

Prevention of Apostasy Through the Implementation of Community Bible Study Program

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Abstract

One of the problems that occur in society is that many Christian communities have been apostated to other religion across from their former religion. The steps prepared by Christian teachers have not been maximized so that each community becomes spiritually mature and has a Christian character. The purpose of this study is to find out that the Bible Study Program in the community contributes to preventing the apostasy especially for Christian. This type of research is a qualitative, there wer five informants who were interviewed to find out the reasons for apostasy. The results showed that those who have apostated were caused by their not understanding of having interpretation upon the Holy Bible is the only words of God, did not have a strong foundation of faith. It was found that by community Bible study program, the society can get self confidence/esteem in possessing Christian faith, the most suggested way to prevent apostasy.

Keywords: *Holy Bible Study program, prevention of apostasy, implementation in community*

Introduction

According to the UN Charter of 1948, one of the human rights of every human being is freedom of choice of the religion or beliefs it wants to adopt. In the world, there are many kinds of religions and creeds. In Indonesia itself there are a number of religions and creeds. Some of them have received recognition as official religions, including: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Kong Fu Tje. Besides that, there are still many other streams of belief which are of course also protected by the laws in force in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia.

Christianity has existed and developed in Indonesia since several centuries ago. As one of the missionary religions also tends to expand to other areas of belief. But this expansion phenomenon is biased because in Christianity itself seems to be divided into denominational groups and / or church levels. This makes it difficult to determine the number of Christians. Many of them do not report the number of members or report membership in a double manner, because each denomination influences or invites members of other denominations to become members or followers.

From the preliminary observations of the research team, several factors were found. The classic reason that is often found is because of poverty, other marriages of religion / beliefs and so on. Another thing that needs to be addressed is the standard of argumentation for those who believe the Bible is the word of God or the Bible contains the word of God. This reason is very fundamental. Like the expression of Jesus in the form of parables of people who built their homes on sand and or on rocks. Another thing, the belief that Jesus Christ is one hundred percent God and one hundred percent human, but there is a mystery that He is still one hundred percent true God and Man; the secret of the guarantee of salvation that is only found in Jesus; understanding of the trinity; understanding of the church and the importance of congregational life; certainty that the Bible reveals in the future and others.

Discussion

The influence of information is very rapid and even films that are broadcast through various television stations that seem to highlight the beliefs of other religions offer alarming developments in the Christian environment itself. For example, divorce was once considered a taboo within the church environment, now it starts to fade, is considered normal even though the Bible strongly prohibits it. Even among certain denominations secretly re-marital marriage to divorced couples, as it is considered normal in other religions.

As a result of the seriousness of the ecclesiastical leadership in preparing and organizing the forms of teaching denominated in each of them resulted in the fidelity of the congregation that was false and did not stand the test. An understanding of the fundamentals of faith as stated above must be done with a multi-approach. It is not enough to approach the sermon and the categorical ministry. Many Christian missunderstood about the meaning and function of Sunday School, but when there are restrictions on the category of age groups "children", resulting in marginalization of Christians aged 16 years to old age. In fact there are still many of these age interval who are unable to understand the basis of their faith, how can they be able to survive when the various pressures of life are getting heavier?.

Age 16 to 25 years in general those who because of school and / or work began to separate from the nuclear family, began to separate themselves in the authority and supervision of their parents. It is also possible for them to join and or live together with a new community of different beliefs. Aged 20 to 50 years are productive workers. Starting with paying for one's own life, family and engaging in career development, Christians are often faced with temptations and even choices. It is his conviction and basic faith that should be able to keep his heart from wanting to cheat. Ages 25 to 60 years are dominated by those whose jobs or policies affect their lives. There is a serious difference between Muslims. At any rate, their faith greatly influences them in making policies and or breakthroughs. On the other hand, government officials, members of the council, state civil apparatus, political party apparatus and other groups of Christian leaders are not too or are reluctant to make policies that are nuanced in accordance with their religious beliefs.

It is time for each denomination to realize this phenomenon. The church must be responsible for the maturity of the faith of its followers. They must be helped to know their privileges as Christians, specifically. Sunday schools that have been made to children need to be developed. But it is also very necessary to think about Bible study at the adolescent, adult and even elderly levels. Thus, in addition to each of them being proud and able to account for the foundations of their faith, they can also innovate in their work without ignoring or sacrificing their own beliefs. Based on this consideration, the researchers agreed to carry the title of the study: "Prevention of Conversion Through the Implementation of Bible Study Programs in the Community".

Many people question the decision of people to convert. First, life struggles such as problems, sickness or desire for the realization of hope which then makes someone promise or vow to commit to God or a particular religion. Second, people convert to other religions because they see the greatness or the magic of their characters, like many people who followed Jesus because of His miracles. Third, regional authorities became religious authorities. Changes in religion here occur for political reasons; the people followed the king's religion. Included in this reason are religions due to work needs or career advancement; for the sake of facilities. Another factor is the element of coercion. Fifth, there are people who convert to religion because they experience disappointment in the people and previous religions that are expected to not materialize so that he looks for other places and religions that are believed to be able to realize his wishes. Sixth, people convert to religion because of the search for truth about God and religious teachings through the process of learning and personal reflection. To prevent the transfer of faith, understanding of the word is needed. Naingolan (2008: 70) says, the teaching of the Word is the Word of God that comes from the Bible which must be known, recognized, lived, practiced or applied by the congregation so that each congregation experiences repentance, recovery, change of mindset and character toward the fullness of Christ Jesus, Our god. Teaching should be directed towards the love of the life-giving and renewing Word of God, revealing mistakes, educating, leading to life and truth (2 Tim. 3:16 and John 8:31), (2) Bringing believers to love one another among others. Jesus has demonstrated his love unconditionally. His love is always doing good. This attitude is the content of Christian education as proof of their love for God (Jn. 13: 34-35), and (3) able to keep believers in fellowship with Christ to bear fruit. In line with Kristianto (2008: 121) which says Christian Religious Education to adults is so that they grow, bear fruit and develop emotionally, mentally, socially and spiritually.

it was necessary to give a proposal regarding the educational framework as a guideline in implementing the Bible Study Program as follows:

a. Establishing Community Bible Study Program Objectives.

- General Goals namely, that the nature of education carried out in the Community Bible Study Program is to equip the saints for the work of ministry and building the body of Christ so that the name of God be glorified (Eph. 4: 11-12, Matt. 5:16).
- Instructional Purpose, which is aimed at increasing the competence of believers in understanding the basis of their faith, so that they can survive when there are shocks, threats or offers to deny their faith. Then they are able to witness, serve, fellowship, worship and implement their faith in Christ in the midst of society.
- Operational Purpose, which is aimed at sharpening the understanding and application of the truth of God's word in the field of witness or preaching of the gospel, the field of service, the field of fellowship and the field of worship to God.

b. Designing Program Implementation / Implementation of Bible Study Programs in the community.

- Rationale that is based on the needs and number of adults who are new converts, are growing and willing to serve God through their respective local churches and also in the community as part of a heterogeneous community.
- Expected goals: after this program is completed, each participant experiences faith growth, practices the manifestation of faith in daily life and gives himself to serve through his activities in the environment.
- Community Bible Study Program participants: Christians and / or those interested in learning about the Christian faith from the age of 16 and above, married men and women (husband and wife). Has a desire to be nurtured and taught to grow in faith.
- Coaching time: every single episode 8 meetings, duration 1 hour.
- Implementation Time: can be done every Sunday or on other days after work, time can be agreed with the teacher who guides the class with the participants of the Community Bible Study Program in the class.
- Construction sites: held in church buildings, houses and / or other village / kelurahan facilities. Facilities for chairs, chalkboards, overhead projectors, stationery for instructors are provided by a committee that has been determined based on deliberation in the community or local church leaders, in this case depending on how the leadership system determines church administrators of certain denominations or local churches each.
- Teaching Method: because the participants are adults, the method used is carried out in an andogogical manner with the following program forms: 1)Praises and prayers, 2) Reading the Scriptures that will be discussed, 3)Discussion of the subject matter, 4)Discussion and sharing groups or classes, 5) Conclusions and suggestions
- The room should be arranged in a circle so that participants are more communicative and can be changed as needed to be more effective in group sharing and discussion.
- Speaker: because this program is a special program, speakers / instructors should be sought for those who have fulfilled Biblical requirements as servants of the congregation, have knowledge of Bible truths that they have lived before, have been delved into, filled with the Holy Spirit and have character and testimony. a good personal and family life in the midst of the congregation and the community.
- The number of participants is not limited but for effectiveness and quality: a minimum of 6 people and a maximum of 10 people for one teacher at the same time.
- Evaluation: to determine the level of ability of the participants given initial evaluation, final evaluation, discussion or sharing.
- Implementing Committee: The committee can be formed by starting from the arrangement as follows: 1)Counselors: Local Congregation Pastors, 2) Responsible Agency: Village officials, especially the Christian spiritual part, 3)Management: Selected should be in the control of village officials

This type of research is exploratory research with a qualitative approach. Explorative research is that researchers want to dig deeply about things that influence the occurrence of something (Arikunto, 2006). Research with a qualitative approach is research in which the research procedure produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people or observable behavior (Moleong, 2010). This type of explorative research with a qualitative approach was chosen, because this study fulfills the characteristics of a qualitative study. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) there are five characteristics of qualitative research, namely: naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive and meaning.

The research subjects are five people who were previously Christian and have now converted to another religion or followers who are willing to be interviewed. The instrument of this research is the researcher himself, to what extent the researcher is ready to conduct further research in the field (Sugiyono, 2008: 305). As revealed by Moleong (2010: 329), data validity means looking for consistent interpretations in various ways in relation to a process of analysis that is constant or tentative (not fixed). Then in checking the validity of the data of this study used triangulation of data. Valid data are analyzed in stages according to Miles and Huberman (1994: 15-16), namely (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation and (4) data conclusion. Data conclusions are made after verification of data from the results of field records and observations.

Method

From the interview data it appears that:

- S1 subjects who initially converted to Christianity after marriage on the grounds of joining the husband. With consideration or struggle 8 (eight) years the subject of S1 finally moved or converted. Before the subject S1 converted, the church did not try to provide input to the subject so that the S1 subject discouraged his conversion. S1 subjects still remember when attending Sunday school, realizing that Jesus is the Savior of Humans If the subject S1 has a strong foundation of faith, S1 will not convert / convert. If you already have a foundation of faith that you are ready to suffer for the kingdom of God (Mk 8:34), be able to face oppression and suffering because of faith in Christ.
- S2 subject who initially converted to Christianity after marriage on the grounds of joining her husband and has the principle that in one family enough one religion. With consideration or struggle for 5 (five) years, the subject of S2 finally changes or converts to religion. Before the subject of the S2 changed religion, the church had tried to provide input to the subject so that the S2 subject was discouraged of converting. As Nainggolan (2008: 67) said, that the purpose of Jesus' teaching while He was still serving on earth was to bring each believer to grow in faith so that it would be seen in genuine love for God, so that everyone, had a deep connection with God, entrusting himself fully to Christ (Mk 10: 13-16), obeying God's commands and laws (Luke 10: 25-37), serving God and others (Matt. 20: 26-28), ready to suffer for the kingdom God (Mark 8:34), faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).
- S3 or Doctoral subjects who were originally Christians converted to religion after marriage on the grounds of joining their husbands and having the principle that all religions teach good. With consideration or struggle that is only 5 (five) to 6 (six) months, the subject of S3 finally changes or converts. Before the subject of S3 changed religion, the church did not try to provide input to the subject so that the S3 subject discouraged his conversion, only from parents and relatives. Subject S3 said that Jesus was the Savior of Humans and said that it would be better if there was a Bible study program in the community. It can be seen that S3 does not have a basic foundation of faith, so that until it converts, so it is very much needed in the Bible Study Program.
- S4 subjects who were originally Christians converted to marriage after marriage on the grounds of joining their husbands and having the principle that all religions teach good (S401). With consideration or struggle that lasts 3 (three) years, S4 subjects finally convert or convert to religion. Before the subject changed religion, the church did not try to provide input to the subject so that S4 subject discouraged his conversion. Subject S4 said that Jesus was the Savior of Humans and said that it would be better for community behavior if there was a Bible study program in the community.
- S5 subjects who initially converted to Christianity after marriage on the grounds of joining the husband. With consideration or struggle for about 1 (one) year, the subject of S5 finally changes or converts. Before the subject changed religion, the church did not try to provide input to the subject so that Subject S5 would discourage her conversion. Subject S5 said that Jesus was a special messenger of God to Christians and said that it would be better and children would grow up and get used to it if there was a Bible study program in the community. Subject S5 also does not have a strong foundation of faith so that it changes or converts to religion, so it is very important to do a Bible study program.

Conclusions

From the discussion, it appears that the efforts that the church has made so far in fostering the faith of its people need to be maximized. To achieve maximum results, all efforts need to be empowered. Coaching should not be limited to teaching in class-by-category classes, such as confirmation / sidi classes, classes of elders / prospective elders, New Christian classes, marriage preparation classes (pre-married) and Sunday School classes for children. The vulnerability of religious conversion in North Sumatra is not only due to the strong influence from outside the church such as the influence of marriage, work, politics, poverty, the environment and so on, but people's ignorance of the nature of the faith they hold causes them to live in uncertainty. The average person who eventually converted (from Christianity to Islam) has heard that Jesus is the only way, the truth and life and that no one reaches the Father (heaven) if not through Jesus. But unfortunately it seems as if this is only for Christians. The Triune God also seems to be a secret that is reluctant to be discussed by the church, especially about things to come (eschatology). It turns out that those who ultimately deny their faith are caused because they do not understand that the Bible is the only word of God. As long as the church is not serious about teaching the origin of biblical authorship, it is very common for people to easily convert to religion. How is it possible for people to survive even if they suffer from defending their faith, if what they believe is not understood or understood correctly according to the demands of contemporary logic? Pessimistic about church preparations that are seen as less than optimal requires an effort to open Community Bible Study classes.

It is not the time to force or persuade someone or a group of people to remain obedient to believe in the teachings of a religion. The intellectuals are demanded to be creative. To minimize and even prevent this conversion, it is hoped that government involvement will work with the church to create a Bible Study class in the Community. The implementation of the Bible Study Program should be carried out by the Tarakung IAKN Postgraduate Program in the form of community service, especially the devotion of S2 Christian Religious Education Study Program students.

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