

The Role Of The Church To The Convert After Baptism

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus says; *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.*” This New Testament scripture of the Great Commission shows that after the disciples have been made, we have a role to play in teaching them to observe all things that Christ has commanded.

The Bible describes the new converts as “new born babes” that should desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby (I Peter 2:2). It is the duty of the church to help feed the new convert with this milk of the word since the convert is not to feed himself. Just as the physical child is born into the world and he/she is nurtured by the parents to grow, a newly converted individual is expected to be nurtured as well.

Unfortunately, some churches, particularly very big congregations neglect this aspect, perhaps unknowingly. Since they have large number of people, they inadvertently tend to neglect the new converts among them. This is why sound eldership is important in every congregation that they will be able to properly tend the flock (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-3.)

Meanwhile, it is the aim of this writing to highlight the roles that the church is to play in the life of a new convert after baptism. Basically, the church is to teach the word to the members in order to equip them and this is what the Bible refers to as “perfecting/equipping the saints” (Eph. 4:12). The church is also to help her needy saints (Acts 6:1; I Timothy 5:9-10) which is sometimes referred to as the “work of ministry” (Eph. 4:12; cf. Rom. 15:25). These works could be done collectively and also on individual basis and all of these could come in different ways as we shall outline below:

- (1) Members of the church is to show good example (cf. I Timothy 4:12). A church that is always quarrelling or having bad reputation will scare the new convert away.
- (2) The church is to groom the new converts to become teachers (Hebrews 5:12).
- (3) The church is to pray for them (I Timothy 2:1-3)
- (4) Members of the church is to edify one another (Eph. 4:16; Heb. 10:25). Special attention should be given to the new convert since he is new and may feel the impulsion to backslide.

- (5) They should be able to bear with the infirmities of the weak (Rom. 15:1)
- (6) Constant visitation is necessary whether during sickness or when okay (James 5:14)
- (7) Members should care for one another (I Cor. 12:25).
- (8) The church should have a separate class of the new convert to teach them the basic principles of Christianity.
- (9) Discipline of the church should be upheld. A church without discipline is a floodgate to apostasy.

Conclusion

The growth of the church is brought about as a result of the contributed efforts of the members (Eph. 4:16) and this is made possible if there is sound leadership in a church. In a congregation without a preacher nor elders and deacons, members will most likely care less about the new converts and along the line, they will be discouraged. The congregations should not ignore the new converts just as it is not ideal to ignore a new born baby and allow him grow all by himself. The church should play her role and the tremendous growth desired will be achieved.

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