

# Volunteer Revolution

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## **1. This is what I was made for!**

Bill was asked: “Do you ever feel guilty for asking busy people to volunteer?”

His answer was “NO!”:

1. It gives people something to do for God’s kingdom
2. We’re created to join God’s Mission – to redeem and fix the planet – and not just chase the wind.
3. We all have the desire to change the world... “You know what I did today? I teamed up with God to change the world!”

What does a transformed world look like?

- Love God and neighbor
- Have a value-system that values the poor and powerless
- Take up the cross – pay the price
- Go into all the world
  - This is what service is all about!

For most people the moment of choice occurs during an experience of worship – we realise “I want to serve the purposes of God in my generation!”

I would rather be a participant than a spectator!

Participation fosters ownership, friendship and growth! “Thanks for inviting me into the game!”

People may have to experiment, but when they find their niche, they experience satisfaction and joy.

## **2. I can’t believe I get to do this!**

Story of Eric and Karen who bailed out of corporate busy-ness into a life of voluntary service.

1. Volunteering can be negative:
  - Poorly conceived
  - Unfulfilling
  - Nothing really to do
  - No clear vision of the diff they make in the bigger pic
  - Not thanked.
2. Key questions that should be asked:
  - Are we caring for our volunteers?
  - Are we training them adequately?

- Are there better ways to recruit helpers?
  - Are our long-term team members still happy, growing, part of the team, and energised by the vision?
3. Some examples:
    - Gardening
    - Feeding Schemes
    - Seat cleaners (Their auditorium seats thousands)
    - Trash-emptying
    - Promise Towne – babysitting for parents who volunteer elsewhere.
  4. Lack of funding can be a huge gift – harness the “power of everybody”!
  5. What do you have to offer? We have been blessed to be a blessing!

*“There is not enough money in the world to pay for all the good deeds desperately needing to be done in the name of God in my church and yours, in my community and yours, in my country and yours.”*

### **3. Servanthood – The great gamble**

*We love, serve, and care for others because that is normal behavior for people who are filled with God’s Spirit. We are Christians. Christ was the ultimate servant. We can’t help but serve because the Spirit of the Servant has filled our hearts. When we serve, we are just being who we naturally are.  
Steve Sjogren (Seeing Beyond Church Walls, 2002, p.39)*

Our culture bombards us with self-gratification. Servanthood, though Spirit-instinctive, is foreign to our sinful natures and to our culture. Service means we get busier and there are no financial rewards. Hybels speaks of his mentor – Dr Bilezikian – who said: “True fulfilment will never come through self-gratification.” Service is the key, and the rewards are great (Mark10:29-30). “You want to really live? Drape a serving towel over your arm!”

Look at the service examples of Christ (John 13, Phil.2) And what about Paul? “My name is Paul and I am a servant of Christ Jesus!”

So take the **Gamble!** Take every opportunity to serve and then do it! It brought about enormous spiritual growth for Hybels and the youth group that became Willow Creek Church.

### **4. The Great Exchange**

*It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself  
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

He lists examples of people who went out to build churches and other missions. The common phrase among those who returned was “I received more than I gave!”

- Hearts were transformed
- Inner Pain was healed
- Relationships were healed
- They got a chance to give back for what they had been blessed with
- Saw God do in others what He had done in them

- Got a new perspective - “My problems aren’t so big...”
- Formal serving encourages informal serving – domestic relationships improve

Talks about the “Helper’s High” and the fact that retired men live 2.5 times longer if they are involved in voluntary work. (These, and other physical benefits are because we have been created to serve.)

## 5. **What? Me? A priest?**

In the OT the Holy Spirit only acted in the priests and only some were priests. At Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out on everyone. We believe in and should practice the Priesthood of All Believers.

What does a priest do? Prays, encourages, watches over, confronts, grieves, and rejoices. How does this make the congregation feel? Loved, nurtured, secure, blessed.

Interprets Eph 4 as saying that there are those who equip the rest for service.

When this happens, then everybody wins:

- Equippers see God using the volunteers
- Volunteers get on the playing field and are used by God
- The Community is served
- God is glorified!

Unfortunately the church lost the vision of the priesthood of all believers.

We have become like the world: We expect doctors to treat us, not train us to treat others! But in the church it should be that ministers train us to minister to others!

Christian pastors should be working themselves out of jobs! We have to be the equippers. We should not relent! Bill gives the example of preaching on service for 13 weeks!

**“You can’t build a God-honouring church with a congregation full of consumers.”**

Remember: Get it right and everyone wins!

## 6. **Just jump in!**

What’s the key to finding your niche? Just jump in and start experimenting!

In the past he would have said: Learn about gifts, reflect, identify gifts and passion and get involved where you fit. (This is what their highly successful “Network” course is all about.)

But they learned some hard lessons:

1. In the beginning everyone worked flat out with great intensity, but many burned out! Now they ask: “What are you good at and what energises you?” They have also learned to ask: “What are you bad at and what drains you?”
2. They also realised that people could wait too long to find “the perfect fit for their gift mix.”
3. The gift assessment tools just didn’t work for everyone.

*“Here’s what we recommend to potential volunteers these days. Embrace wholeheartedly your fundamental identity as a servant of Christ. Use whatever understanding you have of your personality, passions, areas of interest, talents, and preferences to guide you in a general serving direction. Look at the needs of your community. Then jump in with a willing*

*heart and an open mind. Drape the servant's towel over your arm and get busy."*

They came up with the *first serve* idea: "Come once and check it out – no strings attached!"

After a first serve they ask four nb questions:

1. Did it feel meaningful?
2. Was your emotional energy higher or lower afterward?
3. Did you enjoy serving others?
4. Can you realistically fit this into your schedule?

If so, then jump in!

## **7. Using your skills to find your passion**

Gives the example of the CARS (Christian Auto Repairman Serving) ministry which repairs 20-25 cars per week for needy folk. Whole lot of other examples too...

What makes you passionate? Energy flows from passion. Our skills, when linked to passion can unleash great satisfaction. (eg's of hairdresser's day of beauty, Aviation ministry, and a Ski camp.)

Sometimes people need to try something different. e.g. Of Rich who works with big corporates all week, but helps needy families out of financial messes on a one to one coaching basis.

Others are happier working with something familiar. These are people who use skills that they've honed in the marketplace. e.g. Of the Willow HR Board that is made up of Lawyers, HealthCare gurus, and HR people.

For all this to work:

- Volunteers must be tenacious in volunteering
- Leaders must be open to sharing power.

One needs to use a common sense approach. Each situation is unique. There are four questions that are helpful:

1. Who has God brought us?
2. What are their unique contributions?
3. How does the Spirit seem to be leading us?
4. What does common sense say?

## **8. People-driven passion**

Carrie was passionate about Spanish. Now serves a Hispanic ministry and combines gifts of music, leadership, language, and admin with a group of people she is passionate about. When people described in chapter 7 combine their skills and passion with a particular group that they feel for, it all takes off!

The passion can be about a group or an issue: e.g. Divorce, grief, homeless, etc.

Sometimes we will be caught by surprise and discover that we are passionate for a group we did not think we would be passionate about. That is why it is important to be obedient to the call of service and serve with open hearts and ears!

## **9. Don't forget to ask!**

The tragedy is that the church does not do this well! There are many ways:

1. A challenging sermon series that moves people from the sidelines - "It's time!"
2. Making needs known so that people can respond in the areas of their passion.
3. Give a clear how and where!
4. Personal asks are more effective than public ones, and are most effective when they come from folk who are volunteers themselves!
5. But full-time people must model the ask.

How to ask: (Great example given in the book)

1. Don't ask for a long term commitment, but don't hold back on the size of the vision!
2. Cast the vision! Persist! Ask! Pray! Ask again!
3. Give lots of info and detail.
4. Debrief after any exposure and learn from the negative experiences.
5. Tweak the job if need be to suite the person.

They learned three key lessons:

1. New volunteers are fragile: Prone and vulnerable to *discouragement* and *disillusionment*. This happens when people feel trapped, abandoned, shoehorned into a bad fit, or ill-equipped. Respond to pleas for help, provide training and follow-up!
2. The easiest way to defeat a volunteer is to waste their time or completely overload them. Care for your volunteers.
3. Remind them that this is worth it – they are not crazy. 1Cor15:58.

## **10. Over the long haul... (Gal.6:9-10)**

What should be done to encourage those who are in danger of the "Helper's High" wearing off?

1. Memory of their early days of ministry and late night meals in "Tasty's Diner" where they reflected on the services and shared community. One of the things that has kept them serving in the long run (which should be the norm) was community. Make sure people are plugged into caring community as this helps keep them there for the long haul.
2. Emphasize the transformation of those we serve. (1Thes3:8 & 3John4) There are disappointments, but breakthroughs keep us going! They use baptism services as a way of saying "this is all worth it!"
3. Make sure that you practice self-care. This is the middle ground between selfishness and selflessness. If you have said "I'd rather burn out than rust," you probably will! Ministry is not a sprint, but a marathon! "Serve the Lord with *gladness!*" And "come into His presence with *singing.*"
4. Sustained Servanthood flows from Spiritual Fullness. What's your fuel? Guilt? Earning Favour? Need to be needed? We need to draw near to God and be filled with His love and grace.

## **11. The power of doing good!**

*And let us consider how we spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

*Heb.10:14*

*But as for you, do not grow weary of doing good.*

*2Thes.3:13*

*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven*

*Mt.5:16*

*This is a trustworthy saying; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who believe in God may be careful to engage in good deeds.*

*Titus3:8*

We are called to do good deeds – to overcome evil with good (Rom12:20-21) It begins with people – average everyday people – doing little things that will change the world! Great quote about changing the world and inspiring others on pg.136.

A volunteer revolution needs committed-give-it-all-you-got revolutionaries who will not shrink back from the vision of communities committed to God-honouring visions that will do good wherever they can.

“Do Something, Somewhere – Now!

There’s a good deed out there with your name all over it!”