

What Every New Christian Needs

- I. Introduction
- II. Key Thought: Every New Christian need to grow in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our congregation is set to begin a new program for welcoming our new members into God's family and establishing them within the church, and you can contribute.
- III. What Every New Christian Needs
 - a. To Grow
 - i. 1 Pet 2:1-3
 - ii. Heb. 5:12-6:2
 - b. In Christ
 - i. Eph. 4:11-15
 - c. In the context of a Christian Family (Eph. 4:16)
 - i. With in the church
 1. Not an orphanage
 2. Not a boarding school
 - ii. A family
 1. Jesus considered His bond with His disciples as closer than any family ties – Mark 3:32-35
 2. So did Paul – 1 Thess. 2:7-12;19-20
 3. Human baby
 - a. Lots of feeding and cleaning up of messes
 - b. Eventually she begins to recognize who her brothers and sisters are
 - c. To want to be around them
 - d. In coming years her brothers and sisters will represent some her closest, strongest relationships on earth
 4. In the church family, it is critical for the spiritual well-being of new converts that they form close relationships among the congregation in the first few months of their Christian lives
 - a. These relationships form the context in which growth to maturity can occur
- IV. How You Can Help them Get It
 - a. Two ways of categorizing Christians
 - i. New vs. mature
 1. New and growing Christians
 2. Mature and growing Christians
 3. Never stop growing!
 - ii. Raised in the church vs. not raised in the church
 1. This is a significant difference
 2. Raised in the church
 - a. Their human family and their church family were in many respects the same

- b. Nearly everything that happens in the church is unexpected, familiar and seems right
 - c. Their place in the church has been understood from their earliest years
 - d. If they weren't in church it would feel unfamiliar, unnatural and not right
 - e. A huge advantage in achieving Christian maturity
 - 3. Not raised in the church
 - a. Enter the church with almost no relationships with Christians
 - b. With little or no understanding of the Lord's church and what makes it unique
 - c. Everything seems unfamiliar and not right somehow
 - d. A sense that "I don't belong"
 - e. If those feelings don't change, that Christian will have a very hard time remaining faithful
 - b. Unique characteristic of our congregations
 - i. Many were not raised in the church
 - ii. Many came to Christ and the church as an adult
 - iii. If you are a new Christian you should know that
 - 1. 2/3 of our elders obeyed the gospel as an adult
 - 2. 2/3 of our elders' wives – the same
 - 3. Many members of our congregation
 - a. Including many who teach, preach and lead our services in other ways
 - b. Have been right where you are now
 - iv. This should be a source of great encouragement to you
 - v. What does it take to get there
 - 1. Plant –
 - a. Light
 - b. Water
 - c. Soil
 - d. Time
 - 2. New Christian
 - a. The same
 - i. The seed of the word of God
 - ii. In the soil of a tender and open heart
 - iii. With the light of a relationship with Jesus
 - iv. In the warmth of a Christian family
 - v. Then all that is left is for time to grow
- c. Mature Christians
 - i. Raised in the church
 - 1. Great blessing
 - 2. Taught the ways of the Lord from an early age
 - 3. You want those advantages for your own children
 - 4. What about God's other children

5. Our new members who did not have that advantage
 6. It is up to the mature Christians to provide it
- ii. Not raised in the church
 1. Think back to your condition when you first obeyed the gospel
 2. Feelings of ignorance or inadequacy
 3. Feelings that you didn't fit in or belong
 4. But here you are, decades later, strong faithful brothers and sisters
 5. Two questions?
 - a. What did it take to get you from where you were then to where you are now?
 - b. And who are going to provide those things for our new Christians?
 - c. It has to be us!
 - d. And we will do it!
- d. The New Christian teaching program
 - i. Addresses several objectives
 1. To ground new Christians in basic truths that will serve them well throughout their Christian lives
 - a. The elementary principles of Christ – Heb. 6:1
 - b. The milk of the word
 - c. So they can grow!
 2. To provide opportunities for new Christians to form bonds with their spiritual family
 - a. Go beyond getting to know the few who sit near
 - b. And go beyond the pleasantries that are about all have time for before and after services
 3. To provide established members with opportunities to
 - a. Make a contribution to the well-being of our new members
 - b. Develop close relationships with them that will be the basis for their future fellowship in Christ
 - c. Serve the body of Christ
- e. The Plan
 - i. The elders have approved a framework for providing new members with opportunities to get the teaching they need as well as opportunities to establish meaningful relationships within the local congregation
 1. A series of lesson topics shared by mature Christians with the new in Christ
 2. Within the first six to twelve months of their Christian lives they will have studied with and spent time with on a social basis outside of the worship services 6 to 12 established, mature Christians in a context that allows
 - a. Their spiritual histories to be shared and appreciated

- b. The new Christian to see how the Christian life is lived in many different settings by different people
 - c. Discover common interests that can be pursued together
 - d. Discover opportunities to serve others together
 - e. Get to know several mature Christians who they can identify with and interact with as older brothers or sisters in Christ
 - i. For spiritual support
 - ii. To pursue common non-spiritual interests
- f. What will happen
- i. Over the next several months, the elders and I will be presenting lessons during our main worship service on each of the topics that have been chosen for use in this teaching program
 - ii. If you are a new Christian,
 - 1. this is vital, valuable information, that you need to understand and apply to build a firm foundation in Christ
 - 2. Be here and benefit from these elementary principles being taught
 - iii. If you are a mature Christian
 - 1. This will be a review for you
 - 2. Just as important, but most likely very familiar
 - 3. But the elders would like you to not only be reminded of these Christian basics, but also to consider, which of these topics would I be most interested in presenting in a private setting to new Christians
 - 4. And consider making a commitment to participating in this effort to establish our new Christian and get them deeply connected into the body of Christ
 - 5. The elders intention is for every willing, available mature Christian to consider how they might contribute to this effort
 - a. That's why they are kicking me out of the pulpit and will be presenting several of these lessons themselves
 - b. I am sure each will have something to say about this program when they bring those lessons
 - iv. What we eventually will have
 - 1. A list of topics that new Christians will study
 - 2. For each topic
 - a. Names of one or two mature Christians or Christian couples who are willing to and ready to share that topic with a new Christian
 - b. The outlines that the elders and I have presented will be provided to those who are teaching as the basis for their study time

3. The coordinator

- a. When someone obeys the gospel, the elders will let them know of this series of lessons and its purpose and role in firmly establishing them in Christ
- b. Then a coordinator will contact the teacher for the first topic
 - i. The teacher will contact the new Christian arrange a time and place for the first subject to be covered
 1. Your home
 2. Their home
 3. The building
 4. The coffee shop or library
 5. Any mutually agreeable time and place
 - ii. Then notify the coordinator when that topic has been completed so that the next can be scheduled
 - iii. Ideally, the new Christian will meet with another mature Christian every week to three weeks in an informal setting outside of services

g. The Value

- i. It is impossible to really put a value on these interactions and the benefits they will provide both for new Christian and mature Christian
- ii. For most of us, we don't think about how much God has done for us and how far we have come in Christ very often
- iii. Sharing these topics is half the story, the other half is sharing your life and God's work in your life with a new brother or sister
- iv. Letting them know, I was once where you are, if I can make it so can you

V. Conclusion

- a. Perspective: Crush, the sea turtle from "Finding Nemo": [Crush](#): Oh, it's awesome, Jellyman. The little dudes are just eggs, we leave 'em on a beach to hatch, and then, coo-coo-cachoo, they find their way back to the big ol' blue.
- b. In reality, the sea turtle lays over 150 eggs in a hole on the beach, then only a dozen or so survive the predators who try to eat them after they hatch and make it to the water and of those only about a third survive to adulthood
- c. It is doubtful whether any sea turtle has any idea who their parents or relatives are because they have received no care, attention or protection from any other turtle since the time their egg was laid
- d. Not really a good model for human parenting!
- e. The family of God works differently than that.

f. Invitation