

***A survey of 15 churches yields interesting statistics about . . .
How We Are Making Conversions***

A few years ago we conducted a survey of 15 churches to obtain information about their 5 most recent converts. The results are interesting, and some positive conclusions can be made from them (see article on editorial page)

Here are the results:

Sex

53% female
47% male

Race

89% white
11% black

Age

females:

31 % less than 20 years old
46% 20 to 40 years old
13% 40 to 65 years old
10% over 65 years old
average age= 31.6

males:

37% less than 20 years old
46% 20 to 40 years old
8% 40 to 65 years old
9% over 65 years old
average age = 27.8

Marital Status (among those 20 years old or older)

females:

17% single
43% married
30% divorced
10% widow

males:

27% single
57% married
4% divorced
12% divorced & remarried

How initially contacted

30% child of member
19% friend of member
15% relative of member (not child/spouse) 10% spouse of member
6% re-baptism of a member
4% advertising
1 % door-to-door work
15% other

Number of one-on-one studies prior to baptism

37% zero
11% 1
10% 2

| | |
|-----|-------------|
| 4% | 3 |
| 3% | 4 |
| 3% | 5 |
| 32% | more than 5 |

Time between conversions

- reporting churches averaged 2.7 months between baptisms
- it took the average church 13.5 months to baptize 5 people, with one church reporting 5 baptisms in the last 6 months (quickest), and one church reporting 5 baptisms in the last 39 months (slowest).

- by Greg Gwin

Please refer to the preceding survey . . .

Where Do We Find New Converts?

A survey of several churches of Christ turned up some interesting statistics about the people who are being converted to Christ.

Some things didn't seem to matter much. For instance, there were about equal numbers of men and women who became Christians. And people from different races were represented in percentages that aren't far different than the general population.

The age of new converts showed an interesting trend. The highest percentages were among men and women from 20 to 40 years old. And among these, the highest numbers were for married people. This should tell us that we ought to be especially targeting young married people with the gospel message.

The second largest age group for converts was for those under 20 years old. Most of these were children of existing members. This is an extremely important group, and we should never fail to pay special attention to the conversion of our 'own' children.

Without a doubt, the most strikingly obvious statistic is that new converts are, by far, most often among people who are friends or relatives of those who are already Christians. In fact, a look at the numbers shows that fully 80% of conversions are among those that we already know. Only 4% were reached by advertising efforts, and just 1% contacted by door-to-door work.

What does this tell us? It's clear that we need to be working hard to teach and convert our own family members, our friends and co-workers, our neighbors and other acquaintances. 4 out of every 5 conversions are likely to come from these folks who are already known to us. And yet we continue to target people we don't know with ads and door knocking. Let's change that. Let's get more efficient. Let's work energetically to teach and convert as many as we can - especially those we already know.

- by Greg Gwin

Can You March Without Music?

It is said that Benedict Arnold was a better general than George Washington. He was a handsomer man and a more interesting conversationalist. But he had one conspicuous weakness -- he was unable to "MARCH WITHOUT MUSIC." Whenever General Benedict Arnold performed a task in a competent manner, he expected praise and acclaim, and if these were not forthcoming, he sulked and became morose.

In the hurry and scurry of the war there were times when the feats of General Arnold went unnoticed. This hurt in his most vital spot -- his vanity. So he committed a terrible act -- he quit his job and placed the secrets of his country in the hands of the enemy.

Many people in the world, and some of them in the Lord's church, are a lot like Benedict Arnold. If things don't go to suit them, or if they feel that they have been neglected or slighted, or that their talents are not appreciated, they sell out to the devil. It is evident that such people will not work unless they are "IN THE LIMELIGHT."

Now we all like the sweet music of applause and we should "Give honor to whom honor is due," but let's always remember when the applause does not come promptly and when people seem not to notice, the real man, the worthy man, marches on -- without music.

- by A. W. Criswold