

MONDAY MANNA

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'HERE I AM. SEND ME!'

By Robert J. Tamasy

Have you ever done much volunteer work? Many of us might think it is all we can do to accomplish our regular work responsibilities. However, every week millions of people volunteer in a vast variety of ways. If it were not for them, many important things would never get done.

Volunteers provide vital services, such as helping teachers in schools; aiding individuals who are homebound due to illness or disability; assisting in orphanages; providing foster care for children; supporting international relief agencies; addressing needs of the poor and needy; participating in short-term mission trips; responding to natural disasters; mentoring both young people and adults; and helping to care for wounded and endangered animals. Charitable organisations like the Salvation Army have been built by volunteers.

Years ago, after undergoing open-heart surgery, I volunteered at a local hospital to visit with patients who had gone through similar procedures to offer encouragement, share from my own experiences, and give suggestions for their recovery process. It was rewarding for me, especially since I could relate to what they were experiencing and knew how much such visits would have meant for me.

For those of us who follow Jesus Christ, volunteering is a privilege. In the Old Testament, we find the example of one who recognised the importance of being a volunteer. In Isaiah 6:8, we read, *"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"* God took him up on his offer, and Isaiah became a bold spokesman for the Lord, calling people to repentance and offering spiritual assurance to those who were seeking to know Him better.

Everyone who has been involved with CBMC in a significant way understands it relies heavily upon volunteers. It consists of business and professional people who willingly give of their time, energy and resources to help others not only with workplace responsibilities and challenges, but also in helping them discover how biblical truth and principles relate to everyday life and work.

CBMC promotes the concept of "marketplace ambassadors," people who see their work not only as livelihoods but also as opportunities to represent Jesus to everyone they encounter. *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God"* (2 Corinthians 5:20). It is like Isaiah declaring, "Here am I. Send me!"

Where are ambassadors to go? The Good News of Jesus Christ is not limited to certain people, groups or segments of society. It is to be caringly and faithfully communicated in every continent, to every nation, city and town. *"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation'"* (Mark 16:15).

Who are we to serve? Workplaces around the world all consist of people needing to hear the life-transforming message of Christ. In the process, we are to serve as ambassadors – His willing, volunteer representatives. *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19).

What are we to do? The mission is not simply to convey information, but to help people understand what it means to follow Christ, practicing and obeying what He taught. *"...as you are going, make disciples...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded..."* (Matthew 28:19-20).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

How much volunteer work have you done, if any? What has that meant for you – and for those you have helped?

If you have been involved in CBMC to any extent, what has been your impression of its reliance on volunteers and their impact?

What do you think of the idea of serving as an ambassador for Jesus Christ where you work, whether in your job setting or as you travel to other locations? Is that “volunteer work” you’re willing to participate in? Why or why not?

In what ways do you think followers of Jesus can be effective in representing Him and communicating the Good News of Christ to others, while at the same time being diligent to fulfil their responsibilities at work?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about principles it presents, consider the following passages:

Colossians 3:23-24

Galatians 2:20

Philippians 4:8-9

2 Timothy 2:2