

THE EXODUS

EXT. DAY

FADE IN from white on a close up of a sun-beaten cross. As the camera pulls back, we see the cross is actually the top of a church steeple. Offering a God's eye perspective, an aerial camera pans down to reveal an old fashioned wooden building. Energetic worship hymns and "hallelujahs" are spilling out from inside the church. White painted boards are cracking from the blistering southern sun, but they manage to encase beautiful stained glass windows. It's Sunday morning and the congregation of country folk and small town families make their way through wide open double doors into the sanctuary.

In the distance, a junker car lumbers down a dirt road leading to the church. A choking plume of Alabama dust boils and swirls behind it. A family of five is packed into the small jalopy. The three children, who range in age from 3 to 13, are sticky-stained and looking weary. By most standards they are certainly not dressed for church.

Running late, the jalopy whips into the parking lot and the family pours out of the car, rushing to the double doors.

CUT TO:

INT. DAY CHURCH SANCTUARY

A middle aged man sits solemnly in the back pew. A splash of light from the stained glass windows washes over him in a glorious rainbow. He is sitting on the aisle with his beautiful wife and two children. They are the perfect married couple in their Sunday best with Bibles in lap and an obedient child on each side of them.

A teenage girl in shorts and flip flops waddles down the aisle. She gently rubs her big pregnant belly with her left hand. There is no wedding band on it -- much to the chagrin of two older women who glare at her as she takes her seat.

MAN'S VOICE OVER
I hate this. You can't tell by
looking.

MAN'S VOICE OVER

I smile and shake hands. 'Welcome brother, happy to see you. God bless you.'

I even put a check in the silver plate when it passes by. But I hate this.

And I don't understand, why do they love it so much? Do they? This elated feeling they seem to exhibit. I mean is that even real?

That's the kind of thing I think of...every Sunday when I find myself on this hand-carved, wooden pew in the back of the church listening to some fat neck, gobble-headed turkey of a preacher telling me what I gotta do. What I gotta do? I didn't even ask to be born. What do you mean - what I gotta do?

And I watch them and I just don't get it. But I've been doing it my whole life. My whole life.

Even as a kid, they'd bribe me with gum to keep me seated. And I'd lick the candy aluminum foil paper and make little airplanes out of it. All the while, my mind driveling, just going somewhere else. To pure drivel -- to somewhere other than right here.

Ohh, an idle mind is the devil's workshop; I've heard it. But I wanted to be anywhere - anywhere but there.

But now...as an adult, I find myself here every Sunday - every Sunday - - lip-syncing the words to these hymns that I don't know anything about.

I do what my Daddy did... I do exactly what my Daddy did and threaten my children with mild violence if they don't 'stop, be quiet. Pinch 'em on the leg. Listen to the preacher. *Hush* now!'

The whole time I'm here, I'm thinking about where I'm gonna have lunch... ohhh. Football. Football comes on at one. My mind is anywhere but here.

And when it is here...the only thing I can think of is...why?

NOTES AND RESEARCH:

150,000 walk away from church every week. Why?