



WHAT IS THE VINEYARD?

OUR HISTORY, VALUES, AND DISTINCTIVES

———— **KINGDOM OF GOD RESOURCES™** ————
EMBRACE THE KINGDOM. ENGAGE THE WORLD.

“THE MISSION OF
THE VINEYARD IS TO JOIN
GOD’S MISSION IN THE
WORLD BY BUILDING A
COMMUNITY OF CHURCHES
THAT ARE PROCLAIMING
AND PRACTICING THE
FULL MESSAGE AND REALITY
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

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HE SAID TO THEM,
“GO INTO ALL THE WORLD
AND PREACH THE GOSPEL
TO ALL CREATION...THESE
SIGNS WILL ACCOMPANY
THOSE WHO BELIEVE: IN
MY NAME THEY WILL DRIVE
OUT DEMONS; THEY WILL
SPEAK IN NEW TONGUES;
...THEY WILL PLACE THEIR
HANDS ON SICK PEOPLE,
AND THEY WILL GET WELL.”

MARK 6:15,17;18B

INTRODUCTION: THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT

If you're reading this, it's likely that you are somehow involved in a local Vineyard congregation. You may be a pastor or leader in that church, or maybe you're an occasional attender or first-time guest. What you may not know is that this Vineyard church is part of a larger family of churches known as the Vineyard movement.

Vineyard USA is a community of churches with a common heritage and set of values. We are organized in a fairly simple structure, but we are mainly held together by relationships. Most Vineyard churches were planted from other Vineyard churches, and meetings between pastors and leaders often have the feel of a family reunion.

Vineyard churches have a refreshing blend of unity and diversity. There are some qualities you will find at almost any Vineyard church: intimate worship, openness to the Holy Spirit, a high value placed on relationship and community. At the same time, because we value the autonomy of the local church, there will be wide variations of church size, buildings, music styles, preaching styles, and any number of other things. We believe this diversity is a strength, as it enables us to reach the many regions and people groups of the United States with various forms and expressions of congregating.

The Vineyard has some national structures that help hold the movement

together. A national director and executive board provide leadership. Regular meetings at both local and national levels provide a place for community and care as well as broad vision-casting for all the different pastors and leaders in our movement.

Launching new initiatives has always been part of the Vineyard's DNA, so two important national ministries are organized around launching new domestic and international congregations. We work together to identify places where God might be calling us, pinpoint leaders, and develop strategies to see new churches come into being.

Worship music has always been a central part of Vineyard churches, so perhaps over the years the most well-known arm of the Vineyard has been the Vineyard Worship branch of Vineyard USA. Its leaders strive to find the best songs and approaches to leading congregations into heartfelt worship singing. Then, through albums, conferences, and trainings, Vineyard Worship distributes these to the rest of the Vineyard and beyond. Vineyard Worship historically has been one of the most impacting branches inside and outside our movement.

The Vineyard is committed to being a community of churches that live out the words and works of Jesus. But how did we get started, and who are we now?



OUR HISTORY

A Brief Snapshot

The first Vineyards were planted in 1975. By 1982, there were at least seven “Vineyards” in a loose-knit fellowship of churches. Kenn Gulliksen, a soft-spoken, unassuming leader with a passion to know and walk with God, started a church in Hollywood in 1974. In 1975, believing that God had instructed him to do so, he officially gave the name “Vineyard” to this association of churches and led them for about five years.

In the early 1980s, Kenn felt led to ask John Wimber to assume leadership for the growing movement. The official recognition of this transition took place in 1982: the emergence of what was to be called the “Association of Vineyard Churches.”

John Wimber

John Wimber’s influence profoundly shaped the theology and practice of Vineyard churches, from their earliest days until his death in November 1997. When John was conscripted by God, he was, in the words of *Christianity Today*, a “beer-guzzling, drug-abusing pop musician, who was converted at the age of 29 while chain-smoking his way through a Quaker-led Bible study.”

In John’s first decade as a Christian, he led hundreds of people to Christ. By 1970 he was leading 11 Bible studies that included more than 500 people. John became so fruitful as an evangelical pastor he was asked to lead the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth. He also later became an adjunct instructor at Fuller Theological Seminary, where his classes set attendance records. In 1977, John re-entered pastoral ministry to plant Calvary Chapel of Yorba Linda.

During this time, John’s conservative evangelical paradigm for understanding the ministry of the church began to grow.

George Eldon Ladd’s theological writings on the kingdom of God convinced John intellectually that all the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit should be active in the Church.

Encounters with Fuller missiologists Donald McGavaran and C. Peter Wagner, along with seasoned missionaries and international students, gave John credible evidence for combining evangelism with healing and prophecy. As he became more convinced of God’s desire to be active in the world through all the biblical gifts of the Spirit, John began to teach and train his church to imitate Jesus’ full-orbed kingdom ministry. He began to “do the stuff” of the Bible, about which he had formerly only read.

Early Experiences With The Holy Spirit

As John and his congregation, mostly made up of former Quakers, sought God in intimate worship, they experienced empowerment by the Holy Spirit, significant renewal in the gifts, and conversion growth. Since it soon became clear that the church’s emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit was not shared by some leaders in the Calvary Chapel movement, John’s church left Calvary Chapel in 1982 and joined the Association of Vineyard Churches.

A Network Of Churches Worldwide

Over time, the Vineyard movement has grown to be a network of over 1500 churches worldwide. We seek to blend the best of the evangelical traditions with their focus on Christ-like character and regard for the Scriptures, with the best of the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions of welcoming the empowering of the Holy Spirit for life, ministry, and acts of service.

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GREAT GRACE & MERCY.

REFLECTION

“There are a number of things that come to mind when we are asked ‘What is the Vineyard?’ We are going to attempt to express our thoughts in a very simple way, from our point of view.

The Vineyard is God’s idea. We often refer to the Vineyard as a ‘movement of people’ that God initiated and invited, among many others, to join His mission. In other words, we are recipients of and participants in God’s great grace and mercy.

We are a people who have responded to this invitation to join God’s mission, for His greater glory and the well being of people. In responding to the invitation of God, men and women like the Wimbers, the Fultons, and numerous others found themselves swept up in a Holy Spirit avalanche. These people who were at the beginning of this movement did not sit in a boardroom and draw up a five-part plan to form a movement that would spread around the world. This is very important for our present understanding of the Vineyard.

We were called into being as worshippers and Jesus-followers, grateful and humbled by God’s inclusion of people like us. As we understood early on, we received much from God in relation to his presence – his power, his favor, his fruit. We all heard: “We get, to give.” What God had done *in* the people of the Vineyard, he wanted to do *through* these people. We have not moved very far from that simple understanding, nor should we.

Church, church, church! John Wimber’s clear instruction to ‘Love the whole Church’ was a refreshing and liberating invitation. Worship songs with lyrics such as *Help Me to Love The Things You Love* by Danny Daniels reflected this emphasis. The Vineyard taught us all to not only appreciate, but also to embrace, the great historic traditions of the Church.

God has always had a people. Despite our penchant for viewing ourselves as innovators in the 21st century, we must realize that we aren’t as vogue as we think. Instead of blazing trails with our faith, we have taken

the torch that has been passed down to us from generation to generation. We are a family of torch-bearers.

‘Find out what God is doing in your generation and fling yourself (recklessly) into it.’ That is a paraphrase of a Jonathan Edwards quote that caught our attention during the Jesus Movement in the ‘70s. It is not that God changes, or that his message changes. Rather, it is often that a vital truth has been lost or disregarded – and it needs to be rediscovered, revived, and made alive again.

During the time of the birth of the Vineyard, the church was rediscovering the charismata, or gifts of the Spirit. Incorporating them into the life of the church, with all of us participating (‘everyone gets to play’), was one of the highlights of Vineyard understanding. Instead of the ‘one’ getting to play, ‘everyone’ was getting to play. There was no special person, no superstars. Even in our music, the simplicity of the chords and words took music that might have headed into performance back to intimacy, without hype.

First generation Vineyard people came from an incredibly varied set of backgrounds. We ranged from burned-out church leaders from many denominations, to those who had never stepped foot in a church building. Some showed up in suits and ties, only to find out that the casual mode (in dress and attitude) of the Vineyard atmosphere was actually an intentional piece of our liturgy. In those days, the wide range of doctrinal statements was of little importance. We said, ‘Come as you are, you’ll be loved.’ God was gathering a people made up of *ordinary* people.

The Vineyard Movement has a very unique opportunity to pass on a healthy template of what it means to be the Church to another generation. We will stay flexible and pliable in what is negotiable, as we stay the course in our main and plain, divine assignment to be worshippers of God and rescuers of people.”

- PHIL & JAN STROUT



OUR CORE VALUES

Defining Our Core Values

As the Vineyard movement matured, a tension began to develop between preserving the historic DNA that had defined our movement and allowing each congregation to innovate and develop relevant practices within their particular geographic locations or demographics. In 2008, the Vineyard Board, along with then National Director Bert Waggoner, engaged this question by developing a set of *core values*: central priorities of our movement that might be expressed in different ways but would always be part of what it means to be Vineyard.

The values were introduced by the phrase, “We are a people of the kingdom of God who...” This introduction is no mere window dressing. It emphasizes both the ordinariness and the extraordinariness of what God has called us to. We are a people first. Not an institution, not a government, not a force, but simply a people. And we are a people of the “Kingdom of God” – our central theological lens through which we understand the teaching of Jesus (Mk. 1:14-15). We are a people seized by something beyond ourselves and turned into something new, something that is transformative to the world around us. Our values draw this reality out.

We Are A People Of The Kingdom Of God Who...

Partner with the Holy Spirit. We are not simply implementing the best church strategies and trying to accomplish what is humanly possible. Rather, our mission involves praying and finding power from God himself to accomplish what humans could never accomplish on their own. We pray for the sick; we confront injustice; we seek to hear the voice of God on behalf of others. This involves partnership with a Person beyond ourselves.

Experience and worship God. Worship has always been one of the calling cards of the Vineyard. Many people describe their first moment in the Vineyard as being the moment in which they encountered God through intimate worship singing. Worshipping and

experiencing God goes far beyond singing. In every moment of our lives, we seek to live in the presence of the Lord. At the same time, corporate singing is a precious part of what it means for us to be the people of the kingdom.

Reconcile people with God and all creation.

The Bible tells the story of “the Fall.” This is the moment when humans rebelled against God and chose their own way over and against the will of God (Gen. 3:1-24). The result of the fall is isolation and alienation. Self-centered creatures care more for themselves than they care about God, people, and his creation. The declaration of the kingdom of God is an act of profound reconciliation: bringing people back to God, into deep relationship with each other, and into a life of caring about God’s creation again.

Engage in compassionate ministry. There is a profound place in the story of Jesus where a great crowd has gathered to see his ministry, the healings and miracles he did, and the profound wisdom he offered. It says that Jesus looked out at the crowd, he had compassion on them, and he commissioned his disciples to minister to them. Compassion is not about pitying people; rather, it is seeing people in their difficult, complicated life situations and believing that God is able to use his people to minister hope and healing to them.

Pursue culturally relevant mission in the world.

Most people don’t like change. Whether it’s food, sports, music, or clothing, people tend to try to keep things the same. But the message of the kingdom was intended by Jesus to extend from culture to culture and from generation to generation. This means that while our core values and beliefs do not change, the form in which they are expressed will change, from one country to another and from one decade to the next. The kingdom of God can be expressed through casualness or formality, rock music or hip-hop, big churches or house churches. The key for us is to stay true to the mission of God, and to let God show us how his glory can be expressed in each new context.

YOU CAN'T LEARN
HOW TO HEAL
THE SICK BY
READING A BOOK
OR MASTERING A
TECHNIQUE.

YOU BELIEVE WHAT
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REFLECTION

“The kingdom is about doing just as much as teaching. If you aren’t doing the works of the kingdom the message isn’t complete. I pray the Vineyard never stops taking the risks of the kingdom.”

“What I want to see in action is the message, the music and the ministry. We must take the hype out of ministry where everyone gets to play.”

“The call of the kingdom isn’t just one part of our life, it’s all of it!”

“The Vineyard is God’s idea. He called us as kingdom people, doing the stuff of proclamation and demonstration. To do only half of what we’ve been called into is not a complete Gospel message and we must do all of what God’s placed upon us.”

“The manifestation of the Spirit is not supposed to be the exception – it’s supposed to be the norm.”

“The test of spiritual maturity is not the ability to speak in tongues, prophesy, or memorize Scripture. It’s the ability to love God and others. Learning to serve others by loving the unlovely, the less fortunate, the lost, and the broken. This is the highest call, that we would fulfill our purpose on earth.”

“Ministry is a life of giving. We give our whole life, as God should have

ownership of everything. Remember, whatever we give God control of, he can multiply and bless, not so we can amass goods, but so we can take an active part in his enterprise.”

“You can’t learn how to heal the sick by reading a book or mastering a technique. You believe what Jesus promised and then you get out and do it.”

“I’ve never been on a mission to make the Vineyard famous. It’s not about the Vineyard. It’s about Jesus. His fame is what our mission should be.”

“It’s not just about being biblically literate, we must also become biblically obedient.”

“Power evangelism isn’t about adding to the Gospel or seeking to add power, but rather turning to the Holy Spirit in our evangelistic efforts and consciously cooperating with his anointing, gifting and leading.”

“Serving the poor isn’t an option. If we don’t care for the poor we’re good as dead. I see it as a life and death matter.”

“Faith is spelled R-I-S-K.”

- JOHN WIMBER

OUR UNIQUENESS

The Tensions We Embrace

One book written about the Vineyard was called *The Quest For The Radical Middle*, by Bill Jackson. The idea put forth was that a healthy church movement is able to hold on to two sides of a tension, valuing both, without giving either up.

There are a number of these tensions that describe some of the distinctives of our movement.

We are both Word-focused and work-focused.

By “the Word,” we mean the Bible. We are deeply committed to knowing, teaching, believing, and obeying the Bible. We believe in a God who reveals himself, first through Jesus himself and also through the words of Scripture. Scripture is how we find out who Jesus was and is. And alongside the word of God, we are focused on the works of God. John Wimber was famous for telling us “not to eat the menu,” by which he meant that if a person reads the Bible but never does what it says, it will have no impact on that person’s life.

We are both reverent and casual. If you go into any Vineyard church, it’s likely you’ll notice a casual feel. Vineyard folks like to wear jeans or shorts and bring coffee right into the service. Humor is often sprinkled throughout the message, and if there is a glitch in the service, usually no one is bothered and we move right on. But this

doesn’t translate to being casual about God! Our casual style means we take ourselves less seriously, yet at the same time we take the Lord very seriously. It’s not intended to take attention away from the Lord, but rather to take attention away from ourselves and put it on him.

We are both spiritual and non-religious.

We believe deeply in spiritual realities. We regularly invite the Holy Spirit to be among us. We ask God to do things we could never do ourselves. We commit ourselves to prayer, Bible reading, confession, and other disciplines of faith. And we are aware that all of these carry the danger of becoming mere religious acts with no real authentic faith behind them. We choose to live in this tension. Seeking Spirit power from the living God, we are always willing to acknowledge that we can slip out of true devotion into mere playacting. At our best, this is a form of humility that marks our movement.

We are both intentional and spontaneous.

The Vineyard movement loves the spontaneous move of the Spirit. One of the most exciting parts of any Vineyard meeting is that you never quite know what is going to happen next. But we don’t think there’s any reason that our love for spontaneity has to be at odds with intentional, careful planning. Our God works both through unplanned moments of power and purposeful strategizing.



REFLECTION

“The key to being a successful tightrope walker is *balance*.

Balance is a matter of life or death. The same applies to the Vineyard. I think the secret of its success is its *balance*.

If you were to ask me, ‘What is the Vineyard?’ I would have to say that the Vineyard is balance.

It is balance between the evangelical movement and the charismatic and Pentecostal movements. It is balance between being Bible-based and Spirit-empowered.

It is balance between the *already* of the kingdom of God and the *not yet* of the kingdom of God.

It is balance between following traditions and being relevant.

It is balance between letting God do his part in my life and in my church and me doing my part in my life and in my church. It is balance between being a movement and being an autonomous church.

It is balance between being released to be on your own and being held accountable. It is balance between my personal devotional life, my family life, my work life and my ministry life.

I love the Vineyard for its balance!”

-HOMERO GARCIA

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WHERE WE'RE GOING

The Vineyard is moving into its second generation of ministry. Our great hope is that God will enable us to hold onto much of what we have cherished for the last 30+ years, then continue to add fresh wisdom and revelation to it.

As we move forward, we as Vineyard churches seek to be healing communities, biblical communities, outward communities, multiplying communities, and Spirit-led communities.

As *healing communities*, we have always prayed faithfully for the sick – in our church services, in small groups, and in the everyday workplaces and neighborhoods we inhabit. Vineyard people care about racial injustice, about environmental issues, about sexual trafficking and exploitation.

As *biblical communities*, we are committed to careful study and interpretation of Bible and to faithful preaching of its message.

As *outward communities*, we seek to be outposts of the kingdom of God, bringing hope and help from Jesus to anyone who wants it.

As *healthy communities*, we are committed to being churches who practice emotional health, maintaining relationships and carrying one another's burdens.

As *multiplying communities*, we are committed to planting hundreds of new churches domestically and thousands more internationally in the coming years.

We believe Jesus modeled deep dependence on God his Father, and we also ought to do only what we see the Father doing. For this reason, we have always tried to stay flexible and open to the voice of God, and we want to see what he is doing. We have built institutions, but we have also been willing to change course and direction as the Lord has led.

Doing church this way is risky. We have always believed that faith is spelled R-I-S-K. At times, it can be tempting simply to come up with a really smart strategy on our own, rather than to move forward in a way that depends on the action and reality of a living God. But moving forward in obedience to the Father is really the only sort of movement that is worth being a part of.

And because we are a people of the kingdom, it's new people who will bring newness to us. We hope God is calling you to play your part!



IN THE VINEYARD WE'RE
COMMITTED TO THE
BELIEF THAT EVERY
FOLLOWER OF JESUS IS
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HOLY SPIRIT THAT ARE
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TO BUILD UP THE
BODY OF CHRIST.



REFLECTION

“We are a people who have been awakened to the reality that God is not nearly as far away as we once thought. He’s near – he is always near! And it is his nearness that shapes everything we do and everything we are. I didn’t grow up in the Vineyard, but I did come of age in the Vineyard. I was 17 when I went to my first Vineyard meeting. I remember being blown away by the worship, the pastor who didn’t wear a suit, and the ministry time. For years I couldn’t articulate why those early experiences were so meaningful, but then one day I was telling a friend about the Vineyard when he summed it up perfectly: ‘You really believe that God is in the room!’

In the Vineyard we believe that God is *actually in the room*. He’s with us every single Sunday. Not only that: we are waking up to the fact that he is with us every day as well. It’s why we mostly sing songs *to* God. It’s why we pray for the sick and believe for the impossible. It’s why we let everyone join in the work of the ministry. God didn’t come because

a couple of morally superior, super-Christians happened to be in the room. No! We figured out that he loves people so much that he’s present even when the room is filled with the least and the lost.

And he often shares his best gifts with the people everyone else has forgotten. We work for justice because God has brought his just kingdom into our midst. We endure hardship and loss without losing heart because the crucified Christ is with us. We look for the lonely and the outcast because the Good Shepherd, who regularly leaves the 99 to go after the 1, shows up when we do the same.

The Vineyard is diverse. We are city, and we are country. We are rich, and we are poor. We are Black and White and Latino, and Asian, and all the complex mixtures of each. We are old school, and we are new school. We are Boomers, and Generation X, Y, and Z.

But most importantly, we are people who are awake to the nearness of God.”

-ADAM RUSSELL

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WHAT IS THE VINEYARD?

OUR HISTORY, VALUES, AND DISTINCTIVES

The Vineyard Movement, since birth, has valued seeing individual Christians experience God in their daily lives. Through spiritual practices such as worship, fellowship, mission, the reading and application of Scripture, soul care, family care, healing of the broken, cultural influence, the compassionate ministry of the Holy Spirit, and loving our neighbors, the Vineyard community of churches seeks to be intentional about nurturing the lives of those who call us their family.

To find out more about the Vineyard, visit www.vineyardusa.org.