

Televangelist Ernest Angley ordered to pay \$388,000 for using unpaid labor at Cuyahoga Falls buffet

Updated on March 30, 2017 at 4:29 PM Posted on March 29, 2017 at 7:27 PM BY [ERIC HEISIG, CLEVELAND.COM](#)



Ernest Angley (*File photo*)

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio -- A federal judge on Wednesday ordered Cuyahoga Falls televangelist Ernest Angley and a buffet he owns in the Akron suburb to pay more than

\$388,000 in damages and back wages to a group of employees that the U.S. Department of Labor found worked as unpaid volunteers.

U.S. District Judge Benita Pearson wrote that testimony at a trial held in October and November showed that Angley and his managers at Cathedral Buffet encouraged members of his church, Grace Cathedral, to work at the buffet without pay. The for-profit restaurant used volunteers to save money and the volunteers felt pressured to provide free labor, meaning they should have been paid for their work, Benita Pearson wrote.

"... The volunteers' work was clearly integral to the Buffet's operations, in that they did work that was necessary to the operation of a restaurant, such as cleaning, bussing tables, stocking the buffet, chopping vegetables, and operating the cash registers," the judge wrote. "It is hard to fathom that a restaurant could operate without such work being completed."

(You can read the judge's ruling [here](#) or at the bottom of this story.)

The Labor Department filed suit against the 95-year-old televangelist and the buffet in 2015 following an investigation spurred by an article in the *Akron Beacon Journal*. Its lawsuit said Angley and the buffet violated the Fair Labor Standards Act through its use of volunteers and did not document the volunteers' work.