

International Office of Development

by Carl Leo Pieber, C.M.

Director of the Office of Development

I. Introduction to Development

Once upon a time, a little boy walked to school everyday. On his way to school, he would pass a sculptor at his workshop. One day the boy passed the shop and saw in the window a very large square piece of marble. He saw the sculptor take a hammer and make the first hit on the stone. He laughed and thought that it will take a long time to break up that big stone into little rocks. Each day the boy passed the shop and saw the sculptor working on the marble. Finally, one morning on his way to school the boy saw the sculptor standing outside the store looking in through the window. When the boy approached, he too looked through the window. There it was a large marble lion. The boy was amazed. He turned to the sculptor and said, "Hey mister, how did you know there was a lion in that marble?"

The lion in the Congregation of the Mission is all the good that we do and our love of the poor and priestly formation. Most of the time, we are like the boy and do not know that the lion is there because we do not think about all the good that we do.

Development is the sculptor. Development shows others our work with the poor and priestly formation — our lion. Development invites others to look and see, to be converted to a new reality. Development chisels away at the block of disinterest and the unknown by small invitations to see Christ in the face of the poor — our lion.

Some think that this development aspect of our charism is unpleasant. We are totally unaccustomed to "show others our work with the poor." We do not "want" to do development. Yet in many ways, St. Vincent de Paul never failed to show others the poor and invite them into his work — to do development!

The purpose of this paper is to give information on what the International Office of Development is. To do this we need first to look at what development is and what development is NOT. One way to do this is by explaining development with comparisons to our

general understanding of St. Vincent de Paul (Roman numeral II of this paper). This will give us the value and purpose of the office.

Secondly, there are development characteristics to every major activity of a province. By highlighting these, we will be able to see how the Office functions (Roman numeral III of this paper).

II. Development and the Life of St. Vincent de Paul

Everyone thinks of development as asking for money. Sometimes they think that it includes asking for other types of resources. Rarely do they think that development is putting a plan into action by obtaining resources. Development is important to planning by looking at what can be done and what resources are possible. Development also activates the plan by getting others involved in doing it — through money or other resources.

No one was a better developer than St. Vincent de Paul. St. Vincent's charism was to serve and help the poor and priests in their formation. But it is also clear that he never intended to do this solely or without anyone else. An important characteristic of St. Vincent's charism is that he solicited others to join him to serve and help the poor. Easy instances of this solicitation are seen in his creation of organized help: The Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Charity, the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity.

If ministering to the poor was the goal, then the needs of the poor guided St. Vincent's development! His "development plan" could be seen as having three steps:

1. Seeing the poor or priests that surrounded him (identifying "those" to be served);
2. Determining what needed to be done to help them (what he was going to do); and,
3. Soliciting others to do this with him or give him money for others to do it.

To St. Vincent, the poor and priests were not isolated people from those with money. There were no "walls" or "castes" between them. Both were seen as connected in the Body of Christ. They had the same goal "to see and meet Christ." Through their interaction, they helped each other accept the salvation Christ offered.

Each of these three steps had details. Vincent tended to let the details be determined with consultation on the local level or by each entity. To do the details or activate the plan, and to continue the plan into the future, Vincent developed human and material resources for the local levels.

To help priests and the poor Vincent would establish Tuesday Conferences and confraternities. To support these, Vincent would send confreres and daughters. Asking men and women to be Confreres and Daughters can be seen as development of the “human endowment of continuing the works into the future.” Vincent developed resources for the priests and the poor that would last forever.

III. Provinces and Development: Leadership in the Charism

Following the charism of St. Vincent de Paul is to work with others’ help in reaching out to the poor and priests in their formation. In terms of development, every province plans or organizes and asks others to help. Every Vincentian ministry should have others involved with it — from the secretary, cook or volunteer to the staff, professional, or director.

Vincentian development is to write or put forth a consistent and compelling case or plan for a province’s activities that is open to others working with them (either actively or through gifts) to achieve positive results in the confreres’ work with the poor and priestly formation. To write this compelling case, every province in some way follows the same three steps of St. Vincent.

1. Seeing the poor/priests that surround them (identifying the “those” to be served);
2. Determining what needs to be done to help them (what they are going to do); and,
3. Planning/soliciting others to do this with them or give them money to help the poor/priests.

Some wrongly think that development involves only the second part of step 3, solicitation of money. Contrary to this, development requires all three steps. Development most importantly requires that the details of steps one and two be stated as concretely as possible. This directly affects who to ask and how the donor can join with the ministry. Step 3 is successful when, as St. Vincent did, he showed and explained step one and two first.

As it is sometimes said, “The devil is in the details.” So too development and its activities are sometimes seen as the “detail devil.” Development needs the details so that it can interest others in the ministry. Without the details, steps one and two — who the poor are and what is to be done, are too general, vague and uninteresting. Generalities do not attract others or their gifts to join with the province to support their ministries.

For example on the provincial level, the first step can be the most difficult. Development needs or asks the province to focus its work with the poor or priests.

If we use ministries with the poor as an example, the difficulty can begin when the province has more than one ministry with the poor. Does the province try to center on one, two, three or four different ministries? Does it look at what is already being done by others? Does the province try to accept and do any or every ministry with the poor? How has the province previously taken on ministries with the poor?

For development to be successful, it needs a clear and specific message to give to potential helpers and donors. In the example with the poor, a province might state “We minister in poor parishes, secondary schools that serve the poor and prisons.” By default — that which is left out, the province is also saying that it does not emphasize ministry in hospitals, homeless shelters, or work training programs.

Development can happen when the Province focuses its ministries with the poor. Development needs the province to declare what it spends its resources on in ministry so that development can show others the goals and results of these ministries and solicit them to join. Development can not show others “generalities.” To solicit others to give to a fund without limits frightens donors. Their fear is that nothing will be accomplished and much will be wasted.

Step one, identifying the “poor” to be served, requires their description also. Development needs this description. Development needs the province to define and describe the need and the poor. If possible, the description and definition should include why the province thinks these “poor” are a priority as opposed to other types of poor.¹ It is with this definition and description that the province can proceed to answer step 2.

Step 2 determines what ministry or ministries the province will do and why. Sometimes the answer to this question is found in the answers to other related questions. For example, related questions might be:

1. What ministry or ministries might best serve these people?
2. Who among the province can do this ministry?
3. Can we train/form confreres to do this ministry?

¹ Many times the ministry has a historical basis in the province. The priority should include or indicate this also.

4. Can we estimate the costs in terms of manpower and resources to do this ministry?
5. Do we want to expand a current ministry?
6. Do we want to increase the quality of our ministry? Why?
7. Do we need to add another building or more facilities? Why?
8. Do we need to remodel the old building? Why?

The questions can be as numerous as the creativity of the confreres. It is the provincial and the assembly who work tirelessly to focus, order and prioritize questions according to the definition and description of the poor of step one. This work of step two is a critical function since it will shape the ministry, organize the work and imply a probability of success in the ministry.

With many of the questions of step 2, some of the answers can be self-evident. These self-evident answers can be revealing to a province. They can disclose how the Spirit has been working in the province in the past. They can reveal a historical or current distinction or particular thrust to the province's ministry. These revelations are distinctions that make the ministry(ies) separate from others. Development needs these distinctions to promote and invite others to the ministry(ies).

Let us look at a different example concerning priestly formation. Suppose the province in step 1 has determined that priests in the diocese need on-going formation — they are the “poor.” In step 2, the province decided that workshops are the best vehicle to do diocesan on-going formation. To do workshops, the confreres need a formal program of on-going theological formation. In deciding step 2, the province had to answer several questions.

Answers to these questions state the thrust or distinctions that development uses to attract donors. Some of these answers are:

1. That confreres need on-going formation for their holiness and ministry;
2. This on-going formation of confreres can be used for workshops with diocesan priests;
3. Workshops promote a continuing education for priests after the seminary;
4. A program does not currently exist for on-going formation;
5. On-going formation will improve future ministry in the diocese;
6. And so on and so on.

With these answers, development can interest and attract resources: scholarships, money, endowments, room and board, etc.

What is rightly assumed is that donors want holier priests that have the best training possible. This will attract Catholic donors who want good priestly ministry.

For development, the word “Vincentian” also is an answer that is part of our distinction and thrust that can attract donors. It means that every aspect of the ministry will be imbued with the preferential option for the poor. In some cases, “Vincentian” might exclude some ministries or works. Vincentian development declares that the poor have a primacy in the ministry of confreres and diocesan priests training.

In moving to the third step, much has informally already happened. The province has already determined who it will help, who will do the helping and what is needed. No matter what was decided in steps one and two, every ministry has an inbuilt appeal to certain constituencies because it is service to others and the community of confreres supports it.

The work (or formality) of the third step is putting down in words, stories and pictures steps one and two — the ministries and the province’s focus. Confreres are instrumental in doing this and promoting it. They can and do invite others instinctively to join them.

Techniques such as videos, magazines, websites, etc. are all tools that invite others to “come and see.” But please note that these techniques are used at this stage, not before it.

When we use any of these techniques, we must also define who the province wants to see this — are we showing this to older people to give gifts or younger people to join the community? Also, a website does little good if people do not know that it is there and what its use can be to them.

Who are the people that should be interested in or want this website? How will they find out about the website? With these two questions and their answers, a website can begin to take shape and define its content.

A second issue in step three or asking others to join us or give a gift, is to make it easy for them to respond. A website, brochure or video can create excitement about the ministry of the province but if there is not information on how to respond, the donor becomes discouraged. It is much better if the person can donate directly “on-line” or fill out a printed response card with the province address and phone number already on it or click on a link that will send an email to the province or some other way for the person to make instant contact.

A third issue in step 3 is the use of a development company, firm or corporation. These are called development professionals. Such

development professionals can direct the message to appropriate resources. From steps 1 and 2, these professionals are trained to envision needed resources. This envisioning can also help in concretizing what resources are needed now and in the future. Also, development professionals study where resources are and what it takes to access them for us.

Many times development professionals will find resources that are within the province. Every area of the world has resources. Populations with overwhelming numbers of economically poor also have a group of economically wealthy. The development professional works to answer the question: "Who does the province know that has a relation to this wealthy group?"

Development professionals can also look at philanthropy by governments and corporations in any area of the world. Most governments are realizing that they have a responsibility to help their poor. Corporations now know that their philanthropy is a tool that can increase their business. International corporations can sometimes be a resource to a province if the corporation can see a benefit not only to them but to the people surrounding them. Development professionals can craft such a vision.

In conclusion, it is important to recall that our charism implies that we ask everyone to join us. St. Vincent never failed to approach either the poor country woman or the royalty of his day and ask them to help.

Today, it is up to us to declare the goodness of the poor and invite others. The province must want to ask others to join in their ministry and not wait to be approached by donors. The province must want to do development.

God moves the respondent to answer. Our responsibility is to "put the lamp on the mountain" and ask others to join us at the top. God will take care of the rest.

Summary of the Province and Development

A province implicitly does development when it organizes and activates its ministries and asks others to help.

1. Vincentian development is to write or put forth a consistent and compelling case or plan for a province's activities that is open to others working with them (either actively or through gifts) to achieve positive results in the confreres' work with the poor and priestly formation.
2. Development needs the province to focus its ministries and declare what it spends its resources on. Development can

- show others these goals and results and solicit them to join.
3. Development needs the province to define and describe the need and the poor. If possible, the description and definition should include why the province thinks these “poor” are a priority as opposed to other types of poor.
 4. Development uses details of the ministry of step two to attract donors. Development can detail the shape of the ministry, how it is organized and the probability of success in the ministry.
 5. The particular thrust or distinction that makes the ministry separate from others is what development needs to declare and invite others to the ministry.
 6. For development, the word “Vincentian” means that every aspect of the ministry will be imbued with the preferential option for the poor.
 7. The work (or formality) of the third step is putting down in words, stories and pictures steps one and two — the ministries and the province’s focus. Techniques such as videos, magazines, websites, etc. are all tools that invite others to “come and see.”
 8. Development professionals can help the province define what group of people that they will ask to join them and then direct the message to potential groups of interest who have resources.
 9. Development makes it easier for the donor to respond.
 10. For successful development, the province must want to ask others to join in their ministry. God moves the respondent to answer.

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IV. Current Activities of the International Office of Development

Oral Presentation by Rev. Carl Leo Pieber, C.M.,
International Meeting of Visitors
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The International Office of Development was established for two reasons. First, there was a need for more resources beyond what the provinces provide to the International Congregation, especially for poorer provinces. Some of these needs on the international level are provincial endowments, support of new missions, support of future provinces, assistance to the Vincentian Family branches, especially those which have the Superior General as their Director

General, care of Vincentian historical places and worldwide projects for the poor.

The second issue was the thrust of the charism of St. Vincent to invite others throughout the world to help the poor. Development is a type of evangelization of people. It is bringing the needs of one people and nation to a different people and nation and asking for help.

Development necessitates preparation. To ask for resources and gifts demands that you have something to ask for, be able to describe it and show what the outcome will be. The time it takes to gather this information on an international level is longer than on the provincial or local levels. The information must then be translated to a different culture that can help. Development offices on such a large scale take several years to become effective. Starting the International Office of Development now is a planning step directed more to future funding than current needs.

The International Office of Development was established to serve the Superior General and his Council by seeking cash, resources and funds including endowments, bequests and annuities, for needs of the International Congregation as specified by them. Though in its infancy, the Office has two major projects.

Using the discussion elaborated in "Provinces and Development," the Office has begun work on establishing a Patrimonial Fund for seven provinces. The Office is gathering information on the ministries of these provinces to formulate a consistent and compelling case or plan for the International Congregation that is open to others working with it (either actively or through gifts) to achieve positive results in the confreres' work with the poor and priestly formation.

With this case, the Office will then be able to identify constituencies that can aid these provinces. From this research, the Office will formulate a plan with needed materials and technologies and begin solicitation for the patrimonial fund. The financial goal for this fund is \$7 million.

A second and intimately related project is to seek \$2.5 million to support MISEVI, AMM and JMV. These Vincentian Family members have a direct relation to the Superior General and annually receive support from him. Again, the Office is gathering information to establish a case for support, identify resources and begin solicitation for the money.

Another member of the Congregation has offered to work closely with the Office in obtaining this money. Through both of their efforts, his and the office, they hope to complete this work within

several years. The ability to succeed in this project and the other future needs of the International Congregation depends on support of all of the provinces.

This support of the provinces can concretely start with you today. I must appeal to you who already know the needs of the Congregation. I am sure that you know donors who want to give to the mission and support of the International Congregation of the Mission.

There is a working principle that is proven true, time and again. The principle is this: Every donor gives to what that donor likes and wants to give to. No matter what charity asks the donor, if it is not their primary charity, the donor will give little or nothing to that charity. If the donors want to support education of children, they will give little to the homeless, unless it is for the education of a homeless child.

As provincials, you may know some people who are interested in helping the world. These donors want to give to international causes. They have a desire to reach out beyond the borders of their country.

IF you know of some one like this or some group that could help the International Congregation, would you please let me know? To do this, just give me your name. Send me an email — my address is below. I will contact you and arrange a convenient time when we can discuss the group or person. I promise you that I will do nothing with or to this donor without your knowledge. So, who do you know that can join us in helping the poor worldwide?

In conclusion, I thank you for your kindness and attention to this brief presentation. Should you want any further information please contact me. Thank you.

While this issue of *Vincentiana* was in printing, the International Office of Development was merged with the Vincentian Solidarity Office.

E.N.