

Missionary Families of Christ

FULLTIMERS—CHOICES FOR THE KINGDOM

MFC is an evangelistic and missionary community. We exist to evangelize and to do mission. E&M defines who we are and everything that we do. Thus E&M is not just one of our 7 Core Values, but is the fullness of God's design for us.

Jesus started his work of E&M by forming a core group. He needed to have dedicated and totally available people for the work. What they were embarking on was the work of a lifetime. The 12 apostles were the first fulltimers.

Your call

You too have been called. And you have responded. You left your "nets" and even your father "Zebedee." Becoming a fulltimer entails sacrifice. It is part of the package. It is God's intent.

What was your motivation? (or what should be your motivation?)

Love for God. You are responding to His great love for you.

Love for your fellowmen, and the desire to do something to bring Christ into other people's lives.

A desire to make this world a better place, to reflect the Kingdom that is already in our midst. To look to a future full of hope.

To bring others, as many as possible, to heaven.

What do you call that? It is called selfless love. The work of a fulltimer is about love and about selflessness. It is giving all till there is nothing more to give, just like Jesus. Becoming a fulltimer is actually the best career choice one can ever make. In what other job can your boss be Jesus himself? In what other job can you be trained in so many skills in the real world? In what other job can you gain the confidence with which to face any situation in life? Further, as has been said, the pay is small but the retirement benefits are out of this world.

A more special call

Now there is a special kind of fulltimer (you of course are all special). He is the missionary. On top of what a fulltimer does, a missionary gives even more. He gives up his familiar circumstances and faces a somewhat unknown environment in a far-off place in order to serve God. A missionary:

Leaves home. This is our most basic place for support and nurture. Leaving home is quite a move.

Goes to a relatively unknown place. The language, culture, food, etc. would be different. This of course is part of the excitement, but it can be daunting nonetheless.

Will not have the physical presence of brethren and of the community he has known for so long, and where his friendships and pastoral support are.

But that is part of the calling to missionary life. Then he has no one but God. He is simply to trust in Jesus.

What blessings come with missionary life?

As has been said, one will have to fully trust in God alone. But isn't that what Christianity is all about? Having many other things to put our trust in (family, community, resources, etc.) actually can keep us from fully trusting in God.

It can be one of the best ways to grow in holiness. Holiness is God's call to us. Given hardships and sacrifices, these actually bring us closer to God.

An even nobler path

Now there is an even nobler path. And that is lay celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom. It is giving up marriage, family life, financial well-being, and one's own will in order to serve God without distraction. It is embracing poverty, chastity (celibacy) and obedience. It is giving up all in order to fully embrace Jesus, and Him alone.

This was like the call to the rich young man (Mt 19:16-21). Here was one who desired righteousness and had been a good person. He wanted more. Jesus then told him that if he wished to be perfect, he should let go of everything and then follow him. This is very hard. But then, isn't perfection what Jesus desires for us? (Mt 5:48).

Paul also talks about being free of anxieties (1 Cor 7:32-35). A married person is anxious about the things of the world and of pleasing his spouse, and is divided. A single person, totally committed to God, is anxious only about the things of the Lord and is not distracted.

But not pursuing marriage goes against the grain. The most natural thing is to fall in love, get married, have a family, pursue a career, have fun in life, follow one's dreams. But we also know that Christianity is a counter culture. It does not run parallel to what the world considers as desirable. Properly lived out, it is what the world would call foolishness.

It is the foolishness of a Father offering His own Son to a horrible death on the cross, so that those who sent Him to the cross would be saved. It is the foolishness of a Paul who rejoices in affliction for the sake of the gospel.

Looking to God's blessings

What do you have to look forward to as you give more and more of yourself—as a fulltimer, as a missionary, as a lay celibate (priesthood, religious life, or single blessedness in community)? You might have in your mind the unstated question of Peter (Mk 10:28). Of course, giving oneself to God is reward enough in itself. You have made your choice not because of what you can get but what you can give.

But also know that God is never outdone in generosity (Mk 10:29-30). God will return a hundredfold. Including persecutions. For you would then be worthy to suffer for Him.

On the part of MFC, we are committed to support you in your choices for the Kingdom. You would never be just a hired hand. You serve the King Himself. We know you are not in it for money, for power, for position. Nevertheless, we also know that you have human needs. So we will try to support you in some of these. The pay is sacrificial. You probably could get more if you worked at a secular job. The rewards are not financial but spiritual.

Thank you for responding to God's call. You are a very important component of the life and mission of MFC. We are blessed by your response.

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Note: This paper is given to every new full-time pastoral worker.

(SG. Oct 7, 2019)