many even for the church. Martin Luther King had a dream – a wonderful dream of liberation. Martin Luther had a dream too – also one of liberation. Rosa Parks had a dream and those who fought against the use of children in factories of the industrial revolution had a dream. Lincoln had a dream and so did Michelangelo. He had many dreams. Artists dream and then make them – a marvelous gift to the world. Artists are simply dreamers who then make something new.

Each of us can have a dream. Or a few perhaps, if there is the energy and the time. One need not be famous to have a dream. Many became famous only because the dream they had was simply shared by many others, connecting to longings.

What are your dreams? My dream, is simple. I have a dream that the church be a peaceable kingdom. The only two in scriptures are filled with animals who love each other, but humans may as well. Animals live where there is food. That is why our human hearing has such absurdly high decibel capacity – a capacity we do not use today. But it was bred into us early on so that we could hear the high notes of birds. Why? Because birds sing when they are well and mating. And they only are well and mating when fed. So humans developed the ability to hear bird's high notes early in human development, 200,000 years ago, so that we would be able to hear where there was water and food.

The church's mission is, I believe, God's dream. In making Jesus and placing Jesus among us as a model for our intersection in the mandorla between divine and human existence, God was speaking His dream – a dream Jesus spoke too. Jesus' "I have a dream" speech was perhaps the sermon on the mount and God's the first few verses of Johns Gospel – the desire to make word and implant it for the making of a new, peaceable kingdom.

So, what we know about the planet on which we so carelessly live is that its bounty feeds and waters. It is in places of bounty that humans gather because they need water and food to live and be happy. Great cities have emerged from dust simply because of a river or two. The great city of Denver, from which I write this manifesto, emerged simply because two small rivers, often merely a trickle, converged, and plants grew there. It was a green spot on a brown and tan land. So a tent wen up. Then another and another. Cowboys and strong women began to cut trees and replace tents with shacks and then houses. Today, we have Denver.

The kingdom of God is simply a spiritual and temporal version of that work. The church is simply a container for God's hopes for the kingdom of God. And not only the church. But that is for another book.

What is the church's version of the confluence of two rivers and the resulting greenery – the resulting growth, food and water? Is it prayer and study, Eucharist and serving the poor, worship and community?

# A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO FOR THE CHURCH (CONT'D.)

No. Those things emerge from something else just as human work, family life, meals, festivals, sex, intimacy friendship all emerge from the most basic of things – resources. Humans thrive when they eat and drink. It's that simple. Our biology is a secret message from its creator – a message so easily overlooked.

Look at the bread basket of the Midwestern Menonites or the Pennsylvania Dutch in which a tradition of family, land, farming and meals – a bountiful table of pie and roast, vegetables and lemonade abound. People gather at food and water, bread and wine - and then they eat and then their bodies are fueled and then they can live life. A peaceable kingdom, or close.

Then look at Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp. Sleepless nights on boards, cold barracks, putrid water, growling, lurching dogs, uniforms, spotlights, magot-infested meats made into thin soups doled out a cup at a time after a day of death-defying labor, hours standing in lines in freezing cold, ferocious fear, and very little water. Not the peaceable kingdom.

Bounty and starvation – the having and sharing of resources so that life may emerge unfettered - that is the peaceable kingdom. Choke off the resources a human body needs – water, food, rest, connection – those four things, and you have death and illness.

So when I look at the church today I am terribly confused by it. I am not talking here of the manipulation of people by power – that will always be with us. It is the effects of satan and will exist from as early as street ally bullies to as late as bureaucratic Bishops and everything in between. But not all teenagers and not all Bishops and clergy are bullies – just a small few. Many lay leaders, priest and Bishops are very, very good and our job is to be awake to them while not pretending the others do not exist. Satan's best work is not done when we are sinning; it is done when we are not paying attention. Satan's evil can be mitigated if the rest of good people are well fed and rested – able to see. Church drama does not confuse me. It is just human drama in costumes. What confuses me is how very effectively and thoroughly the church has avoided to attend to the raising of resources which fund its mission - the way a person might starve themselves and then wonder why they lack energy to work. Why do we so hate talking about and doing the work of raising money and people when we need both so much to be The Church?

When the Shakers settled their commune at Canterbury, near Blackwater Bluff, my farm and pottery in New Hampshire, they first removed trees and built gardens. They found water from local streams and lakes. They prayed and worshipped and tended to their friendships, but much of the day, to make those good things possible, they tended to the resources they would need – fuel for the physical energy to be well, to thrive, to be strong bodies so that those strong bodies might do the work, the intimacy, the friendship, the worship which created the peaceable kingdom they were choosing. They were so ingenious in their pursuits of agriculture and crafts – the things we need to live life – making resources. They invented the seed packet industry simply because they wanted and needed seeds to grow vegetables. They invented the woven broom because they wanted cleaner houses. They invented the washing machine to have clean clothes. And they invented many of our favorite American recipes because they loved good food. Food fuelled their love for each other. Water fuelled their love for each other. Both fueled the energy to live life abundantly.

So what confuses me in the church today is how thoroughly and effectively we have retained a form of

Gnosticism around money in the church which names money evil and evangelism impolite. Our seminaries have chosen not to spend much time teaching financial development and membership growth, preferring to use all of their resources of teaching on scripture, liturgy and pastoral care – very fine things indeed for clergy to know before a ministry. But then they emerge from seminary to take a church or a chaplaincy, a hospice ministry or missionary work and are utterly unprepared to raise the money they will need to fuel their mission.

Someone, somewhere along the way decided that money is evil, earthly, secular. Perhaps it was the King James' translation of money as "filthy lucre" or perhaps it was because hagiography favored the poor saints, or perhaps (and this is what I suspect) it was just that not having money so pissed them off that they made themselves feel terribly spiritual by being poor victims of mean wealth. Regardless, the church has rejected Gnosticism but only officially. Gnosticism is rejected as heresy in all its expressions but one – practicality. We get out of having to raise money and people for mission by labeling them both "temporal, worldly and evil. Gnosticism lives within our church and thrives in stewardship meetings and membership growth conversations. Satan wins not by hampering our efforts at resource development, but rather by inspiring in us a rejection of it as "base and worldly." For too many of us "These hands are made for chalices and not calluses" is no longer funny. Our churches and dioceses are groaning under the weight of a lack of human and financial resources and yet we turn away from and have limited tool employed for financial development and membership growth.

Money has been labeled evil and evangelism (membership growth – welcoming people into the church) has been labeled social encroachment so we teach neither fundraising nor marketing to our seminarians, knowing full well that both fundraising and marketing/communications are the bedrock of non-profit leadership. To our peril we pretend that churches are "above" mere non-profit stature and then wonder why our local museums and universities, YMCAs and Homeless shelters are raising millions from our own parishioners! They raise it because they employ valuable tools to do so. Why will not the church? And saying that our churches are not "non-profit agencies" is simply more Gnosticism. The cycle starves the church of its needed resources.

We will sometimes spiritualize the situation by saying that "God will provide in God's time." Which is just a financial version of the Christian Scientist's spiritual value that medicine is not needed – God will provide health in God's time. Neither, to this author, is a good plan. Must churches and people die so needlessly and slowly simply because working hard is somehow unspiritual?

So, I have a dream.

I have a dream of a Church fully funded for its mission.

I have a dream of clergy taught well in the tools of church administration, financial development, membership growth, evangelism, strategic communications, gorilla marketing, major gifts invitation, meaningful conversation hosting, planned giving invitation, media management, grants-writing and discerned strategic planning.

# A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO FOR THE CHURCH (CONT'D.)

I have a dream of a church in which a priest is as skilled at asking for a major gift as they are at crafting liturgy.

I have a dream of a vestry having to figure out where to give the extra millions the church does not need for inflated, institutional empire building by clergy career climbers.

I have a dream of a church in which a priest is as skilled at designing the ways people are asked for investment of money and time, as they are skilled in navigating and using the scriptures of their tradition.

I have a dream of a church in which Gnosticism is no more, is finally moved into its heresy charge so that money is no longer a source of anxiety but a fuel for mission, no longer evil and worldly, but every bit as powerful as a cup of wine or a plate of bread to make change in the world.

I have a dream of a church in which its members are helped to let go of their white-knuckled grasp on money and encouraged to give their money to the mission of the church joyfully with great investment in that to which they are giving money.

I have a vision of a church in which people who love music, give money to help the church to make music and other, different people who love liturgy give a major chunk of their money to make beautiful liturgy – to buy the candles, the silks, the sculptures, the windows, the altars which move people to be better able to see glory.

I have a dream of a church which so energetically writes grant proposals that they get funded by them to do amazing things which ease human suffering and work to inspire and create a peaceable kingdom.

I have a dream of a church that so effectively raises money that it can discern to spend \$200,000 on its needs and another \$200,000 to build a safe-house for abused women and children – that it does not raise enough to simply exist, but rather raises enough to flourish for the healing of people outside their nave – those “other” people – the people who did not win the genetic lottery on our planet.

I have a dream in which people die and leave the church their estates, making it possible for churches to give millions and even billions to heal humans and to heal our planet’s land and waters. My dream is not that taxes will do that. So I have a dream that clergy and lay leaders are taught effectively how to ask for a penultimate gift like an estate. It’s not as hard as we make it out to be. It goes like this: “Will you include our church in your will please?”

We make planned giving hard so we do not have to actually do it. Just ask people to include money in their will for the church and then work hard to deserve the money for which you are asking. We make asking for money, and asking people to come and see (perhaps even become part of) our churches hard so that we do not have to do it. But even that’s not true. Really, in the end, our mission is not constipated by a lack of willingness by Her people – such lovely people they are – mostly. Our mission is confined and constrained by a lack of money simply because very few agencies are able to teach fast enough to change the system

– though God bless those agencies like The Episcopal Church Foundation, TENS, and Fearless Church Fundraising which, among others are trying to teach, trying to encourage financial development and membership growth in our church! With 6,500 churches, a few dozen consultants – experts on financial development and church wellness - have their work cut out for them!

When I was born in the 1960's there were 3.6 million Episcopalians and more than 8,000 churches. Today there are only 1.9 million Episcopalians left. The big, strong, safe church I imagined I was becoming part of is changing under my feet – under our feet. What is it molting into now? We will see. But it is naive to think it is going to stay the same. It is changing into something else and part of that change is being driven by reduced numbers in giving and membership. We can react by being angry and resentful, or we can respond by being curious. I choose curious.

The energy is in the shimmering question – always. One of my shimmering questions is about resources. At the YMCA we new that if we raised enough money from people who admired the effective work we were doing in communities, then we would have the financial resources to spend money on membership communications and marketing, thereby bringing in new people to use, enjoy, give to and support our mission. With that success, we could do even more, raise even more, grow membership even more and then, and then, and then. It was an upward spiral. Was I naïve to think that could be a reality in the church? Is there something spiritual that I am missing about a church spiraling downward in money and membership so needlessly?

The four-fold way of being in the world which best serves humans is

1. Show up
2. Pay attention
3. Tell the truth
4. Do not be attached to the outcome

So this manifesto is my way of showing up. I am calling the church to pay attention. So what truth can be told in our current situation in the church? Well, here is one truth I am pondering...

In the past 50 years, we Episcopalians have lost our older 2 million Episcopalians to inevitable human death that includes:

- the Lost Generation (who left gifts through their wills in the 60' and 70's)
- the Great Generation (who left gifts through their wills in the 70's and 80's) and
- the Silent Generation (who left gifts through their wills at the turn of the millennium)

# A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO FOR THE CHURCH (CONT'D.)

We know from research that asking religious people for money is made easy because religious giving and attendance is already a norm. “(All) religious giving in 1992 totaled \$56.7 billion, Cornell reported, which was 14 times the \$4 billion spent on the three biggest sports: major league baseball, football, and basketball. Moreover, attendance at religious events, based on annual Gallup polls, was 5.6 billion, 55 times the 103 million total attendance reported by the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball.... If all church members were to tithe 10 percent, an additional \$131 billion would be available through churches for Christian and charitable work, both within and without the congregation.”

Giving in Different Denominations: Religious giving has reached all-time lows Cover Story from May / June 2001 issue of Philanthropy magazine by Julia Duin

Let's say, just for fun, that the average gift through planned giving in the last few decades (given some very small bequests and some very large ones) is \$80,000 ( a very conservative estimate based on research published by The Chronicle of Philanthropy.) Two million Episcopalians, deceased from the last 50 years could have given 160 billion dollars (\$160,000,000,000) for the church to use in mission and communications.

Many may say that the church does not need all that money. But there are starving children in Yemen who disagree. There are teens caught up in human trafficking who would disagree. There are stranded refugees who would disagree. There are many seeing violent conversation on a rampage in our culture who would disagree. Could the church raise money in order to thrive and then, on top of thriving as institutions, give billions away to feed starving children, care for refugees, build safe-houses for women and men in prostitution and build centers in Washington DC which teach non-violent conversation? And the list of needs goes on.

The church needs clergy who know how to raise money and who know how to attract and keep community members of their “tribes” or “churches.” And it needs to choose clergy willing to do this work. It is not good enough to pass a plate and hope money falls into it. And it is not good enough to have fun or pretty things occur inside its walls and hope people magically start attending church and enfolded into the community of a church as a result. People need to be asked to make financial gifts – the church needs the funds for mission but even more, the people need to learn to give it away! People need to be asked to come and see (and perhaps one day even join) our churches. As we see membership and giving drop in our church, might we ask if what we are doing to raise money and people for mission, and how we are doing it, is working or if, in fact, we need a new model – a system change?

I believe, with all my heart that I and many other fundraisers and membership marketers have something to offer to the church at a time in which the church needs what we are offering. What we offer is not glamorous nor particularly fueled with any forms of greatness. We fundraisers and marketing experts in the church are just people who are missionaries in a horrific revolution around resources within our church, clergy and lay leaders who are experts in financial development and marketing are asking if the church has suffered enough and if the church would like to use financial development and marketing the

way the church uses a table as an altar, a goblet as a chalice and a napkin as a purification? Might a robust fanatical development and membership growth revolution in our church provide the resources she needs to be a new kind of church for a new kind of future?

These past 25 years of my working life I have been a corporate financial development and membership Vice President in the YMCA, then a seminarian and priest in a kind, gentle parish, then a monk, a church canon for stewardship and congregational life and finally a cathedral canon. It has been a strange career, full of the joys of meeting great, good clergy and Bishops as well as meeting some horrific ones. People are people no matter the title. Is it possible to inspire clergy and lay leaders to embrace fundraising? There are some great examples of those who have. Here is one.

Monty Roberts was a horse trainer. His story has always inspired me. His father was a great horse trainer and a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth II for whom horses are a passion and considerable source of income. Monty grew up watching his father and his staff train horses with a rough, abusive technique which trained them but left them wounded. He wondered if there was a simpler, more natural, and more effective way forward in the horse training industry and so went to school to learn psychology and animal management. Over time, this unremarkable and un-famous man began to train horses in a more natural way by making them at ease and using communications rather than abuse to incline their behavior. The Queen heard about this and asked him to come to England to show her what he was doing. He gave an exhibition which stunned her and brought the Queen Mother to tears.

Trainers from the “old school” immediately began to whisper rumors that he was using a kind of snuff, thrown surreptitiously into their nostrils, in the speed of things, and which chemically calmed them, giving an impression of miraculous handling. Rather than believe the rumors of the many people with whom she had lived and worked in the horse management industry, even some her own family, she asked for a second display that afternoon, cancelling her engagements and standing with him so as to get an up-close view. Again, he astounded, and the defamation was crushed in infancy. People get mean when they envy the talents and goodness of others.

The Queen sent Monty on a 28 county tour to train English trainers in this new, gentle, kind, effective way of managing and training horses. She suggested he write about his work and it changed his life. He never became famous nor wealthy, but he contributed to a field which needed his work and prevented many horses from further abuse.

That is all that I and other fundraisers in the church want to do. I just find that after having raised money in the church for exactly half of my half-century of life, I feel I want to use this last 15 years to join others in promoting a new way of doing this work, one that is back-to-basics transforming financial development (stewardship) and membership development (evangelism) ecclesial systems which are not working because they have never really been developed on the science and technology of development and membership marketing – a science and technology which is so successful outside the church.



# A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO FOR THE CHURCH (CONT'D.)

## RESOURCE 2.13

The church's insistence that it will not pollute its holiness with secular models is not serving it well. We use new-fangled irons in sacristies but seem able to dismiss new forms of financial development strategy. There are only so many conferences to which one can go in which people gather for self-congratulations about knowing the 20 times Jesus spoke about money before we begin to see that the emperor has no clothes. And I am saddened by churches – led by good clergy and good laity (for there is little to be done about the rest but love them) whose mission and ministry is confined and imprisoned within the inability to use effective tools to raise money and people. Is it possible for a clergy person or lay leader to raise money and still be an effective church leader? Absolutely. Here is an example.

I and my family have spent many Christmases in Williamsburg and yet for the first time, I was able this year to get a tour of Basset Hall, the Williamsburg home of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and his wife Abby. As I heard the story unfold in front of me – a tourist, on a rainy day in Williamsburg - I began to realize that I wanted to write to you from within the epiphany I experienced. I was nearly frantic to do so because things were becoming clearer to me. Let's go back in time a bit.


The Reverend Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin was twice rector of Bruton Parish Church in the 20's. Bruton Parish was and still is the colonial church of the town and Goodwin was department chair at William and Mary and a development officer on the side for the college as was sometimes the case with professors. It is good because while passionate about teaching, they can use that passion with donors. Financial Development is not for everyone but it was for some, and that is why I feel that clergy can and should, when possible, do the same thing – raise money – especially major gifts - with donors in their churches.

Goodwin loved history and people and God. He was fascinated to know that beneath and within this dull, ugly little college town were foundations of the town whose streets Jefferson and others walked as this nation was being imagined. The gas station had two types of brick – one was from a colonial printer. The cow field was bumpy with the foundations of the Governor's palace and the old shed behind the general store was the colonial blacksmith shop while the old general store was the colonial silversmith workshop. Goodwin began to wonder. What would it be like to restore the town to its pre-1776 appearance as a living museum?

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and his wife Abby Aldrich Rockefeller were in and out of Williamsburg because they were philanthropists to William and Mary and specifically to the Phi Beta Kappa Hall being built on campus, largely with his money and its influence on other major donors. Phi Beta Kappa Hall was part of the philanthropy of Rockefeller – part of what I call in my book manuscript on Major Gifts in Church “the meaning-making of a donor.”

One day Goodwin, an experienced major gifts fund raiser for the College of William and Mary, asked Rockefeller if he would go on a drive – just a drive. Rockefeller, a busy oil tycoon with five homes around the nation, one with 180 rooms, was a busy man and self-made. He agreed to the drive – even aware as he was that Goodwin was a priest and a fundraiser. Goodwin never asked for a dime on that trip but he planted a vision by pointing out the hidden buildings under the tawdry, dusty veneer of 1920's Williamsburg – a colonial silversmith shop there, a wig shop there, a 1772 coffee house there, the House of Burgesses here,





the colonial “gaol” (jail) there – all hidden under dozens of renovations over 200 years and lots of cheap press-board and under olive linoleum.

Goodwin had raised the money from wealthy parishioners to excavate and then renovate the church in his care and also raised enough to buy the then dilapidated Wythe House next door as a new rectory and formation center– the home in which Wythe tutored Thomas Jefferson in Law.

Each time David Rockefeller and Abbey, his wife came to Williamsburg to check on the progress of the William and Mary capital campaign, Reverend Goodwin took him on a drive. Soon the Rockefellers were so charmed by the little town that they purchased a small home there. Basset Hall – was the home Rockefeller bought as a retreat house for Abbey whose love of colonial folk art was rooting her there for rest, away from their many mansions and associated social responsibilities of great financial wealth. One day, under the massive tree in front of that house, and after a drive, Goodwin asked Rockefeller if his meaning-making overlapped with Goodwin’s. He further asked Rockefeller to help financially to research and restore Williamsburg as a gift to the future of a nation needing to know its history.

Rockefeller said no. But later, he agreed only to pay for architectural accountings and renderings of the colonial town and an assessment of what was remaining of Colonial Williamsburg and what would need to be rebuilt. And he agreed only on condition of anonymity and only to donate \$5,000. A friendship had begun. And something more. That day, an episcopal priest, in what was once the nation’s capital city – one trained in major gift financial development, found an overlap between the Rockefeller’s meaning-making capacity and the vision Goodwin had to restore a town to beauty and establish the preservation of a window into an important era in the nation’s birthing. Of course this would also have major impact on the college so, in fact, he was doing his job as a fundraiser, a priest, a writer and a teacher. He also imagined good things for Bruton parish if the town was a place of destination, interest and beauty again. Today, a million people from all faiths and none visit Bruton Parish church as they tour the 301 acres of Williamsburg. Not bad evangelism.

Soon thereafter, the first great colonial house – also dilapidated - went up for sale for \$6,000. A wire to Rockefeller asking for more financial investment of philanthropy was responded to with a long-awaited and very conservative “yes,” but in a telegram under the assumed name of “David’s father.”

Soon Rockefeller would agree to \$5 million in gifts but absolutely no more. Within his lifetime, however he loved what he saw unfolding as did Abbey. The friendship grew, the mutual respect did too as did the vision and the scope. Soon Rockefeller had donated \$65 million. Since his death, hundreds of millions more has been donated by his heirs and by other philanthropists who saw the progress and wanted a piece of the philanthropic action.

This great friendship between an episcopal priest who raised money for an idea - and this oil tycoon - birthed a dream. And at their respective deaths, the Rockefellers admitted to friends that of all their many and massive mansions, Basset Hall, where they lived in Williamsburg, was their real and most happy home – two rooms down and two up at the end of the most famous road in American history.

# A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANIFESTO FOR THE CHURCH (CONT'D.)

## RESOURCE 2.13

This is the Epiphany. The late medieval word “disaster” comes from the words “dis + astron” or “without a star.” The word came from the terror and pain of being lost – travelling without a guiding star to guide one to the Christ of peace – the star followed by kings. I believe, down to my bones, that a disaster in our time, and in our church is the lack of care and attention to the overlap between the mission needs of our church and the meaning-making philanthropy of these generations soon to die. We have need of so much money to get good things done but the philanthropy is going instead to universities and museums that have the financial development resources to raise the money from those whose meaning-making is being made through philanthropy. What if the church had those resources? What if the church had that passion to raise money for mission rather than what seems so often to happen – raising money to keep the lights on and the clergy paid?


I and a few other church fundraisers and marketing experts are on this planet to help wealthy and even not so wealthy people out of the cloudy “dis-astron” of being lost within their wealth (wealth being here defined as membership in the 1% of the planet’s wealthy – which means most of us.) And we am on this planet to help those people with financial capacity to find the meaning-making they seek, and how it overlaps with Christ’s mission in the Episcopal Church – a wealthy, privileged church to which much has been given and so from which much is expected. That overlap is where major gifts are given to the church and her mission.

The wealthy benefit – are less lost – because they feel great about their gifts. The church benefits because it can use the money to build that which points to glory, that which serves and heals the poor and marginalized, that which teaches and forms goodness. It is a rare win-win situation. It is rare indeed. And from missionary in Haiti to College of William and Mary fundraiser to YMCA fundraiser to ordination to parish ministry, to monastery, to church ministry to cathedral ministry I have tried hard to be faithful to the calls on me that I, and those around me, sensed were of God.

It was a hard choice to leave the monastery. Sometimes the hardest thing we do is what we choose not to do. But I left, in part, because I felt that being a priest and fundraiser could be better lived-out, with difficulty, outside a monastery and because I wanted to try to find a way to be a leader in a church which was and still is wrestling with the tensions between the need to raise money and the inability and disinclination to do so effectively as a part of ministry.

Our seminaries do not teach our clergy – of all ranks – how to raise money, and how to raise membership. My time on the Executive Council did not incline me to believe The Episcopal Church will assign much money to teaching churches how to rise money and yet seems confused by their lack of resources – the situation is pathological.

Sure, an honest, effective, faithful clergy person whose prayer life and skills make ministry in a parish flourish, will attract giving, will attract investment as long as his or her mission is worthy. But meanwhile the museums, the universities, the YMCAs and others are expertly harvesting annual gifts, major gifts and estate gifts because they have the expertise, staff, dedicated resources and skills to do so – leaving most clergy in the situation I faced as a curate, at a death-bedside in which the lady with whom I spoke lamented saying “I wish the parish had asked me.” She left her multi-million dollar estate to UVA.



Monty Roberts had a new way of doing something people needed done. Father Goodwin saw a need, had the capacity to meet that need and inspired meaning-making in the heart and soul of a great philanthropist.

May God raise up a revolution of fundraising and membership growth to fuel God's mission in these days.