



UNCUT DIAMONDS

GEMS IN THE ROUGH

by Mark Gauthier, Director of Mobilizing Churches



Developing new leaders is often desired but difficult to do. Rare is the lay leader who is fully equipped, trained, and ready to go from the moment he or she volunteers. Most often, it takes weeks, months, or even years to fully develop a lay leader, but few staff members are willing or able to invest the time and effort to develop them.

Unteachable Qualities

We tend to look for the person with the “right” qualifications so he or she is ready to go right out of the box. How often do we overlook the person God may have appointed for this position at this time? How many in our churches want to serve and feel called to serve but are not serving because we do not ask? While a job may require training, if the volunteer has certain “unteachable” qualities, he or she can be taught to do most jobs.

What “unteachable” qualities should we look for in a leader?



Letting Go

Once we have found the right person to lead a ministry, one of the greatest difficulties is letting go of it ourselves. We now have to release to someone else a ministry we may have begun and grown to become successful. Sometimes we fear they may not do it as well as we would. The reality is that, while the lay leader may do it differently, different does not always mean wrong.

While we must be willing to let go so others can lead, we must insure there is a strong foundation on

which they can build. Working together to develop the framework or objectives for a ministry is crucial. Being available to insure they do not become overwhelmed is essential. They must be part of the team, relied upon but not abandoned, and mentored, not forgotten.

Recognition of individuals for their contributions can make the difference between keeping and losing volunteer leaders. Recognition that is low-key, frequent, and personal is generally more meaningful to people than a big, annual event (although doing both is even better). If lay leaders do not feel valued, they may choose not to continue serving.

SBCV Mobilizing Churches has been blessed with lay leaders who have developed or grown various ministries, including:

- Disaster Relief** — led by Bob Williams, Wayne Sink, and Eddie Urbine (along with more than six other lay leaders)
- Baptist Builders** — led by Jack and Nancy Dunford
- Families on Mission** — led by Charlie and Ann Baker
- Campers on Mission** — led by Tom Hankins

Reaching the World for Christ

Over half of all SBCV churches and thousands of volunteers have taken part in reaching the world for Christ through the above-mentioned ministries alone. Churches are built, lives are changed, homes are restored, and families model missions and evangelism to their children and grandchildren. All of this is made possible by lay leaders who volunteer untold hours to spread the Gospel.

Since God’s Church *is* the people, we must strive to insure we encourage people as they work to build the local church and community. We must show lay leaders that

we respect their desire to serve and must treat them as fully vested members of the team. The church should be the best place for volunteers to spend their time. Through a commitment to prayerful volunteer selection, training, and appropriate recognition, we can make this a reality.

RESOURCE

■ **Website:** www.sbcv.org/mobilizing

■ **SBCV Contact:**
Call 888-234-7716 for details from your region’s missionary.

■ **Consider:**
Staff member: Are you overlooking a church member who may be called to serve?
Church member: Have you hesitated to volunteer because you thought you weren’t qualified?