

Note: By the end of 2003, there were growing concerns in our leadership about sagging evangelism in our adult home churches. As part of a church-wide response to this problem, Xenos adopted the changes outlined below in our approach to adult education.

Changes in Xenos Classes – Spring 2004

This spring, we're introducing a new set of courses and a new approach to class-taking. We're confident this will help advance the work of our home groups.

Need for Change

In the fall of 2003, it became apparent that our old approach to classes had serious flaws. From 1998-2002, growth in class registrations outpaced the growth of Xenos as a whole.

In 2003, the number of people taking classes continued to grow aggressively, but home group growth was flat, and even more concerning, evangelism was waning. Overheated class-taking wasn't translating into increased growth in the church. Something had to change.

Core Values

We scaled back our classes in 2004, and used the downtime to rethink every aspect of our Adult Education program. Our first step was to revisit why we offer classes. We want:

- students to fall in love with God's word.
- students to develop an appetite for reading the Bible and applying it to their lives;
- students to have the tools they need to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ;
- to focus our training on people who are gaining experience in ministry.
- to prepare future leaders for the unique demands of serving in home group leadership.

Proposed Changes

To better achieve these goals, we're replacing part of our Christian Principles curriculum with two preliminary classes offered every quarter:

Introduction to the Bible: A five-week class, open to anyone, designed to give students basic Bible literacy and inspire them to pursue a lifestyle of reading and applying God's word;

Christian Growth: A 10-week class, open to anyone in a home group, focusing on spiritual growth and drawing most of its content from Christian Principles 2. These introductory classes are now prerequisites for three Christian Ministry classes, roughly corresponding to Christian Principles 1, 3 and 4. All five classes are now required for Servant Team membership.

Limited Seats in Christian Ministry

Christian Ministry 1-3 will be more interactive than Christian Principles and will require smaller class sizes.

Therefore, we will allocate seats to groups to allow more students from home groups with need, and less from those with little need.

We used a system like this in the early '80s with very good results. Students who participated in advanced training saw it as a privilege and were highly motivated to do their best.

It also caused home church leaders to periodically think through the growth and progress of each person in their group. They were able to match individuals gaining experience in ministry with the equipping they needed to succeed.

In this new system, home group leaders will work together with their sphere leaders to decide who to invite to take Christian Ministry classes.

On average, adult groups will be allowed to invite two students to take a Christian Ministry each quarter. Some groups may receive as many as five seats, and others, none.

The number of seats in class a group receives will depend on a variety of factors, including: group size, group growth and need to prepare leaders for an upcoming church plant.

The past has taught us that classes aren't always the answer: Some groups will advance not by pursuing additional training, but by challenging members to act on what they already know.

Christian Leadership Series

Once students have completed Introduction to the Bible, Christian Growth, and Christian Ministry 1-3, those who are applying their training may go on to take Christian Leadership, which will be divided into three, 10-week classes:

Looking Ahead

In Ephesians 4:12, the Apostle Paul reminds us to equip the saints "for the work of service." Our hope is that these changes will strike the right balance between knowing the truth and living it out, so we can better advance home group ministry in Xenos!