**E-Teams at Kirkland**

**By Brent Hunter, Evangelist Kirkland church of Christ**

[**Cbhunter53@gmail.com**](mailto:Cbhunter53@gmail.com)

**Feb 9, 2014**

The **“E”** in E-teams stands for **evangelism**, **encouragement**, and **e-mail**. Those who are members of the “Peter, Paul, and Priscilla” group --those who have learned ***The Big Picture of the Bible***, and our “Andrews” -- those who are committed to using the Big Picture business cards to set up Big Picture presentations, will need these three on-going elements to be successful! Remember, we are focusing on changing the *culture, who we are,* not just beginning a new evangelistic “program,” that is likely to diminish over time and eventually fail.

Soul winners need to maintain their focus and “keep their radar up” as we live our lives in the world. That way we do not overlook people who may be looking and needing the gospel message. To continue to stay involved and not be discouraged, big doses of **motivation** and **encouragement** will be needed. In today’s world, an ideal way to stay in touch with each other and provide regular communication and feedback is with an opt-in **e-mail** distribution list! Thus the three fold meaning of the “**e**” in e-teams -- **E**vangelism, **E**ncouragement, and **E**-mail.

Let’s begin by looking at the Bible basis for smaller groups working together evangelistically to do the Lord’s work. Paul did not travel alone in his work. In fact, he would have as many as seven others accompany him as a part of his evangelistic efforts. Barnabus, Silas, Titus, Demas, Crescens, Timothy, Luke, John Mark, Sosthenes, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, Trophimus are all named as companions of Paul. The encouragement of working with others is clear in such passages as Acts 18:4-5 where the arrival of Silas and Timothy greatly encouraged Paul to speak boldly. There is a lot to be said for building groups of people who work together to encourage others to not give up and to keep the faith as one spreads their faith. Knowing that others are praying for you and counting on you, helps you to shine your light when it is needed, instead of given in to the temptation to turn on the dimmer switch! The boldness we gain, I am convinced, is not just doubled, but enhanced to a factor of three or four times.

**GOALS OF THE E-TEAMS:**

Each e-team will have 5 goals to accomplish. They are:

1. **Share news** – The challenge with visitors is that only one or two may know their story or different ones know different parts. A group meeting to discuss visitors and prospects can tell of good things happening and update others on what they know about prospects and visitors to services.
2. **Shoulder Yokes** – Connecting with visitors and contacts is easier when you are collaborating with others as a team. They collaborate on knowledge about prospects and how to work with these prospects and share responsibilities in leading them to the Lord. Ideally, we are able to immerse the contact in a culture of caring people who are kind and interested in them.
3. **Sharpen Skills** – By meeting and discussing prospects and experiences with them we learn from each other what works and what doesn’t. We also share our work with a contact. More experienced team members can teach and share skills in evangelism.
4. **Showing Fruits** – *Accountability*. Being a part of a team helps each show they are working and doing things. It also pushes folks to get out of the barn and into the field! I know I must do my part to support the team effort! Together the team learns that we are involved in life and death efforts for the eternal destiny of souls.
5. **Shaping Culture** – The team becomes a leavening agent in the congregation. They are not trying to be an elite group but actually work to involve other members in their work. In this way they change the whole culture of the congregation. Both efforts and results from the team inspire the congregation to get more involved. New members are told about this special effort at Kirkland and encouraged to be a part of this effort if they are so inclined.

**Evangelistic Method**

One of the keys is involvement in the lives of others. Those who are ready to share the Big Picture and or ask people around them if they would like to hear a Big Picture presentation will need to be encouraged and motivated to do so. Touching bases regularly with others who share a similar interest and love for souls can be a great help. It helps to serve as a motivator for them to step out and make the “ask” even when it would be easier and more “comfortable” to let those opportunities pass. Knowing the brethren are praying for them and counting on them to faithfully “sow the seed” will be a great positive encouragement for them to do so! To me, this is a practical application of *“provoking one another to love and to good works”* (Heb 10:24).

Further, we recognize that everyone is not as capable as others in setting up and making Big Picture presentations, but they can influence and prepare hearts by being a friendto those who show interest in the gospel. Hospitality is an important part of a growing and loving congregation and it is essential to attracting and assimilating new members. Members are encouraged to get to know visitors and contacts and become involved in their lives in a positive way. They share these names with others in the group and they work together to encourage and help these people when the opportunity arises. Much of this can be done through regular updates through email.

Ideally, as the group shares news about such opportunities, more people get involved and realize they can play a role bringing people to the Lord also.

**Communication**

This is a key to the success of the work. There are two ways we want the group to communicate and encourage one another.

1. Each group meets regularly for no more than 10-15 minutes after services on Sunday nights in the preacher’s office (church library if we need the room) to discuss contacts, results, opportunities, etc., with potential prospects, visitors and new converts. Every one of these short e-team meetings ends with a prayer asking God for guidance and blessing upon our efforts. We pray constantly that the Lord will put “truth seekers” in our path so that we can teach them, similar to what happened with the Ethiopian treasurer and Phillip the evangelist in Acts 8.
2. Each e-team member is also on an email distribution list with other members. Members of the group communicate regarding contacts, sharing info and updates, asking for prayers, etc. We may consider using group texting (group g-mail) for immediate prayer requests or needs if e-team members are interested.

This kind of ongoing communication accomplishes one of the keys to successful evangelism – it keeps everyone in the group thinking and praying about evangelism daily. They are always “in the moment” and that makes a tremendous difference in results.

**Group Size**

Group size is ideally about 12-15 people. This size encourages some discussion and participation. We may need to have two e-teams meeting in different rooms if needed, or perhaps meet every other week with the two teams alternating. My plan is to meet every week for the first month in order to get the hang of it, and then switch to every other week. In this way it is more likely to be sustainable long term. Further, I would suggest that once a quarter we have a social get together at a group member’s home to help aid closeness and provide a forum for better communication than we have time to do at the building.

**Commitment**

We are asking for a serious commitment to be faithful to attend the regular e-team meetings and to regularly pray and consult the emails sent out to the list. It will also involve a willingness to contact and if possible, associate with prospects and visitors. It will require members to be open to learning new skills and stepping out to do new things in reaching the lost! The ultimate goal is to *make evangelism a natural part of your everyday life, not a program done for a couple of hours a week*. When it becomes a part of your life, then you are always in the evangelistic moment, without special time set aside to evangelize. This is what the New Testament church did and they changed the world.

All members who signed up to be in the “Peter, Paul, and Priscilla” Big Picture mentoring group are automatically a part of an “e-team” unless they decide to opt out, which anyone may do at any time. Anyone else who wishes to participate and be a part of this sharing and prayer time is welcome. Just let me know and I will add you to the opt-in email distribution list referenced earlier. I will be providing e-team members with regular evangelistic tips and helpful answers to questions and materials that will help members in their life time journey of letting their light shine and effectively winning souls.

**Epilogue**: Solomon said: “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that wins souls is wise” (Prov 11:30). I look forward to working with as many as our interested in this wise and noble task! Jesus reminded us***: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest*** (Lk 10: 2-3)! Beloved, time is getting away from us. Let us all have a sense of urgency as we look to the future! Remember: ***We have all of eternity to celebrate the victories in Christ, but only until the sunset to win them!***