

The Exodus TEAM

A Biblical Model for Church Growth

Exodus 18:13-26

If the church is ever to accomplish the task of reaching the world for Christ and ministering to the saints, it will require the involvement of the laity. It is beyond reality to have the expectation that the clergy alone can meet the needs of a congregation while at the same time trying to evangelize the community.

The laity are called to ministry in the kingdom of God and the idea of two classes of Christians, clergy and laity, is a church tradition created in the Dark Ages. The laity must share in the ministry if the church is to be effective. The laity must also share in evangelistic outreach if they are going to be obedient to the call of God in their lives.

The problem is not always that the laity are unwilling to share in the ministry; sometimes the people have the desire to work, but do not always feel equipped to work. Without a clear understanding of the role of the laity combined with a program which provides training and requires the involvement of the laity, church members will drift into inactivity and ineffectiveness. Involvement of the laity in ministry is an indispensable ingredient in church growth.

Building on the advice Jethro gave to Moses in Exodus 18:13-25, this model for ministry builds on some proven principles. If Moses was able to meet the needs of over a million people (Numbers 1:19-45) by having groups of ten people, this model should work for a church of any size. Exodus 18:13-26 provides a model for effective ministry to the congregation and the organizational structure to meet the needs of the people:

Exodus 18:13-26

13 And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. 14 So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" 15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws." 17 So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. 18 "Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you, you are not able to perform it yourself. 19 "Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. 20 And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. 21 "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 22 "And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. 23 "If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace. 24 So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26 So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves." NKJV

While leading the children of Israel to the promised land, Moses was called on to settle disputes, hear complaints and give counsel. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, observed that Moses sat "from morning to evening to judge the people" (Exodus 18:14) and settle disputes and difficulties. Jethro said, "This is not good, you and these people will surely wear yourselves out" (Exodus 18:18).

Jethro's perspective from the outside allowed him to see that the needs of the people were not being met. Moses did not have enough hours in the day to meet all the needs. People came "to inquire of God" (Exodus 18:15), to get help with difficult situations and "to settle disputes" (Exodus 18:16).

People today need someone to pray with them as they seek God's will for their life, when there is illness, and when there is conflict and difficulty. People need to know someone cares enough to listen. People need to know that God has a plan for their life. As people struggle with life experiences, biblical guidance and spiritual growth need nurturing. Leaders need to intercede before God on behalf of the people.

Building on Jethro's advice to Moses, the Exodus TEAM is organized to facilitate evangelism and ministry through groups of ten people. Again, if Moses was able to meet the needs of over a million people (Numbers 1:19-45) in this manner, it should follow that a church of any size should be able to apply the principle. There will be leaders of tens, leaders of fifties and leaders of hundreds.

There are five basic qualifications given for group leaders. Three are found in verse 21, and two are found in verse 22.

The first qualification is a TEAM leader must have a reverence for God and a respect for His Word (Exodus 18:20). The ways of God, the will of God and the Word of God will truly make a difference in the lives of Christians and lost people. Friendship is nice, fellowship is good, but if people are not ultimately pointed to God and if His Word is not applied to life situations, nothing else will really matter.

The second qualification of TEAM leaders is that they must be persons of integrity and honesty (Exodus 20:21). They must have genuine compassion and honest concern for the people. People must know that they really care and are not ministering out of obligation. Confidentiality is a high priority in many situations. They will be called on to listen without repeating what they hear. A sincere motivation to minister must prevail and this is not a ministry for those who

like to tell all they know about people. It is dishonest to violate a confidence. The application of biblical truth should be the goal.

The third qualification for a TEAM leader is unselfishness (Exodus 20:21). That qualification means going beyond one's own comfort zone for the benefit of others. It will mean visiting people one does not know and being involved in sacrificial ministry. This is not a ministry for those who seek recognition and reward, but for those who are assured that God is aware of any sacrifice. The only reward leaders may receive may be when they get to heaven.

Verse 22 implies being available "at all times." The Exodus TEAM is not a ministry of convenience. It will take time. People need to know there is someone to turn to whenever a problem arises. This ministry requires availability and a commitment of time and energy. It is not for the selfish.

The final qualification for TEAM leaders is a willingness to take care of small details (Exodus 20:22). The minor things can be taken care of by the TEAM leaders, and the critical and serious situations can be referred to the pastor. Many times, the pastor is overwhelmed with so many little things that critical needs are sometimes left unmet. There are times when the pastor is not in contact with all the people enough to know when serious problems arise.

A strict interpretation and application of the Exodus model would require that only men serve as group leaders. Liberty is taken in the inclusion of women as group leaders. One consideration for developing the Exodus TEAM is to provide a ministry model which will allow women and divorced men to be involved in ministry. In many churches today, deacon ministry has been abandoned due to the lack of men qualified to serve as deacons. Women and divorced men meeting the above qualifications would be able to serve as group leaders without being ordained, and yet will be able to have a place of ministry. Also, without being in conflict with deacon qualifications, women would be able to be a group leader for single women or widows.

The ultimate goal of this ministry is found in verse 26. It is so all the people may “go to their place in peace.” The purpose and goal of this ministry is that everyone may live in peace with God, in peace with others and in peace with themselves. “All the people” include both church members and those in the community who are pre-Christian. As each group grows and divides, the church will grow proportionately.

For simplicity, the acrostic T.E.A.M. is used to aid in training group leaders. “T” is for training a new group leader. “E” is for evangelism of any unsaved group members who are brought into the group. “A” is for assimilation of group members into the congregation. “M” is for ministry to group members.

Training Through The Exodus TEAM

Each TEAM leader is to train a TEAM leader from within his/her group who will then, when the group reaches ten – twelve people, take five or six of the people and start a new group. When the new group reaches ten people, it will have a new leader trained and the group will be divided again, and so on. The understudy of the group leader is an apprentice with the role of recruiting and motivating others toward the birthing of a new group. When the group gets larger than eight, someone starts being neglected. The group should divide by the time it reaches ten to reduce the possibility of people being neglected. One of the responsibilities of TEAM leaders will be to identify a person who will be the next TEAM leader.

Based on a conservative projection that each of the ten TEAM leaders will produce a new group of ten people each year, there should be two hundred people assimilated into the congregation within two years. Within five years, each initial TEAM leader should have five new group leaders and would therefore become a leader of fifty people in a congregation of 500.

Evangelism through the Exodus TEAM

It must first be said that although a primary responsibility of the TEAM leader is the evangelism of group members, this will not be the only evangelism going on in the congregation. This program is only one part of the evangelism ministry of the congregation. Ralph Elliott shares a reminder that “the church must discover again that the ministry to the outside is primarily a lay ministry. Clergy can aid in cultivation of the harvest, but it is the lay witness that will win the world to Christ and the church.” All the laity are called to be evangelistic in the community. Personal evangelism is not a spiritual gift for a few people; it is a mandate from God and every Christian has a God-given obligation to make known the gospel of Christ. The people of God must understand that lost people matter to God and therefore ought to matter to the church.

If 85 percent of churches are either plateaued or in decline, it seems evident that little effective evangelism is taking place. One of the indispensable conditions for a growing church is that it wants to grow. In some churches, evangelism is hindered because some church members act like the Pharisees who only wanted to receive sinners when they began acting like saints (Mark 2:16, Luke 7:39). There are churches today which do not seem to understand that lost people will act like lost people and sinners will act like sinners. Many youth and adults today are unchurched and simply do not know how to act in church. I recall hearing a young person refer to someone sitting on the front pew as “sitting on the front bleachers.” In the minds of church members, they were sitting in the sacred sanctuary. In the mind of the unchurched youth, he was in a meeting place which resembled a gym or football stadium. Unchurched people must be welcome in our worship centers and some allowances made for what would otherwise be considered unacceptable behavior.

Many church members are unwilling to accept sinners as they are. There are churches today which have adopted a dress code and people are not allowed to worship if they are not dressed according to the strict standard. Acts chapter 22 records that the Jews were so anti-gentile they wanted to kill Paul for

preaching to the gentiles. Pastors at times encounter a hostile spirit from church members when effective evangelism begins to bring in a “different kind of people” than the congregation.

Before any program of evangelism begins, it must be determined if the church is willing to accept unchurched people. Otherwise, growth will lead to conflict and possible division. It is not unusual to hear of churches which experience a sudden surge of growth and then a short time later experience conflict which ultimately leads to a separation of the congregation.

Lost people are out in the world and need to be brought into the family of God with patience, understanding and a certain amount of tolerance. New birth brings new life, but growth takes some time. A church should use discernment and grace during the time between when an ungodly person starts attending worship, and when they get saved, and then start moving toward spiritual maturity.

The responsibility of the TEAM leader is to share Jesus with any unsaved member of his group. It is Jesus alone, not an institutional church organization, who is worthy of total commitment. Unnecessary hindrances to evangelism and issues which distract lost people should be minimized. There are at least two obstacles in the way of successful evangelism: the first, man’s natural and irresistible impulse to oppose God, and the second, Satan’s persistent effort in shepherding man in ways of unbelief and disobedience.

While we must always remember that it is our responsibility to proclaim salvation, we must never forget that it is God who saves. TEAM leaders also need to understand that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict of sin. It is the work of the Christian to share the love of God and the message of salvation.

Many people today experience frustration and a sense of hopelessness. Christians have an opportunity to share Christ with people who are struggling with the burdens and pressures of work, family, and society. Many people are

aware of their separation from God and many people simply have no answer for the emptiness in their lives.

Many lost people are more willing to talk about spiritual things than are many Christians. They have been abandoned by the church and feel abandoned by God. Some lost people believe that because they have turned their back on God, God has turned His back on them. Many of these people will never attend church unless someone they know cares enough about them to share the love of God with them and bring them to God.

Relationship evangelism is the most effective form of personal evangelism. TEAM leaders will grow their group by getting those in their group to establish new relationships or simply evangelize those whom they already know. It is not always necessary to go out and find strangers to evangelize. Leaders should add friends of group members to their group. One pastor stated that “90 percent of his church’s baptisms were adults and youth who had developed significant relationships with Christians.”

For those who are praying for the salvation of family members and close friends, it is a very real burden to consider the reality of their eternity in hell. When we evangelize, our trust must be in the God who raises the dead. Knowing that it is God’s desire that all be saved, those who have a burden for lost people should be encouraged and continue in prayer and faith. Living a truly Christian lifestyle among unbelievers can be evangelistic and is one way to show the reality of God and the “peace that passes all understanding.”(Philippians 4:7).

As new people are assigned to a TEAM leader, every effort should be made to identify friends and acquaintances. Almost three-fourths of church members began attending at the invitation of a member or friend. According to various surveys “79 percent to 86 percent of the people who join a local church do so because of the invitation of a friend or family member.” With such a significant role to be accomplished by the members, it is important that they be equipped and encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities.

It should be mentioned, this program will not be the only evangelistic activity going on in the congregation, but it will have a major evangelistic priority. The Exodus TEAM will have a very focused, intense evangelistic ministry and will be trained in relationship evangelism and sharing the gospel.

Assimilation through the Exodus TEAM

A major problem all churches experience is losing members out the back door as quickly as they get them in the front door. Getting people to attend worship is important, but keeping them is the goal.

The incorporation of new members into the church fellowship does not happen automatically. If there is not a system or structure in place to assimilate and keep the people who are reached, they will not stay. A survey asked 400 church dropouts why they left their churches. Over 75 percent of the respondents said, "I didn't feel anyone cared whether I was there or not." While churches may not intentionally communicate a message of rejection, a congregation must be intentional in communicating a message of acceptance and openness.

The TEAM leaders have the responsibility of making newcomers feel welcome. Friendships are a key to retaining members. People need more than a handshake or a hug at the end of a worship service to feel like they really belong. People are "not looking for a friendly church as much as they are looking for friends."

Relationship building is a critical factor. People want to know that they belong. Relationships are best developed when relaxed and unpretentious, like eating meals or doing things together. In the process they will observe the values and disciplines that mold our lives. When a new person comes into the congregation, and when a person becomes a Christian, there should be Christian

friends around to constantly encourage spiritual growth. Healthy churches are committed to building kingdom community relationships.

When people do not attend worship services, it is not necessary that everyone notice they are absent, but it is important that someone knows if they are absent. It is the responsibility of the TEAM leader to know if someone in his/her group is absent and why. TEAM members should be spoken to at every meeting. The Weekly Report serves as a reminder to the TEAM leader to pay attention to absences and to also find out if there are prayer requests or ministry needs. The pastor should be notified of special needs or crisis situations.

Lyle Schaller provides a shocking glimpse of reality by stating: "There is considerable evidence which suggests that at least one-third, and perhaps as many as one-half of all protestant church members do not feel a sense of belonging to the congregation of which they are members." TEAM leaders are responsible for providing fellowship opportunities among the group. Many people today are burdened with loneliness and isolation. While watching television, sixty million people may watch the same images, but each does so individually, not in communion with others.

The TEAM leader should fellowship with the group or one family at a time as often as possible. A telephone call should be made at least once every two weeks, more if necessary. Opportunities should be created to build friendships among group members. As hobbies and special interests are discovered among the group, there should be an effort to bring them into contact with others who have similar interests. New members must establish two to seven meaningful relationships if they are to stay in the congregation and go on to be active ministers in the kingdom of God.

The TEAM leader is responsible for making sure each member finds his/her place in the congregation. When a new person is assigned to a group, the leader should visit him/her within two weeks. The ministry of assimilation is a vital, but sometimes the most neglected, component of church growth.

Ministry through the Exodus TEAM

The Exodus TEAM ministry has a narrow focus and is not intended to provide the depth of seminary training in all areas of ministry. Because of the narrow focus and limited expectations, ministry will be accomplished in a manageable format and will allow TEAM leaders the opportunity to avoid being overwhelmed with a multitude of expectations. The primary emphasis will include the ministry of encouragement, prayer, hospital visitation and basic counseling.

TEAM leaders should contact their group members at least once every two weeks, even if they are active members, for the purpose of encouragement. Look for reasons to celebrate. Give attention to the positive and do not forget birthdays and special occasions.

When a person's unique talent is discovered, when new prospects are discovered, and when illness, crisis or conflict situations arise, the pastor should be informed. The TEAM leader should still take care of the small details while informing the pastor as a matter of information.

Christians need to be encouraged as they go through the growth process. Change can be difficult, especially as Christians leave behind an old life and old relationships. TEAM leaders need to be there to cheer them on. Before God rebuilds and starts shaping a new life, He often pulls down and plucks up. When things begin to go wrong for a new Christian, a good TEAM leader will be able to guide them through the process of transformation into a maturing Christian. When new Christians have challenging times, there is a temptation to return to the old friends and the old places. The ministry of encouragement is significant in assimilation and retaining new members.

The ministry of prayer is especially critical in the life of a new Christian and continues to be important throughout the Christian life. Prayer requests should be shared among the group. The TEAM leader should make it a priority to pray

for the group members on a regular basis and encourage the group to pray for one another.

Hospital visitation is a responsibility of TEAM leaders. Much damage and sometimes an extended stay in the hospital can result in well-meaning but untrained visitors to a hospital. TEAM leaders will receive instruction on the do's and don't's of hospital visitation.

Training in basic counseling skills is provided. It is interesting that "90 percent of the real help people receive comes from their friends and not through highly trained and paid professionals." TEAM leaders will have opportunities to have a significant ministry and be able to provide much-needed help. A peer counselor who has "just one client can really concentrate on and pray for that situation."

Conflict resolution is needed and should be expected anytime there are people who routinely gather for any length of time. Were it not for trouble in the churches that Peter and Paul founded, we would have a very small New Testament, if we had any at all.

Churches are not immune to conflict. Those who have been in churches any length of time are not surprised that conflict thrives where there is misunderstanding, anger, criticism, pride, disagreement, stubbornness, personal attacks, or intimidation. Unfortunately, this can be true of Christian organizations as well as those that are non-Christian. When people do not understand what is going on or if they begin to feel left out and neglected, there is a tendency to murmur and complain.

The Exodus TEAM is the front-line defense against bickering. TEAM leaders should constantly hold forth the vision of the congregation and maintain a positive influence in the fellowship. Conflict is inevitable and the average pastor usually spends 20 percent of their time managing conflict. Conflict which remains unresolved ultimately affects the entire congregation and usually results in a large number of the members becoming distracted from the mission of the

church. Grumbling should be discouraged, but relevant concerns should be addressed.

TEAM leaders are not expected to have all the answers. They are to help find the answers and refer when necessary. New Christians always have questions about the Bible. Some questions can be answered by the TEAM leader; other questions may need to be directed to the pastor or can be answered through the personal study of the TEAM leader.

TEAM leaders have a tremendous responsibility along with exciting opportunities. The care and nurture of new Christians will reap many rewards.

The Role of the Pastor

The role of the pastor as found in Ephesians 4:12 is to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.” The pastor must be willing to share the ministry if there is to be effective ministry of the laity. It is rare to find a pastor leading a healthy, growing church who is not committed to moving the spotlight off himself and onto the people who must do the brunt of the ministry: the laity.

Many pastors resist the idea of entrusting ministry into the hands of the laity. It is not an option; it is God’s plan. Many of the laity resist the idea of assuming responsibility for ministry. It is not an option; it is God’s plan. The church is not an arena where a professional minister is cheered on by lay people who are nothing more than spectators. The pattern of Scripture is clear: pastor-teachers are to train lay men and women to minister to the world.

The ministry of the laity does not mean that the pastor is free from responsibility. The pastor bears the responsibility of leadership and training, and pastors must lead if churches are to grow. As the laity adjust to the biblical role of the laos (the people of God), the laity in many churches must also begin to see the pastor in a role other than a “hired servant.”

Any congregation that wants to follow God's plan and begin to see growth must come to understand that one of the ten non-negotiable principles of church growth is the laity must do the ministry. This principle has largely been ignored by many church members. But it must be remembered that those who would be the people of God must be involved in the work of God.

Pastors also need to make some adjustments in their ministry. As a pastor moves toward this new paradigm for ministry, it must also be remembered that the people must give up control of the leadership, and the pastor must give up control of the ministry. The burden of doing the work which God has delegated to someone else will eventually be a burden too great to bear. In a recent survey, pastors were asked to list their greatest mistakes in ministry. On top of the list of mistakes is "I tried to do too much alone."

A large percent of churches do the same basic things every Sunday. One possible reason for this boring routine is the pastor does not have enough time for the things he should be doing. When pastors become overwhelmed doing things someone else should be doing, much of what he ought to be doing goes undone.

If the pulpit ministry is neglected there will be a negative impact on the growth of the church. Preaching is important to church growth because people, especially unchurched lost people, gauge the effectiveness of a church on the pastor's abilities in the pulpit. When any congregation has the expectation that the pastor is to do all the work which God intended the laity to do, disappointment and frustration are the results. Dissatisfaction will emerge on the part of both the congregation and the pastor. When the church places unrealistic demands on a pastor, it is only a matter of time before either the pastor voluntarily leaves for another place of ministry or the leadership of the congregation decide it is time for him to go.

The results can be devastating. Statistics are showing that hundreds of pastors are leaving the ministry each year, and, an estimated 125 are fired each month.

Jethro told Moses, “The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.” (Exodus 18:17-18). The Exodus TEAM is a biblical model for ministry to be done through those who would be called the people of God. By following God’s plan for evangelism and ministry, Christians will fulfill their calling as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Peter 2:9), and all these people will “go to their place in peace.” (Exodus 18:23) KJV, NKJV, ASV, RSV

Implementing the Exodus Team

The initial Exodus TEAM is organized by recruiting and then training group leaders to fulfil their responsibilities. The initial number of groups would be determined by the size of the congregation. Ten would be a good number, but three or four may be a good number in some congregations. A six-week training program launching the ministry should be followed by monthly training sessions.

The list of prospective TEAM leaders is compiled after prayerful consideration of the task to be accomplished and the criteria established in Exodus 18. There is probably a combination of people who are not currently involved in a ministry position and those who are already serving in other areas of responsibility. For some TEAM leaders, this may be the first position of responsibility in the congregation.

Having compiled a list of prospective leaders, recruiting is accomplished by giving a brief explanation of the Exodus TEAM to each person and inviting them to an orientation meeting. The orientation meeting should include an overview of the Exodus TEAM concept and the qualifications for the leaders. The requirements of time and commitment should be presented and each prospective leader is given the opportunity to decline to serve.

The first training session can be scheduled for the following week. Each potential leader should be asked to make a decision about serving before the following week. Don't be surprised if people will decline to serve following a period of personal evaluation.

Session One is an in-depth study of the qualifications of TEAM leaders and the significance of each of the criteria. Issues of personal integrity, confidentiality and sacrificial service are discussed. TEAM leaders are told to become peacemakers and encouragers. A brief overview of the following sessions is presented.

Session Two deals with the organizational structure of the Exodus TEAM and the process by which the groups would be expanded. Leaders are each assigned five or six people to begin their initial groups. Assignments are made according to age grouping, personal interests, and compatibility. It is helpful to recruit members based on personalities and affinity groups. Each TEAM leader is given the responsibility to identify and begin training a new leader from within the group.

Session Three is a review of personal evangelism models and instruction on how to present the gospel. By presenting the Gospel using various models, leaders will be able to choose which outline meets their comfort level. Available outlines include the model presentation from Evangelism Explosion, the presentation from Continuing Witness Training, the Roman Road plan of salvation, and a guideline for using a personal testimony in personal evangelism.

Session Four is a discussion on the importance of assimilation. Ideas for fellowship opportunities are discussed. Leaders also have the responsibility of speaking to each person in their group at each gathering of the congregation. Newcomers to the congregation are immediately welcomed into the fellowship and receive attention at every worship service.

Sessions Five and Six are dedicated to an overview of the ministry of counseling and problem-solving skills. Attached is an outline of the three stages

of problem solving and provides a model for helping people find answers to their problems.

During each monthly training session there is a time for sharing progress reports. TEAM leaders are encouraged and ideas for fellowship opportunities are shared. Leaders are assigned new prospects as they become available. The monthly sessions which follow include more discussion and training in the areas of ministry responsibility. The pastor should provide additional training and notes from the hospital visitation session, counseling, and other areas of ministry. The sharing and reporting time is valuable, educational and encouraging.

TEAM leaders are required to submit a weekly report of activities planned and new members added to their group. The Weekly Report requirement to list each member who is absent from worship provides a reminder to seek out each member of the group at each worship service. The Weekly Report is also a reminder to check on needs, prayer requests, and celebrations among the group.

Each TEAM leader starts with responsibility for a group of five or six people and the growth of the group comes from the addition of newcomers to the congregation and prospect discovery from within the group. One member of each group is identified and recruited by the leader to begin being trained to become a TEAM leader.

During the early stages of this ministry, one may prefer that church members who are already part of the active core group not be assigned to a group. This omission of a large part of the congregation should not be viewed as neglecting those who already active members, but rather as an attempt to grow the church. Those omitted from an initial group are viewed as having already been evangelized and assimilated into the congregation. The goal is to eventually have all members of the congregation in a group under the watchcare of a TEAM leader.

One of the benefits of the Exodus TEAM is that it provides simple, clearly defined responsibilities. The task is not overwhelming and results are visible

almost immediately in some instances. TEAM leaders have the joy of participating in significant, tangible ministry.

The Exodus TEAM is designed to give structure to evangelism, assimilation and ministry in the congregation. The structure does not have to be a separate organization. The same principles can be implemented through the Sunday school or any other organization of small groups.

One major insight comes to the forefront. It takes work. This is a program which requires effort. It requires work in overseeing the team and making assignments and keeping up with the reports. As more people are ministered to by the TEAM leaders, more needs are discovered which require the attention of the pastor. Many critical needs are discovered which would possibly go unnoticed.

It requires work on the part of TEAM leaders. Weekly reports are an effort. Some TEAM leaders will discover the difficulty of keeping up with fewer than ten people. Some will realize the importance of follow-up. If someone is not assigned to take responsibility for people, people will drift away from church and their absence is seldom noticed.

During evaluation meetings with the Exodus TEAM, a number of insights will be revealed. The amount of time required to keep in contact with group members often gives way to busy schedules. The amount of time required may be an indicator of how easy it is for many churches to simply drift along with very little tangible ministry. There is an increased awareness of the new people attending worship services. This acknowledgment leads TEAM leaders to be more inclined to speak to newcomers and be friendly to strangers.

The TEAM leaders will probably be unanimous in affirming that the responsibilities of group leaders is a work which must be done. There will be very few of the TEAM leaders who fail to see the significance of the Exodus TEAM. The plan is that the Exodus TEAM is an anonymous group with very little public recognition. Meetings are not announced publicly and very few people

needs to know the Exodus TEAM exists. Every glance at the T.E.A.M. acrostic and every reference to the Exodus TEAM should be a critical reminder of the eternal significance of Training, Evangelism, Assimilation and Ministry.

The significant bottom line is that ministry requires work. While this statement may not be new, it may provide insight into why many church programs fail. Very few people today have leisure time and are not pressured by a hectic schedule. Unless a significant commitment is made to ministry, there will be no time for kingdom ministry, and ultimately, there will be no kingdom growth.