
APPENDIX D

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Geoffrey T. Boisi, Chairman, National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management

Since the idea of the Leadership Roundtable began about five years ago, and was formally incorporated three years ago, we have attempted to accomplish a number of things. The approach we have taken has been very consistent. We have insisted that we be positive and make contributions that are positive and develop relationships within every level of the Church. Personally, I feel we have been pretty good at that. In our hearts and in our actions we are trying to be extremely inclusive and positive.

One of the best things we do in terms of emphasizing the positive is conferring the Leadership Roundtable Best Practices Award. I feel that Bishop Steib and Dr. Mary McDonald were great choices for this year's award. I know how impactful their presentation was on a lot of us. It shows what real leadership can accomplish within the Church and in a tough situation. We thank them very much for their participation and for sharing with us their story.

A second theme is that we have committed to be solutions-oriented and active. When we bring before you the kind of people who were on our parish panel—Fr. Jack Wall, Leisa Anslinger, and Fr. Joe Donnelly—that to me was an informative, thoughtful, and inspiring rendition of what we are all about. At the parish level, which is where everything really starts, and in some ways ends for all of us in our relationship with the Church, to see when that is done really well is to know how exciting our religion is and how impactful it can be.



Geoffrey T. Boisi

The reason we have the quality of people we do in this room, and the time, energy, and talents that you are bringing, is because you have a love of the Church, and you understand the notion of mission.

We also want to acknowledge that we have heard loud and clear the notion of translation of the terminology between the Church and the business world. I know there was a lot of discussion this afternoon and this morning on the Work of Hope document. Not only in this, but in each of the documents that we've been preparing, we've really poured a lot of time and energy into translating our work into a spiritual dimension, a language that appeals to each of you who are active day to day in the Church, and that captures what the secular world has found to be best practices. It is a good theme to remind ourselves of, and we will continue to do that and get better at it over time. It will be very helpful to us if you could identify interpreters for us who balance and work in both of those worlds.

We've tried in everything that we've done to be smart, effective, have creative ideas, and identify really talented, experienced, brilliant people.

Stewardship is another notion we have tried to foster. The reason we have the quality of people we do in this room, and the time, energy, and talents that you are bringing, is because you have a love of the Church, and you understand the notion of mission. I'd like to think that everybody believes that we, as an organization, have that deep in our hearts and our souls. It's pretty tough doing this day in and day out as you do your own work, but it's possible because you love the Lord and you love the mission of the Church. We have to continue to remind ourselves of that. It's hard to accomplish the things that we need to accomplish unless we are invested in it. There are people who invest and there are people who contribute. And people invest in ideas and they invest in the mission; they invest in the people who do quality work, and for the right reasons. People contribute because they want to be part of something. Here we are talking about one of the most important relationships of our lives, and therefore we've invested, and it's hard to invest unless you have trust and respect for each other. When that's harmed in some way, you are not facing up to the reality of the situation unless you address that. Maybe we haven't done it well and maybe we need to figure out a better way to do it, but that's the reason why we put it on the table.

We've tried in everything that we've done to be smart, effective, have creative ideas, and identify really talented, experienced, brilliant people. That's why we asked Fred Gluck and Larry Bossidy to kick this conference off, and hopefully over the past years you've felt that the people we've chosen to speak to this group and advise this group are in their category. I think for us to accomplish our overall goals, we need to continue to attract more and more people like that.

At the heart of everything is our devotion to the Church.

To hear someone like Larry Bossidy, who was a bit of a skeptic, say today, “You guys have stayed at it and I have a different perspective on this; I’m going to try and figure out how to work with you guys,” to me that’s a great thing. There are a number of people who have important voices like he does, and as we continue to do this and execute at the levels we are, I think we will be able to attract more people like yourselves and like Larry, and if we are smart about it we will be able to transmit our message to millions of people rather than the hundreds of thousands we are currently reaching.

At the heart of everything is our devotion to the Church. I was really happy to hear what Larry said today, particularly about the Church getting beaten up. We are tired of that and we have a lot more pride in something that is so important to us. That’s why I thank Susan King and the great Carnegie Foundation, who are going to help us convene other secular foundations. We are creating a case for the great contribution this wonderful Church of ours has made to this great country, and will start conveying that message and the reasons why these foundations should be contributing to us more than in the past.

You heard my comments earlier that we are really confident about the quality of some of the things we have done, and the quality of the people we have surrounded ourselves with. I think that message is becoming more interesting to the secular media, and in order to achieve the kinds of scalable goals we are talking about we are going to have to do a better job of reaching out to them. Any relationships you have in that regard, or any ideas you have in terms of themes or introductions, would be extraordinarily helpful.

. . . we have to make sure we capture all the dimensions of the Church, from a socioeconomic standpoint, from a geographic standpoint, and from a cultural standpoint.

In terms of what you can do for us, you’re off to a good start by just being here. Many of you have volunteered to be on various committees and we want you to continue to do that. I would ask each of you to think about one or two people within your sphere of influence—whether it’s your functional area, or your sector of the Church, society, business, or other frame of reference—who could contribute to what we’re doing in terms of their intellectual talent, their presence in the community, their voice in the community, or in any other way, we would like to have you nominate them to be part of our council.

Many of you represent organizations that have tremendous influence throughout the Church. If you feel confident in the quality of our people, and you feel what we’re doing is worthwhile, then we will achieve our goals.

Along the lines of the conversation we had yesterday on the inclusiveness of our desires, we have to make sure we capture all the dimensions of the Church, from a socioeconomic standpoint, from a geographic standpoint, and from a cultural standpoint. This has been an objective of ours from the very beginning, and we have not yet accomplished it. If any of you, in terms of your spheres of influence, can bring more diversity to this body, we are very desirous of that. Furthermore, we ask you to take the tools and the products that we have collectively developed and sit down with your bishops, your pastors, and the different organizations that you have affiliations with and encourage them to use these materials to promulgate what we have done. We have started to develop a very powerful network. Many of you represent organizations that have tremendous influence throughout the Church. If you feel confident in the quality of our people, and you feel what we're doing is worthwhile, then we will achieve our goals.

To the extent that you have a relationship with the bishop, ask that bishop to join us. We've had a number of conversations with the bishops over the years. They encourage us not to view the numbers that come to this meeting as an indication of the impact we are having. I do believe that because they say it to us, and we have heard a lot of anecdotal information about that—but it would be helpful and it's reinforcing to have more bishops here. One of the things I want to talk about is whether or not to move this gathering around the country or not. We are very thankful to Wharton over the last five years for hosting us. It's been phenomenal, but maybe now, to demonstrate to our broader Catholic community some of the goals that we have, maybe it's time to move around the country. If you could communicate with your bishops—and also the superiors and provincials of both men's and women's religious orders—and serve as an advocate of what the Leadership Roundtable offers, that would be a significant help.

“This is what we are about. . . . We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not the master builder, not messiah, we are prophets of the future, that is not our own.”

Your willingness to serve or chair some these subcommittees: that's really where the heart of the work we are doing lies. Hopefully you do feel the sense of quality that we've got, and those of you who have done that have recognized that we have come up with some really good things and it's a worthwhile expenditure of your time.

I'll just close with a comment. Sometimes my intensity takes over. I am an impatient guy by nature and the scalability thing is an important thing. I do realize that we've made a lot of progress and I recognize that and I'm personally proud and inspired by it. Our good friend Gerry Roche calls me up periodically and every time I talk to him he gives me a good piece of advice and he gives me something that touches me. This morning on the way over, he told me he called back to his office and he got a copy of a quote by a real martyr of the Church, Archbishop Oscar Romero. He wrote this, and I think it is relevant to all of us:

“This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter, and to do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not the master builder, not messiah, we are prophets of the future, that is not our own.”

Plenary Discussion Highlights

Kathleen McChesney:

Could you say something about what the Board is thinking about as the possible topic if we do have another general meeting next year? I understand there is a possibility of taking on the theme of communication and the use of the media both to lend professional expertise on the question of how the Church could improve its communication within the Church but also using the print media, televised media, the Internet to improve and work on the Church’s image in the larger country and the community.

Geoff Boisi:

We are going to have annual meetings. That isn’t a question, it’s just a question of whether or not to have it here and what the timing of it is and whether or not to do it in a way that includes certain other messages... I think we’ve gotten people involved around the notion that we are interested in temporal themes and things like that, and this is emphasized with Wharton being a leading business school. I don’t think we’ve really decided whether we will meet here again, but I think that is a legitimate and important topic to consider.

Fr. Monan:

Just one idea on your reflection of patience and the importance of patience. The fact that I think all of us realize what a tremendous resource we have here, and among the other people who are not here who could be of great help, and the surprise we’ve had that there has been less activity on the part of bishops that we would have liked, and you know we’ve talked to a number of bishops individually, Cardinal George, and certain others. And they explained to us that part of the problem is the reluctance to and the fear of giving up control. I think that’s true. The more I’m involved with this group, the more I recognize the magnitude of the change that would be if the Church really began to professionalize the management of its operations. When the universities did this 10, 15, 20 years ago, the change was dramatic. It’s almost a different world. If the Church were to professionalize its management at the diocesan level, at the parish level, the change would be a complete change and the Church hasn’t seen anything quite like it. So, to take on a task like that is

certainly a long-range effort that is going to take years and years to do. But I think the ball is going to pick up speed and start moving, and the change will be dramatic. It does take patience on the part of all of us to realize what a big operation this is we are inviting the Church to begin to take on.

Thomas Healey:

I meant to mention in my comments before that one of the important things that we heard and we concluded as a group, among the many things which you will read in the document that we produce after this, is this notion of training for pastors and the important role that the universities can play in that. I just saw Dr. Cernera and Jack DeGioia, who invited us to work on some specific projects. I think we ought to take it upon ourselves to work with them. Whether that turns to be a focal point in the notion of training or some combination of training and communications or another topic of this whole notion of the multicultural aspects of the Church, there is a whole element in terms of the involvement of the reconnection with the youth—these are all topics that we have to grapple with over time and they should be candidates for discussion and focus of this group. But they all weave into the thing that Fr. Monan just talked about. I think you'll see from the information that we distribute over the course of the next weeks that we are considering not only the things that we've started to work on but also the contribution that the Church makes to the country economically. If we could professionalize this contribution from a managerial standpoint even more, it would free up huge resources that could be applied to other uses.