

Note: The notes below are excerpts from a presentation made in January of 2006 explaining what the future holds for Xenos classes. Like Paul says, “we see in a mirror dimly” – our approach to equipping is evolving, but we feel we’re headed in the right direction!

What Lies Ahead for Equipping at Xenos

Our goal is not to disseminate knowledge. Our goal is to mobilize Christians into ministry by giving them the training they need to build up the body of Christ.

Ministry IS training – that’s how we truly learn – and our equipping program will always be secondary to that process. So we have to find a way to train people while they’re in motion. Our role is similar to that of a water station in a marathon race – we hold out cups of Gatorade to passing runners. We offer refreshment and fuel for people who are running the race.

As Xenos strives to be a movement of self-replicating churches, we need be strategic about our approach to equipping. Where are water stations most needed? What do people need at different stages of the race? How can we offer the right amount of fuel at the right time? What will all this look like in practical terms?

Here’s what we’ve come up with so far...

We want students to fall in love with the word. Our courses should help students to develop an appetite for reading the Bible and applying it to their lives.

We want students to move beyond rote learning and apply biblical principles to real-world situations. To achieve this, we plan to introduce more interaction into our Christian Ministry courses. New case studies in Christian Leadership classes will help students apply key principles to situations they are likely to face as home group leaders. Practical assignments in all of our courses will encourage students to apply what they learn.

We want to balance the need for training with the demands of ministry. This means training must be more accessible – it shouldn’t pull people away from evangelism efforts or from home group ministry. By breaking our classes into smaller modules, offering them at convenient times, and making some of them available on DVD, we can offer training when and where it’s needed.

Xenos has several hubs of ministry in the Columbus area – one in the north east corner of Columbus, another near the OSU campus, a third on the Near East Side, and a fourth on the West Side. Each hub is serving a very diverse group of people – rich and poor, suburban and urban, students and adults. How can we move our training close to these hubs of ministry and adapt to their needs?

Our provision for training must move closer to where the ministry is actually happening. We’ll need a few more water stations.

We hope to establish a new Study Center on the west side and another near the OSU campus. Classes designed to meet the needs of the urban poor are already being offered on the West Side. Down the road we hope to offer classes at other sites as well. We will continue to host an extension site of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School at Xenos. Some of our future leaders will need access to seminary training. Instead of sending them away to school which is expensive disruptive to their ministry, we will bring the seminary to us.

We hope this vision of equipping will facilitate the planting of many churches in Columbus and beyond. Like everything else we do, it's a work in progress and will continue to evolve over time. We invite your input as we continue to look for effective ways to multiply churches and help people run the race!