



**CCO Staff
Information & Discernment
Guide**

*The following is a the text from a letter written by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II,
to Catholic Christian Outreach Canada
on the occasion of the Rise Up 2002 Christmas Conference in Edmonton, Alberta.*



From the Vatican, December 28, 2002.

It is a great joy for me to greet you on the occasion of your National Christmas Conference. The memory of my meeting with you and so many other young people from around the world in July of this year remains vividly etched in my mind.

At the World Youth Day Prayer Vigil held in Downsview Park on Saturday, the evening of July 27, I called for a new generation of builders to respond to the aspiration of humanity for a civilization of love marked by freedom and peace. Indeed I entrusted this hope of mine specifically to you, my dear young people. As members of the Catholic Christian Outreach you are generously responding to that appeal through your courage to be disciples of Jesus, living the life of the Beatitudes on campuses throughout Canada. In this way, as you strive to be the salt of the earth and light of the world for others, you become shining beacons illuminating the way of the Lord, answering the question that stirs in the hearts of all young people: "to whom shall we go?" (Jn 6:68).

Yes, Jesus Christ is the sure foundation of your hope and joy. Immersed in him and his paschal mystery your own lives will grow in holiness, which is the authentic path of true witness to the light of his loving presence in our world. And so I confidently renew my appeal to you: listen to the voice of Jesus! Let His light shine in your lives, continue steadfastly on the path of holiness, share with everyone "the good news of a great joy which will come to all the people" (Lk 2:10).

Invoking upon all of you the joy and peace that the birth of our Savior brings, I cordially impart to you and your families my Apostolic Blessing.

JOANNES PAULUS PP. II



Dear potential staff member:

Welcome to Catholic Christian Outreach. We want to personally congratulate you for considering a career with our exciting organization.

CCO is a team of highly committed, like minded people who are dedicated to fulfilling the call of the Church in the area of evangelization. Over the last many years our organization has grown and become a recognized and respected lay movement throughout the world.

The Catholic Church is calling for a renewed evangelization. In the words of Pope John Paul II: "The harvest is abundant! But there are still relatively few ready to proclaim Him [Jesus] in a credible way. There is a need for young people inspired with the missionary spirit, because it is young people who should become the first apostles of the young."

Each day God brings new challenges and opportunities for CCO to spread His Word. With these challenges and opportunities lies a need for more staff; men and women who are ready to use their life for God's glory.

As you read the following pages, we pray that God will use them to help you discern a possible call to full time ministry with CCO. God Bless you as you embark on life's greatest adventure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Lockert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Lockert
CCO President

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Important Considerations

Our World Desperately Needs the Savior

With more than five billion people on the planet, the need and opportunities to present the life-changing message of Jesus Christ have never been greater. Especially on our university campuses –where the Gospel message is frequently challenged—students need to hear the Good News of Jesus.

“The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second Millennium after Christ’s coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service.” (The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, Pope John Paul II).

“Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear today, as in the past, that many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the Gospel revelation or to enter the Church.” (The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, Pope John Paul II).

Who Will Get the Job Done?

With the tremendous spiritual needs of individuals throughout the world and its growing population, Jesus’ words carry much significance:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; So ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37, 38).

For someone to pray this sincerely, he or she must be willing to be an answer to this prayer.

You Can Play a Strategic Role

You can play a vital part in fulfilling the Great Commission by using the talents and skills God has given you to influence lives with the Gospel. CCO has many opportunities where you can do just that. In the next few pages, we will give you a brief overview of CCO and invite you to consider joining us.

“Those who are incorporated in the Catholic Church ought to sense their privilege and for that very reason their greater obligation of bearing witness to the faith and the Christian life as a service to their brothers and sisters and as a fitting response to God.” (The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, Pope John Paul II).

Making This Personal

Being on the staff of CCO is a high calling and a great privilege. Although it is not for everyone, we believe that in view of the needs of the world and the mandate of Jesus Christ, all Christians should prayerfully consider full-time Christian ministry. We would like you to investigate that possibility. Our application process is designed to help you discern God's direction for your life.

What About You?

- Where are you in the process of considering full-time Christian ministry?
- How is God leading you? Do you sense He is calling you to be a CCO missionary?
- Do you have the same heart, mission and spirituality as CCO?
- What questions or concerns do you have?
- Would you like to begin the process of becoming a staff member of Catholic Christian Outreach?

The following information will help you pursue this process.

Our Unique Characteristics

Our Purpose

CCO is a university student movement dedicated to evangelization. We challenge young adults to live in the fullness of the Catholic faith with a strong emphasis on becoming leaders in the renewal of the world.

Our Statement of Faith

- We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.
- We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate: He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scripture; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.
- We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
- We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
- We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
- With firm faith we believe all that is contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in tradition, which the Church, either in solemn judgment or by its ordinary and universal teaching authority, sets for our belief as revealed by God.
- We firmly accept and hold each and every thing definitively proposed by the Church concerning its teachings on faith and morals.
- Moreover, we adhere with religious submission on intellect and will to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate in the exercise of their authentic teaching authority, even if they do not intend to proclaim those teachings by definitive act.

Our Strategy

- To Proclaim the Gospel clearly and boldly to university students.
- To Equip them in their faith, evangelization, and leadership skills.
- To Commission them to proclaim to and equip others.

The goal of our campus movement is simple but far-reaching: to fulfill the Catholic Church's primary and central mission of evangelization on the university campuses of the world. In other words, take the gospel to every student every year. Through campus wide programs and events, staff and students work to make that goal a reality.

Our Place in the Roman Catholic Faith

CCO is:

- A lay association of Christ's Faithful which is responding to Christ's command that His disciples "Proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mark 16:15-16, Matthew. 28:18-19).
- A concrete way to foster the Church's primary and universal mission of evangelization ([Evangelii Nuntiandi](#), #14).
- A positive answer to the call of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, for a "new evangelization" in our times.
- An active outreach to the distressingly small numbers of believing and practicing youth.
- A positive and successful influence in the promotion of religious vocations.
- A practical way to respond to cults and fundamentalist sects aimed at undermining the faith of Catholics.

Our Values

Catholic Christian Outreach believes that evangelization is not primarily programs and methods but rather people sharing with people. What is most distinctive about CCO is its emphasis on training with transferable methods and materials, and a commitment to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of the Roman Catholic faith.

As a guide to developing its programs there are three main aspects that stand out as particularly Catholic.

First, is CCO's desire to ground its efforts for the evangelization and sanctification of men and women in the teachings received through Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Church.

Secondly, CCO understands that evangelization is not just a one-time action or decision but a process. Although CCO does believe it involves an initial conversion, it must also include incorporation into the community, participation in the sacramental life of the Church (especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation), a response to the universal call to holiness, and finally, in the words of Pope Paul VI, "the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others."

Finally, as a movement CCO believes strongly in operating within the God-ordained structures of the Church and submit to the apostolic authority of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

Our Five Founding Tenets

In response to the large number of university students who were becoming increasingly alienated from their faith, CCO set out to challenge students to deeper conversion to Christ, develop their leadership skills, and give them a heart to serve the Church. Catholic Christian Outreach was founded at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon in 1988, after receiving the approval of the local Bishop. During that fall semester, CCO began by offering small faith study groups on campus. From a humble beginning of four students, the movement now serves hundreds of students on several campuses through a wide array of programs and outreaches.

During these early years, there were five clear principles or tenets which have become essential pillars of the movement. They are:

1. CCO is to be “evangelists of the youth”.
2. CCO is to proclaim Christ clearly and simply.
3. CCO believes in the importance of reaching one person at a time.
4. CCO’s goal is to reach out to the whole world with the Gospel.
5. CCO expects God to do great things through His people.

For a more detailed explanation of these tenets and the beginnings of the movement, please read the article in the Appendix titled: “The Five Founding Tenets of CCO”.

A History of Effectiveness

Highlights

- 1988** Inception at the University of Saskatchewan
- 1991** Mission project to Manila, Philippines
- 1992** Incorporated as a non-profit organization
- 1994** Mission to Bialystok, Poland
- 1994** Expansion to the University of Regina
- 1995** Launch to the internet (www.cco.ca)
- 1996** Mission to St. Lucia, Caribbean
- 1997** Expansion to Carleton University, Ottawa
- 1998** Expansion to Simon Fraser University, Vancouver
- 1999** Impact Canada summer mission, Ottawa
- 2000** Expansion to the University of Ottawa
- 2000** Mission to the Gambia, Africa
- 2000** Mission to Rome for World Youth Day 2000
- 2000** Rise Up National Conference, Vancouver
- 2001** Rise Up National Conference, Ottawa
- 2002** Impact Canada summer mission to Ottawa and Toronto for WYD 2002
- 2002** Rise Up National Conference, Edmonton
- 2003** Expansion to Douglas College, Vancouver
- 2003** Rise Up National Conference, Saskatoon
- 2004** Impact Canada summer mission, Halifax
- 2004** Expansion to Dalhousie University, Halifax
- 2004** Rise Up National Conference, Toronto
- 2005** Pilgrimage to Cologne and Italy for WYD 2005 and in the Footsteps of the Saints
- 2005** Rise Up National Conference, Vancouver
- 2006** CCO National Headquarters move to Ottawa
- 2006** Rise Up National Conference, Québec City
- 2007** Impact Canada summer mission, Vancouver
- 2007** Expansion to Queen's University, Kingston
- 2007** Rise Up National Conference, Calgary

Career Opportunities - Campus Staff

As a campus missionary with CCO you can share the love of Jesus Christ with people, build believers to maturity, and teach others so they “will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2). As a growing university student movement we have had many requests to expand to other campuses in Canada. The possibilities are unfolding like never before. All we need is God's grace to call more labourers!

The CCO Campus Internship program is the beginning of a new career as a full-time Catholic lay missionary on university campuses. The Campus Internship Program begins at the end of August of each year and lasts 8 months. At the end of this time, successful campus interns are invited to serve for 2 or more years with CCO.

Internship Objectives

- To learn the CCO way of doing campus evangelization and leadership development.
- To demonstrate that they have prepared for internship weekly training meetings.
- To be actively involved in CCO, at a pace that is tailored to their experience and competency in CCO's way of evangelization and leadership development.
- To demonstrate a strong, consistent prayer life (meditative and intercessory).
- To complete all required reading, and assignments on time (as given by internship and campus directors).
- To effectively manage their time, and demonstrate personal organization skills through the use of a time management tool.
- To be actively involved in a parish, and possibly other adult movements or associations in the diocese.
- To learn Support Team Partnership and Development philosophy and strategies.

Timeline

The first semester of the internship program will focus on the basic fundamentals of CCO materials and strategy. During the second semester, or earlier for those interns who were student leaders in CCO, the process of multiplying this training into students begins. Here we practice having a “next generation mindset” of working with a student who is working with another.

First Semester: Observe, be observed, and be independent in: meeting new contacts of students interested in CCO, sharing the UR, leading Faith Studies, and preparing testimonies.

Second Semester: Train students to: follow up new contacts, lead studies, prepare a testimony, share the UR.

Weekly Internship Training will include: movement strategy, campus practicals, reading and writing assignments, and accountability in the areas of personal prayer, campus intercession, evangelistic appointments and other assigned tasks.

Weekly Work Schedule generally staff are on campus between 8:30am and 3pm. Phone calling (4:30-6:30pm and 9-10pm) and events (6:30-11pm) typically happen in the evenings. Interns will learn to time block into their schedule such things as:

- internship training
- staff meetings (daily check-ins, planning, team spiritual formation)
- one-on-one staff meetings
- student executive meetings
- recruitment tables
- campus prayer
- faith studies
- follow up appointments with new people interested in CCO
- situational specific one-on-one's with students
- phoning,
- large group events.

The program also includes assignments and practical reading, including:

- The Master Plan of Evangelization
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi*
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- Theology for Beginners
- Handbook of Christian Apologetics
- *Redemptoris Missio*

The Campus Internship Program is designed to train and ensure that new CCO staff are ready to embark on this cutting-edge career.

CCO pays a modest stipend to cover their living expenses (approximately \$1200 depending on the region) so they can fully focus on their training. Interns are given training through the year on Support Team Partnership and Development focusing exclusively on it April to July inclusive. See *STPD Questions and Answers* at the end of this document.

For any questions regarding the CCO Campus Internship, feel free to email hr@cco.ca or call (613)736-1999

Career Opportunities - National Headquarters

CCO headquarters offers challenging positions where you can use your education, skills, and gifts to support the work of the campus staff and to lead the movement nationally and internationally.

The CCO HQ Internship program is the beginning of a new career as a full-time Catholic lay missionary within a corporate setting at the national headquarters office. It is designed to give HQ interns a comprehensive knowledge of the various aspects of the National Headquarters while at the same time preparing them to serve within a specific area of the administration.

The HQ Internship Program combines personalized training in the different areas of faith, leadership, teamwork, and practical office training. Listed below are some of the various topics covered:

- Understanding the beginnings of CCO and our charism
- Understanding giftedness, aptitudes, personality and temperament
- Public speaking
- Time management, project management and goal-based planning
- Faith formation in evangelization and the Catholic Church.
- Job shadowing in the areas of finance, marketing, human resources, and development, internet technology, etc.

The program also includes mentorship, learning activities and practical reading, including: John Maxwell's 21 Laws of Leadership, Stephen Covey's, 7 Habits of Highly Successful People, I Believe in Love: a retreat on St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and various encyclicals of the Church.

The HQ Internship Program is designed to train, equip and ensure that new CCO HQ Staff are ready to embark on this cutting-edge career. It is also designed to be a final discernment process before joining full-time staff with CCO.

Once an individual has been accepted to the internship program they would begin for an 8 month term beginning August and ending in March the following year. And the end of this time, successful HQ Interns are invited to serve for 2 or more years with CCO.

During the HQ Internship program, CCO pays Interns a modest stipend to cover their living expenses, so they can fully focus on their training.

Roles in the CCO National Headquarters include:

1. Marketing & Promotions

- Corporate Fundraising
- Graphic Design and Multi Media
- Conference, Mission, and Events Organizing
- Sales & Promotional activity:
- Soul Snack Merchandise

-
- Publications and Editing
 - Journalism
 - Media/Public relations
 - Alumni Development

2. Accounting & Finance

- Budgeting & monitoring national accounts
- Not- for- Profit tax
- Internal controls
- Accounts payable
- Accounts receivable
- Donor development
- Payroll
- Fund accounting

3. Department of Operations

An exciting development this year is the establishment of the Department of Operations in our National HQ. The Department of Operations is a dynamic team that serves the national movement of CCO in a variety of areas including **Human Resources, Material Development, Communications and Information Technology**. Immediate needs this year in the Department of Operations are:

- **Volunteer Coordinator**

Volunteers are a key component to the operation of our HQ. The volunteer coordinator is in charge of developing relationships with students and others whom God calls to volunteer in the office. You will be in charge of planning recruitment strategies for potential volunteers, coordinating the office responsibilities of current volunteers on a weekly basis, and developing relationships with our volunteers to further our staff recruitment efforts.

- **Human Resources Administration**

Become a part of a dynamic team that drives the recruitment of the future missionaries that will reach the hearts of students across Canada. HR administration involves you in the whole spectrum of the hiring process, including maintaining contact with applicants, processing and reviewing applications as they are received, conducting reference checks, and working with the Human Resources Committee to schedule interview times. While prior education would be an asset, we will train you to be an effective administrator in our HR portfolio.

- **Information Technology**

Working in the field of information technology, you will help maintain and grow the technical backbone of a national movement. There is a wide array of areas for you to put your IT skills to work to further the work of evangelization: internal networking, web development, software programming, development of internet evangelization opportunities, technical troubleshooting. Ever wonder if you could use your technical abilities to reach souls for Christ? Here is your opportunity! Existing knowledge and training in the areas of networking, software development and/or web development would be strong assets for this area.

For any questions regarding the CCO HQ Internship or other opportunities at CCO National Headquarters, please contact hr@cco.ca or 306.652.5100.

Short Term Career Opportunities - VINE Program

Alternately, we also offer the VINE program. VINE (Volunteers in the New Evangelization) is a commitment to offer your gifts and talents to CCO for about a year in a specific field of service.

1. National Headquarters VINE

With the increasing conviction among young adults in our world to make a difference through a year of service, CCO has embarked on a new journey redefining the field of business. At the National Headquarters in Ottawa, students have an opportunity to use their education combined with their passion for Christ to gain valuable work experience. As a non-profit organization we have a variety of positions: marketing, finance, project management, public relations. Some of these roles and responsibilities include:

- Directing national communication
- Creating & coordinating national prayer partner correspondence
- Assisting with the management of donations and ministry partners
- Managing incoming revenue using accounting software
- Tracking expenses for our national organization
- Interacting and networking with a nation-wide staff team
- Contributing to national conferences
- Experiencing a national staff family rooted in prayer and living for Christ

2. Campus VINE

Are you a student leader in CCO who would love to be able to do CCO full-time and not worry about school and classes? Perhaps you are looking to take a break from school or work and “give a year to the Lord”? Why not take 8 months to do the VINE program on one of our CCO campuses?

VINers add great vitality and excitement to the local CCO chapters through their contagious zeal, energy, witness and service.

The definitive and primary role of the VINers will be campus evangelization:

- Reaching out to students,
- Doing outreach tables and other outreach strategies,
- Meeting with new contacts, sharing the Ultimate Relationship,
- Welcoming and investing in new people
- Leading Discovery studies.

Campus VINE members will also:

- Assist in the planning, organization and execution of various campus events, retreats and conferences.
- Be immersed in the life of a CCO missionary as a co-labourer on the campus staff team.
- Receive mentorship from a senior campus staff member.
- Participate in regional staff retreats and formation days
- Attend CCO's National *Rise Up* Conference and national staff gathering, Dec 27th to Jan 3rd.

Prerequisites for campus VINE applicants is a proficiency in:

- Giving a personal 3 minute testimony in a public setting.
- Working an outreach table.
- Phoning new contacts and meeting with them independently to share CCO and how to get involved in faith studies.
- Sharing the Ultimate Relationship booklet.
- Leading the Discovery study.

More information about fundraising for Campus and HQ VINE

Start date will be near the end of August; end date the beginning of April.

The team that a VINER is assigned to (HQ or particular campus) will assist and mentor the VINER in their Support Team and Partnership Development, orientation to the staff team, and in finding affordable housing (which could be a billet or room and board opportunity, if suitable). Estimated fundraising cost for the VINE program is \$12 000. Actual fundraising targets may be different and will be established on an individual basis according to various factors (cost of living in their assigned city, any debts or loan payments, housing options).

Support Team and Partnership Development training materials will be sent out shortly after acceptance. STPD can begin immediately and is done in the spring and summer. **All fundraising must be in place before start date.**

Standards for Staff

Because our staff members are placed in positions of high visibility and spiritual leadership CCO's standards are high. Our selection process focuses on your spiritual, social and emotional maturity, as well as your personal and family life.

In order to qualify for CCO staff you must:

- Be a practicing Catholic and have a good knowledge of Scripture and Church teaching.
- Have a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Understand and fully agree with our statement of faith and ministry objectives.
- Be able to state clearly how and why God is calling you to the ministry of CCO.
- Demonstrate a concern for others and a willingness to learn how to introduce others to Christ.
- Have either the necessary formal education or on-the-job training to meet the demands of your assignment. In most cases a university degree is preferred.
- Possess good emotional, mental, and physical health. Any permanent disabilities such as hearing or visual, will be discussed and taken into account from case to case.
- Have leadership qualities, be attractive to others in personality and character, or manifest potential in these areas.
- Have a reasonable degree of self-assurance and an ability to handle pressure.

Personal Debt

You must not be overly in debt (with student loans as a possible exception). This will be discussed during an interview.

Tenure

All career staff members, campus and HQ (with the exception of those on the VINE program), are encouraged to consider their commitment to the ministry of CCO as a lifetime involvement, and are expected to spend a minimum of two years on staff after their internship year for campus staff or after completing their support team development for National Headquarters staff.

Staff Salary, Benefits and Training

Support Team and Partnership Development

CCO looks upon its work as a mission field. Thus, it considers its staff members to be missionaries in the first world, reaching out and bringing the faith to spiritually hungry students on university campuses. In doing this missionary work, the question often comes up: “how do you financially support yourselves?”

It is CCO’s policy that each staff member develops a support team to finance his/her involvement in the movement. This approach is called Support Team and Partnership Development (STPD). Essentially STPD offers the opportunity for families and individuals to be involved with the work of CCO by financially and prayerfully supporting a CCO missionary. CCO Staff members meet with potential supporters and share with them the vision of CCO and the opportunities available for them to help. This approach of inviting the Faithful to sponsor the work of the Church has been used for centuries past and is based in spiritual principles.

But CCO also employs this approach for a number of practical reasons. Firstly, it provides CCO with the opportunity to meet with many people and to share CCO’s exciting vision for the spiritual lives of young people. Secondly, it allows supporters to make a personal connection with their giving. They are not giving to a vague general cause but rather are helping to sponsor a specific missionary’s work. Thirdly, it has been proven to be an effective means of raising funds. CCO Staff members have been successfully using this approach for nearly two decades. They have been able to purchase homes, live comfortably, and support growing families.

In order to be effective in STPD, new CCO Staff members receive extensive training and resources to assist them. This enables new staff to be confident from the time of beginning to brainstorm a list of potential supporter, through the initial contact and presentation, to the follow up and on-going care of a support team. Like all good things, STPD requires dedication and hard work, and can be challenging at times. But it brings with it many blessings including growing in the trust of God, wonderful friendships with supporters, and the furthering of CCO’s work in the lives of students in Canada.

For more detailed information about STPD please contact our Finance and Development Officer Kelly Boyko at kelly.boyko@cco.ca or (613) 736-1999

Salary Considerations

All staff members work under the same financial policies and pay scale. The goal of our salary structure is to provide an income which allows staff members to meet individual and family needs. Salaries are based on:

- Prior work experience
- Length of service on CCO staff
- Education
- Geographical location

Benefits

CCO provides opportunities for medical, dental, and pension benefits.

Ministry Expenses

Ministry expenses are reimbursable.

Other Benefits

- On-the-job training programs
- Short-term international opportunities
- Annual staff training
- Seminars and conferences relevant to your position
- Working with a team of skilled and experienced people
- Organizational commitment to the family
- Opportunity to work with some of the most visionary and enthusiastic people in the world

Training and Development

We are committed to helping you develop your character and ministry expertise. After the initial training period, staff are continually challenged to grow and mature in their personal life and in their ministry. We foster and encourage individual creativity and initiative. Part of the training is designed to help you increase the scope and depth of your leadership abilities.

The following are some of the opportunities available to you for your ongoing development:

- Eight month CCO Ministry Internship Program
- Staff training conferences
- National and International summer projects
- Professional development seminars
- On-the-job training
- Book and video courses
- Continuing education (university/adult education classes)
- Diocesan formation programs

Getting Started

The Application Process

- Pre-Application
- Full Employment Application
- Medical History and Certificate Questionnaire
- Reference Checks
- Criminal Record Check
- Comprehensive Interview
- Submit a Police Background Check
- Eight Month Internship Program
- Support Team and Partnership Development & Ministry Assignment

Other Helpful Articles Available in the Appendix:

- A. The Five Founding Tenets of CCO
- B. Discerning between full-time ministry and a secular career
- C. STPD Questions and Answers
- D. Support Team Building and Sacred Scripture
- E. Considering Family Concerns
- F. Discovering God's Will in My Life

The First Step

To take the first step in discerning to join staff with Catholic Christian Outreach, contact us and complete and send in the Preliminary Ministry Interest Form which follows this page. This is not an official application, but rather the first step in the process of discerning.

This form can also be filled out online at the CCO website: www.cco.ca.

Our mailing address is:

Catholic Christian Outreach Canada
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9
Canada

Phone: (613) 736-1999
Fax: (613) 736-1800

hr@cco.ca
www.cco.ca

Catholic Christian Outreach

Preliminary Ministry Interest Form



Note: This is not an application for employment with Catholic Christian Outreach. Rather it is information that allows us to serve you as you discern your skills and calling to our missionary apostolate.

I am interested in the following staff position (circle one):

A. Internship B. Headquarters C. Campus V.I.N.E. D.HQ V.I.N.E. E. Other

Personal Information

Mr. Mrs. Miss Other _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Date of Birth _____ No. of Children/ages _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Home Phone _____ Work/Cell Phone _____

Fax _____ Email _____

Current Occupation _____

Degree(s) _____

School _____ Graduation Date _____

Name of church you now attend _____

What is your marital status _____ Have you ever been divorced? _____

Experience

1) Who or what influenced you to inquire about working with Catholic Christian Outreach?

2) Are you currently involved in ministry? Explain. _____

3) Are you or have you been involved with Catholic Christian Outreach? Yes No If yes, please indicate:

CCO conferences or missions you have been on and when: _____

Position on CCO student executive and when: _____

All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

CCO SKILLS	Received training	Able to do independently. How many times have you done independently?	Trained others How many times?
Outreach table	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Meet new contacts	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Share the UR booklet	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Discovery Study	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Source Study	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Growth Study	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Obedience Study	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Book studies	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
3 minute testimony	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

4) Please list your professional skills, abilities, and experiences: _____

5) All our staff members are responsible to raise their own financial support. Would you be willing to raise your own support?
 Yes No Maybe Please explain: _____

6) Indicate your level of interest in full-time Christian work (1=little interest, 10=very interested)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 10+

7) Would you consider relocating? Yes No Maybe Please explain: _____

8) When would you be ready to begin the transition into CCO ?
 Immediately 6-12 months 1-2 years 2-3 years don't know Projected date: _____

9) If financial resources were not an issue, and you could do anything you wanted to do, what would you begin tomorrow?

10) Please write down any question you have or need answered at this time. _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

CCO Staff Information & Discernment Guide

Appendix

A. The Five Founding Tenets of CCO

By André Regnier

My motivation to start CCO did not only come in response to a need on university campuses; rather it came from God's clear call. CCO is God's vision for how His work can be fulfilled on university campuses.

What is that vision? It has always been and will continue to be important that we as a movement are clear on what God has called us to do. In order to keep our focus and to stay faithful to that calling, we have developed five tenets. These tenets serve as a compass or guide for what we do and how we do things. These tenets or principles are more than just good ideas, they are prophetic words spoken to CCO by God over the years.

In my last year of university, I went through the "Life in the Spirit Seminar". I was expecting to receive extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, and at the time was disappointed to only receive these simple words of prophecy: "You will be an evangelist of the youth." I now, however, realize the power of these words. It is because of these words and because CCO focuses on youth on university campuses that our first tenet in CCO is to be "evangelists of the youth."

CCO believes there is not a more strategic and important group of people to focus on in order to make the greatest impact on the world. The next generation of leaders: of doctors, of lawyers, of teachers, of politicians, and of those making decisions that will lead our country into the future, will be coming from our universities. If we fail to focus on them at this critical time of discovery and development, we fail to impart the value and the power of the gospel to the future generation. Consequently, leadership in this country will continue to lack the influence and formation of Jesus Christ and His Church.

University students are in a period of life where they desire to make a difference in the world. They have the energy, the freedom, the enthusiasm and the idealism to make a difference. History has shown the impact young people can have (communism, hippie movement) when they believe in something and put their natural God-given energy into making it happen.

The vision for CCO expanded further when I attended a conference in my last year of university. One of the speakers at this conference quoted Philippians 1:18 "*all that matters is that in any and every way...Christ is being proclaimed! That is what brings me joy.*" These words had a profound impact on me. I felt as if they had been spoken directly to me. This scripture has formed the second tenet and it is one of the most defining elements of the ministry.

The words spoken by the Holy Father "many (Catholics) do not know Christ or do not know him well enough" is a reality on university campuses across the country. Since our faith is based on a personal life giving experience of Christ, this lack of knowledge and experience of Christ cripples the spiritual life of Catholic young people. Without this experience many young people find that their faith has little to no value. It is not that they are abandoning their faith, it

is that they are unaware of the importance of knowing the person of Jesus Christ. When young people have a living encounter with Christ, their faith comes alive. Their connection to the Church becomes real and life giving. They have a great desire to share that faith with friends, family and classmates. Seeing the effect that a clear proclamation of Christ's gospel has on students and reflecting on Philippians 1:18, the second tenet became obvious: "proclaim Christ clearly and simply".

The first few years were an exciting time of growth for the ministry. In spite of the growth, I would find myself in the Chapel crying out to the Lord for all the nations of the World. "What can I do for the Church in Russia, China, Africa, South America? How can I reach out to these people?" One day I received an answer: "One person at a time". I realized that the individual student is of great value and holds great potential to accomplish great things for God's glory.

CCO knows that the greatest impact young people will make will not be at university. They generally only spend four or five years of their lives on campus. The greatest impact will be felt as they go out into the world to work and raise a family. If we can prepare them to take leadership in sharing their faith they will take that learning experience and continue to be leaders for the rest of their lives. If the Catholic Church is going to have an impact on the world, its individual members have to be missionaries in the communities around them. That is why we believe that every CCO member is a missionary and we are all called to reach one person at a time.

Coming out of the chapel, another impression I had was that we must look beyond our families, our cities and our countries and ultimately to the ends of the earth. This was the call to the disciples in Matthew 28, but they did not go beyond the local area in which they lived. Their heart was for the whole world and they were aware that the salvation offered through Christ was for *all* people. It is true that we may not all be missionaries in a foreign country, but our heart and concern is for all people to be saved by Christ. This is Christ's heart, so it must also be ours, therefore CCO's fourth tenet is to "reach the whole world." CCO imparts a vision to students to have an impact on the world.

Over the years God has done great things in our midst. Each year seems to bring new opportunities for the ministry. We are excited and encouraged by these opportunities, but it should not surprise us. Early on, the Lord often directed my attention to Ephesians 3:20: "God is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine." Our fifth tenet is to have great expectation. He is showing us what our expectations should be. Whatever we do, however small or large, we should always have an attitude of great expectation. We expect that God is going to use events and initiatives for His glory. God never fails to answer our prayers. He has taken CCO from a small group of enthusiastic young people to a national movement having international influence. Is there a more wonderful or more hopeful place to be than in the midst of young people who are working for the kingdom, expecting God to work powerfully through them?

It is the hope and intention of CCO to serve the Church on university campuses as long as God calls us. It is essential that we stay focused on what God has called us to do, however long that may be. Sometimes it is easy for us to forget what impact we can have in people's lives.

However these five tenets will assure us that as we continue to strive for what we have been called to do, we will have a great impact.

Our five tenets have shaped the movement to what it is today and with God's guidance, it will continue to grow! We will continue to be a movement that is defined by being evangelists of youth whose mission is to proclaim Jesus' name clearly and simply, one person at a time. CCO's mission is to have a major impact on the world and with our attitude of great expectation it is possible. "For **nothing** will be **impossible** with God." Luke 1:37.

B. Discerning Between Missionary and a Secular Career

“What if I plan to get a secular job and use my position to develop a ministry?”

If God is clearly directing you to a career in a secular field, then you will need to make a commitment to your employer. Your employer is not paying you to evangelize on the job, but to make a profit for the company's shareholders. You are to work heartily, as unto the Lord, whatever you do.

Surely, as a Christian you are called to be His ambassador every minute of every day, but you need to be sensitive to your employer's expectations. Your opportunities to witness and disciple will be significantly more limited than what you may have experienced as a student. It is exciting to have a ministry in a secular context. However, keep in mind that it is very difficult to balance your commitment of time, talent, creativity and energy between your professional goals and your ministry.

The real question is not, “Can I develop a ministry within my job?” but, “Do I sense God wants me to use all my time and energy for ministry or only my discretionary time?”

A survey of young professionals seeking to minister in the marketplace revealed four predominant barriers to having an effective ministry:

- Pressure from the employer not to “dispense religion” in the context of business.
- Pressure from the boss to “produce” leaves little time for ministry during the work day.
- Commuting time included, 50-60 hour work weeks are the norm, leaving little time or energy for ministry after work.
- Little to no environment, encouragement or accountability to foster a ministry.

“How can I prepare myself for an effective ministry within the context of a secular career?”

Many Christians fail to develop disciple-building opportunities “on the job” because they simply are not equipped to work through the complexities of a ministry in the marketplace.

If God calls you to develop a lifelong ministry within a business environment, then you need to equip yourself just as a physician, attorney or CA invests several years of additional education and experience in preparation for a lifelong career.

Three years of lay Christian ministry or a year in the Vine program will give you the basic training you will need to be a well-equipped ambassador for Christ - wherever God leads you. Think of it as a graduate school in life-effectiveness.

As a CCO staff member, you will have unlimited opportunities to develop and sharpen skills that will be important for the rest of your life - skills in the areas of personal ministry, leadership, communication and relationships. To be well-prepared for a lifetime of ministry in a secular position, you should consider taking two or three years of “graduate work” to strengthen your walk with the Lord and develop personal ministry skills.

“Wouldn’t a secular job be more secure financially and therefore better stewardship of my money?”

Financial security is probably not the major factor in your decision. If it is a specific issue, however, consider that there really is no financial security in any position. Tens of thousands of men and women have spent years of their life working for major corporations, only to turn around one day and have no job.

Financial security can only be found through obedience to God and His direction for your life. The bottom line is our obedience to His call. It is only in Him and through faith in His promises that we find lasting security. Our lives are in His hands. Therefore, we are ultimately His responsibility.

C. STPD Questions & Answers

What is STPD?

STPD is support raising and partnership development. All CCO staff have a unique opportunity to rely on God's providence. CCO missionaries go out and find partners who believe in the mission of CCO and want to support it both financially and in prayer. These partners provide the salary for which CCO missionaries are paid. Each staff has their own team of supporters.

How many people support a missionary and how much do you get paid?

After the internship year completes, interns go through a process of determining their salary. There are a number of factors to consider like geographic area of residence, years of education, years of experience, etc.

Each staff have approximately 125 supporters in their first year donating anywhere from \$25 to \$200 monthly. A new CCO staff member's salary is comparable to that of a teacher's starting salary. It is required that a staff member raise at minimum 65% of their salary in order to begin their work in the field. A strategy is in place to assist staff members to achieve these goals in a realistic time frame and to keep them accountable.

What if it is taboo in my family to raise support. How will I raise the funds without their support?

STPD is a radical process of living. It is God's providence and it is countercultural. From our families' perspective, it is hard for them to see their child doing something completely foreign to them and as parents, especially difficult, because they cannot see security in it. However, over time, family members' hearts do change because the Lord changes them. Relying on providence is the most security you can have, because you are learning to rely on the Lord to take care of your needs. He never abandons you. It is fascinating to watch as your family will become more engaged in the process and often experience some type of conversion themselves.

I don't know who I would ask to be on my support team?

In the STPD training process, at the beginning of the internship program, you actually brainstorm a list of people you already have that are involved in your life. Throughout the year, you will grow your relationships and contacts as well through parish involvement and other ministry opportunities. You would be surprised at your final outcome and contact list.

Another strategy we implement presently is parish appeals. Here you would request to

speak briefly after all the masses on a particular weekend. You would explain CCO and challenge parishioners to support \$25 or more MONTHLY. This strategy has borne tremendous fruit, and reaches a wide base of people. It is also a great avenue for evangelization and ministry.

How do you juggle your time between ministry and STPD?

In CCO, STPD is the other half of our movement. Without our supporters, our work of reaching out to students with the Gospel is not possible. In CCO STPD is part of our weekly routines where we are in touch with supporters sending them updates, inviting new people to partner, or giving a quick phone call. For interns, April to July are designated months for launching their support team.

How will I know how raise a support team?

Every CCO staff coming off the internship program receives a twelve month training course beginning in September of their internship year on raising a support team. It's a program designed to help you understand providence all the way through to gaining tools on writing letters, making phone calls, and doing presentations. By the end of the training program, you will be equipped to be a fundraiser! Your training will include a small class of other interns who will also be learning how to build into their support teams.

What will I live on once my internship stipend runs out and I'm just starting the STPD process?

Interns receive a bonus stipend at the end of April for the month of May to assist them financially as they beginning raising their support team.

If I have expenses throughout the year for developing my support team, who pays for that?

CCO wants to see the interns succeed in their efforts of developing a support team. That's why we invest \$200 into each intern for the year to aid the intern in developing and building their support team. Any costs related to developing a support team can be reimbursed from the staff's missionary account.

I think I'm called to staff but I just don't think I called to ask for money?

STPD is more than asking for money. It's a spiritual part of our movement that develops us as missionaries because we have to rely on God providing for our needs. Our attitudes, the way we think and live are formed by this process. It overflows into our apostolate. It would be nearly impossible to be a missionary without living on God's providence. If God is calling you to be a missionary with CCO, then he has already prepared for you a team of supporters willing to invest into your work.

What if I have student loan debt? Will I make enough money to pay it back?

This would be province specific but for example in Ontario people under certain income brackets are relieved from loan payments and they can do this up to 16 months. Not only do you not have to make payment if you qualify, but the loan is also frozen for the period of time. You must re-apply each month stating your current income and OSAP decides. The process for applying for this relief is very simple and the form is available on OSAP's website.

One staff this year shared their experience.

“My loan was \$20,000 when I started paying in January of this year. I have made monthly payments depending on my monthly budget, ranging from 275\$ (min payment required for me) to \$2500. It's now October, 8 months later, and I am down to \$12,000 owing.”

This staff has chosen an aggressive strategy for lowering their student debt. This is highly recommended, especially when you receive a large sum of money (for example from your tax return).

How do I save for retirement?

CCO places a high priority on planning for the future and saving for retirement. As a result, it has set up CCO Group Plan through the Royal Bank. In this plan CCO contributes 2% of your monthly salary toward your RRSP on top of the staff members' own contributions.

D. Support Team Building and Sacred Scripture

“Who came up with this support raising idea?”

Nearly 3,300 years ago, God designed a comprehensive financial plan that would adequately provide the salaries and benefits of His full-time workers.

In the book of Numbers, God called the Levites to be His first full-time ministers. There were plenty of qualified and motivated laymen (i.e. Moses, Joshua, Caleb) to work in the tabernacle, but God was looking for more than part-time help. He wanted to meet the demanding spiritual needs of the nation, but these could not be met by even the most dedicated workers in their spare time alone.

God created a position for lay ministers in His kingdom, and these first full-time workers, the Levites, were instructed to rely on God for their income and financial stability.

The Lord tells Aaron in Numbers 18:20, 21, “...*I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel...to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform...*” (See also Deuteronomy 18:1-2).

The Lord staked His credibility on providing financial security for His servants. While the nation of Israel worked the land and faced the financial uncertainties of drought, disease and famine, the Lord promised to provide for the Levites through the tithes and offerings of their countrymen. The Israelites were charged with the responsibility of providing for the finances of the Levites, and they were to give of their best.

“Didn’t God change His missions budget in the New Testament?”

After Christ came, God did establish a new covenant whereby any Christian (not just those in the family of Levi) could serve Him in lay ministry. Jesus, who was a carpenter, could have funded His ministry by building furniture or repairing carts and tables full time, then teaching and healing during His spare time. But that’s not the example He left those He calls to lay service.

As Jesus went out ministering full time, He relied on people (i.e. Mary, Martha, Lazarus) who helped “...*support Him out of their own means...*” (Luke 8:3). Jesus had financial supporters.

When Christ commissioned His followers “to every city and place,” He gave them the spiritual authority to minister and told them to trust Him for their physical provisions. “*Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep*” (Matthew 10:9-10). They were to accept gifts from others, as Jesus said, “*eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages*” (Luke 10:4-7). A laborer in God’s kingdom is truly worthy of being paid for his or her service. The workers in the early church lived on the same system of support that God established for the Levites.

“Paul was a tent maker. He didn’t ask for gifts. Shouldn’t I follow his example?”

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:14, *“so also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.”* He explains that God set up a system of financial support for His workers. He also writes that even though he had the right to be supported by the Corinthians, he chose to make tents. This was an exception, however, to Paul’s normal method of ministry.

Paul wanted to make sure that the Corinthians to whom he preached had no reason to question his motives. He chose to live on a smaller salary and take less from the Corinthians in order to validate his character, his faith and his ministry with the Corinthian church. Paul may have supplemented his income by sewing canvas, but he did rely on gifts from supporters.

Many times in the New Testament (Philippians 4:10-16; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5) we see that the churches gave sacrificially to support Paul’s work. He commended them for their support and reminded them of the eternal profit of their gifts. *“Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account”* (Philippians 4:17).

This great missionary willingly received financial support from other Christians and churches, and he asked for support: *“When I go to Spain...I hope to have you assist me on my journey”* (Romans 15:24). The original language in this verse confirms Paul’s request for money. John also made reference to support: *“For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth”* (3 John 7, 8).

In examining Scripture, it is clear that Paul was a support-raising missionary, and his part time job in Corinth was a special exception to God’s financial plan for His full-time workers. The lifestyle of supported ministry to which he was called to was little different than the models followed by both the Levites of the Old Testament and Jesus Himself.

“I’m willing to do what God wants, but right now I just don’t feel comfortable raising support.”

Most people find themselves a little uneasy as they approach the challenge of support raising. It seems to go against our Canadian culture to depend on others - especially for finances.

As Catholics, we heed strong scriptural warnings about our culture’s view of morality, materialism, etc. Similarly, we should not rely on the world’s view or our own feelings when it comes to God’s Word on support for His full-time ministers. Scripture strongly states that accepting support gifts is part of God’s economy. Is that not how our church and priests are funded?

Raising support is a matter of obedience, not of feelings. If God calls you to a supported ministry position, then He will provide everything you need to fulfil your ministry (including emotional strength and perseverance): “...*My God shall supply all your needs*” (Philippians 4:19), and, “*Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass*” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Developing a financial support team is a great faith adventure and a tremendous opportunity to see God work in your life, as well as in the lives of the people who will stand with you through their prayers and financial gifts. Your supporters are not merely doing you a favor; you are helping them make investments for which God will return benefits to them now and throughout eternity.

For further study and consideration: Numbers 1:47-54, 18; Deuteronomy 18:1-6; Luke 8:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9; Matthew 16:25; Luke 6:38; Jeremiah 29:11; John 15:16.

E. Considering Family Concerns

“I’m interested in joining staff with CCO, but my parents don’t want me to.”

When Scripture clearly teaches that we are to both honor and obey our parents, it’s hard to justify going against their wishes. Both the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) and Ephesians 6:1-3, as well as other passages, admonish children to revere and obey their fathers and mothers.

Your parents’ opinions are important. Your mother and father love you and are as concerned about your future as you are. So, how do you weigh your parents’ wishes when you’re evaluating many factors in trying to discern God’s leading for your life? Are their wishes the predominant criteria or merely one voice in the crowd? Neither. Your parents’ wishes should be considered as a very significant piece of information, but not as the determining factor.

There was a period of time in your life when you were totally under your parents’ authority. However, the Scriptures indicate that with adulthood, your accountability shifts from your parents to your own independent responsibility to God. You are always to be committed to honoring your parents, but there comes a time when a person must assume responsibility for his or her own life decisions and be personally accountable before God.

. What Jesus communicates (Luke 1 2:51, Luke 9:59-62, Mark 3:31-35) is that the call of God is much more important than the call of the family. We must always respect and honor our parents, but our responsibility to obey subsides when we become independent adults.

“My parents are worried that I will be wasting my major.”

It is difficult to imagine a major that would not have application in some facet of the worldwide work of the Kingdom. Many organizations have positions that someone with your particular academic degree can fill.

Your academic training, while very important, is only one part of your overall education. While in university, you also learned how to deal with pressure, how to produce, how to function under different grading styles, how to learn and, most importantly, how to get along with other people. These benefits of your education will be with you long after the specifics of your major become obsolete. These broader abilities can be used in any ministry context.

Incidentally, very few individuals actually end up working directly in the field in which they majored, just ask people you know who have been out of school more than 10 years.

Notice that the Lord never hesitated to call people away from their majors or life work to serve Him full time. For example, Moses, who was raised in Pharaoh’s court, listened to God’s call and left a prestigious leadership position. Matthew “majored” in tax accounting and Luke in medicine. Jesus never apologized for calling them away from their “majors.”

Maybe your parents are really saying, “We do not want you to waste the buying power of your

education.” That is understandable. But you only waste something by spending it on something of lesser value. Buying land with your life’s savings, only to find that it is six feet under a lake, is wasting your money.

The most valuable commodity in all the universe is the human soul. *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”* (Mark 8:36). Certainly it is not wasteful to invest something that you have for something of higher value. In ministry, you are investing your education in changing people’s lives for all eternity. You are purchasing the commodity of highest value. That is not a waste. That is a phenomenal investment.

“What can I do to help my parents understand what I want to do?”

First of all, sit down and ask them what their questions are. “I know you have some concerns about my future decisions, and I would like to understand them” will go a long way in opening up communication. By taking the time to listen, you are not only showing consideration and respect, but you will also be better able to address their specific questions.

Explain what you want to do and why your parents need to see your heart and the depth of your conviction. Calmly communicate your goals and desires, and give them adequate information about CCO. Many objections come from misinformation or lack of information. Talk to your parents in the context of how much you appreciate them and all they have done for you.

If you sense pressure to fulfill their expectations more than your convictions, then consider saying, “I want you to know how much I have appreciated all you have sacrificed for my education. Now that I’m making my career choices do you have some expectations in return for your investment or am I free to make my own choices?” Getting their expectations out on the table will help both you and them evaluate their validity. Remember, your parents want what they perceive to be the best for you.

“What are some other steps I can take?”

- Pray for your parents.
- Determine specifically what questions or objections your parents have.
- Take the initiative to get answers and helpful information for your parents.
- Introduce your parents to other people involved with the organization in which you are interested.
- Begin to take personal responsibility for the decisions you have to make.
- Be firm and assured in your call to full-time Christian ministry. Parents can easily sense apprehension, which can raise further doubts in their minds.

Remember that disapproval probably does not mean your parents will disown you. For most parents, their children will always remain exactly that - their children. Letting go is often very difficult.

F. Discovering God's Will in My Life

I looked out the window one bright January morning and my mind drifted towards the inevitable question: what should I do after graduating university? Should I follow the prodding of my professors and parents and go to graduate school to continue my dream of working in foreign affairs? Or, should I head into lay ministry work as many of the influential Christians in my life are encouraging me to do?

I played with my coffee cup and wondered how to make this decision and how to deal with the pressure being applied by those around me. A single thought grabbed my attention: when my life was over I would have to give an account not to a person, but to God. It seemed logical then to concentrate on determining God's design for my life. Yet how was I to do that? He was not going to talk to me audibly. Would I receive a vision? How could I ever find out what God wanted me to do?

The Sound Mind Principle

At the height of my confusion, a campus staff member explained the "Sound Mind Principle" to me. It helped me to clearly understand how to find God's will for my life. This principle has also helped me in every subsequent decision.

Is this Sound Mind Principle found in Scripture? 2 Timothy 1:7 states "*God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power; and of love and of sound mind*" The sound mind in this verse refers to the keen mind God has given us if it is under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Notice the key phrase, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. If we are not Spirit-directed or Spirit-led, we will not have the sound mind of Christ but the self-centered mind of our old nature.

At a quick glance, it is important to see that the Sound Mind Principle is firmly rooted in faith and the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. Since our faith is deeply rooted in the understanding God's Word, it is important that all insights into seeking His plan be supported firmly in His Word. God never contradicts Himself. He never leads us to do anything contrary to what's already set forth in His Word.

You might think: "There are thousands of portions of Scripture which deal with God's plan and design for our lives; which do I look at?" Consider the following. What are the two greatest commandments? First, to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; second, to love your neighbour as yourself. The Spirit-led person would obviously desire to do both in a maximum way.

While most Christians seem to concentrate on how to love the Lord and develop their relationship with Him, each person needs to consider the second greatest commandment—loving your neighbour as yourself. How do you do that?

Two Key Questions

Consider, “What is the greatest thing someone has ever done for you?” Your answer, quite obviously would be: “Helping me to know Jesus in a more personally, as Saviour and Lord.” Finally then, “What is the greatest way you can help others?” The answer again is obvious, “Help others to know and love Jesus better.”

Today, more people are alive than ever before. Millions are now ready to follow Jesus if someone would tell them how. Remember all Christians have been commanded to be witnesses for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28 18:20); this is an act of obedience. One does not need the gift of evangelization.

In the context of eternity, living 70n or 80 years is very brief. You can not even be sure you will live that long. Therefore you need to make every moment count for Christ. You can not carelessly waste the time God has given you.

Evaluate in Light of Eternity

Using the Sound Mind Principle, you need to evaluate where your life will be a maximum investment for God. This is done by making a list of the most logical options of where God could use you to most effectively accomplish seeking and saving the lost. For each person the options will differ slightly. For many, the options will include working in industry, business, education, government and in various lay Christian work. I must emphasize at this point that each option must be considered in light of the fact that over two billion people have yet to here about Christ. With the attitude of putting God’s revealed will before your own., list the pros and cons of each opportunity.

Consider the wise counsel of mature faithful Catholics. Get their opinion on your pro-con list. Consider, too, any other suggestions they might have. I would caution you, thought, to not use the counsel of others in the place of seeking the Lord Himself. Remember, your life must not be dictated by what people want you to do— be it family, friends or associates. We are accountable to the Lord alone. After completing this procedure, begin to take some positive steps towards the direction that would maximize your life for Christ. You are no longer your own. Has bought you with a price. You must, unless specifically directed by the Holy Spirit, pursue what appears to be the maximum. Thus, He desires that you pursue a secular vocation only if it accomplishes this gaol more effectively than a Christian vocation.

Beware of the “Closed-Door” Method

Too often, we follow the convenient “closed-door method,” like the university graduate who stated: “ If I can not get a job in the business world, I will know God wants me in lay Christian work.” While God may close doors for the Spirit-led Christian, such a method to utilize our God given intellect in discernment.

Further, this closed-door method lacks true openness to God because it seeks God’s will

through a process of elimination rather than actively seeking to discern how our lives can be maximized for Christ.

Take Spiritual Inventory

Why not begin employing the Sound Mind Principle in everything you do in life? Apply it to the investment of your finances, your abilities and your time. Christians should take spiritual inventory regularly by asking themselves these questions: “Are my time and abilities being invested in a manner that ensures the largest number of people being introduced and shown Jesus? Are my finances being invested in such a way that the most people possible are hearing about Jesus?”

Investing our lives in the maximum way for our Lord and His Kingdom is the most rewarding life of all. Remember Jesus’ words: “*No one who has left home, (family) or farms for my sake and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age... and in the world to come...*” (Mark 10 29:30)

If you are grappling with determining God’s will for your life, take time right now to apply the principles mentioned here. As you seek Him, He will show you the way you should go.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, I thank you for the gifts you have given me,
especially for life, love, family and friends.

Help me to know myself better and to know my talents, as I pray,
study, and decide on my life's work.

Help me to see and understand the path You open for me.

Help me chose a life's work which will be a reflection of
my gifting and Your love for me.

If I am being invited to follow you as a lay missionary give me a
generous heart to respond to Your challenging call
and the strength to follow You wherever You may lead me.

Amen