

Are We Crazy?

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In the news recently was the story of two men who spent several weeks in considerable peril trekking across Antarctica. Suffering from exposure, weight loss and exhaustion, the pair doggedly trudged across hundreds of miles of barren ice as the world applauded their heroism. No one questioned their judgment in risking their lives for something devoid of any tangible moral or humanitarian value.

Likewise, the man who abandons his family for three years to circumnavigate the globe alone is praised for his “adventurism.” The Olympic medalist is “driven.” The medical intern who lives at the hospital during his residency is “devoted.” The actor who thoroughly researches his role and transforms himself into the character he plays is “dedicated to his craft.”

In all of these endeavors the world admires such concentration and commitment. But when a man or woman shows similar zeal for spiritual matters, the world contemptuously snorts “fanatic,” “crackpot” or some other derogatory epithet. Only in rare cases is an individual ever extolled for religious fervor. The popularity of Mother Teresa is merely a matter of fashion, not a genuine appreciation for the principles to which she adheres.

When Jesus left His secular employment and became the Great Physician of the souls of men, He wholly immersed Himself in His task. He wearied Himself mentally and physically in fulfilling His part in the redemptive purpose of God. And for all of this, His enemies said, *“Do we not say rightly that You ... have a demon,”* and *“His own people ... went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind’”* (Jn 8:48; Mk 3:21).

It is not pleasant to be thought a naive simpleton or a mindless fanatic, and the temptation thus arises to moderate our views and activities to maintain the world’s respect. This suits Satan’s purposes well. Diluted commitment on the part of God’s people is as good as total apostasy – maybe even better.

Christians must face the fact that there is a price to be paid in being wholeheartedly committed to God. Not only will the world consider us religious extremists, less committed brethren might accuse us of meddling, egomania or something worse. But *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind”* (2 Tim 1:7). Surely unreserved devotion to God is worth the risk of being thought a bit crazy.