



*Changing the World  
One Life at a Time*



**6-week  
prayer/study  
journal**



**Name:**

# Investing, Building, Reaching

Discovering your role in...

## Changing the World One Life at a Time

Jeff Gordon

God is changing the world through Xenos, one life at a time. He is working through people in Columbus and around the globe to shake up the world with the love of Christ. No doubt, God is at work in your life to change you since he designed you to be part of something that is bigger than yourself. He has a role for you in a dynamic church that is working to bring his love to this broken world.

At Xenos we are working together to follow God and accomplish the tasks that he sets before us. He put many challenges before this church over the years and now he presents us with another big one.

*Will we continue to reach into our community and the world by sacrificing to fund three important capital projects?*

We, the elders, want every Xenos member to understand the biblical basis and strategic purpose of these big expenditures. We will present a series of four teachings from September 17th through October 15th to explain these issues. These teachings will be done in a way that is sensitive and compelling so that new people and old members alike will understand what God is doing through Xenos and where he is leading.

We are asking all Xenos members to participate in this eight week campaign by reading this journal, the listed passages, and answering the questions. We want to come together to focus our prayer and thought on these issues so that we will be able to meet the funding goals and then quickly resume our main focus of reaching people who do not know God. Therefore this campaign will last only eight weeks.

It's been over ten years since our last capital campaign and God has used those facilities and the sacrifice of those donors to change thousands of lives. Many of you are here today because of their sacrifices. I pray that we will rise to the occasion so that we can look back and know that we sacrificed when God called and we made a difference.

## Week 1

# The Church on the Move: Then and Now

*Dennis McCallum*

During the early years of Xenos, we had the idea that home Bible studies could multiply and expand in a wild-fire movement similar to that in the early church. First dozens, then scores, then hundreds joined in.

Even then, we had little inkling that one day, thousands would begin relationships with Christ. But one thing was clear right from the beginning: The whole thing was being orchestrated by God.

Everyone in our group had a strong inner sense that God was working, and therefore we were responsible to show up and do our part. I felt rocked by surprise as God would move heaven and earth to advance our fellowship.

Always the pattern has been the same: We had to move out in faith trusting that God would be there when the time came:

Today, as we stand on the edge of a new phase of ministry, Xenos prepares to plant entire ministry spheres. The term “sphere” is based on 2 Cor. 10:13 (NASB), where Paul uses the term to refer to the entire group in Corinth.

This fall we are planting the West Side sphere and the first Main Campus sphere will plant in early 2006. We anticipate more spheres will be planted each year. The new facility in the north campus area will open the possibility of planting adult as well as student spheres.

Never have we stood at a more exciting crossroads than today. If our vision for sphere planting succeeds, we may see action in the future that goes far beyond anything we have seen so far!

*Read Acts 18 & 19* and the background information on Ephesus.

*Ephesus:* Judging from the size of the pile of books they burned in this city (50,000 pieces of silver, each equal to a day's wage) the group must have been huge. Also, later references to churches in seven cities around Ephesus, none of which were visited by Paul in Acts, strongly suggests these were all planted by the vigorous group in Ephesus. (Colossians, Rev. 2 and 3)



Another indication of the immense size of this movement comes from the mouth of Demetrius the silversmith: “you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.” (Acts 19:26,27) Considering that this temple was one of the ancient wonders of the world, it says volumes that Demetrius would have been able to argue with credibility that this cult was threatened by the number of people converting to Christianity. This church planting movement must have included thousands in Ephesus, and many more in surrounding cities.

### **For discussion:**

How did Paul communicate truth about Christ?

How could we follow his example today?

How did God embolden and protect Paul?

How would your witness change if you were confident of God’s protection in your life?

Look at Acts 19:10: How far did Paul’s ministry reach?

What potential do you see for Xenos’ future?

What could you do to increase the spread of the gospel?

### **Prayer Points:**

- Ask God, “What more can I do to spread the gospel?”
- Pray for a few people you know who are apart from God.
- Ask God to continue to lead this church and that we will embrace the changes and challenges that God leads us into.
- Pray that God would help every Xenos member, including you, to be generous.

## Week 2

# What Motivates Generosity?

Gary DeLashmutt

The church in every era must embrace God's call to be counter-cultural—to allow him to radically transform our values rather than being conformed to the values of our culture (Romans 12:2). In 21st century America, we will either allow God to transform us into generous stewards, or we will be conformed to our culture's affluent individualism and materialism.

At the heart of this matter is the question of identity. Do I see myself as an autonomous owner—or as God's steward? Standing against this autonomous ownership consensus is the biblical view—that God is the owner of all that we have, that he entrusts wealth and possessions to us to manage in ways that advance his interests.

But there is more. God not only rewards individual Christians in the next life for being good stewards. He also entrusts steward-minded churches with more opportunity and spiritual power in this life.

We have experienced this correlation in Xenos time and time again. God has granted us additional power for growth when we have embraced his call to generous stewardship.

Now we face another challenge in our service to God. He wants to grant us greater power and increased fruit in South Linden, on OSU campus and among adults.

Will we embrace this challenge as a church and continue to allow him to transform us—or will we allow ourselves to be conformed by our materialistic culture and forfeit this opportunity?

### For discussion:

Read 1 Tim. 6:6-11; 17-19

From the text, list the dangers of wealth:

From the text, what is the appropriate response?

If we handle wealth properly, what will be the outcome? Read Titus 3:14 and note the outcome of generosity.

Read 2 Cor. 9:7. Who do you know that is a "cheerful giver?" What makes them that way? What could you do to move toward becoming a cheerful giver?

### Prayer Points:

- Ask God to clearly reveal the dangers of wealth in your life
- Ask God to reveal to you what your life could be like as you adopt his view of wealth. To be free from the love of money.
- Praise God for examples of people you know who are cheerful givers.
- Pray that God would show you what a sacrificial gift would be for you. Don't expect an answer this week, but keep asking

## Week 3

# God's Heart for the Poor

*Jim Leffel*

Now is the time to take stock of our enormous potential as a movement and build on the awesome vision God has granted us. As we begin to take concrete steps to invest in this vision, I'd like you to consider some important things.

As in almost every major American city, the evangelical church in Columbus is looking to grow in the prosperous, expanding suburbs. And as in almost every major American city, low and marginal income areas of Columbus have been largely ignored by the church.

By establishing a permanent physical presence in South Linden and north campus, substantial populations largely isolated from the gospel will have a compelling witness on their turf.

God has been laying the foundation for dynamic urban-centered ministry through Xenos for more than a decade. Now is the time to take these ministries to a higher level. Meeting the needs of those least able to meet their own is a defining feature of authentic biblical faith.

I believe that today, the Lord has raised up Xenos to reap God's harvest in those areas of Columbus in greatest need and with the least active Christian presence.

I pray the testimony of our church will be that when God opened doors of opportunity to glorify him, we didn't hold back. I live in the hope that eternity will look very different because love for our neighbor in need had real substance.

### **For discussion:**

Read the following Proverbs and summarize the thought of each.

Proverbs 14:20

Proverbs 14:31

Proverbs 17:5

Proverbs 19:17

Proverbs 22:2

Proverbs 29:7

How does God view the poor?

How does God view those who neglect the poor?

How does God view those who attend to the needs of the poor?

What was your perspective on the poor before you became a Christian? How has your perspective changed since you became a Christian?

**Prayer Points:**

- Ask God to give you empathy for the poor.
- Ask God to help you see less fortunate people as he does.
- Ask God to continue to lead our church to serve the poor in Columbus and throughout the world.
- Ask God to show you how you and others can be generous. What could I sacrifice or economize on to be more generous?

**Week 4**

## Becoming a Cheerful Giver

*Jeff Gordon*

God already has done great things in Xenos and he is calling us to much more. This is not the time to relax! We face an exciting future with big challenges—to keep growing we need to make major capital investments in three projects. Without this investment, progress and growth is almost certain to stall. Each of us has the opportunity to invest in this righteous venture and be part of the sustained advancement of God’s work.

We are investing in lives, not buildings. Jesus commands us to invest wisely and, “Lay up treasure in heaven.” We can invest in people, who are eternal beings, and therefore lay up heavenly treasure. We are embracing three projects that focus on changing lives and embody God’s priority for this church.

We are eager to invest and build so we can be part of God’s loving hand that is reaching into this broken world. God is working through Xenos in many ways, and we each must decide whether we want to be part of extending his reach.

These are big projects and the price-tag presents a challenge. Our goal is to raise \$5 million in gifts. God is giving each of us the opportunity to be part of what he’s doing. He’s doing a great work; do you want to be part of it?

Our goal is 100 percent participation! We believe God is calling the church to these great works.

**For discussion:**

Read 1 Chronicles 29

What motivated David to give?

How did he lead?

What was the outcome of David's leadership?

Read vs. 9. Why did the people rejoice?

What effect will generosity have on your personal life?

What effect will generosity have on the life of our church?

What effects could we expect if we are not generous?

## God Rescued Me

*Jeff Gordon*

I thank God regularly that he rescued me from a life of agony. I'm most deeply moved by the way God has changed my relationships. He's changed me so that I've been able to have great friendships and a growing marriage of twenty-one years. I'm also super thankful that he's given me a refreshing new perspective on possessions.

I came to Christ about twenty-three years ago while I was in medical school. I looked forward to a life of prestige and the wealth afforded a physician. As I grew in my relationship with Christ I began to realize that the unseen things like relationships are more important than material things. As a result, I decided to invest less time in making money and more time in people: That decision has brought great joy to my life. The other important realization was that I could share my wealth to help promote God's agenda and help the poor.

As God taught us to give generously, he brought tremendous joy and a sense of contentment that possessions or money never provided. Here's a paradox I learned: When we don't look to material things for joy or security, then we can enjoy them. We're content and thankful for what we have. Besides that, there is great joy in knowing that our donations support God's work in significant ways here in Columbus and around the world. We also get to experience God's power and faithfulness as he provides for our needs as we give. I think this perspective will have a lasting impact on our kids too. Finally, there's something really sweet about the fact that God looks on with joy when we, his children, serve him and love others with our money.

I encourage you to consider all the benefits of being generous and the perils of being self-absorbed and possessive. Make decisive moves in your life against self-centeredness by being generous and you will see great reward in this life and in the life to come.

### Prayer Points:

- Thank God for David and Israel's example of generosity.
- Ask God to move in our church to produce a similar result.
- Ask God to show you how your life and home church could be changed through generous sacrifice like this.
- Pray that 100 percent of Xenos members would give to help fund these projects.
- Pray for the major donor campaign over the next two weeks-for generosity among those with financial resources.

## Week 5

# My Role in the Church

Jeff Gordon

God has a specific and significant role for you to play in his work. The truth is you will not be content in your life if you do not line your priorities up with God's priorities. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul writes,

*"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

Let's examine this verse carefully:

### For discussion:

"we are God's workmanship": You are not an accident! You are specifically designed by God. You have unique talents and a unique life experience that makes you BEST suited for certain work that God will present to you.

Do you regularly believe this claim or do you view your role as insignificant? Why?

What talents has God granted you? What talents do your friends see in you?

What in your life experience or training gives you something to share with others?

"created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" God created you for good works and you can do good works!

What good works has God given you to do?

What good works have you walked away from? Why?

Describe someone you know who is committed to serving others through good works and the effect that has on their life.

Describe the connection you see between being generous with our time and energy through Christian service and generosity with our money.

### Prayer Points:

- Thank God for the way he has made you and for the gifts he's provided.
- Ask God to show you how you can use your gifts to the fullest extent.
- Ask God to give you more opportunities to serve this week.
- Pray for the final week of the major donor campaign and for the generosity of all members. Thank God for the many acts of sacrifice and ask him to bless those who gave with a sense of peace and contentment for following him.

## Week 6

# My Role in Funding These Projects

*Jeff Gordon*

This is the last week of this study. If you have not donated yet you will have the opportunity to do so over the next two weeks. Our goal is to have every member of Xenos help fund these projects to endorse this direction for the church. We hope to come together for this righteous cause and by sacrificing together unify the church.

On this last week I ask you to take extra time to pray through the list of requests. Study time is short this week, so take plenty of time to labor in prayer.

Your efforts in study and prayer will bear fruit as we follow God with confidence and hope.

### **For discussion:**

Read Luke 16:9-13

What is the connection between spiritual responsibility and stewardship?

Why does this connection make sense from a biblical perspective?

### **Prayer Points:**

- Pray for several (or all) members of your home church (by name), asking that God will move them toward generosity.
- Ask that God will affirm each person who is generous and provide for them in miraculous ways.
- Ask God to provide examples of heroic givers in your home church.
- Pray for your home church (or study group) meeting during which you will discuss these projects. Ask God to build more unity into your group through this experience.

**For more campaign information including an electronic copy of this study guide and online pledge, visit [www.xenos.org/invest](http://www.xenos.org/invest)**