

Missionary Families of Christ

A MANUAL FOR MISSIONARIES

MFC is a missionary community. Just like the Church of which we are a part, we exist for mission. This means we go out into the world and share the good news of Jesus Christ. We do a worldwide work of evangelization, working for the salvation of souls and for spiritual transformation.

In MFC we do three types of missionary work.

- 1) On the simplest level, all members who actively serve in the day-to-day life of MFC are doing mission, simply because they contribute to the overall work of the missionary community.
- 2) On a higher level, mission is understood to be the actual going out into the world to actively carry on the work of MFC. This can be going for a few hours to another parish, or going for the weekend to another area (province, state, etc.), or going for a week or longer to other countries.
- 3) On the highest level, to be a missionary is to leave home and settle in another country or territorial area for an extended period of time, normally at least one year, in order to do our work.

Unless otherwise stated, this paper will deal with the third category.

What are the reasons why we send out missionaries?

- 1) MFC is a worldwide missionary community and sending out missionaries is part of our response to the Great Commission.
- 2) MFC has many pastorally developed areas that can effectively share resources with less pastorally developed areas. This enhances and hastens overall mission.
- 3) The harvest is rich and sending missionaries will help bring in a bigger harvest.
- 4) Missionaries help intensify the interaction and inter-relationships within the worldwide family of MFC.
- 5) Missionaries are a living manifestation of our commitment to give our all for the cause of Christ.

What is a missionary?

The role of a missionary:

- 1) To animate and to help move forward the life and mission of MFC in a particular country or territorial area.
- 2) To help train leaders and get them to effectively carry on our life and mission.
- 3) To spot and develop nationals who can become full-time pastoral workers.

Qualifications of a missionary:

- 1) Must have a deep relationship with Jesus.
- 2) Must have the heart of a servant.
- 3) Must have solid and extensive experience in the area of service that one will focus on.
- 4) Must have leadership qualities and the ability to deal with leaders.

- 5) Must be of good physical health.
- 6) Must be emotionally stable.
- 7) Must be willing to face any hardship, challenge or sacrifice.

The challenges for a missionary:

- 1) Living apart from family, friends and familiar circumstances and entering into unfamiliar territory, often with an unfamiliar culture and perhaps language.
- 2) Loneliness.
- 3) At times, lack of personal pastoral support.
- 4) At times, resistance from local leaders.
- 5) Lack of money and logistical support for mission.
- 6) Empowering nationals to carry on the life and mission of MFC.

Proper posture of a missionary:

- 1) A missionary does God's work and is at the forefront of MFC's missionary thrust. Thus consider it a privilege to be sent on mission.
- 2) The call to mission is the call to sacrifice. Thus do not look to nice amenities but be grateful for whatever the Lord provides. To go on mission is to give totally of oneself, a that attains to the ideal of Christian discipleship.
- 3) Expect to receive all the support you need from local and international MFC. But if such is not forthcoming, just work even with a lack of such support.
- 4) Expect the unexpected!
- 5) Crosses will come your way. Look to them as blessings that can draw you closer to God and strengthen your faith.
- 6) Trust fully in God who calls you to be His missionary. You are in His hands and He is accomplishing His plan in your life.
- 7) Expect to have the most rewarding time of your life.

Discerning God's call to be a missionary

Do not go if:

- 1) You are just looking for excitement or adventure.
- 2) You have romantic notions about mission.
- 3) You are just succumbing to peer pressure, because your peers are going on mission.
- 4) You are doing it out of obedience to a human leader.

Go if:

- 1) You discern God's call to become a missionary.
- 2) You are qualified.
- 3) You are ready to give your all.

Functioning in the mission field

Preparing to be a missionary:

- 1) As much as possible, learn the language. (Note: one must already be very conversant with English).

- 2) Equip yourself with knowledge and experience on the different programs and ministries you will be responsible for. Have a working knowledge of the totality of MFC life, mission and programs.
- 3) Learn about the life and culture of the mission country or area (through the Internet, inputs of other missionaries, etc.).
- 4) It would be good if you can play the guitar.
- 5) It would be a plus if you learned basic self-defense.

How a missionary should relate to the local MFC:

- 1) Be respectful to local leaders.
- 2) Try to integrate well into the local life of MFC. Settle in well first before starting to challenge mistaken elements of MFC culture.
- 3) Do not be quick to criticize or to impose your ideas and inputs.
- 4) With proper respect and prudence, be bold in asserting what is right about how to conduct the MFC life and mission.
- 5) If you do not make headway, respectfully suggest that the matter be elevated to a higher authority, either the Country Coordinator, Regional Coordinator or International Mission Coordinator.

How the local MFC should relate to a missionary:

- 1) Be respectful of the missionary, who has been sent by the worldwide leadership, under the Servant General, to help MFC in the country/area.
- 2) Make him/her welcome as a valued member of the MFC family. Look to him/her as having invaluable experience with which to help your area.
- 3) Be open to his/her inputs and ideas, which come out of pastoral experience and knowledge of how MFC does things.
- 4) Do not be defensive when told about elements of MFC work and culture that are not being done properly, but welcome such inputs as an opportunity to bring your MFC in line with worldwide community standards.
- 5) Be open to a matter being brought up to a higher authority, in order to be able to do what is truly right in the life and mission of MFC.

How a missionary should relate to others in general:

- 1) A missionary should not use his/her position for personal gain or for worldly ambition.
- 2) A missionary should be humble, submissive to authority, and beyond reproach.
- 3) A missionary should be a team player, with other missionaries and with other leaders. He/she should look after the welfare of fellow missionaries and should try to work well with all leaders.
- 4) When making decisions, the missionary should keep in mind the good of the local MFC community where he/she is stationed.
- 5) The missionary should always consult with his/her local seniors, or if need be with the Country Coordinator and/or International Mission Coordinator, for major decisions.

Oversight of the missionary's work:

- 1) The missionary is directly under the supervision and direction of the International Mission Coordinator, or his designated representative, and/or the seniors of the regional mission base (country that functions as the sending MFC).
- 2) The missionary is also inserted in the pastoral structure of MFC in the area, and thus is subject to the local governance structure.

Providing for the needs of the missionary:

- 1) MFC provides for lodging, food and other necessary mission expenses.
 - * Food should be simple but adequate.
 - * Lodging should be simple but safe and with basic essentials (privacy, toilet, etc.).
 - * Lodging should not be moved from place to place every so often (e.g., houses of different MFC hosts every month), but should be at a fixed address for at least six months or longer.
- 2) MFC provides for a personal stipend.
 - * For full-time pastoral workers, this stipend replaces their regular salary.
 - * Full-time pastoral workers (not missionary volunteers) receive a 13th month pay, which is the amount of their regular monthly salary (at home base) and not the stipend (in mission area).
 - * When they are at home base (away from the mission field), they will receive their regular salary and not their stipend.
- 3) MFC provides for accident insurance.
 - * Health or medical insurance is not provided by MFC mission bases due to its prohibitive cost. Should serious health or medical problems arise, MFC (international, regional or local) will help out with expenses.
- 4) For personal pastoral support, the missionary is inserted in a household.

Financial aspects:

- 1) The missionary's basic personal and service needs are provided for by MFC (per above). In addition, a personal stipend is provided.
- 2) The missionary is not to accept any monetary gift from MFC in the mission area or from others for work done on mission. Such offers are to be politely declined. If the offeror persists however, the money may be accepted, but turned over to the MFC International Mission Fund (IMF) or to the mission fund for the area or country.
 - * However, where an appeal has been made by MFC to its members for specific needs (e.g., giving birth, medical treatments, etc.), then money for such purposes may be accepted.
 - * Money may also be accepted as gifts for specific special situations, such as birthdays, baptisms or weddings.
- 3) Non-monetary personal gifts may be accepted. However, if these are on an ongoing regular basis (e.g., monthly food baskets), these should be reported to and cleared with the International Mission Coordinator. Adjustments in the MFC provision for regular upkeep of the missionary may then be made accordingly.
- 4) The missionary should focus entirely on mission work and not take on any personal or secular work for added income. On an exemption basis, if deemed absolutely necessary,

part-time secular work may be allowed, upon the approval of the International Mission Coordinator, and with clear guidelines.

Cultural integration:

- 1) Learn and speak as much of the language as you can.
- 2) Eat local food, and wear clothes appropriate to the locality.
- 3) Translate our songs into the local language or dialect if possible. Use local songs as appropriate. You may adapt our songs to the local beat or rhythm.

Safety:

- 1) Be prudent in deciding where to go when in the mission field. Trust in God's protection but do not be foolhardy.
- 2) Be vigilant when riding public transportation, especially on extended trips.
- 3) In going to unfamiliar areas, it is best to have a companion.
- 4) Always have appropriate contact numbers on hand.
- 5) Always let the local office or brethren know where you will be going on an extended basis.

Romance on mission:

- 1) Single missionaries should focus totally on their mission and avoid romantic involvements, preferably for the whole duration of the mission. If not, at the very least, there should be no such romantic moves for the first year of mission.
- 2) After the first year, any initial move towards a romantic relationship should be consulted and cleared with the International Mission Coordinator and/or the Missionaries Coordinator.
- 3) In case a relationship develops, single missionaries should be very prudent in how they conduct themselves, ensuring that they are not cause for idle talk and thus compromise their mission.

Finances and mission

Mission is financed basically through the free-will contributions of MFC members. Mission funding is provided by Manila through the International Mission Fund and by other mission bases (USA, India, etc.), as well as local mission areas.

Proper posture of mission bases providing funding:

- 1) It is a privilege to be able to provide funding for missionaries.
- 2) Funding missionary work is a top priority.
- 3) Being the funder does not mean "owning" the missionary or assigning tasks not appropriate to his/her responsibilities as a missionary.

Giving birth on mission

A missionary wife should be prepared to give birth in the country where she is assigned if the time for such falls within her term of mission. The reasons are as follows:

- 1) It will be added expense if she has to be brought home to give birth, which expense is avoidable.

- 2) It will take the missionary and her husband away from the mission field (perhaps up to 4 months for the wife and one month for the husband).
- 3) It is a great sign of our missionary commitment if we have our MFC babies in our countries of mission.
- 4) A missionary couple should be open to settling permanently in another country for the sake of the work.

However, if for whatever reason the missionary couple prefers to have their baby delivered elsewhere other than the country of mission, this is their decision. However, for good order, the matter should be discussed with the International Mission Coordinator.

The cost for maternal care and giving birth is to be shouldered by the missionary couple, but they can expect that MFC, locally and even internationally, would provide financial assistance as needed. Thus this is subject to discussion and mutual agreement.

The health and safety of both mother and child are of paramount importance in choosing the doctor and hospital (or other arrangement) to be used. However, the missionary must also give witness to the local area by avoiding extravagance and being open to receiving the care, if adequate enough, that locals receive.

Reminders

- 1) The worldwide mission center is in Manila. All missionaries and all sending mission bases should be submitted to directives and other inputs from the Servant General, through the International Mission Coordinator.
- 2) In dealings with clergy, know that MFC is not a Filipino ministry but is a ministry of the universal Church. Thus normally the parish or diocese should not place MFC under the Filipino chaplaincy or under an ethnic grouping.
- 3) The vision and mission of MFC, the call to evangelization and mission, the cultural aspects of life in MFC, the directions for our ministry—all these are contained in the books and writings of the founder. Read all his books and writings and become very familiar with their content. The mission library should have all the books of the founder.
- 4) We have a “missionaries” e-group. Missionaries can use this to be connected with all other missionaries throughout the world. Share your blessings, struggles, insights, ideas, etc.

The mission of the seventy-two

Our missionaries are those whom Jesus himself sends out. We then look to his final instructions.

(From Luke 10:1-11)

v.1 “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit.

- * It is Jesus himself who sends you forth in order to do his mission.
- * You will normally be sent in pairs or more, whether a married couple or a tandem of one male and one female single, or two handmaids.

v.2 “He said to them, ‘The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.’”

- * Our evangelization work is one that is rapid, massive and worldwide. There is much that needs to be done, but there is always a lack of people and other resources.
- * Continue to pray for more workers and missionaries.
- * Be on the look-out for and help form potential full-time pastoral workers in your mission area.

v.3 “Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves.”

- * The mission field is the world and you will encounter worldly people, who may even be antagonistic to the gospel. Discard romantic notions about mission, and be ready to shed tears, sweat and even blood.
- * You are the sacrificial lamb. You are called to a life of sacrifice, even to the giving of your very life.
- * “So be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves” (Mt 10:16). Do not be naïve about or too trusting of people in the world, be prudent and careful, but still, have a heart that loves and a mind that is pure.

v.4 “Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way.”

- * Be simple in your lifestyle. Do not be attached to material possessions.
- * Be totally dependent on God and His provision (as He also uses MFC and others to provide).
- * Leave behind any baggage (emotional or material) that can prevent you from freely and fully serving God while on mission.
- * Be focused and single-minded about mission. Do not be side-tracked in doing your work. Know that our mission is urgent.

v.5 “Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’”

- * You are messengers of peace.
- * In particular, we carry on our ministry of strengthening marriages, renewing the family, and defending life. We are bringing God’s light to homes throughout the world.

v.6 “If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you.”

- * Do not let your own peace be disturbed by those who do not respond positively to the gospel.

v.7-8 “Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you”

- * Be grateful for God’s provision.
- * Know that MFC is committed to support you in your personal needs and in your service. This is your right and the community’s privilege.
- * Do not be selective as to the circumstances of your mission area—the area itself, the hosting, the food served, the work assignment, etc.

- * Inculturate as much as possible—eating local food, wearing appropriate local clothes, speaking the local language or dialect, etc.

v.9 “cure the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God is at hand for you.’”

- * Be instruments of healing—spiritual, emotional and physical.
- * Proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus, and work hard to build his Kingdom on earth.

v.10-11 “Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, ‘The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.’ Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand.”

- * If a person, parish or town does not accept the gospel message, move on. Do not be disappointed, for there will be those who will not accept the good news. The important thing is that we tried, and the Lord gave them the opportunity.
- * But in everything, be convinced that God indeed is at work in establishing His kingdom. So just be faithful, and the fruit is up to God.

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