

**FOLLOW-UP OF NEW CONVERTS: A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE CHURCH  
GROWTH IN DALE MOORE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

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## ABSTRACT

The follow-up of new converts is an integral part of church growth ministry which requires the attention and participation of every mature Christian, especially pastors and church leaders/workers. But in most Baptist churches, the follow-up of new converts are not always properly handled. Thus, a minimal percentage of new converts are retained in such congregations.

This research study, therefore, assessed the follow-up pattern of the local churches of the Dale Moore Baptist Association in the light of that of the New Testament churches, identified the hindrances to proper follow-up and thus proposed strategies for improvement that will lead to effective church growth.

The Descriptive Survey method was employed in this research and the target population were the organized churches of Dale Moore Baptist Association. The only instrument used for collection of data in this study was questionnaire and this was preferred because the nature of the research required direct, personal information from the respondents.

Impressively, the major findings from the research showed that these churches employed similar patterns in the follow-up of new converts as the New Testament churches, such as visitation, personal contact, discipleship, pastoral care and prayers. Ironically, however, they had an average rating in the effectiveness of their follow-up programmes/teams/units

Based on the findings in this research study, the following recommendations were made: that the churches should not feel complacent but rather strive to do better, that the follow-up of new converts should be done through small groups such as the cell and house fellowship groups, and that only committed, credible, and mature Christians should be involved in the follow-up ministry.

programmes, teams, or units. Thus, the churches should not feel contented with their present state but should revitalize their follow-up ministry in order to make it much more effective.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this research work, the following conclusions were reached as regard the organized churches in Dale Moore Baptist Association:

- Majority of the respondents, that is, pastors and church leaders are within the middle age class of 31-45years. This, therefore, shows that the churches have young and vibrant ministers who are ever-ready and available to proclaim and extend the kingdom of Christ in this crooked generation.
- Most of the respondents have between 5-10years of ministerial or leadership experience, which can be regarded as moderate enough to comment on such area of ministry. Therefore, their contributions or input in this research can be regarded as being reliable.
- The churches make new converts/new members mainly through witnessing and church services; however, many of them are embracing the cell church system as indicated by the reasonable response on making new converts through cell groups. This, therefore, shows that the cell church system is gaining ground as a productive means of reaching out to the unsaved.
- The follow-up of new converts/new members are done immediately after their conversion, and there are classes for them. This prompt attention given to new converts is therefore a very important strategy in retaining most of them.
- They have planned programmes and follow-up teams/units for consistent follow-up of new converts. This is thus an indication of a good organizational set up.

- In a local congregation an estimated average of 4 new converts/new members are made and 3 retained monthly, while 12 are made and 10 retained in a year. This is quite an encouraging statistics, and therefore indicates that most of the new converts/new members are been retained.
- Visitation, personal contact, discipleship, pastoral care, and prayers are the methods of follow-up used in these churches. And these are in agreement with those employed in the New Testament churches. Therefore, it is not surprising that their follow-up ministry is doing well and helping to retain a good number of the new converts.
- The hindrances encountered during follow-up include lack of commitment, unwillingness, time constraint, lack of mobility, and lack of maturity as regard the follow-up personnel, while on the side of the new converts are incorrect names, wrong addresses, unseriousness, excuses of time, and non-availability of new converts at home. It therefore shows that the follow-up ministry like every other ministry is not devoid of challenges.
- The churches in the Association were rated average in the effectiveness of their follow-up programmes/teams/units. This, therefore, shows that their overall performance in the follow-up ministry is not that excellent considering the relevant machineries and resources available.
- Majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the growth in their churches, therefore they desire improvement.
- Almost all the respondents (96.5%) agreed that follow-up contributes to the numerical growth of their churches. This is therefore a strong pointer to the fact that follow-up is a vital tool for effective growth of any church.

## **Recommendations**

From the findings of this study, the researcher hereby makes the following recommendations:

- . That the follow-up of new converts/new members be done through small groups such as the cell and house fellowship groups. This is because these groups are more effective in that they are able to reach out easily to the new converts within their vicinities. It also solves the problem of placing this huge responsibility on just a few people who constitute the follow-up team.
- That on the issues of incorrect names and wrong addresses, the new converts should be properly guided to fill in their personal data correctly in order to avoid such mistakes. Moreover, the follow-up personnel must not give up on new converts who seem difficult or unserious but should be patient with them and be persistent and prayerful on their behalf.
- That leaders or coordinators of house fellowships, cell groups, and outreach/evangelism unit should constitute the core of church leadership because these are the key areas of ministry as regard church growth.
- That on the issue of hindrances mentioned on the part of those involved in the follow-up ministry, the church should endeavor to involve only committed, credible and serious-minded matured Christians who care and are concerned about new converts. In addition, relevant material resources, finances, mobility and discipleship literature should be made available promptly.
- That genuine needs of new converts/new members be met as a show of love and concern about their well-being. This will no doubt encourage them and make them feel welcomed to the new family of God.

- That the churches should not feel complacent no matter how encouraging their present state of growth may be. Rather, they should re-assess their follow-up ministry and make necessary amendments for greater efficiency considering the fact that they have the relevant machineries in place.