

LEADING THE PROSPECT FROM PROFESSION TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

"Preparation before the effort is not half as important as follow-up after." Evangelism, p. 432
Now this is speaking specifically of a public crusade, but the principle is equally applicable to personal evangelism. It is a real tragedy to lead someone to the Lord and then leave them to struggle with doubts and temptations, in ignorance. We can be certain that Satan will not desert the battlefield after the prospect has made a profession. He will be there to bring discouragement if at all possible. So we must have a definite plan in mind for the nurture and edification of every new child of God whom we help to bring into the spiritual family.

One of the beautiful aspects of this approach in soulwinning is that a person who accepts Christ as his Saviour and receives the assurance of sonship with God is possessed of a thankful and positive spirit which provides an ideal atmosphere in which to work.

As was pointed out earlier, miracles begin to transpire in his life, a new power is present, all as the result of the simple step of acceptance. Transformations in the life are experienced which all the theoretical teaching in the world could never effect. All this creates a deep appreciation on the part of the new convert toward the individual who has led him to Christ, as

**Satan keeps fighting
so must we!**

**New approach creates
willingness to attend
church**

well as toward the church he represents. So we have a tremendous opportunity which we have not enjoyed with our past methods. Perhaps the most significant of these is the opportunity to invite and bring the new convert to church services right away. A tactful invitation to attend Sabbath School and church can be extended at the close of the first visit. More often than not, there will be a willingness to come. (Under the old plan of doctrinal Bible studies we didn't dare suggest that a person think of attending our church until we were well along in the series, and most often not until the series was complete. This was so because we had simply created an issue between two denominational points of view. We had not given the individual a great spiritual gift, in the eternal life that comes through Jesus Christ, and in the assurance of forgiveness. The individual felt no debt of gratitude for having been brought from death to life.)

Five steps to follow-up

What now are the things we can do to most effectively lead this new believer from profession to full fellowship in God's church. There are five steps:

Invite to regular services or crusade meetings

1. Make immediate invitations to church attendance and Sabbath School. This should not be a matter of pressure, but just a kindly desire to invite them into our fellowship, where they may rejoice in the blessings they have found. If at this point they feel that they want to remain a member of their former church, this should not affect our attitude or our work for them in the slightest. They will discover soon enough that their new experience is incompatible with their former fellowship and it will be a natural change into God's remnant church as the truth unfolds in their life.

Get them reading Steps to Christ (Real Happiness Is)

2. The same day that they make a profession we should be prepared to leave with them the little book Steps to Christ. The first thing they need to know, is more about the Lord they have accepted. We should encourage them to read through the entire book in the next couple of weeks. The new edition of

Steps to Christ which has been promoted by our Youth Department entitled, **Real Happiness Is**, includes response sheets at the end of each chapter, which provides some motivation for study and some aids in learning the essential points of each chapter of the book. If the new Christian can be encouraged to fill one of these out each day and to read a chapter each day for the next two weeks, he will finish the book in that period of time. If he knows that the individual who led him to the Lord will be back to help him review these response sheets, this will motivate him to accomplish this study and work. Going through the book Steps to Christ will lay a solid foundation for step number three, which is a series of doctrinal studies on the teachings of the church. (There are some who feel that it takes too long for the individual to read the book Steps to Christ and that this period, which may stretch into several weeks, delays unduly the doctrinal lessons. If this proves to be the case for some workers, no doubt the same principle could be served by the preparation of two or three special studies on knowing Christ, which could precede the doctrinal studies, in connection with the gift Bible plan which constitutes the third phase.)

3. After the new believer has learned to know Christ better, then he is prepared to take up the teachings of the church in one of our traditional doctrinal series of studies. The Gift Bible plan is certainly appropriate and it is one which most of our churches are already prepared to implement.

As the doctrinal studies come to their conclusion, the individual will be making his decision to take the step of baptism and church membership and the pastor will be helping in the final preparation for this step.

4. The new member is not yet ready for service and will certainly lose his experience unless we continue to train him and link him with the work of the church. Christian Service, page 69, says, "Especially should those who

"Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim."

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are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God." The ideal follow-up includes the plan for the individual who led this person to the Lord to begin taking him with him on soulwinning visits.

Assign sponsors

5. Another essential element of follow-up is the assignment of each new member to a sponsor whose work it is to integrate him into the fellowship of the church, into its various activities, and to acquaint him with other members of the church, (besides the one who has led him to the Lord and carried him through the Bible study program). A committee of three or four members of the church should be set up to assign new members to sponsors and to instruct them in their work. The pastor should sit with this committee or approve its work. The sponsors should be given the instruction sheet shown at the end of this chapter so that they can be reminded of their various duties.

These things will not transpire simply because they ought to. If this follow-up is carried out properly, it will be the result of sound organization and implementation by the pastor and his staff of lay helpers. Follow-up really begins by the workers filling out the reporting card after their visits each week. A sample **Prospect Card** which can be used both for visiting and reporting is shown at the end of the chapter. The pastor or a committee assigned to this work, processes these cards and sees to it that each individual is properly followed up. Each week assignments are given for such followup work, and reporting of the same is required. If such a careful plan is not followed there will be a great loss to the kingdom of God.

INSTRUCTION FOR SPONSORS

Sponsor Name _____

Convert Name _____

Address _____

1. At every service of the church make it a point to speak a few friendly, cheerful words to the one in your charge.
2. Visit him in his home, often, at least twice a month.
3. Invite him to your home for a Sabbath meal once a month. Get someone else to invite him at least once a month.
4. Call him on the telephone frequently.
5. Invite him to sit with you in church from time to time.
6. Introduce him to others.
7. If he is absent on a Sabbath, do not let the day pass without calling to inquire if he was ill.
8. Care for him when ill.
9. Avoid discussing church problems with him and never gossip or criticize.
10. Take him with you on soulwinning work.
11. Pray **for** him daily. Pray **with** him frequently.
12. If any dangerous spiritual signs develop in him, let the pastor know.
13. Avoid monopolizing him, but encourage him to form close friendships with other members.
14. Get the new members out to secular, social functions of the church. This is one of the more difficult assignments.
15. These responsibilities continue for four months.

PROSPECT CARD

Last Name _____ Father _____

Mother _____ Children _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ Map Index _____ Zip _____

Age/Fam. Status: () 0-12 () 13-19 () 20-40 () 41-64 () 65— () Sing. () Mar. () Div. () Wid.

Church: () SDA () Former SDA () Interested () None () ? () Other _____

Best Time to Visit: () Morning () Afternoon () Evening _____

() Sun. () Mon. () Tues. () Wed. () Thurs. () Fri. () Sab. (hour)

EXPERIENCE & ATTITUDES:

- () Has Assurance of Salvation
 Trusting () Christ () Self
 () Presented Gospel Date _____
 () Profession Date _____
 () No Decision () Rejected
 () Willing to Attend Church
 Remarks _____

 () Favors SDA Teachings
 () Favors Sabbath
 () Thinking of Keeping Sabbath
 () Thinking of joining SDA

BACKGROUND & STUDY:

- () Attends Regular Services
 () Evang. Series () Gospel Witnessing
 () Colporteur
 () Radio () T.V. () Literature
 () V.B.S. () Children Attend Sabbath School
 () Medical Ministry () Relative of S.D.A.
 () Other _____
 () Bible Course Finished
 () Taking Bible Course Now

 (Comments on Back)