

APPRAISAL OF THE RELEVANCE OF VOLUNTEER
WORKERS IN THE LIFE OF A LOCAL
BAPTIST CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this essay is to critically appraise the relevance of volunteer workers in the life of a Local Baptist church. This is with the view of providing pragmatic approach laden with biblical principles in administering the various functions of volunteer ministries for an optimum spiritual performance.

To achieve this purpose, the researcher examined the theological, scripture and concept of the mission of the church. The work examined the concept of volunteer workers/ leaders and the nature of Christian leaders. He examined principles of church ministry through the medium of volunteer ministry, and discovered that God is highly interested in the way Christian believers offer themselves for kingdom service. Thus, the Bible encourages effective use of our gifts and talents in serving one another as faithful stewards. Field researches were carried-out. The methodology employed include analysis of structured questionnaires which revealed motivation for voluntary service; impact of training and general administration of volunteer workers in the life of a local Baptist church.

The conclusion is that the church must be abreast of the great contributions of volunteer workers in a success story of a local Baptist church, and be knowledgeable on how to mobilize, motivate, organize and coordinate such volunteer responsibilities to the glory of God. Therefore, in this essay, the researcher concludes that for a local church to enjoy the best of volunteer workers and ministries would demand a considerable administrative effort, careful planning and constant nurturing on the part of church leader.

5.2 Conclusions

This work has provided the opportunity to critically look and appraise the relevance of volunteer workers in the life of a local Baptist church. Theologically, scripturally, and administratively, volunteer ministry consists of an organized group of individuals endowed with significant authority to design and carryout certain church activities within certain parameters and in line with the church's overall vision. It is a ministry center team, with set specific objectives to be accomplished. Thus, it is our opinion in this work that, for the church to fulfill the Great Commission, the church must be prepared to tap and annexed the God given ability in the lives of the members and engaged them in volunteer ministry.

This study has been able to prove that the volunteer workers in a local Baptist church would appreciate clear, concise information about the jobs they are ask to do. For the church leaderships to attract this volunteer workers Morris said, "Those of us who manage and coordinate them (volunteer ministry) must be professional, caring, ethical and efficient. We can not afford to waste a volunteer time or abilities" (14).

This study has revealed that the church of today needs a lot of human and materials resources in order to accomplish its purpose. The church therefore needs to put in concerted effort to reach out to all its members. Volunteer workers of today in church ministry according to Margie Morris are male or female, young or old. They are from every economic and cultural background. And they volunteer for reason of their own. (13). Volunteers workers want to see themselves as part of an effective team, using their skills to make a difference. Most want to have input into the church projects they work on both at the planning stages and during the evaluation. Morris said many expect to participate in goal setting and problem solving.

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This study has revealed the natural purpose of the church, it recognizes and uses persons as gifts of the Holy Spirit. It recognizes that the church is an incorporation of the body of Christ in a local congregation. Most of all, volunteer ministry is a means of helping more of God's people understand that the grace of God gives them freedom in Christ, freedom to live by the Gospel. Oscar. E. Feucht said, "In every generation, in every decade, in every congregation, in every church body the New Testament polity needs to be rediscovered and given implementation. He that multiplies the workers is greater than he who does the work. This is God's basic strategy for the churches of the New Covenant" (149). Therefore, a volunteer Christian's service is simply responding to his/her whole message of Christian faith. Hence, Jesus put this into a single sentence on the day He ascended to Heaven: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth"(Acts 1:8).

This study does not call into question the office of the pastoral ministry or the practice of ordination. It does deal with the more strategic use of the pastoral office in the development of the whole congregation for the fuller exercise of every Christian's God-given priesthood. And doing so, within the confines of the revealed word of God.

5.3 Recommendations

The Church of God has come a long way, and that is the very good reason to say that the life of a Christian is a life of service. Serving in God's vineyard is an antidote

for narrowness and self-centered life. When we recognize the ownership of God over our lives, then we give back the best of our service to our Lord and Master. In the view of Morris, “volunteering means choosing to give one’s time for a specific purpose that furthers the church’s mission, and the volunteer’s personal ministry. It is a means for developing self-confidence, not eroding it” (58). This view of Morris is telling us that volunteer ministry provides two ways benefit.

Voluntary service in the church of God is an act of worship. Thus, Olayanju, Adebusoje and Fasogbon said that “no one realizing this fact can still live a narrow, selfish and spiritually neutral life. It is a cure for the paralyzing disease of non-participating with which many church members are afflicted” (12). The following recommendations can be made to the church of today from the work of this study:

1. The pastors, and other group leaders with church volunteer workers must be governed by sound biblical based and balanced doctrine.
2. The pastor’s support for volunteers’ ministry is vital for effective and spiritually balanced volunteer ministry. It is important for the pastor as an individual to support by word and deed the work of volunteers. The pastor should emphasize the joys of service as well as the needs for person’s to serve from time to time. The pastor’s presence and counsel in meetings of workers as well as at the stated times of work are important indicators of interest and support. It is wise for the pastor to find ways to encourage and support the volunteers.
3. Church leadership should be in prayer continuously for the Lord to lead them in discovering those who should serve in the work of the church. Research had shown that there are potential workers for what the Lord wants to do in a church’s life.

