

Like chickens after beetles

The Christian church needs to re-evaluate what it is doing to celebrities who convert to Christianity.

The old "notch-in-the-gun" spirit still lurks in the heart of many of God's bounty hunters who are too eager to hang out the scalp of some well-known personality who takes up the cross. It's one thing to go hunting and trap a squaw—but to snare a chief. . . ah, that's worth a picture to hang in the study.

Once the word goes out that some TV star, movie actor, politician or radical left-winger has become a

BUCKSHOT
JAMIE
BUCKINGHAM



Christian, well-meaning Christians pounce on him like chickens after a beetle in the barnyard. Tour groups sign him up to lead trips to Israel. The FGBMFI puts him "on the circuit." And publishers vie with each other to write his book.

Announce that a pro baseball player or an ex-murderer will speak at your church and you'll surely draw a crowd. That's good. But let's be careful, church, that we don't ask more of our celebrity-turned-Christian than he is qualified to give. The tendency, unfortunately, is to snatch the newly hatched Christian from his nest, when this is the very time he needs to stay home to be fed by his spiritual father.

So the nagging question remains—does the church have other responsibilities to these famous ones than to use them? Should we not, instead of competing for a spot on their crowded calendar, provide for them a loving family where they may learn both the ways and the Word of God? If Paul found it necessary to spend the first dozen years of his Christian life in obscurity before God found him mature enough to minister, dare we ask any less of today's celebrities?

In fact, I know several celebrities who right now are holding back on a public profession for fear of being gobbled up by church publicity hounds.

Christian TV ministries often use celebrities to give credence to their existence. After all, if three Nashville singers, Joe Jock from the Detroit Lions and the President's nephew appear on the same program it's the equivalent of God's anointing. Yet, the testimony of Harriet Housewife, Carl the Coalminer or word from some obscure Bible teacher may be far more meaningful to the viewers.

Sometimes, I suspect, celebrities feed the ego of the announcer more than the hungry souls of the viewers.

There are glowing exceptions, of course. We need the exciting testimonies of celebrities. But please, church, let's give them a chance—not just to speak out, but to sit and learn as well. After all, our responsibility to help them does not cease once they become Christians. If anything, it increases.