

MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST

Roles of Area Pastoral Leadership

MFC has a pyramidal pastoral structure. Aside from being able to care for a large number of members without overly burdening leaders, this structure provides for particular functions at different levels. In other words, the structure is not just for the purpose of dividing the large membership into more manageable cell groups, but more importantly it is attuned to the needs of members as they grow in Christ and to the needs of the larger community for the furtherance of its mission.¹

Following is a basic description of the pastoral roles of servant leaders at each of the levels.

Household Servant

He is an older brother to the brethren under him. He has been with the community for at least a year, being in a household during that time. He has grown spiritually. He has some facilitation skills. He is willing to serve.

He is not expected to answer all questions or resolve all problems. He can give advice or inputs based on his own experience. Anything beyond him he passes on to the Unit Servant.

Unit Servant

He is the “father” to the unit, that is, his own unit household and all the households under his Household Servants. He has been a Household Servant for at least one year. He has grown further spiritually. He has greater maturity.

He is a low-level formator. He teaches. He concerns himself with the spiritual growth of unit members. He oversees (but not directs) the life of his Household Servants and through them, the lives of the other unit members. He deliberately looks to their growth in spirituality and in faithfulness to our covenant.

Chapter Servant

He is the “grandfather” of the chapter. He has been a Unit Servant for at least a year. His spiritual life is in fairly good order. He has grown in wisdom and commitment.

He is the overall formator of the chapter members,² though he does this basically through his Unit Servants and his intervention is more on an as-needed basis. He concerns himself more with the overall life and service of the chapter. He is an administrator as well as a pastor. He coordinates, directs and oversees chapter activities, including services. He looks to the overall

¹ The servant leaders in the different levels do not just have the same basic function but in ever larger groupings as you go up the pyramid. Rather, the particular function of each level of leadership is really quite specialized and different from the others.

² Formation is not handled by the PFO, which office prepares programs and teachings, but implementation belongs to the territorial leadership.

well-being of chapter members as well as the chapter as a whole, and intervenes directly with individuals whenever necessary. He guides the chapter's parish involvement.

Area Servant

He is the overall pastor and governor of the area. He is the extension of the Servant General for the pastoral care of community members and the furtherance of our mission. His work is overseen through seniors with delegated authority from the Servant General.

He is responsible for the overall formation of the MFC members in the area, though he does this basically through his Chapter Servants and his intervention is more on an as-needed basis. He concerns himself more with the overall life and service of the area. He is an administrator as well as a pastor. He coordinates, directs and oversees area activities, including services. He looks to the overall well-being of MFC members as well as the area as a whole, and intervenes directly with individuals whenever necessary. He guides the area's involvement in the diocese.

Pastoral notes

The above are general guidelines that define and distinguish some of the basic functions of servant leaders at the different pastoral levels. It is not a comprehensive listing of how they pastor and serve the brethren. Other important aspects as evangelization, faithfulness to covenant and core values and culture, financial monitoring, Church relationship, etc., have not been touched on.

Though all servant leaders are important, the basic importance of particular leaders is stressed, as follows:

Household Servants – they care for new people, and are the ones who provide the initial experience of the love of Christ and the face of community.³ Their role is thus crucial, being the front-liners in our evangelization.

Unit Servants – they are the basic formators. Unlike Household Servants who are basically facilitators providing “milk to babies in Christ,” they help provide the “solid food” that enables community members to grow strongly in their life in Christ. Their role is crucial, as they provide the back-up for the front-liners.

Chapter Servants – they head the “mini-MFC” which is the basic localized community, capable of living out the fullness of our life and mission.

Some of the functions described have to be adapted to particular situations. For example:

One-year requirements mentioned for Household, Unit and Chapter Servants may have to be relaxed in certain situations. For example, when we open in a new area and leaders are appointed from among CLS participants.

Appropriate training is given at each level of servant leadership.

³ Together with the facilitators and team in a CLS.

Note: For couples and for single sisters and handmaids, the appropriate adaptation in terminology (“he” to “they” or to “she”) is to be applied.

(SG. Jan 31, 2021)