Attracting & Keeping Long Term Staff

by Barry Austin

The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few! How can we increase the number of long term staff in YWAM? We need to improve the way we recruit, but we also need to examine why people leave after being on staff.

Why do people leave?

Many people leave YWAM because they are called long term to serve in a local church situation and to work in a normal job. Others are called to work with other missions. This is normal and to be expected.

However, some leave because of negative experiences or because they are unfulfilled within YWAM. We need to consider the reasons for these negative experiences, but let's look at the question in it's positive form: not, Why do some leave? but, Why do people stay?

Why do people stay?

I think most people join YWAM because they are attracted to a particular vision or ministry, and also because of the person leading that ministry.

But although they initially commit to YWAM because of the vision or leader, I believe they stay in YWAM long term for other reasons.

I have found that people stay because they find it to be a place where one or more of the following conditions or desires are met. In general, the more of these conditions they find, the greater and longer will be their commitment.

• It's a place where they feel significant and fruitful in serving God.
• It's a place where they feel they are growing spiritually.
• It's a place where there is vital community life.
• It's a place where they have friends.

Is it valid for our staff to have these expectations? I believe so. I think these needs are valid and Biblical and should be met within the corporate life of the mission. In fact it is essential for the health of our people that we do so.

Keeping Staff Long Term

Discuss the following questions with your team, find some answers and develop strategies to meet each need. As we apply these strategies, I believe we'll be more effective in keeping staff long term.

1 How can we help our staff identify their gifts and ministries and find their place of maximum fruitfulness in the kingdom of God? 1 Peter 4:10,11; Romans 12:1-8; Ephesians 4:12

2 How can we best create an environment in our communities and teams that is conducive to the ongoing personal and spiritual growth of our individual staff? Hebrews 10:24,25; 2 Peter 1:8

3 How can we best create and maintain vital community life so that our works of service come out of the spiritual overflow from our relationship with God and our corporate life together? Ephesians 2:22; 4:15,16; 3:20

4 How can we better provide an environment in our communities and teams that is conducive to making friends and supportive relationships?