

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY**

**A REFLECTION OF MATTHEW 20:1 – 16: THE CASE OF EMPLOYEES  
AND VOLUNTEERS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL  
CHURCH, PARADISE TEMPLE, DOME PILLAR 2**

**BY**

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**A Long essay submitted to the Department of Theology and  
Education of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Central  
University (Ghana) in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Award of Bachelor of Arts Degree in Church Administration**

**SEPTEMBER, 2021**

**APPROVAL PAGE**

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this Long essay is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere. However, all sources of referenced materials are duly acknowledged.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this Long essay were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of long essay laid down by the Central University.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Arriving at this stage of my academic career would have been impossible without the help, support and understanding of many people. First of all, I am grateful to the almighty God for the gift of life and good health. Secondly, I would like to say a warm thanks to my beautiful wife Comfort Fremah Kpordeh for the numerous encouragement and also being a great support. Also, my thanks go to my son Gershon Fafali Nana-Kofi Kpordeh for missing countless father and son moments. God richly bless you for enduring my absence from home. My supervisor, Rev. Charles Ammanor Commey, deserves a special mention and gratitude for his exceptional guidance, love and patience. I cannot thank you enough. I say Aye Koo. God richly bless and expand your coast. A big thank you goes to all the lecturers and colleagues for the friendship we shared. God bless you. I am indebted to my Pastor Rev. Abass Awuni for not only seeing great potentials in me but taking the initiative to sponsor my university education. Last but not least, I am grateful to the council of ICGC Paradise Temple, Dome Pillar 2 for consenting to my sponsorship.

## **DEDICATION**

To my beautiful wife, Comfort Fremah Kpordeh and my son, Gershon Fafali Nana-

Kofi Kpordeh

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A Reflection of Matthew 20:1–16: The Case of Employees and Volunteers; the Case of International Central Gospel Church, Paradise Temple, Dome Pillar 2**

**By  
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The church, as a body of Christ, is charged with preaching the gospel globally. The fulfillment of this divine mandate requires the inputs of faithful employees and volunteers who serve in diverse meaningful ways within the church. However, being mortal vessels, church employees and volunteers are prone to misunderstandings resulting from personal disagreement and wrong expectations as narrated in the parable of the workers in the vineyard. It therefore behoves the church to develop an in-depth understanding in how to manage employees and volunteers in fulfilling the divine mandate given us. The study was a qualitative research that adopted a deductive research approach. The analysis revealed that in recruiting employees and volunteers, the church adopted the interpersonal recruitment appeal, loose connection, and job-fit and culture-fit strategies. A critical reflection of the text was examined in relation to how the church can motivate its employees and volunteers, the study revealed recognition, compensation, regular training, advancement opportunities, empowerment, and collaborative reciprocity. The main findings made by the study on the sources of misunderstanding among employees and volunteers in the church were role ambiguity, personal disagreement, lack of communication, blurred expectations from the church and conflicting assumptions by employees and volunteers, and ethical issues.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Ministries everywhere depend on volunteers; these unpaid workers often work side-by-side with ministry employees, who also may volunteer some of their time in addition to their regular work hours. As an employer, ministries are required to properly pay employees for all time spent performing their job functions, so distinguishing between volunteer hours and employee hours is important. In order to comply with state and federal wage and hour laws, ministries also must distinguish between volunteer hours and employee hours. The U.S. Department of Labor defines volunteers as “individuals who volunteer or donate their services, usually on a part-time basis, for public service, religious, or humanitarian objectives, not as employees, and without contemplation of pay.” An employee, then, is an individual who performs work at the request and direction of the ministry and expects to be paid. For example, federal wage and hour laws generally require that an employed church secretary who also does 'voluntary' secretarial duties on a Sunday be compensated at the same (or perhaps overtime) rate she is paid for her work during the week. Whenever volunteer work is substantially similar to work done for pay, the work performed should be included in the calculation of the employee's weekly paid hours.

However, when the volunteer work is substantially different from work done for pay, occurs outside of normal working hours, and is not performed at the direction of the employer, an employer will not typically be required to pay the employee for such work. Ministries will most often run into this issue with employees who are classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly rate.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Time that exempt ministry employees spend volunteering, even if the volunteer activity is similar to their job responsibilities, does not require an employer to consider paying them additional compensation. Ministries need to take care when providing money or any other benefits to workers who are strictly volunteers. Compensation is one of the factors used in determining employment status, and while reimbursing the expenses of a volunteer is acceptable, paying anything more than a nominal amount to a volunteer for work performed may create an employment or independent contractor relationship. Payments or benefits that are made periodically, and outside of reasonable expense reimbursement, may create difficulties and lead to a determination that a volunteer is actually an employee. This could lead to tax and employment law implications, such as withholding tax requirements and a need to pay at least minimum wage. Ministries should either make it a practice to not provide compensation to volunteers or speak with legal and tax advisors prior to doing so to be sure the amount is nominal.

## **1.3 Research questions**

- I. How are employees and volunteers recruited in the church?
- II. How are employees and volunteers motivated in the church?
- III. How is misunderstanding among employees and volunteers managed in the church?

## **1.4 Research objectives**

The main objective of the study is to examine the role of church employees and volunteers in the work of ministry.

- I. To assess how employees and volunteers are recruited in the church.
- II. To assess how employees and volunteers are motivated in the church.

III. To explore ways of managing misunderstanding among employees and volunteers in the church.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The case for the significance of this study is argued for in two respects: in church administration and in academia. The misconception of the expectations of volunteers in organizations its widespread challenges that usually resurface on the agenda of organisation, managements and particularly the church (given its religious and not-for-profit status). There is the need to bring to the fore the sources of this misconception and how the church can explicitly distinguish between employment and volunteering in its functions. This study attempts to fulfill this need within the perspective of the orientation, remunerations and compensation for employees and volunteers as well as the commitment expected by the church from employees and volunteers and vice versa. The findings of this study will also expound on the ethical considerations in dealing with church employees and volunteers. Church administrations will therefore benefit immensely from this study. Concerning academia, this study attempts to bridge the research gap in church volunteering within the Ghanaian setting. The study will augment the growing body of research-based knowledge on church employment and volunteering. The study will thus serve as a reference material for researchers who may want to delve into the subject of church volunteering.

### **1.6 Scope of study**

The contextual scope of the study is centred on the church as an organisation, volunteering in the church, models of volunteering, the distinction and similarities between the activities of a church employee and a volunteer of church employment and volunteering, and the recognition and compensation of volunteers in the church. The theories expounded to underpin the study are the functional model theory, the job

characteristics theory, the resource theory, and self-determination theory. The word 'church' as used in this study is delimited to the local church which is defined as a local assembly of believers or a congregation that meets together physically for worship, fellowship, teaching, prayer and encouragement in the Christian faith as admonished in Hebrews 10:25.

### **1.7 Summary of methodology**

A qualitative research strategy that adopts a deductive approach was used for the study. The research design adopted for the study was the archival research method. The study used only secondary data that were sourced from papers published on employee and volunteer management in the church. The keywords "employees", "staff", "workers", "volunteers", "volunteerism", "unpaid workers", "volunteering", and "church". Discussions were done with the literature reviewed serving as a benchmark to guide the discussions.

### **1.8 Organisation of study**

The study is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter introduced the study by providing the background, the problem statement, research objectives, significance of the study, brief methodology, the scope as well as the organisation of the study. The second chapter gives the review of relevant literature on the study context. The third chapter shows the research methodology that was used for the study and also justifies the choices made. The fourth chapter presents the analyses and discussions on the data collected during the previous chapter. The last chapter brings the entire study to a close by presenting the summary of the main findings and the conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter brings to light the various scholars writing on the study. And also highlights commentaries on the text under study. This chapter presents a literature review of the case of church employees and volunteers alluding to the issue of unspoken agreement deduced from the parable of the workers in the vineyard. The chapter comprises five sections; conceptual review, theoretical review, empirical review, conceptual framework, and chapter summary. The conceptual review deliberates on the church as an organisation and makes a case for paid employment in the church. The section delineates volunteerism, discusses on volunteering in the church as well as the distinctions and similarities between church employees and volunteers. Lastly, the section identifies the source of misconstruction of church employment and volunteering. The theoretical review proffers and discusses the job characteristic theory, self-determination theory, and the Functional model theory as theoretical underpinnings of the study. A framework that undergirds this study is proffered by way of presenting a conceptual framework to this study and finally, a chapter summary is presented.

#### **2.2 The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard**

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace <sup>4</sup> and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. <sup>5</sup> Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. <sup>6</sup> And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup> They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

<sup>8</sup> "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'

<sup>9</sup> And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. <sup>11</sup> And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, <sup>12</sup> saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' <sup>13</sup> But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. <sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' <sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." Matt 20:1-16 (NKJV)

The parable of the workers in the vineyard, presented above, presents a quintessential scenario where individuals uphold their assumptions concerning certain agreements as though the assumptions have been agreed upon by all parties involved in the agreement. By categorising the labourers hired by the landowner to work in the vineyards, the parable revealed that there were five sets of labourers. The first set was the labourers hired first. The second, third, fourth, and fifth sets of labourers were hired at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour respectively. Unlike the first set of labourers who had an expressed agreement to take a denarius for the day's work, the rest of the labourers had no expressed agreement on how much they would be given after the day's work. When it was time for the day's wage to be paid, the landowner started payment from the labourers called last to the labourers who were called first. The labourers called at the eleventh hour were given a denarius each. When it was the turn for the first-called labourers to receive their wages, they assumed their payment would increase because they "...borne the burden and the heat of the day". Although they agreed to receive a denarius for their work, they reasoned that the initial agreement would be amended because the "*last men*" who "*worked only one hour*" had received a full day's wage and they (i.e., the first labourers) had borne the burden and the heat of the day.

The passage brings to bear that ‘perceived agreement’ or ‘unspoken agreement’ is a situation that recurs in organisations and more often in the church given its religious inclination and not-for-profit nature. No wonder the labourers were required to work in a vineyard; a place used to typify the ‘working space’ of the church (Isa 5:7). The expectations ministry work by the church from workers (both paid and unpaid) and vice versa present a ‘perceived agreement’ that is exemplified in the parable. For instance, although largely not agreed on, unpaid workers (henceforth interchanged with volunteers) may expect the church to cater for them should they be involved in an accident that incapacitates them while volunteering in the church premises or elsewhere in the duties of the church. The church administration may also expect some level of consistent performance from volunteers they are not paid for their services.

### **2.3 Conceptual review**

The Greek word *ekklēsia* which translates to an assembly or gathering, came to mean church and was originally applied in the Classical period to an official assembly of citizens. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), *ekklēsia* is used to imply the general assemble of Jews, particularly when assembled for religious purposes like hearing of the *Torah* (Deuteronomy 9:10, 18:16). The New Testament use of *ekklēsia* implies the entire body of believing Christians globally (Matthew 16:18), believers in a particular area as in Acts 5:11, and also, the congregation meeting in a particular house, referred to as ‘house-church’ (Romans 16:5). Hence deducing from this discussions, one can maintain that the church consists of God’s people and a gathering of believers in Jesus Christ and not the physical building that facilitates fellowship, worship, and ministry of God’s people as popularly alluded to in everyday usage of the word. The church describes a Christian religious community or an organisation of Christian believers who meets in a particular location (Schmiechen



2012). One important distinction to note in conversations on the church is the local church and the universal church. Everist (2010, p.23) posits:

The main difference between the universal church and the local church is that the universal church is all who believe in Jesus Christ. The local church is a community of these individuals who regularly meet in a certain building, town, or group. The main similarity is the purpose. Both types of the church have the responsibility to bring the Kingdom of God to the earth.

That is, while the universal church encompasses all believers of Jesus Christ in the world, the local church refers to the local assembly of believers in Jesus Christ who congregate at a place and are committed to regular meetings, fellowship, Bible study, praise and worship, breaking bread, and prayer. The relevance of this distinction manifests when one is examining the church as an organisation for the purposes of administration and management (Pickles 2009).

One of the major functions of church leaders whom Christ has given to the church is *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry”* (Ephesians 4:12, NKJV). Such equipping entails developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individual Christians to enable them to better serve the Lord. The equipping procedure requires providing and developing necessary motivation to encourage Christians to use their gifts to serve the Lord in their specific context (Dunaetz and Boccock 2021). The field of organisational psychology provides a number of tools for understanding how people think, feel, and behave in organisational contexts to help equip Christians for the work of ministry (Grant and Shandell 2021; Spector 2021; Blackler 2015). This is needed because Christ has called Christians to live in community which is the church (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 2:19-22). Hence, the church is an organisation that is characterised by love (John 13:34-35, I John 4:7), the thoughts, emotions, and behaviours of church members and these characters are among the concerns of church leaders. Dunaetz and Boccock (2021) argue that although the Holy

Spirit transforms the lives of individuals who are truly born again (John 3:3), the community that these individuals form (i.e., the church) still has the same dynamics that make the study of secular organisations possible. Particularly, patterns of interpersonal and intrapersonal processes that tend to produce specific outcomes. The application of organisational psychology in studying the church does not contradict or deny the existence of spiritual transformation. Also, a study of the organisational dynamics of the church does not examine the effects of such a transformation.

#### **2.4 The case for paid employment in the church**

Over the years, there has been a perceptible move toward professional or paid staff in churches. This observation is quite pronounced in larger congregations. The presence of staff appears to be virtually a prerequisite, if not the main feature of large churches. While some doubt the necessity of paid staff in churches, others suggest that the recruitment and retention of volunteers might be the answer to the increasing demands on church management (Anderson and Fox 2015). On the other side of the argument are those who perceive that paid staff in the church is a pragmatic response to the organisational imperatives and the difficulties integral to the operation of any human organisation today (Zigan and Le Grys 2018). One often overlooked factor that calls for the recruitment of paid staff in the church is the call for increasing level of compliance and professionalism (Anderson and Fox 2015). It is not that these demands are onerous, however, several people find it imposing and sometimes, too much to ask of individuals who are already volunteering their time and energy. While many volunteers may feel this demand is a bridge too far, paid staff members find the demand for compliance and professionalism as a responsibility expected of them. Again, while the church may want every worker, either paid or unpaid, to be of the same enthusiasm and work daily from the treasure in their hearts, this is not always possible; particularly

with unpaid workers (volunteers). Manetti et al. (2015) assert that performance is easily expected of paid employees but it is sometimes too much to ask from even willing volunteers on a consistent basis. The higher the church's expectation, the less realistic is the case when dealing with volunteers. Furthermore, it is harder to enforce procedures with unpaid workers for the same reason. When, volunteers ignore policy when it suits them, what can the church do about it? At this instance, remuneration offers a leverage; paid workers would rightly expect their employer, i.e., the church, to be a good one and a Christian at that while similarly, the church can rightly expect its employees to perform their job functions at a certain level of professionalism consistently. The assertions for paid workers do not imply that volunteerism is dead. Vermeer and Scheepers (2019) ascertained that a large church is no less dependent on volunteers than a small one. The difference between these two churches is application; where volunteers are concentrated. Moreover, larger churches do not only have paid professionals running their major departments; they need paid professionals running their departments. This argument does not de-value volunteers as assets nor preclude their invaluable inputs for the smooth running of the church. The church and its paid workers are not going to be successful without volunteers.

## **2.5 Definition of volunteerism**

*“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give”* (Winston Churchill). Elementary definitions describe volunteerism as the acts or services intended to improve the wellbeing of others with no expectation of monetary rewards while volunteering is a voluntary act of an individual or group freely giving time and labour for community service (Guidi et al. 2021). More comprehensive definitions, however, delineate volunteerism as voluntary, ongoing, planned, helping behaviour that increases the well-being of strangers, offers no monetary compensation, and usually

occurs within an organisational context (Liu et al. 2017; Whittaker, McLennan, and Handmer 2015). Deducing from the definitions presented, volunteers are people who help others to improve their wellbeing without any expectation of monetary rewards. A perusal of literature on volunteerism reveals six elements that are central to the concept of volunteerism (Greig 2020; Whittaker et al. 2015; Widjaja 2010; Davis et al. 1999). These are voluntary action, little to no compensation, non-obligation, planfulness, longevity, and organisational context.

Voluntary action describes the self-determinative or autonomous decision that individuals or people make to engage in activities or services for others' wellbeing. Little to no compensation espouses the intentionality of volunteers to expect no monetary rewards for their voluntary services. Concerning non-obligation, volunteerism excludes making loved ones, friends, and intimate others the recipients of volunteering acts (Greig 2020). Inferring from this assertion, it can be seen that the recipients of volunteer actions are usually strangers, as such, volunteers are not obliged or are not under any expectation to volunteer. This distinguishes volunteerism from social responsibility.

Planfulness suggests that volunteering is not a spontaneous action but rather a planned decision backed by actions. An earlier study posits that before volunteering, individuals engage in considerable forethought, weighing its costs and benefits (Whittaker et al. 2015; Davis et al. 1999). Individuals are more likely to be willing to volunteer when they anticipate positive emotional responses and satisfaction from the activity (Meier and Stutzer 2008), hence to some extent, volunteerism requires planning based on rational deliberation of the effect and satisfaction likely to be derived from it. However, due to the nature of emergency situations, the decision to help is usually made almost instantaneously and without nearly as much conscious deliberation as the

decision to volunteer, and thus the term spontaneous volunteerism (Gunessee et al. 2018). Studies suggest that once individuals decide to commit to volunteering, they do so for a significant period of time even if volunteering imposes substantial opportunity costs and time sacrifices (Ainsworth 2020; Stukas et al. 2016). While there are individuals who engage in voluntary, ongoing, helping behaviours towards strangers on their own, volunteerism typically occurs within some type of organisational context (Penner 2002).

Globally, churches depend on volunteers. Volunteers' unpaid services coupled with the services of church employees, who may sometimes offer some of their time in addition to their regular work hours to promote the smooth running of the church (Vermeer and Scheepers 2019). As an employer, the church is expected to properly remunerate its employees for time spent in performing their job functions.

Hence, differentiating between church employees and volunteers as well as between working hours and volunteer hours are crucial and critical to preventing any misunderstanding that may emanate from misconstruing these two important aspects of church work. Both empirical and anecdotal evidence suggest the existence of high levels of misunderstanding between employees and volunteers of churches (López-Cabrera et al. 2020; Senander 2017; Fretheim 2016; Moutchnik 2016).

## **2.6 Job characteristic model**

The job characteristic model was proposed by Richard J. Hackman and Greg R. Oldham in 1976 as a normative approach to job redesign or enrichment. The model proposes that autonomous work motivation, high-quality performance and satisfaction, and low absenteeism and labour turnover can be achieved when three critical psychological states are present (Hackman and Oldham 1976). These are meaningfulness of the work, responsibility for outcomes of the work, and knowledge

of actual results of the work activities. The proponents posit that satisfaction in these three aspects can be achieved through optimal job design. Based on the three psychological states, they further developed five core job characteristics that jobs should have; *skill variety*, *task identity*, *task significance*, *autonomy*, and *feedback*. Skill variety entails the range of tasks performed. Task identify implies the degree to which a person can identify with the work. Task significance describes the degree to which the job impacts the lives of others. Autonomy typifies the degree of freedom and discretion an individual has over the tasks as in being independent and autonomous while feedback refers to the degree to which direct and clear information about the effectiveness and performance of the tasks being performed is provided.

Literature adduces that the first three job characteristics contribute to the meaningfulness of the job (Smith and DeNunzio 2020; Li et al. 2020). That is, the higher the task variety, task identity and task significance, the more meaningful the job is. This translates into experiencing the meaningfulness of the work (a critical psychological state). The fourth job characteristic confers a sense of responsibility on an individual for the outcome of the job. In other words, the higher the degree of freedom to use one's discretion in performing a task, the more responsible one feels, which a critical psychological state.

The last job characteristic allows the one performing the task to appreciate the outcome of the efforts invested in the task and this provides knowledge of actual results of the work activities; the last critical psychological state identified by Hackman and Oldham (1976). The effect of the five job characteristics on the outcomes is mediated by three moderators.

There moderators are:

- i. Growth needs strength; which determines how individuals respond to a high motivating job. Individuals with a strong need for growth respond more positively to the job opportunities whereas individuals with a low need for growth respond less positively or even negatively.
- ii. Knowledge and skill; which determines whether the individual is capable of doing the job or otherwise.
- iii. Context satisfaction; which also determines which individuals respond to work context factors/external environment.

Simply put, the job characteristic model espouses that the presence of five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) in a job result in three critical psychological states (meaningfulness of the work, responsibility for outcomes of the work, and knowledge of actual results of the work activities) which yield the outcome of autonomous work motivation, high-quality performance and satisfaction, and low absenteeism and labour turnover. The model further maintains that these outcomes are mediated by three moderators: growth needs strength, knowledge and skill, and context satisfaction. The job characteristic model is proffered to underpin this study because it presents a framework for increasing motivation, satisfaction, and performance for both church employees and volunteers. Hackman and Oldham (2005) aver that the model has been embraced by multitudes of organisations and professions.

## **2.7 Self-determination theory**

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human personality and motivation that centres on people's inherent psychological needs and innate growth tendencies. The theory is concerned with external interference and influence (Deci and Ryan 2012). It focuses on the degree to which human behaviour is self-determined and motivated (Ryan and Deci 2017). Although studies on SDT were present in the 1970s, it was not until the mid-1980s when Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan wrote a book titled "*Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior*" that the theory

was formally introduced and accepted as a sound empirical theory (Deci and Ryan 1985). The self-determination theory proposes that people are able to become self-determined when their need for autonomy, connection, and competence are fulfilled (Deci and Ryan 2012). The theory makes two key assumptions. The first assumption is that behaviour is driven by the need for growth. This suggests that people are actively directed towards growth and taking in new experiences or gaining mastery over challenges is crucial for developing a cohesive sense of self. The second assumption is that autonomous motivation is important. While external sources of motivation (known as extrinsic motivation) like prizes, money, or applause may motivate some people to act, self-determination primarily focuses on internal sources of motivation like the need to gain independence. Internal sources of motivation are known as intrinsic motivation.

Expounding on the three psychological needs for growth, autonomy refers to the need of people to feel in control of their behaviours and goals. The theory espouses that this sense of being able to take direct actions that lead to change is critical in making people feel self-determined. Connection, sometimes referred to as relatedness, describes that sense of attachment or belonging to other people or something bigger and competence refers to the mastery of skills gained. SDT suggests that the more people feel connected and competent, the more they feel self-determined.

The self-determination theory is proffered to underpin this study because it accounts for the motivations that spur people (particularly volunteers since their services are not paid for) on to act. Inferring from the theory, volunteers' self-determination can be increased by building their competence and creating a sense of belonging through recognition and promoting comity in the church. The theory, however, has a limited application in externally motivating people to volunteer or to



continue volunteering in the church since external sources of motivation do not confer the sense of self-determination on volunteerism.

## **2.8 Functional model theory**

The functional model theory premises that individuals engage in particular behaviours or value some attitudes because those actions and behaviour fulfill distinct psychological functions, and that various individuals can hold the same attitude or participate in the same behaviour for diverse functional reasons (Güntert et al. 2015). The functional model theory was propounded by Smith et al. (1956) and Katz (1960) and it focuses on psychological variables as factors of attitude change and persuasion. Two tenets are central to the theory: individuals engage in purposeful activities to fulfil a certain goal and individuals can perform the same activities to serve different psychological functions (Güntert et al. 2015). That is, different people may volunteer in services to fulfil specific psychological functions or the same people may volunteer in services to fulfil those same psychological functions but at different times of their lives. However, the sense of fulfilment of certain psychological functions is common on all people engaged in volunteering. The functional approach attempts to identify the goals and rationale of volunteers and seeks to conceptualise volunteering decision within the perspective of personal motivation (Sekar and Dyaram 2017). Hence, the theory posits that volunteering that appears to be similar may have different motives and these motives symbolize different psychological functions. This implies that people volunteer and continue to do so as long as the volunteering matches and fulfils their motivational concerns (Sekar and Dyaram 2017).

The functional model theory is proffered to underpin this study because it accounts for the diverse reasons why people start to volunteer and continue to volunteer (or do otherwise) for certain services in the church. That is, to fulfil certain specific

psychological functions in their lives and they continue to volunteer in those services when those functions are met by their volunteering. The theory also suggests that people may discontinue volunteering or change their acts of volunteerism when the specific psychological functions are no longer met. The functional model theory, however, falls short of determining how volunteers may be recognised and compensated.

## **2.9 Empirical review**

A qualitative analysis of church volunteerism was conducted by Wymer (2000) where he examined the motives for service, motive for retention, and perceived rewards/benefits from volunteering. The study assessed 134 church volunteers from multiple churches in two Midwestern cities. The analysis revealed three primary motives for church volunteering; volunteering is a response to Scriptural teachings, volunteering makes meaningful contribution, and volunteering offers psycho-social benefits. The study asserted that for many church volunteers, their service confers a sense of being needed, helpful, and useful on them and this explained the sustained volunteering. The study also evinced that volunteering provides a means for social interaction with others.

Dunaetz and Boccock (2021) researched on the role of work engagement and organisational commitment in the ministry involvement of church staff and volunteers. The authors sampled 336 church members involved in ministry including both paid staff and lay volunteers. The findings indicated that both work engagement and organisational commitment contribute to predicting ministry involvement of church staff and volunteers. Also this relationship holds regardless of gender, church size, or tenure in the church. The results revealed that work engagement is especially important for paid staff compared to volunteers. These findings imply that church administration

needs to not only encourage commitment, but also ensure that ministry is energising and engaging for those who are serving.

In *Character strengths and well-being among volunteers and employees: Toward an integrative model*, Littman-Ovadia and Steger (2010) designed a model integrating character strengths (defined as personality traits that manifest in feelings, thoughts, and behaviours to various degrees among different people), satisfaction with occupational activities, and meaning and well-being, and tested it in a sample of working adults and two samples of volunteers. The purpose of this study was to develop and test an integrative model linking character strengths, meaning, and well-being in the vocational domain. The model that was developed focused on accounting for some ways in which one's endorsement of character strengths is related to well-being, with an emphasis on the important occupational life domain. The results established that deploying strengths at work provided key links to satisfaction with voluntary and paid occupational activities and to meaning among both young and middle-aged volunteers, and adult working women. Among adult volunteers and paid workers, the results showed that endorsing strengths was related to meaning, while both endorsing and deploying strengths were related to well-being. Together, these studies provide a model for understanding how strengths may play a role in how both volunteer and paid workers find meaning, well-being, and satisfaction

*Church-based volunteering, providing informal support at church, and self-rated health in late life* was a study conducted by Krause (2009) assessed the relationships among volunteer work at church, providing informal support to fellow church members, religious commitment, and change in self-rated health over time. The author sourced interview data from a nationwide longitudinal sample of 681 adults who were 66 years or older. The interview data was collected within 6 years. Findings of the

study suggest a significant relationship between providing informal tangible support to fellow church members and better health, but this relationship was only noted among volunteers who were more deeply committed to their faith. Contrariwise, there was no relationship between volunteer work at church and religious commitment.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology, as defined by Dźwigoł and Dźwigoł-Barosz (2018), describes a systematic way to solve a research problem. It is the logical sequence of how research is conducted, and it includes all the techniques or methods that are employed in undertaking research. Research technique refers to the behaviour and instruments that are used in carrying out research activities like observation, data recording and collection, and data analysis (Strang 2015). It thus includes the strategy, approach and design, sample, data collection and the analytical tools used in the research. This chapter discusses the research strategy, approach, design adopted for the study. The chapter also presents how data for analysis was sourced and the analysis technique utilised for the study. Lastly, the chapter discusses the methodological rigour of the study and the ethical consideration made in the conduct of the study.

#### **3.2 Research strategy**

A research strategy refers to a systematic plan of action that directs the researcher's ideas and efforts to your thoughts and efforts to enhance the conduction of the research scientifically and timely and also ensure the production of a quality outcome and detailed reporting (Johannesson and Perjons 2014). It decreases the researcher's frustration, promotes quality outcome, and above all saves time and resources. A research strategy is fundamental to the research process which describes the essence of experimentations employed to ascertain set objectives (Strang 2015). Fundamentally, there are three research strategies; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research strategies.

### **3.3 Qualitative strategy**

Qualitative research is a naturalistic research strategy that attempts to understand the everyday life of different groups of people and communities in their natural settings (Mohajan 2018). Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter that makes sense of a phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Also, Gibson (2017) asserts that qualitative research is a scientific method of observation that gathers non-numerical data to make meaning of the collected data.

This study adopted the qualitative research strategy. The study aimed to examine the role of church employees and volunteers in the work of ministry. In achieving this, non-numeric data was gleaned from published papers relevant to the subject. Also, thematic analysis which is a non-computational analysis technique was utilised to analyse the data for the study.

### **3.4 Quantitative strategy**

A quantitative research strategy is described as a systematic scientific investigation of quantifiable properties and their relationship. It involves the collection of quantifiable data or variables and the use of statistical, numerical, and computational techniques in identifying underlying relations between those variables (Creswell and Creswell 2017). The quantitative research method was adopted for this study. This was because questionnaires were utilised to collect data that was coded and analysed numerically with mathematical principles.

### **3.5 Mixed method strategy**

Mixed-method strategy integrates both qualitative and quantitative research within a single study. This strategy benefits from the strengths of the two research strategies discussed earlier and also minimises their inherent weaknesses significantly (Gunasekare 2015).

### **3.6 Research approach**

The research approach entails the plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018). The overall decision involves which approach should be used to study a subject matter. The research approach is based on the nature of the research problem at hand, the researchers' personal experiences, and the target audience of the study (Kruth 2015). Creswell and Creswell (2017) assert that it is vital to outline the research approach adopted for a study because it enhances the research validity. Literature adduces two research approaches; namely, deductive and inductive research approaches (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018).

### **3.7 Deductive approach**

Deductive implies reasoning from the 'specific to the general', hence a deductive approach is concerned with developing hypotheses based on existing theories and then designing a research strategy to test these hypotheses. The hypotheses are usually tested using primary data obtained (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018). This study adopted a deductive approach as it involved the use of already existing theories to account for the procedures employed by the church in recruiting employees and volunteers and to account for the motivation of employees and volunteers in offering their services in the work of ministry.

### **3.8 Inductive approach**

Unlike the deductive approach, the inductive approach entails reasoning from the general to the specific. That is, it starts with observations, patterns, resemblances, and regularities in experience, and then conclusions are drawn from these observations to generate a theory (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018).

### **3.9 Research design**

Research design refers to the logical and systematic plan and procedures adopted to answer the research question and assumptions from the collection of the necessary information or observation to analyse (Creswell and Creswell 2017). Kabir (2016) presents research design as complete guidelines for the entire research process. Creswell and Creswell (2017) admit that the significance of demonstrating research design and approach as an effective and efficient strategy is to augment the reliability and validity of social research. In this particular study, the archival research design was used. The archival research design entails a variety of activities employed to enhance the study of documents and textual materials produced by and about organisations (Heng et al. 2018). Specifically, archival methods are employed to investigate historical documents. The documents are usually created at some particular past time of the subject's existence and give information about the organisations, persons, and phenomena (Moore et al. 2016). The study adopted the archival research design because it sourced data from already published works on church employees and volunteers from 1997 to 2020.

Other research design include exploratory design which studies a new phenomenon by seeking to comprehend the phenomenon through forming hypotheses, analysing concepts, and gaining insights into the phenomenon (DiNardo and Lee 2011). Descriptive design seeks to describe a phenomenon by clarifying and elaborating its



relationships and properties by answering questions like who, what, and when (DiNardo and Lee 2011). Explanatory design focuses on the cause-effect relationships, i.e., which cause/factor produces which effects. Explanatory design goes beyond just describing cause-effect relationships; it expounds on the reasons for the phenomenon that was only observed by the descriptive study (DiNardo and Lee 2011). Case study design describes a detailed investigation, often with empirical material collected over a period from a well-defined case to provide an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon (Harrison et al. 2017). A case study makes it possible to identify essential factors, processes, and relationships. The survey research design involves measuring research variables through self-reporting with significant attention to issues of sampling (Jann and Hinz 2016). Survey research designs usually ask respondents to give accounts from their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Action research design encompasses several forms of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods specifically designed to detect problems or weaknesses—whether organisational, academic, or instructional (Dick and Greenwood 2015). This design helps in the establishment of pragmatic solutions to efficiently and effectively solve the identified problem.

### **3.10 Data for the study**

Research data implies facts and statistics that are collected for reference or analysis. Broadly, two types of data exist; primary data and secondary data. Weston et al. (2019) identify primary data as data that is collected by a researcher from first-hand sources with the use of techniques like experiments, interviews, surveys, or questionnaires. Secondary data, on the other hand, describe data collected by someone other than the researcher (Weston et al. 2019).

This study made use of only secondary data. The secondary data was sourced from scholarly articles, journals, published papers, online materials, as well as relevant conference excerpts on church administration.

Johnston (2017) contends that secondary data analysis can be leveraged by researchers to attempt to answer new research questions, or to examine an alternative perspective on the original question of a previous research. The secondary data also served the purpose of reviewing literature and also guided the discussion of the analysed data.

### **3.11 Data analysis technique**

After collection of the data, an analysis was performed on the acquired information. Data analysis refers to the process of inspecting, transforming and modelling data to discover useful information, informing conclusion and supporting decision-making (Castleberry and Nolen 2018). Data analysis techniques, thus, involve the analytical methods and tools utilised in data analyses. Data analysis technique may be either quantitative or qualitative depending on the type of data involved. Quantitative data analysis technique involves the use of statistical, mathematical or computation means to analyse quantitative data (Mayer 2015). Qualitative data analysis technique, on the other hand, involves ‘sense-making’ or understanding a phenomenon, rather than predicting or explaining (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2012). This study adopted a qualitative data analysis technique since the data to be analysed was qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves reading through a data and identifying patterns in meaning across the data (Castleberry and Nolen 2018).

### **3.12 Methodological Rigour**

Guba and Lincoln (1994) in an earlier work on competing paradigms in qualitative research enumerated credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability as the criteria for trustworthiness in research. Trustworthiness describes the degree of confidence in data collection, interpretation, and methods employed to ensure the quality of research (Korstjens and Moser 2018). This study adopts the trustworthiness criteria listed in pursuance to ensuring methodological rigour.

Credibility in research refers to the degree to which a study account is appropriate and believable, with particular reference to the level of agreement between the researcher and the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Trochim (2006) parallels credibility in qualitative research to internal validity in quantitative research and further expounds it to entail the process of ensuring that research findings are reliable from participants' perspectives. This study ensured credibility by describing how data for the analysis was obtained and the discussions of the that reflected the initial findings made in the papers used for the study.

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process (Kamal-Kaur et al. 2018; Guest et al. 2017). Dependability in this qualitative study was ensured through the meticulous details provided on data collection and selection, data processing, and analysis. Merriam and Grenier (2019) underscore that these details provide an audit track that ensures that the research procedure could be replicated in a similar research fashion to yield similar findings with minimal faults and prejudices.

Confirmability in research as delineated by Anney (2014) is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the research findings are not figments of the researcher's imagination, but instead, clearly derived from the data. That is, the data produced in a study can be followed back to original data sources for validation by other researchers using an audit trail. Anney (2014) argues that one of the best ways to establish confirmability is to have an outsider researcher conduct an external audit trail and Lincoln and Guba (1994) mentioned field notes, documents, audio/video recorders, and observation logs as examples of original documents that can be used to authenticate the original study by other researchers. This study therefore provided the title, author(s) and year of publication of the papers used. This makes it easy for any researcher to get access to the papers to compare them with this study for confirmability.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings precipitated in one study apply to another study or future research and theory (Lincoln and Guba 1994). This study aims to achieve transferability by providing sufficient information on the subject under study. This is to ensure that anyone who wishes to do similar research will follow the processes and procedures already established.

### **3.13 Ethical consideration**

Žukauskas et al. (2018) emphasise the importance of research ethics by describing it as the norms or standards that provide guidelines for the responsible conduct of research. There are no concerns for breach of confidentiality in this study since only secondary data was used and are publicly available. Credit was given to all authors of the papers, data, and ideas used in the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and discussions of the study. The results are presented based on main themes that were gleaned from the analysis of the sampled papers. The study aimed to examine the role of church employees and volunteers in the work of ministry.

#### **4.2 Using Church Volunteers in International Central Gospel Church, Paradise Temple, Dome Pillar 2**

- i. Money matters, and when free ‘labor’ is available, few pastors can bear to turn it down. Think about it. If you had to hire or pay everyone who served at the church, your church would go broke in a week. Cleaning crew, yard crew, the men who take the offering, the team who fills the communion cups, the ushers, the nursery workers, the youth group sponsors, the Sunday school teachers. Volunteers facilitate the existence of the church. Having to pay everyone who did anything would seemingly flatten the opportunity for spiritual service, not to mention drain the church budget.
- ii. A church is not a business, and church members need the opportunity to minister. Teaching Sunday School or helping to mow the lawn is a way for people to contribute to the body. The New Testament speaks of providing help to others, serving, ministering, etc. We have no record of anyone being on payroll per se. Instead, believers not in a pastoral role simply exercise their gifts, not expecting anything tangible in return.
- iii. Many churches degenerate into distinction between clergy/laity, where the paid staff does all the work and the rest of us just sit and soak it in. Even if it’s not

thought of as a clergy/laity distinction, often churches operate on the performer/spectator mentality. Just sitting back and enjoying the show isn't the same as being part of a church. To really get involved, one must give back, minister, get involved, and participate actively in the life of the assembly. Such involvement doesn't mean getting paid! Volunteer work is the way that a church invites the integral involvement and spiritual refreshment that church members need. It's a natural giving back and outflow of one's internal passion for God and love for the believers. Throwing an employee agreement or even a "love offering for your work" into the mix would douse the flames of passionate service that has sprung up in the heart of such a volunteer.

- iv. Beyond the formal or informal discipleship sessions, there is huge growth advantage in getting the individual plugged in the church at a volunteer level. Volunteer opportunities are growth opportunities for new Christians or even the most experienced of Christians. An older Christian man who oversees the landscaping can help mentor younger Christian men who come to help out on a Saturday afternoon.
- v. Growth, harmony, and discipleship take place within volunteer work settings. Obviously, such warm and profitable interaction can take place on the level of paid-employee. However, breaking down the structure of employee, manager, coworker, etc., better facilitates a growth environment, especially when there is no money, year-end bonus, or promotions that could distract.
- vi. A church that works together, serves together, labors together, and builds together, is often a church that is healthy and vibrant. A "church" after all isn't a pile of bricks and drywall. It's a group of people, who love, serve, live, and work together. Volunteer church workers are the lifeblood of a church's very

existence, allowing the body to function and operate as the church was intended to operate.

#### **4.3 Cons of Using Church Volunteers in International Central Gospel Church, Paradise Temple, Dome Pillar 2**

As necessary as volunteer church workers are, there are risks that come along with it, too.

- i. Your goal in using church volunteers is not to see how much work you can get out of them, but how they can best grow and develop through the opportunity of volunteering at church.
- ii. Volunteers get unlimited vacation days, unlimited sick days, and can bail out at anytime for no reason. Just expect it. Relying on church volunteers is a risky thing to do.
- iii. As two passers-by observed the invitations to a local gospel concert, they were turned off by the awful graphic design work on the flyers. It's the price that is to be paid for volunteer work. Betsy, a retired secretary, may be excellent at typing dictations, but you may not want to call upon her graphic design skills. With volunteer work, you may have to settle for less than excellence in the quality of work.
- iv. Jesus is not asking any church volunteer to burnout, especially not because of the demands of an unrelenting pastor who lords it over them. There is nothing spiritual about running a sanctified rat race, punishing your body, your family, your health, and even your spiritual wellbeing just to be doing stuff for the church. Volunteer service is too easily pushed to the brink of burnout, which is not spiritually beneficial.

vii. After years of serving behind the scenes, doing arduous work for no pay, some volunteer church workers may feel totally unthanked for their services. Feelings like this can easily turn into resentment and bitterness.

viii. A cheerful and smiling group of church nursery volunteers may foment with rage and fury after a late nursery worker, a mom who refuses to volunteer, or the parents who bring their snotty-nosed germ-bearing toddler to nursery—again. This is not the worst of it, though. Some conflicts can get really bad—abuse, violence, sexual molestation, theft, etc. In the world of business and commerce, laws are in place that helps to mitigate workplace conflict, as best as possible, preventing worsening fallout from such awful circumstances. In the rough-and-tumble-contract-free arena of church volunteers, such conflicts can go much farther than it ever should. One nasty incident can wreck churches, scar lives, and desecrate God’s name in the eyes of others.

#### **4.4 The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard**

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> He agreed to pay them a denarius<sup>[a]</sup> for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. <sup>4</sup> He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ <sup>5</sup> So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup> About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

<sup>7</sup> “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

<sup>8</sup> “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

<sup>9</sup> “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup> When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. <sup>12</sup> ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’



<sup>13</sup>“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius?’ <sup>14</sup>Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. <sup>15</sup>Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ <sup>16</sup>“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” The New International Version (NIV). Matthew 20:2 A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer.

#### **4.5 Matthew 20:1-16. The parable of the workers in the vineyard**

According to Richard Niell Donovan 2014, in chapter 19, we heard of rewards that grow out of one’s discipleship:

The rich young man was denied heavenly blessings because he loved his money too much and God too little (19:16-26).  
But the disciples will sit on twelve thrones in the heavenly realm (19:28).  
Jesus promised, “Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive one hundred times, and will inherit eternal life” (19:29).

For Niell Donovan (2014) Jesus closes chapter 19 by saying that “many will be last who are first; and first who are last” (19:30). We can hear that as a wonderful promise if we think of ourselves as one of the last—the poor or powerless or otherwise one-down. But in Jesus’ comment about the first and last, there lurks the warning not to expect God to hand out purple ribbons to disciples who focused on beating the competition. Then, with the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, Jesus spells out how the heavenly rewards system might look. Keep in mind that Jesus gave this parable in answer to Peter’s question, “What then will we have?” (19:27). Peter, who had left everything to follow Jesus, must have heard this parable with some frustration, because it implies that the rewards that the apostles will receive will be the same as the rewards that lesser disciples will receive. That must have offended Peter’s sense of justice.

Niell Donovan (2014) ascertained that we are accustomed to functioning in a world where one’s rewards are proportionate to one’s service. (Although we have to wonder if a professional football player is really worth as much as a thousand high

school teachers.) We would be happy to grant the apostles a larger share than we would expect for ourselves as long as we could expect more than a lesser disciple might receive. We feel for the all-day workers, who received the same pay as the one-hour workers. Is that fair? Don't they deserve more? Shouldn't the master treat them better?

For Niell Donovan (2014) this parable is similar to the Parable of the Prodigal Son/ Elder Brother (Luke 15). In both parables, the grace shown to the undeserving person offends those who think of themselves as deserving. However, the prodigal son is so winsome that he steals our hearts. When we read that parable, we are glad for the mercy shown to the returned prodigal and are offended at the elder brother's outrage.

Not so with the Parable of the Workers. We share the offense of the all-day workers. They have worked long and hard, but the master put them on a par with all the rest. In like manner, God has put us on a par with latecomers to the faith—and others who have done less or given less.

But we do not want to be on a par! We want to be on top! We don't want mercy (what God gives freely) but justice (what we have earned). If God distributes rewards fairly, we who worked all day will get more than those who arrived at the last hour. We will receive what we have earned plus a generous bonus. The irony, of course, is that the little bit that we have earned is of no consequence when compared to God's grace-bonus.

#### **4.6 Matthew 20:1-7. For the kingdom of heaven is like...**

1“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3He went out about the third hour (*nine a.m.*), and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. 4To them he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went their way. 5Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour (*noon and three p.m.*), and did likewise. 6About the eleventh hour (*five p.m.*) he went out, and found others standing idle. He said to them, ‘Why do you stand here all day idle?’ 7“They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’

“He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right.’”

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard” (v. 1). This parable starts wonderfully well. A landowner goes out early in the morning to find laborers for his vineyard (v. 1). Even though he has a manager (vs. 8), he goes personally to the marketplace.

“When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard” (v. 2). He hires those who are available for work after securing their agreement to a fair wage (a denarius), and they go to work (v. 2).

A denarius is a small silver Roman coin roughly equal in value to the Greek drachma, another common silver coin. This verse tells us that an ordinary laborer’s wages are equal to one denarius for a day’s work. To translate that into an equivalent value today, we simply need to know what an ordinary laborer can expect to make for a year’s work and divide by 250 (the number of working days in a year). If an ordinary worker can expect to make \$25,000 a year, his/her daily wage is \$100. That would be the equivalent of a denarius today. “He went out about the third hour (nine a.m.), and saw others standing idle in the marketplace” (v. 3). As the day progresses, the landowner makes four additional trips to the marketplace to hire workers. He makes his second trip at nine o’clock (Greek: *peri triten horan*—the third hour) (v. 3). While the Jewish day technically starts at sundown, the working day starts at sunrise and is divided into twelve hours, the length of the hour varying with the seasons. The third hour corresponds roughly to 9:00 a.m. our time. The master makes additional trips at the sixth and ninth hours (noon and 3:00 p.m.), and makes his final trip at the eleventh hour (5:00 p.m.).

“To them he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went their way” (v. 4). The landlord’s focus seems to be less on the urgency of the harvest and more on the need for more laborers. He does not specify how much he will pay these workers. Presumably he will pay three-fourths of a denarius to workers who work three-quarters of a day—half a denarius to those who work half a day—etc. However, the master promises only to pay them whatever is right.

“Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise” (v. 5). In the original Greek, he went out around the sixth and the ninth hour, which correspond to noon and three p.m. “About the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle. He said to them, ‘Why do you stand here all day idle?’” (v. 6). In the original Greek, he went out around the eleventh hour, which corresponds to five p.m. This is the origin of our phrase, “the eleventh hour,” by which we mean “at the last minute” or “very late in the game.”

“They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right’” (v. 7). Some scholars speculate that the landowner is trying to speed the harvest to prevent spoilage, but there is no mention of that in this text. We can only guess at his motives. Perhaps he intervenes because, in his mind’s eye, he sees children who will go without food if their fathers fail to find employment.

Presumably, the more motivated laborers went to the marketplace early to find employment, and those who went later were less ambitious. Savvy employers would avoid latecomers. This landowner, however, hires everyone in sight—a grace-filled moment. Those hired early have a clear contract. They are to be paid a denarius, the usual wage for a day’s work (v. 2). For those hired at nine o’clock, noon and three

o'clock, the landowner promises only to pay what is right (v. 4). For those hired at five o'clock, there is no mention of money (v. 7).

#### **4.7 Matthew 20:8-12. The first supposed they would receive more**

8 “When evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first.’  
9 When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. 10 When the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise each received a denarius. 11 When they received it, they murmured against the master of the household, 12 saying, ‘These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat!’”

“When evening had come” (v. 8a). The Torah (Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:15) requires that the laborer be paid at the end of the day. “Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first” (v. 8b). Jesus has said that the first will be last and the last will be first (19:30) and will soon repeat it (20:16). Here, in this parable, we see it happen. The workers who were hired late in the day get paid first, and the all-day workers get paid last—not the way it is usually done. “When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour (five p.m.) came, they each received a denarius” (v. 9). The last workers hired are paid a denarius, a full day’s wages, even though they worked only one hour.

Who are these one-hour workers? Those who repented on their deathbeds? Yes! Those who battled addiction all their lives? Yes! Those who wasted their youth and were able to give Jesus only their withered last years? Yes! Tax collectors? Yes! Prostitutes? Yes! (21:32). We hear no complaint from the other workers. They smell generosity, and can hardly wait to see their own paycheck. Jesus makes no mention of the wages received by those hired at 9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m., but presumably each receives a denarius. If so, they all enjoy a bonus, but the bonus becomes progressively

smaller as the manager moves to the earlier groups, because the earlier groups worked more hours and came closer to earning a denarius.

“When the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise each received a denarius” (v. 10). When their time comes, the all-day workers also receive a denarius, one day’s wage exactly as contracted with no bonus added. At that point, they complain (vv. 11-12). Their complaint is not that they should receive more money but that “These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat” (v. 12). But this parable unveils a truth that Matthew’s predominantly Jewish readership needed to hear. It unveils a truth that Peter and the other apostles needed to hear. It unveils a truth that we need to hear. That truth is this: God calls us to give ourselves unreservedly to God’s service and to trust God for our reward. There is an implied corollary—that God is certain to be more generous than we deserve—and probably more generous than we could even imagine.

But while we who have worked so hard want God to show mercy to those less deserving—we want God to reward our good service with a special dollop of blessings. But perhaps Jesus’ story is fairer than it seems at first blush. We assume that it is a better deal to work one hour for a full day’s wage than to work all day for the same amount. However, those of us who have spent day after day in labor halls waiting for our name to be called know otherwise. It is soul-killing to wait and wonder and hope. It is soul-killing to have our destiny controlled by someone whose name we do not know. It is soul-killing to wonder if we will be able to buy groceries for the dinner table. Far better to sweat in the hot sun all day, secure in the knowledge that we will be able to feed our family that night!

And so we must ask whether it is better to live most of our life without Christ—without faith—without prayer—without hope—and to pay the cost of discipleship only in one’s last days? To imagine that those who find Christ on their deathbed have struck a better “deal” suggests that we do not really value our relationship with Christ—that we value the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow rather than the joy of knowing Jesus. Such discipleship is like valuing great art only for its price tag—failing to appreciate the way that it enriches life! The person with that attitude lives a shrunken life!

A part of our problem in accepting the grace in this parable stems from our experience in a world where scarcity prevails. While some would argue that there is no scarcity (if we would just distribute goods equitably, there would be plenty for all) that fails to meet the test of our experience. While it might be possible to ensure that everyone can enjoy a daily bowl of rice, it is not possible to give everyone a luxury car—or a waterfront home. At some point life is a zero-sum game—a game where one side can win only if the other side loses. There is only so much waterfront land, and you and I cannot own the same waterfront lot. Either it is mine or it is yours. If I win it, then you lose it. Knowing that some of our desires will go unmet, it is difficult for us (1) to rejoice at our neighbor’s good fortune and (2) to shift from this-world-thinking to kingdom-thinking.

But Jesus has just said, “Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive one hundred times, and will inherit eternal life” (19:29). The ultimate reward of faithful discipleship is eternal life and of that there is no scarcity. The kingdom of heaven is *not* a zero-sum game. When Jesus offers eternal life to the less deserving, he takes nothing from the more deserving. In God’s kingdom, we can all have, as the old song promises, “a mansion just over the hilltop.” There is no need for spiritual competition, because

our reward will be as good as it could possibly be. That is a hard lesson for competitive people to learn.

#### **4.8 Matthew 20:13-15. Is your eye evil, because I am good?**

13 “But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Didn’t you agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last just as much as to you. 15 Isn’t it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?’”

“Friend, I am doing you no wrong” (v. 13a). The landowner calls the complainers “Friend.” While they might be ungrateful, he does not call them ingrates. He has shown grace to latecomers, and now he shows grace to those who came early as well. “Didn’t you agree with me for a denarius?” (v. 13b). They contracted for the usual wage, and received exactly that. The landowner has not shortchanged them, but has paid them fully in accordance with their agreement. The landowner’s generosity to the latecomers has not taken a penny out of the pockets of the all-day workers.

“Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last just as much as to you” (v. 14). There is no harsh judgment here—only grace. The landowner does not punish the early workers for complaining, but acknowledges that the denarius that they received is their property. They are free to take it and leave—but they are not free to dictate what the landowner will do with the rest of his money. If he chooses to be especially generous to the eleventh hour workers, he will do so—and he does.

Then the landowner asks, “Isn’t it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?” (v. 15). These two questions go to the heart of this parable. The question, “Or is your eye evil, because I am good?” means, “Are you jealous because I have been generous?” The answers are obvious. First, the landowner is clearly allowed to do what he wants with his money. Second, the all-day



workers *are* jealous. They paid the price to get ahead. They got up at the crack of dawn and worked through the heat of the day, but the landowner refused to acknowledge their diligence by elevating them above the latecomers.

#### **4.9 Matthew 20:16. The first will be last**

*16* “*So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.*” Jesus ends the parable as he began it (19:30). This is the Grand Reversal. Who are the firsts, and who are the lasts? The firsts would include Israel—and the Pharisees—and the Elder Son (see Luke 15)—and the apostles—and those who are born into the church and serve Christ all their lives—and ministers of the Gospel—and pillars of the church.

Why would such firsts become lasts? Perhaps because they have become prideful. Perhaps because they have given their alms on street-corners so that others might marvel at their generosity. Perhaps because they sought to pave the way to heaven for themselves and their families with little consideration for others. Perhaps because they spent their lives praying, “MY will be done!” instead of “THY will be done.” Perhaps because their lives have been characterized more by getting than giving.

But there is also the possibility that the firsts will become lasts simply because God has willed it that way. If so, the firsts won’t have lost anything. They will receive their full due—and probably a grace-filled blessing as well.

The last would include Gentiles (most of us are among the Gentile lasts)—and the son who wastes his inheritance and comes home with his tail between his legs (see Luke 15)—and pimps, prostitutes, drug addicts, alcoholics, and others who live wanton lives before turning to Christ—and those who find Christ on their deathbed. We might cringe at the prospect of sharing our heavenly neighborhood with these undeserving lasts—but let us instead give thanks that God has chosen to include them. If he has

chosen to forgive their grievous sins, then we can believe that he will forgive our grievous sins too.

Unlike the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-9; 18-23), Jesus does not give us an explicit interpretation. As a result, scholars have offered many interpretations. Because the people in the story are laborers and managers, some assume it is about work. In that case, it seems to say, “Don't compare your pay to others” or “Don't be dissatisfied if others get paid more or work less than you do in a similar job.” It could be argued that these are good practices for workers. If you earn a decent wage, why make yourself miserable because others have it even better? But this interpretation of the parable can also be used to justify unfair or abusive labor practices. Some workers may receive lower wages for unfair reasons, such as race or sex or immigrant status. Does Jesus mean that we should be content when we or other workers are treated unfairly?

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+20%3A1-16&version=NIV>

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter brings the whole study to a close by presenting the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The chapter gives a review of the main findings precipitated by the study, and the conclusions drawn from the findings. The implications of the study findings are then presented to church administrations, church employees, and church volunteers. The chapter then proffers practical recommendations and finally gives suggestions for future research related to church employees and volunteers.

#### **5.2 Review of research objectives**

To enable a proper assessment of whether the study has been successful, it is important to revisit the objectives that the study set out to achieve. The specific objectives of the study were (I) to assess how employees and volunteers are recruited in the church, (II) to assess how employees and volunteers are motivated in the church, and (III) to explore ways of managing misunderstanding among employees and volunteers in the church.

#### **5.3 Summary**

This study aimed to examine the role of church employees and volunteers in the work of ministry. A précis of the main findings precipitated by the study includes:

- i. Church employee and volunteer recruitment - The analysis revealed that in recruiting employees and volunteers, the church adopts the interpersonal recruitment appeal, loose connection, and job-fit and culture-fit strategies.
- ii. Motivating church employees and volunteers- Concerning how the church can motivate its employees and volunteers, the study revealed recognition,

compensation, regular training, advancement opportunities, empowerment, and collaborative reciprocity. Recognition entails acknowledging and giving credit the services offered by employees and volunteers and it serves the role of feedback as proffered in the job characteristic model. Compensation serves as an appreciation of the extra efforts invested by church employees. To volunteers, it serves the purpose of alleviating the cost incurred in serving and not necessarily the efforts made by them. Regularly training church employees and volunteers on their service roles improves their knowledge and skills thereby improving their skill variety and competence which may translate into an increased task significance and context satisfaction. Providing employees and volunteers opportunities to advance in their work places is a meaningful expectation on them and thus motivate them extrinsically. Empowering employees and volunteers culminates in increasing their autonomy and self-determination because it makes them independent and communicates a sense of trust to them, thereby motivating them. Fostering collaborative reciprocity among employees and volunteers integrates them, increases the growth need strength and increases their options of satisfying their distinct psychological functions because they assimilate new knowledge and skills from among themselves. Collaborative reciprocity also communicates the helpfulness and usefulness of employees and volunteers in their ministry work and is a positive feedback.

- iii. The main findings made by the study on the sources of misunderstanding among employees and volunteers in the church were role ambiguity, personal disagreement, lack of communication, blurred expectations from the church and conflicting assumptions by employees and volunteers, and ethical issues. Role

ambiguity emanates from unclear expectations or undefined roles and it is a significant source of misunderstanding that could translate into conflicts if not resolved. Personal disagreement results from individual dissonance among employees and volunteers, especially on how recognition or compensation should be done by the church. The discontentment of the first set of labourers on how much the second to fifth sets of labourers called by the landowner in the parable of the workers in the vineyard are paid alludes this situation. Lack of communication leads to misunderstanding because it breeds distrust and withholds important feedback that could be of use to employees and volunteers in the work of ministry. Blurred expectations from the church decrease the sense of belonging of employees and volunteers to the ministry and this may breed misunderstanding resulting in misplaced priorities by church workers.

The potential of conflicting assumptions to result in misunderstanding can be deduced from the anger shown by the first set of labourers in Matthew 20:1 – 16 for assuming they would get more than a denarius for bearing the heat of the day. Ethical concerns on the services of employees and volunteers could breed misunderstanding when not adequately discussed and resolved.

#### **5.4 Conclusions and suggestions for future research direction**

Although efforts were made at optimising the methodological choices in the study, there are still areas for improvement worth mentioning. These restraints as well as questions unanswered by this study can be used as ideas for future studies. There is still the need to develop an in-depth understanding of the church volunteerism, particularly in the following respects: what are the stages a person goes through to decide to volunteer in the church? Does volunteer experience burn-out and can burn-

out be prevented? What are the precursors of volunteer attrition and what can the church administration do to reactivate former volunteers?

Also, it is recommended that larger studies that compare and contrast the role and experience of volunteers in secular social service and religious or faith-based organizations be conducted. Such studies are needful in investigating the nuances of motivation for volunteering in secular social service organisations and religious organisations. It is further suggested that such studies should also take the size of the organisation into consideration.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

- 1) As the church grows and changes, the church staff must continually assess and rethink the need for additional employees.
- 2) Even though someone is a volunteer, it is not unrealistic to set out guidelines. After all, if they are agreeing to give their time and effort to the church, they are also, in essence, agreeing to abide by your expectations. Keep your expectations reasonable, even “below reasonable,” if possible.
- 3) There are organizations which offer background checks specifically for churches. It is important that you conduct background checks on persons who are working with children or young people.
- 4) One of the prickliest areas of church volunteering comes in the area of nurseries. Nurseries are notorious for areas conflict, incidents of child abuse, and overworked moms. Although the church nursery is intended to help church families, it could turn into a cancer in the church’s existence. One strategic, albeit expensive, way of overcoming this challenge, is by using paid nursery workers.
- 5) Thank volunteers and show your appreciation

- 6) One of the main functions of church leadership in the New Testament is to help people participate in ministry by serving others. However, church leaders may find it difficult to motivate lay volunteers, and even church staff, to do so.

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