

history

theology

why vineyard

discover what brings us together.
explore what holds us together.
experience the jesus way together.

INTRODUCTION

posture

practice



vineyardcanada®

*"Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually.
I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it.
I am not angry.*

*If only there were briars and thorns confronting me! I would march against them in
battle; I would set them all on fire. Or else let them come to me for refuge; let
them make peace with me, yes, let them make peace with me." (Isaiah 27:2-5)*

We seek first God's Kingdom and His justice on the earth. The Jesus Way.

Jesus described Himself as the Vine. He called us His branches. Our *love for Him*, and the community that grows as a result of *faith in Him*, personifies this connection. We cannot be fruitful apart from Him. He nourishes. His church. His way. A vineyard.

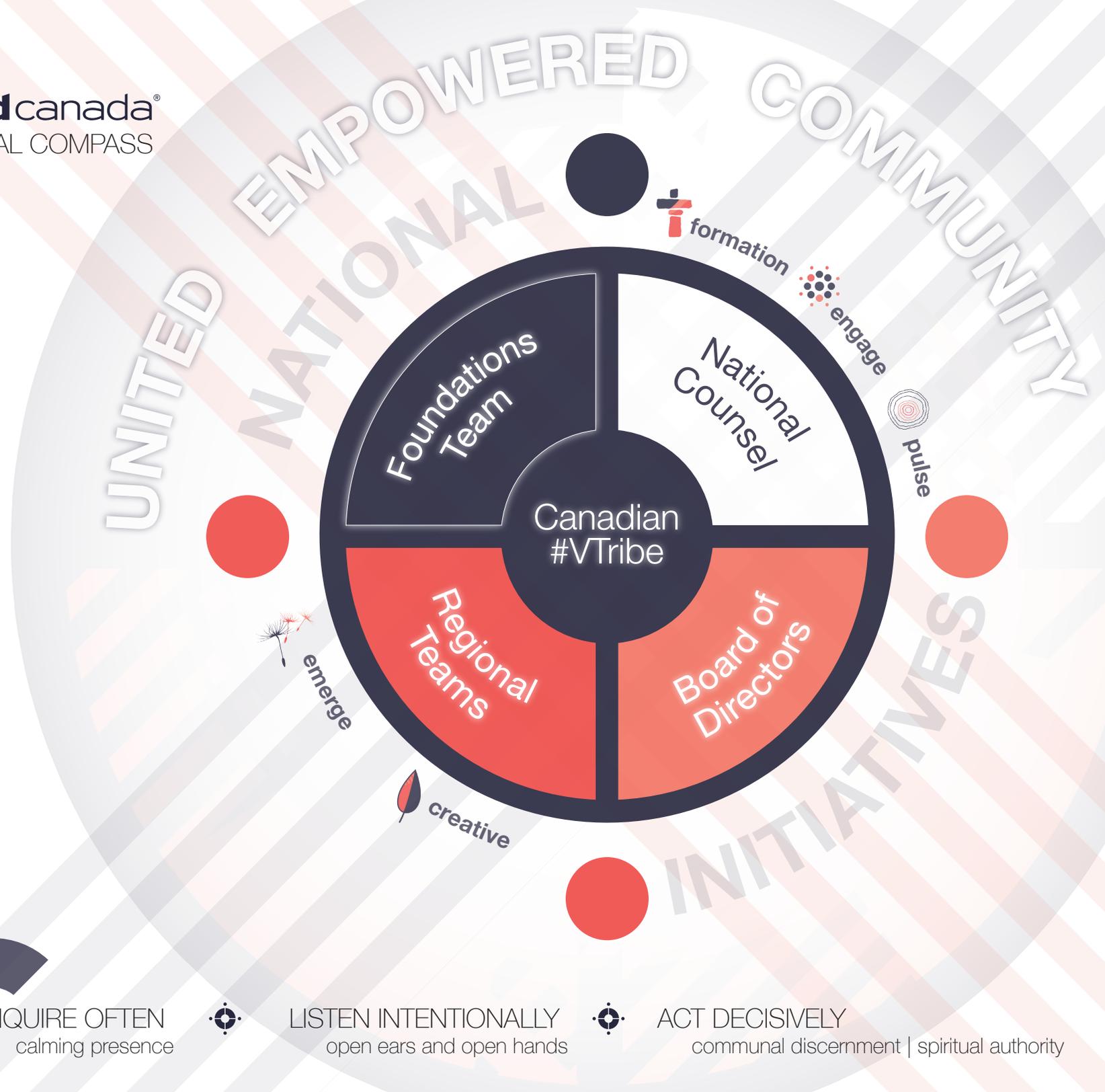
We love the depth, simplicity and beauty of this imagery. It captures the organic nature of who the Holy Spirit is shaping us to be and the life of worship we want to cultivate.

The Association of Vineyard Churches in Canada is comprised of interdependent and missional communities united by this Kingdom design. Through serving our neighbourhoods, civic spaces, Indigenous lands and peoples, provinces, territories, nation, and the world, we aspire to plant churches that share all God has entrusted to us. We do it all in the name of Jesus.

But seek first His Kingdom and his righteousness [justice] and all these things will be given you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

"...until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ."

Ephesians 4:13
The Message



INQUIRE OFTEN
calming presence



LISTEN INTENTIONALLY
open ears and open hands



ACT DECISIVELY
communal discernment | spiritual authority

foundations team

The FT is designed to work alongside the National Directors to ensure healthy systems are in place. The FT's role is to see that the health, best practices, and care of our Vineyard family are realized by equipping leaders, encouraging strong communities, and envisioning a missional posture that results in church planting.



national counsel

The NC ensures accountability with the National Directors on behalf of the National Team. This dynamic includes prayer support, emotional health, and gauging performance. The NC speaks into the National Team from a grassroots perspective, offering wisdom and insight. The term "counsel" is deliberate, given the relational and organic nature of our Movement.

regional team leaders

Vineyard Canada is composed of five regions, each of which has its own team to connect communities, provide leader care and coaching, and cultivate the #VTribe vibe across the country.

board of directors

Because of our values, it is important that the BOD is integrated within the National Team beyond simply providing legal and fiscal accountability for VC, as a registered non-profit. They are full participants on the NT. Board members include pastors and entrepreneurs with local church, business, charitable organization, and governmental acumen.

national initiatives

Initiatives create space for dialogue, co-creation, and innovation. *Formation* synchronizes our theology, spiritual health, and equipping strategies from cradle to grave; *Engage* unifies our efforts in justice and societal impact; *Pulse* distills what we are leaning into in prayer and what we are hearing as a prophetic people; *Emerge* sharpens our local, national, and global missional edge; *Creative* inspires the "right brain" of our Movement.



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our compass

why
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Staying in Our Lane

Church history is a story of the complexities and challenges of sustaining unity in diversity. Saying “yes” to Jesus has always resulted in unique expressions of obedience to Him, both collectively and individually. We acknowledge that joy and pain have often accompanied this journey. As a relatively new movement, we have not been without our own growing pains. We also have much to celebrate. We continue to lean into the Holy Spirit so that we might discover who we are today and where we fit into this unfolding history. 2 Corinthians 10:13-18 calibrates our compass:

We aren't making outrageous claims here. We're sticking to the limits of what God has set for us...we're not barging in on the rightful work of others, interfering with their ministries, demanding a place in the sun with them. What we're hoping for is that as your lives grow in faith, you'll play a part within our expanding work. And we'll all still be within the limits God sets...we have no intention of moving in on what others have done and taking credit for it. "If you want to claim credit, claim it for God." What you say about yourself means nothing in God's work. It's what God says about you that makes the difference.

“Staying in our lane” is how we like to say it. Being comfortable in our own skin allows us to play our part - without pretense, competition, or the need to perform. Jesus said that we would be known by our love for each other. We love the whole church.

Setting Our Course

part
one



WE are co-heirs with, surrendered to, and following the historical and risen Jesus. He is truth revealed. He's who we live and die for. His reign is the Kingdom of heaven come and He remains pre-eminent over the Church.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. (Revelation 3:19, 20)

1



our compass

The Vineyard Common Prayer

Father - we are Your children. As we seek first Your Kingdom and serve in our Vineyard Communities, may we never lose the wonder and simplicity of childlike trust. Heal us of the distortions of the soul we carry from dysfunction, abandonment and abuse in our earthly families, and grace us with renewed vision to see who You are and what You do, that we may obey.

Jesus - we follow You. Head of the "C"hurch and the only Hope for our Vineyard Communities. Be our centre. Be our model. May we reflect You in all areas of dialogue, spiritual rhythms, and strategy that we undertake together. We open our hands, our minds, and our wills to Your transformational presence. Christ in us.

Spirit - we need You. Awaken our spirits that we may cry "Abba, Father." Reveal the Son to us that we may behold His beauty and become like Him. We surrender to Your wisdom. We attune ourselves to Your voice of reason and righteousness, that we may do the will of the Father and engage in the words and works of the Son. Equip us to serve our Vineyard Communities. Empower us to serve with grace and humility. Employ us that we may love the whole "C"hurch, deliver the captives, and be disciples of Jesus who disciple others.

AMEN.

part
two

ALL is added from here [the Kingdom]. Discipleship. Evangelism. Equipping. Community. Service. This Kingdom defines who we are together as Jesus' Church. This is a relational realm, a way of being; a faithful presence, sustained under the governance and care of King Jesus.

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in Heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven. (Matthew 16:17-19)

part
three

THIS requires that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount be a way of life, not just pithy principles. There are no secret codes or religious manipulation here, just a tenacious obedience borne of love. To love Jesus is to say "yes" to His invitation to follow Him into all the upside-downness of His Kingdom ways. To follow Him is to walk in the way of friendship with even our enemies, becoming like Him in incarnation, death, and resurrection. Let the Kingdom come and His will be done. Here.

I am the Vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... as the Father has loved me, so have I love you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:5-15)

2

our compass

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part four

THIS compels us to engage in both the proclamation and the demonstration of this Kingdom - the oscillation of the words and works of Jesus is our norm.

Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. (Matthew 4:23)

He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases...so they set out, proclaiming the Good News and healing people everywhere. (Luke 9:1, 6)

part five

WORSHIP is central here. This Kingdom has a King. It (our worship) is sustained, guided, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, both in intimacy [proskuneo] and as the basis for all Christian service [latreuo].

A time is coming and is has now come when true worshipers will worship [proskuneo] the Father in spirit and truth. (John 4:23)

For we are the circumcision, who worship [latreuo] by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh...I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. (Philippians 3:3-8)

part six

LOVE and COMPASSION motivate us. The heart of our ecclesiology is community: intergenerational, multicultural, cross-economic, egalitarian, and non-prejudicial. The soul of our missiology is mercy and kindness, resulting in justice, evangelism, and church planting.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)

The whole congregation of believers was united as one – one heart, one mind! They didn't even claim ownership of their own possessions...they shared everything...And so it turned out that not a person among them was needy. (Acts 4:32-35)

3

1970s

1974 - Kenn Gulliksen is sent out from Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California to plant a church in West Los Angeles. This would be the first "Vineyard".

Mother's Day 1977 - John & Carol Wimber found Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda. They, and most of their congregation, come from a Quaker background.

Mother's Day 1979 - Lonnie Frisbee prays "Come, Holy Spirit" while speaking at Wimbers' church, which is meeting in Esperanza High School.

Mother's Day 1982 - Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda becomes Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship. John Wimber assumes leadership of the Vineyard Movement the same year.

December 1984 - a group of seven people are blessed and released by County Line Christian Fellowship. They plant Langley Vineyard in Jan. 1985, Canada's first Vineyard church.

1985 - The Association of Vineyard Churches and Vineyard Ministries International are officially established by John Wimber. He also forms Mercy Records (later Vineyard Music).

1980s

1990s

1994 - The Toronto Airport Vineyard experiences a major outpouring of the Holy Spirit ("Toronto Blessing"), drawing many from around the world.

1994 - John & Carol Wimber, along with Bob & Penny Fulton, meet with Canadian Vineyard leaders at Minaki Lodge near Kenora, Ontario.

1995 - The Association of Vineyard Churches Canada is established, under the leadership of Gary & Joy Best.

November 1997 - John Wimber, age 63, dies in Santa Ana, California. At the time of his passing, there are more than 650 Vineyards in nearly 50 countries.

July 2014 - After an intensive process of recalibrating Vineyard Canada's operating systems, and a time of communal discernment, the National Team invites David & Anita Ruis to become National Directors.

As of 2019, the Vineyard continues to grow, with over 2,500 churches on six continents.

2000s

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From the Jesus People to the Vineyard

The Jesus People movement of the 1960s and 70s was a spiritual awakening within hippie culture around the world, as thousands of young people found themselves on a desperate search to experience God. Not finding Him through drugs, sex, or rock'n'roll, these hippies became a subculture transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit during a time of dramatically shifting cultural values and societal norms. Mainstream evangelicalism found it very hard to receive these new followers of Jesus, just as they were; however, ministries arose from scores of these cultural refugees at home and abroad. Figures like Walter Heidenreich in Luedenscheid, Germany would have an impact in central Europe and beyond; Jackie Pullinger, a young missional rebel from the UK, would move to the walled city in Hong Kong; Loren and Darlene Cunningham, pioneers of YWAM, would continue to steward its expanding global reach. Among those shaping this emerging voice within the church was a soft-spoken, unassuming leader named Kenn Gulliksen. He came out of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California and started a church in Hollywood in 1974. This community had an immediate effect on many in the entertainment industry, given its passion not only for cultural relevance, but for intimate worship. Influential artists such as Larry Norman, Chuck Girard, Bob Dylan, and Keith Green became part of this mix. A vision for church planting was a hallmark of Gulliksen's work. Believing that God had instructed him to do so, Kenn gave the name "Vineyard" (from Isaiah 27:2-3 & John 15:5) to these newly formed communities. He would go on to lead them for the next several years.

On Mother's Day 1977, John Wimber, an evangelical pastor and teacher on church growth, founded Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda. He and most of his congregants were former Quakers. Wimber's teaching on Kingdom theology and the ministry of the Holy Spirit gave rise to a meeting with Calvary Chapel leaders, where it was suggested that Wimber's church stop using the Calvary name and affiliate with Gulliksen's Vineyards. John and Kenn had become friends, and on Mother's Day 1982, Wimber's church changed its name to Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship. Because John's influence was profoundly shaping the theology and practice of the Vineyards, Kenn felt led to ask John to assume leadership of the nascent movement. This transition took place in 1982, when there were at least seven "Vineyards". This fellowship would officially become the "Association of Vineyard Churches" in 1985. Wimber served as National Director until 1994, and president of the association until his passing in 1997. Today, there are hundreds of Vineyards around the world. John's legacy beyond the Vineyard includes the great passion he had for intimacy in worship through music. Scores of worship songwriters and leaders would emerge across all streams of the church as a direct result of his strong belief that we should be about the business of creating songs *to* Jesus, not just *about* Him.

history

“Strung between novelty and nostalgia, a Biblical imagination remembers forward. The remembering enjoined by the Torah looks forward to a ‘time to come’ (Deut. 6:20). The Biblical command to remember is written in the future tense.”

James K.A. Smith

Editorial: Memory, Forgetting, and Hope



Come, Holy Spirit

There would be no Vineyard today without the surprising inbreaking of the Holy Spirit's power and presence. Mother's Day evening 1979 would be pivotal to John Wimber's impact on our Movement. A young charismatic "Jesus Freak" named Lonnie Frisbee carried an incredible gifting in the areas of word-of-knowledge, healing, and evangelism. John Wimber felt a prompting to invite Frisbee to speak at Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda and reluctantly obeyed, aware that some regarded Frisbee as a bit of a wild card. Lonnie prayed "Come, Holy Spirit" at the end of his talk and, what ensued, seemed like mayhem. A new understanding of ministry in the power of the Spirit was modelled that night, as manifestations such as falling over, shaking, and speaking in tongues were experienced in a way unlike anything they had seen to that point. Those three words would become the heart cry of an entire Movement.

Meanwhile In Canada...

Though there were notable differences between the Canadian and American countercultures, the Jesus Movement here was remarkably similar to its prototype in Southern California. Kids in sandals and tie-dye shirts were transforming the mainstream church, filling Gothic spaces with fresh worship and encounters of the Holy Spirit. What resulted was a new expression of faith. The Yorkville hippie scene, the Jesus Forever Family at Rochdale College - Toronto's "hippie heart" - and Saint Margaret's Reformed Episcopal in East Vancouver are just some examples. As the Jesus People gave way to the Vineyard in the US, the Holy Spirit was awakening many scattered across the Canadian mainstream and evangelical community. Those once skittish of a more demonstrative Christianity - both in the work of the Holy Spirit and in communal worship expression - began to step out of the box and collide with the sensibilities of their various denominational structures and polity. This surge among conservative evangelicals became known as the "Third Wave" - a child of the Charismatic Movement, which had its genesis in the 1960s Jesus People ("Second Wave"), and the Pentecostal Movement which began in the 1920s ("First Wave").

This "Third Wave" flooded the Canadian landscape from coast to coast.

history



Church Renewal: Shaping the Canadian Story

For some, the Vineyard was our point of contact. We began to find each other around Vineyard DNA, drawn together by a common hunger for intimate worship, a fresh articulation of Kingdom theology, and a desire to take the risk of actually doing the works of Jesus, not just reading about or assenting to them. From the very beginning of the Vineyard, Wimber felt a call to this kind of church renewal. "Love the whole church," he would often say, and with this passion established Vineyard Ministries International (VMI).

VMI was not intended to be a church planting arm of the burgeoning Movement, yet Wimber, along with his brother-in-law, Bob Fulton, kept running into people around the world who wanted to become part of what was happening. Other leaders from the US Vineyard would also begin to travel under the banner of VMI. Several made their way to Canadian soil. Subsequently, Canada would be a key player in influencing Vineyard leadership to expand beyond the States. Through relationship with several Canadians, the bonds between Vineyards in America and the growing interest in Canada became stronger. This dynamic was in play all across the country.

A ground-breaking community, particularly in the area of worship music, sprung up under the leadership of Gary and Joy Best in the Lower Mainland of BC in 1985. Their contact point was directly with the Anaheim Vineyard and what was happening in SoCal. In the Okanagan Valley, a newly planted Baptist Church under the leadership of David and Anita Ruis and Wesley and Stacey Campbell, encountered an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1987, marked by prophecy and evangelistic growth. Vineyard teaching provided a grid for what was happening to them. Their contact point was mainly through American leaders living in Canada at the time. This church in Kelowna would be adopted into the family through a connection with the Bests at the newly founded Langley Vineyard. The late 80s also saw a stirring in believers throughout the Edmonton area after a Wimber conference in the city. Future Vineyard leaders like Mark and Brenda Wollenberg were captivated by what they experienced. Their contact point would be the Vineyard in Fort Collins, Colorado. In Calgary, Mark Coppersmith and Bob McKenzie were developing relationship with Gary Best and American Ken Blue, who had relocated to BC. Blue was an influential teacher and practitioner in Kingdom theology and ministry, with close ties to Wimber.

Moving eastward, Southern Ontario would undergo the same type of awakening during this period. People like John and Carol Arnott, Steve and Christina Stewart, and Bob and Sue Buckley would build connection with a wide swath of US Vineyard leaders - including Kenn Gulliksen and the Laguna Vineyard, which sent teams into Toronto monthly.

history

John Wimber with Joy and Gary Best in the spring of 1996, during Wimber's visit to the Abbotsford campus of Langley Vineyard, British Columbia.



In Atlantic Canada, leaders such as Larry and Karen Levy and Rik and Cathy Berry (all graduates of Acadia Divinity College) had been transformed by Vineyard teaching at a "Power Evangelism" conference in Birmingham, Alabama - to the degree that they could not go back to what they knew before. After a visit from the Gulliksens, who were now in the Boston area, Levy's church joined the family and were, in Larry's words, "grafted in" as part of the Northeast Region of the US Vineyard.

In 1994, at Ontario's Minaki Lodge, the Wimbbers and Fultons began a process with Canadian Vineyard leaders that would, in 1995, result in Canada becoming the first country outside the US to be accorded independent status: the Association of Vineyard Churches Canada, with Gary and Joy Best as National Directors.

The Journey Continues

On both sides of the border, the 1990s proved to be a tumultuous season of experiencing and exploring the mystery of the Holy Spirit. Metro Vineyard Fellowship in Kansas City, MO carried a unique calling in the areas of the prophetic and intercession. Their influence was vital in furthering the Vineyard's understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and what it means to be a praying and prophetic people. The Toronto Airport Vineyard church would experience a unique outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would become known as the "Toronto Blessing". It was an expression of church renewal that was exuberant and demonstrative. These Vineyards would garner international attention and have a ripple effect right across the broader church world. We had to find fresh articulation for our theology that would not only clarify our apologetic, but refine our pastoral care and ecclesiology. The effects of this decade continue to be felt. It was a season of great blessing, controversy, and a parting of ways. Just as Lonnie Frisbee's visit to Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda nearly twenty years earlier led to the establishing of the Anaheim Vineyard, Kansas City would go on to found the International House of Prayer. Toronto would start the Harvest Network and begin to plant Catch the Fire churches.

Looking to the future, we know to expect beautiful and disruptive workings of the Spirit. We never want to shy away from the risk this work entails, or neglect the pastoral care and stewardship required. We pray for wisdom, revelation, and fire.



theology



An Ancient Faith

Theology matters. Everyone has opinions about God. Theology provides the framework - the skeleton - for how we flesh out the way we think, how we live, and how we love. Christian theology has a long history, and though over the centuries there have been many orthodoxies, to this day and across the board, most of the Christian church adheres to the tenets of its oldest creed, dating back to at least 140 A.D.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Spirit), born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost (Spirit); the Holy catholic (universal) Church, the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting. Amen.

- The Apostles' Creed

The Sacred Text

For us in the Vineyard, our theology is informed by the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. They are both sacred. However, we do not worship the book. We worship God: Father, Son, and Spirit. We believe that God is self-revealed in the Scriptures, culminating in the person of Jesus, the Living Word.

Our approach to the Biblical text is about reaching for (the) Truth more than catering to the need to be right. This involves giving due attention to history, science, hermeneutic and Biblical scholarship as well as theological framing. We are not know-it-alls. We expect to receive revelation and insight from each other, those we may even disagree with, and the voice of the Spirit within and among us - anchored to textual and communal discernment. This, in fact, is key to our understanding of the entire Biblical narrative. It is God-breathed, yet delivered through human agency. This helps us make sense of the broad scope of how the Bible is written. There are stories, historical accounts, prophetic utterances, poetry, and parables. This awareness is particularly important to understanding the Old Testament. Knowing this helps us see that much of it is descriptive as opposed to prescriptive. The Gospels and Acts of the New Testament are also a great reflection of this. These documents were written from several different perspectives, memories, and places of personal impact, which at times may appear conflicting.

theology

"I think of it (the Bible) like the score of a Beethoven symphony, but every time it is performed it comes out differently. So the Bible is open to many performances, and if someone knows enough about music, they will know how some of the performances contradict each other. So the way I want to understand it is the Bible is an invitation and a summons to take it seriously and to see what my life would be like if I were to be deeply and responsibly engaged with what this script is yielding. The Bible is an artistic articulation."

Walter Brueggemann

This does not water down the text in any way, but rather keeps the Word of God alive. Breathing. Tethered to story and journey. The Epistles of the New Testament stay in this vein. When the writings are disembodied from the journey of community trying to live out the Jesus Way, they become a set of rules and doctrine that are open for all kinds of "right" interpretation and resulting contradictions which often end up in unnecessary division. There is room for nuance without losing the divine revelation at its core. This in no way minimizes conviction. But we can hold conviction without certainty. We can hold to our understanding of how our obedience to Christ plays out, holding fast to the Bible as our guide without becoming overbearing and belligerent.

Vineyard Distinctives: Kingdom Come - and Coming

"...Who is He, this King of Glory? The Lord..." (Psalms 24:7-10)

"... 'The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'" (Mark 1:14-15)

Christianity takes us far beyond behavioural modification and sin management, into a process of complete transformation. Worship becomes holistic - loving God with mind, soul, body, and spirit; loving others as we love ourselves. We are to be, in Jesus' own words, *born again*. This new and abundant life is shaped and sustained under God's dynamic and expanding reign, extending to all of creation and into eternity. The birth of Jesus signalled this Kingdom breaking into the human experience. His ministry of healing, hope, deliverance, forgiveness, compassion, and justice established the beach head for advancing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Light in darkness. Life over death. Perfect love casting out fear. Continuing this Kingdom work, we long for the day of Christ's return, when the fullness of His Kingdom is realized. Theologians call this *Inaugurated Eschatology*. We refer to it as *"the now and the not yet"*. One of the proponents of this understanding was George Eldon Ladd. He taught alongside John Wimber at Fuller Theological Seminary, and would subsequently have a significant impact on Vineyard theology. Ladd sums it up like this: *"God's future Kingdom, where healing and justice and love will reign supreme for eternity, was being brought into the present through the ministry of Jesus. In Jesus, humanity was experiencing the presence of God's future."*

theology



Vineyard Distinctives: The Upside-Down Way

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. (Isaiah 55:8)

"...These fellows (have) turned the world upside down...by saying that there is another king - Jesus!" (Acts 17:6-7)

In the "world according to Jesus", most everything we've come to accept as normal is turned upside-down. The lame walk, the blind see, the poor are rich. The weak are strong, the servants lead, and the meek inherit the earth. Jesus is at odds with conventional thinking. This Servant-King challenges our understanding of authority and power, good and evil. His life, death, and resurrection reveal a radically different pathway to the wholeness, liberty, and flourishing that God intended for every human heart from the dawn of creation. The impact of this on our theological lens helps us see that a Kingdom perspective allows for tension. Far from compromise, it requires leaning into faith that remains robust in the midst of uncertainty. It allows us to wrestle with models of leadership, ministry, and mission that often take us outside acceptable norms. Historically in the Vineyard, we have called this the *radical middle*, or the ability to see things as *both-and*, rather than *either-or*.

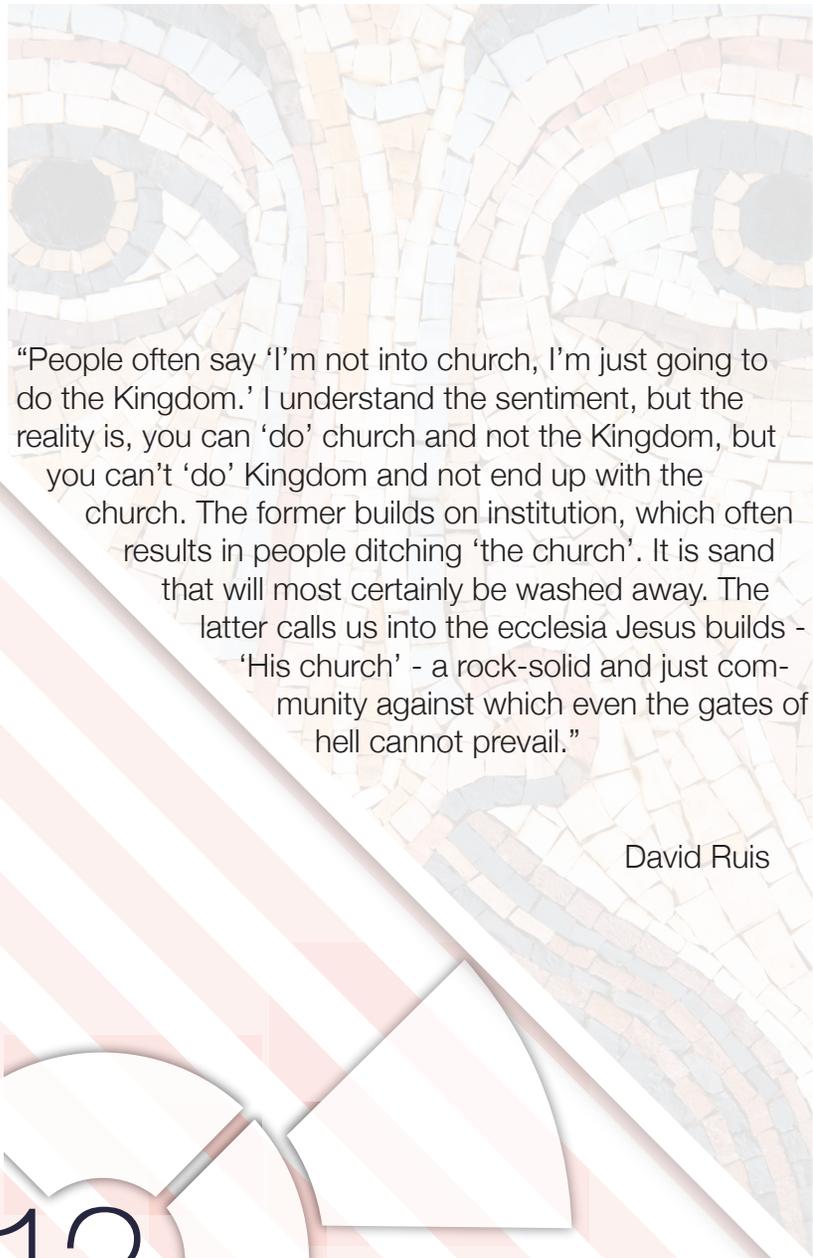
Vineyard Distinctives: The Father's Heart

"But You are our Father...from long ago, 'Our Redeemer' is Your name." (Isaiah 63:16)

"...What the Father does, the Son does likewise...The person who has seen me has seen the Father..." (John 5:19 & John 14:9)

"This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased" are the words that launched Jesus' ministry. Just like Jesus, God as Father is the bedrock upon which we experience intimacy in worship, engage the power of the Holy Spirit, and subsequently express our identity and calling as His children. This is why the prayer Jesus taught us to pray as His Kingdom disciples begins with "Our Father". You'll often hear us say in the Vineyard that our desire is to only do what we see the Father doing. This sensibility not only informs our approach to ministry, but has also deeply impacted our expressions of worship. "Touching the Father's Heart" is one of our most enduring series of musical recordings.

theology



“People often say ‘I’m not into church, I’m just going to do the Kingdom.’ I understand the sentiment, but the reality is, you can ‘do’ church and not the Kingdom, but you can’t ‘do’ Kingdom and not end up with the church. The former builds on institution, which often results in people ditching ‘the church’. It is sand that will most certainly be washed away. The latter calls us into the ecclesia Jesus builds - ‘His church’ - a rock-solid and just community against which even the gates of hell cannot prevail.”

David Ruis

Vineyard Distinctives: Jesus is Our Centre

“...‘You are my Son, today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance!’...Therefore, kings, act wisely! Earthly rulers, be warned!...Kiss the Son...” (Psalms 2:7, 12)

“God, having spoken in former times in fragmentary and varied fashion to our forefathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by a Son whom He appointed to be the heir of everything and through whom He also made the universe. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact likeness of His being, and He holds everything together by His powerful word...” (Heb. 1:1-3)

From our very beginnings, we have been impacted by experiencing the tangible presence of God - which we have learned is neither formulaic nor predictable. Just because we have gathered in a room does not guarantee His presence with us. Just because we struggle alone in a dark night of the soul does not mean He is absent. So we wait. We respond. This is where our Quaker roots really come into play: our conviction that listening and waiting on His presence is critical to every individual and communal expression of our faith. At the heart of the Vineyard ethos is intimacy - abiding in God’s presence, not relying on an institution or blind loyalty to a movement or denomination. We seek His face, not His hand.

We are the Father’s House. We submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is our centre, the perfect reflection of God’s glory. We worship Him, the Anointed One - Messiah and King of kings. We gather around Jesus, the crucified One, to remember His sacrifice and partake in His suffering. We follow Jesus, the Risen One, to embody His life and teachings, and see His Kingdom come. Intimacy is about proximity. In simplicity, we draw near to Him expectantly, reverently, knowing that He draws near to us. He is not manipulated by our impulses or level of intensity. We love *Him*, the person, more than an atmosphere charged by His presence. It is this love that compels us to pursue Him beyond brick and mortar. We will find Him on the margins of society as much as in the middle of community. The Kingdom of God is anywhere King Jesus is present. To be called out is to obey. To obey is to love. To love is to grow in intimacy. To be intimate is to rest.

Come to the Table | A reflection on the Eucharist by Kris MacQueen

His Table as our Centre

Jesus shifted the central gathering point of the worshipping life from an altar for our sacrifice to a table of His setting. He is the host of the meal. This is a particularly poignant reminder in our context, we in the Vineyard being often centred, for practical purposes, around a stage. The stage may be a helpful tool for us, but it is a lousy centre.

The Elements

In the elements, we have a reminder that creation is good. In the last supper, Jesus gets super practical. This isn't just about being "spiritual". He takes the elements on the table that are most deeply rooted in the physical creation - wheat and grapes - and infuses them with the promises of the Kingdom, the weight of the new covenant, and the sacrifice of His very body. We are invited to partake of Him, to ingest His substance. He is our sustenance.

The Power of Symbolism

It's also a helpful reminder that, though the bread and wine or juice is symbolic, the power of a symbol is that it carries the weight of the thing it represents. We take the elements as if they are the very body and blood of Christ.

theology

The Golden Sequence

Come, Holy Spirit; send down from heaven's height your radiant light. Come, lamp of every heart come, parent of the poor; all gifts are yours. Comforter beyond all comforting, sweet unexpected guest, sweetly refresh.

Rest in hard labour, coolness in heavy heat, hurt souls' relief. Refill the secret hearts of your faithful, O most blessed light.

Without your holy power nothing can bear your light, nothing is free from sin. Wash all that is filthy, water all that is parched, heal what is hurt within. Bend all that is rigid, warm all that is frozen hard, lead back the lost.

Give to your faithful ones, who come in simple trust, your *sevenfold mystery*.

Give virtue its reward, give, in the end, salvation and joy that has no end.

St. Gregory the Great
604 A.D.

Vineyard Distinctives: Come, Holy Spirit

"The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2 - this reference is known historically as the sevenfold mystery)

"...It's for your advantage that I'm going away, because if I don't go away, the Helper won't come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7)

"If you love me, keep my commandments. I will ask the Father to give you another Helper, to be with you always. He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor recognizes Him. But you recognize Him, because He lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:15-17)

If you hang around the Vineyard for any length of time, you will be sure to hear the prayer "Come, Holy Spirit." Fully recognizing that the Holy Spirit *indwells* all those who believe in Jesus, we also recognize that He is *with us*. The Spirit is often described throughout the Biblical narrative as "coming upon" people. Even Jesus relied on the Spirit in this way, proving the critical importance of our need of the third person of the Trinity as Helper. The early church was to wait for Him to descend upon them. The earliest followers of Jesus experienced a baptism of the Spirit in various and sundry ways, and a filling of His power that can only be described as overwhelming - not just relegated to a one-time event. All significant advances of the Church throughout history have been marked by what is often described as an *outpouring*. These encounters are often accompanied by a demonstration of power, which can result in physical manifestations. It is not uncommon in our Vineyards to witness trembling, tears, laughter, groaning, and even falling down in response to the strength of these encounters. There are numerous other ways in which people respond to the weight of these encounters with the Spirit. Even the most sincere of these reactions are not to be replicated for their own sake. We see these as potential responses to the Spirit's presence, not prerequisites or a metric for spirituality. The fruit of the Spirit - character - is actually the goal of the Spirit's work, not the accompanying manifestations of His power.

theology



Vineyard Distinctives: Light in the Darkness

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:2)

"God has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the Kingdom of the Son whom He loves..." (Colossians 1:13)

"For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm." (Ephesians 6:12)

"...The reason that the Son of God was revealed was to destroy what the Devil has been doing." (1 John 3:8)

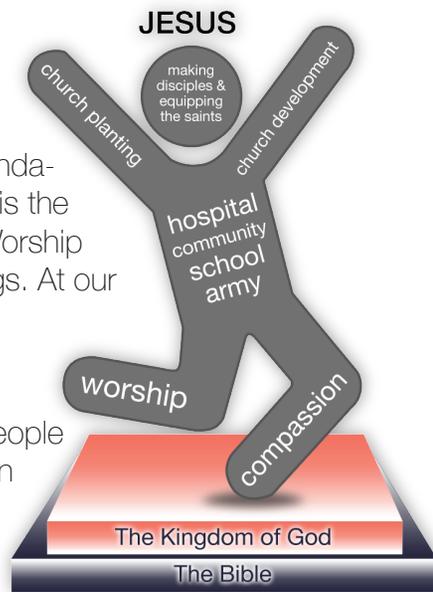
We are made in God's image and celebrate beauty in all of creation. When we categorize things as "sacred" and "secular", it creates unnecessary discord; however, we unequivocally affirm the existence of good and evil - and they are at war. In his book, *God At War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*, Gregory A. Boyd writes:

"This is our part in spiritual war. We proclaim Christ's truth by praying it, speaking it and (undoubtedly most importantly) by demonstrating it. We are not to accept with mere pious resignation the evil aspects of our world as "coming from a father's hand." Rather, following the example of our Lord and Savior, and going forth with the confidence that he has in principle already defeated his (and our) foes, we are to revolt against the evil aspects of our world as coming from the devil's hand. Our revolt is to be broad--as broad as the evil we seek to confront, and as broad as the work of the cross we seek to proclaim. Wherever there is destruction, hatred, apathy, injustice, pain or hopelessness, whether it concerns God's creation, a structural feature of society, or the physical, psychological or spiritual aspect of an individual, we are in word and deed to proclaim to the evil powers that be, "You are defeated." As Jesus did, we proclaim this by demonstrating it."

It may defy our human sensibilities to think and act in terms of existing in a supernatural theatre of war, but the reality is we are immersed in a cosmic battle. Evil never fights fairly, but our nemesis is not our neighbour. Our primary mode of engagement in this conflict is compassion, especially toward those who are the most demonized, oppressed, wounded, and ill. Our protection is in the place of humble, steadfast prayer. Our power lies in the gifts and discernment of the Holy Spirit.

theology

One of the earliest diagrams used to describe the Vineyard was the infamous "Vineyard Man". The Word of God is our foundation, our frame of reference is the theology of the Kingdom. Worship and compassion give us legs. At our core, we are a hospital for people to be healed, a community for people to find family, a school for people to be equipped, and an army that advances the Kingdom.



Our mission is clear: go and make disciples as we plant and develop local churches.

Gary Best, first National Director of the Association of Vineyard Churches Canada, writes in *Naturally Supernatural* why our participation in this struggle is paramount:

"This is why we must proclaim to the sick and demonized: 'The Kingdom of God is within your reach! God's deliverance is not beyond your ability to grasp it. Satan's domination is not so secure or extensive that your situation is hopeless. In fact, the Kingdom is already upon us all and our salvation is at hand!' Every time we cast out a demon or pray for physical sickness or injury, we are making this statement of faith: Though in some ways it is delayed, the rule of God has come and will come and the gates of hell will not be able to prevent its fulfillment. Every time a body is healed, every time a life is freed, the spell of Satan's despair is weakened, the crack in the door to his dungeon is widened and light streams in. When we pray, we are reaching for the Kingdom and proclaiming that it is within reach. If I don't see it today, I may tomorrow or the following day. If I cannot pray from faith, I pray from hope. When I am relatively hopeless, I pray out of principle – the strong man has been fatally wounded and his time is short. I have been commissioned to take the plunder."

Vineyard Distinctives: Worship and Justice

"Spare me your noisy singing...but let justice roll on..." (Amos 5:23-24)

"...whatever you did for one of the least...you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

Authentic worship - the only kind that captures God's ear - is always inextricably tied to mercy and justice. Throughout the Bible, church history, and in our own Vineyard experience, worship is most vibrant when love for one's neighbour is expressed as sincerely and enthusiastically as when we come together to profess our love for God. The heart of worship is a life offered to God, not just acts of worship done or spoken in His name. If God is not listening, why are we singing? If the Father's heart is not touched, what are we doing? Kingdom justice is not so much about human rights and our own needs, in and of themselves. It is about surrendering to, and aligning with, heaven's rule and reign. This Kingdom has a King. We bow down. It is under His sovereignty and care where all things flourish.

Knowing What, Understanding How

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should. Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” (Colossians 4:2-6)

We are a Movement of faith communities that spans a wide spectrum of approaches to church development and discipleship, as well as theological nuance and cultural engagement. We call this a “big tent”. Our course - past, present, and future - is determined by communal discernment and dialogue rather than solely by statements and policy. For this reason, we have always resisted using denominational terminology. The Vineyard is not a franchise, it is a family.

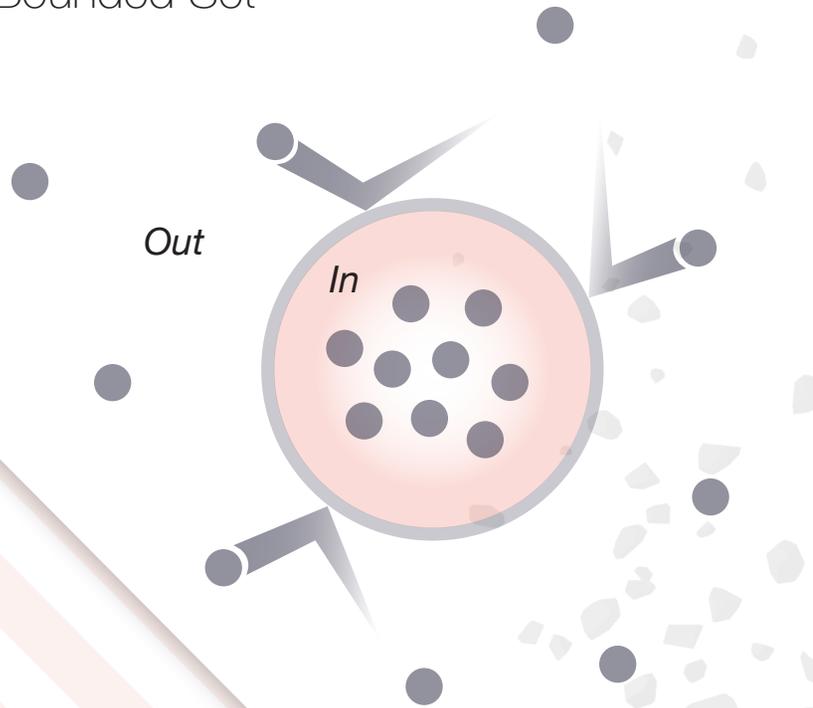
“The most powerful (though not the only) picture of the church is a family. It is not however, the western nuclear family, (dad mum and the kids) but rather the extended grown-up family which consists of many nuclear families, with a connection of clan/tribe name, nature and shared history... There is a significant difference between a ‘family of churches with a purpose’ and a network of related churches. A family has a much deeper commitment to each other, in a similar way that a single man and single woman cheerfully and voluntarily give up some of their individual autonomy in order to have the greater privilege of marriage. In a family of churches we ask each individual church to cheerfully and voluntarily give up some of the freedom of being an autonomous church in order to become part of something bigger and more effective - a movement, clan or family of churches. A network, by contrast, simply connects a variety of churches with differing interests, theological emphases, and leadership styles. There is no need to give away any autonomy, and work together for the common good in a network.”

*Lloyd Rankin, former National Director
New Zealand Association of Vineyard Churches*

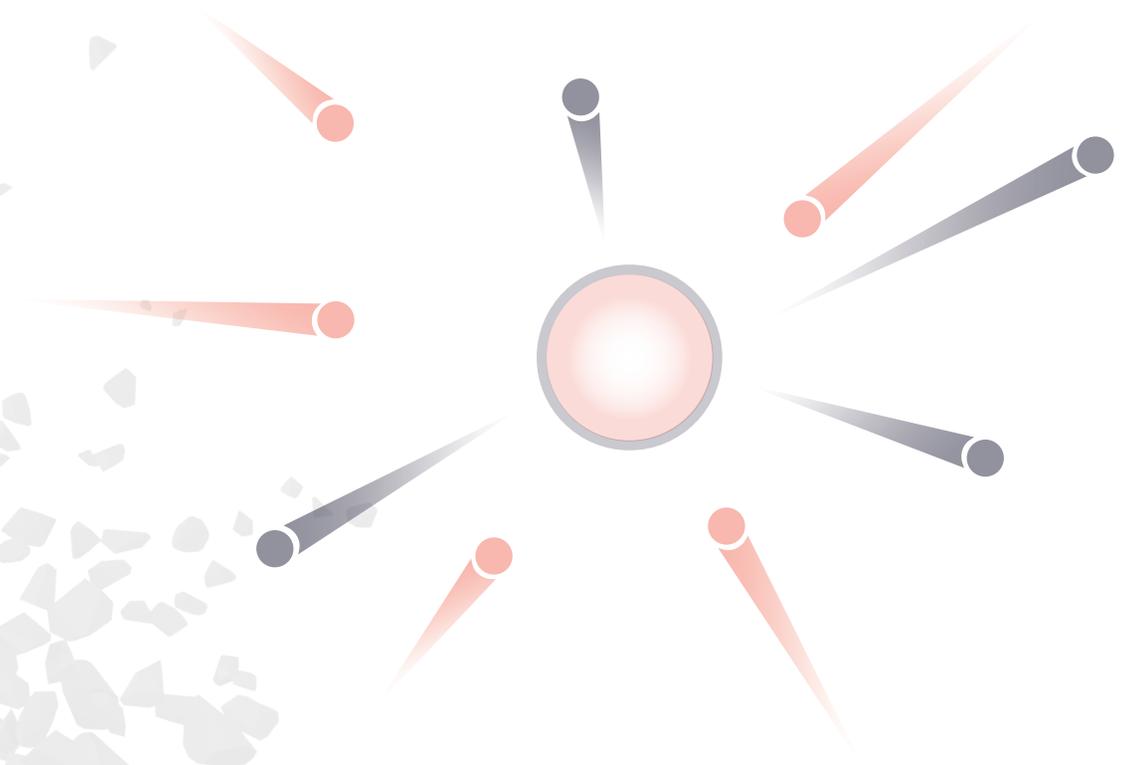
These aspirations require a heavy reliance on relational integrity and accountability. It is also the kind of paradigm wherein things tend to move more slowly than in other organizational models. This is a risk we are willing to take because *how* we process is, at times, even more important than *what* we do. Posture determines everything.

posture

Bounded Set



Centred Set



There are several defining characteristics for each of these models. We will draw attention to two important distinctions for each: a *Bounded Set*, as its name suggests, is 1) *defined by its boundaries*; therefore, the position of an object is determined by whether it is *in* or *out*; 2) a *Bounded Set* is *static* - locations may change over time, but at any given moment, the position of an object is based on where it is right now, not where it was yesterday or will be tomorrow.

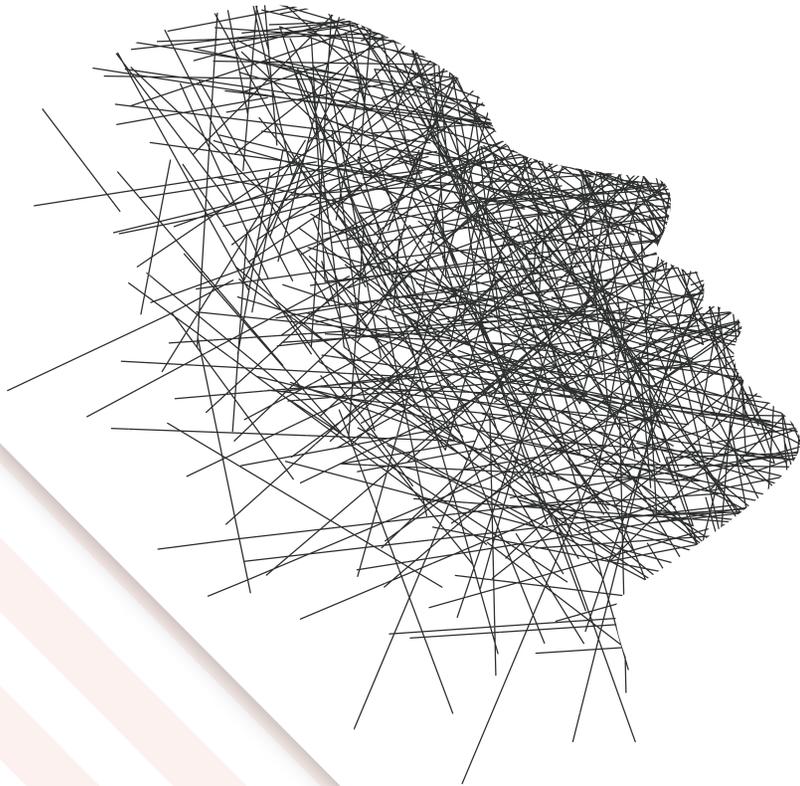
The *Centred Set*, as its name suggests, is 1) *defined by its centre*; therefore, the position of an object is based on its proximity to that centre; 2) a *Centred Set* is *dynamic* - objects are moving *toward* centre, or *away* from it. This model is most effective in situations where change is ongoing and inevitable.

The Centred Set

The Vineyard ethos is one of *relationship*. It is at the core of who we are, which is why the Centred Set model best illustrates our culture. This is also why you will often hear us use the idiom “more caught than taught” in referring to *how* we operate and engage in ministry and mission. Creative tension is inherent in all relationships, and is amplified in diverse, *big tent* non-profits such as ours. This is why *posture* is critical. Our convictions should not quash, ignore, or deny this tension. Alexander Venter, a South African Vineyard Pastor, has been one of our key theologians and church practitioners from our Movement’s earliest days. He reflects on how we use the Centred Set:

“I was honored to work with John Wimber in 1982, learning, among other things, the Social Set Theory – the three sociological models (Fuzzy, Bounded, Centred) – introduced by Jack Simms, a sociologically trained market researcher on staff with Wimber in Yorba Linda between 1978 and 1982...By definition a model is a pictorial overview of how segments of reality are arranged and work. Models have limits to what they represent, to what they say and don’t say. Hence we don’t use Social Set Theory for theological or ethical reflection regarding church and society. We must be clear on the Biblical theology of church (from a Kingdom hermeneutic) and then see where and how the Centred Set helps us to articulate it, and NOT the other way round. To make the Centred Set the basis of our ecclesiological or ethical thinking and praxis is to lose our Biblical base. “Integrating truth” (a Vineyard value and practice) from other disciplines into Christian-Biblical faith and praxis (e.g. how we do church), needs critical theological evaluation as to its usability and application. We use the language and idea of the sociological models for their original purpose: contrasting views of approaches to society – how communities arrange their common life.”

Though our emphasis is on the Centred Set, we do recognize that the Bounded Set approach is used by other churches and faith-based organizations, and may be required in certain circumstances. But our opinion is that a Bounded Set can also be easily weaponized for the purposes of preserving organizational integrity at the expense of relational integrity. Where this model reinforces a more top-down approach to leadership, a Centred Set does not emphasize hierarchy. This opens up space for broader participation in discerning our current direction and Spirit-given purpose in the context of our times. We come together because we cannot make it alone. We glean from every corner of our Movement, listening to each other and to the Holy Spirit. Obedience to Jesus is at the heart of it all, as we endeavour to remain true to our faith, be a prophetic presence within culture, practise respect and hospitality in a diverse society, and remain flexible enough to pivot whenever necessary.



Centred Set: Upside-Down Values

Our worldview is that the Kingdom is an upside-down reality. It stands to reason, then, that our approach to developing and sustaining a Centred Set organization is guided by values that could be construed as counter-intuitive, or even counterproductive.

-  **SERVANTHOOD.** Jesus taught that the greatest in His Kingdom are those who serve. As our friends in the Anglican Church like to say, “Once a deacon, always a deacon.” We never graduate from the posture of servanthood.
-  **DIGNITY.** Recognizing that each of us is created in God’s image, we must never lose sight of the fact that our Movement is a gathering of individuals. In our philosophy of how we lead, minister, and manage conflict, we are committed to a posture that does not violate the dignity of the individual.
-  **INVITATION.** A Centred Set approach distinguishes between authority and power - they are not the same. With Jesus as our example, we will not use power to coerce or manipulate people towards our aim. In meekness, we rest in our God-given authority, exchanging a reliance on power for a non-anxious presence. This distinction creates a posture of invitation from which we call one another forward.
-  **LEARNING.** As we lean into the tension of “the now and the not yet”, it is clear that our fullest capacity for knowledge and prophecy still leaves us staring into a dimly lit mirror (1 Cor. 13); however, *God knows all*, and all truth is God’s truth. A willingness to learn requires humility, open hands, and open minds. This will lead us to discover truth in even the most surprising ways. This should never unnerve us or threaten our faith. Just as wonderfully disconcerting can be how the Spirit’s revelation comes, and through whom. This is the posture of a lifelong learner.
-  **AUTHENTICITY.** What drew the Gulliksens and the Wimbers together, along with so many others that helped lay the foundation of the Vineyard, was a longing for something authentic. Something real. Authentic worship that was true to the language and culture of the time; authentic faith that not only learned about Jesus, but dared to do the works of Jesus; authentic community that embraced transparency, love for the poor, and being culturally relevant. The Centred Set has always served the posture of authenticity well.

Vineyard Habits

*"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."
(1 Corinthians 4:2)*

A *habit* is a routine of behaviour that is repeated regularly, and tends to occur subconsciously. *Practice* is a customary, habitual, or expected procedure - a way of doing. Both of these sensibilities have been used to describe the various rhythms of common life found in diverse expressions of Christianity over the centuries. Our experience in the Vineyard is that we are no different. There are traits that just seem to come naturally to those who are drawn into our Movement. It is a journey of discovery, more than a process of joining.

practice *Stand with the Poor*

1 We practice an ecclesiology where the poor in the eyes of the world, and the marginalized are welcomed into the centre of Christian community. We resist targeting, programmatic outreach, and tokenism. The key question is: "Are you willing to welcome?" not "How many food hampers did you deliver?" The posture of the "poor in spirit" allows us to welcome each voice, life perspective, and insight - no matter how vulnerable or weak - into the heart of communal discourse. We all wrestle with our idolatry, addictions, vices, and brokenness, discovering hope and freedom in Christ, so the truth is, we are all at some level, just one beggar helping another beggar find bread.

practice *Walk with a Limp*

2 Our desire is to practise the kind of vulnerability in community where none of us is afraid to "walk with a limp." This applies to leadership as much as to anyone else. This requires truth-telling and transparency in a way where no one feels they need to hide for fear of reprisal, rejection, or judgement.

practice *Play: Everyone Gets To!*

3 Our practice is to create generous spaces where everyone gets to play *their part*. This is not simply about individual freedom of expression, nor about demanding conformity. Through the heart of servanthood, communal discernment, and a posture of deference, everyone can find their unique place in community.

practice *Prophecy*

4 We practise the wide spectrum of prophetic ministry: personal, communal, and societal. We embody the message of the kingdom come. We are to be a prophetic presence in culture, speaking truth where there are lies, lament where there is pain, hope where there is despair. As we cultivate this prophetic ethos, we acknowledge that the presence, voice, and empowering of the Spirit comes like a rain, not like water from a single spout. He speaks to the church, through the church, to the world.



practice 5 *Respond*

We practise a spirituality that is rooted in response to God's leading, not our initiation. This impacts all that we do, from missional engagement to liturgical expressions.

practice 6 *Come, Holy Spirit*

It is our practice to invite the presence and empowering of the Holy Spirit in all our gathered spaces, ministry environments, and missional endeavours. Our go-to prayer is "come, Holy Spirit."

practice 7 *Prayer for Healing*

Our desire is to practise consistent, persistent prayer for healing. We see healing at the core of the gospel of the Kingdom. The Triune God is Creator. The creation, both heaven and earth, are in process of being made new, aching for the return of Jesus and the liberation of all God's children - the final healing of the created order. We embrace an audacious faith, daring to believe this new creation is breaking in all around us, reconciling and redeeming all things. Therefore we see creation care and the healing of mind, soul, body, and spirit - both the miraculous and the misericordia - as central to our divine mission.

practice 8 *Expectancy*

We practise expectancy in worship. We are a people of "presence", aware of both the "in us" and "with us," resident and manifest, empowering and sending, ubiquity of God. From His presence, we expect to become His presence in the world. *Incarnating* a new social order; *challenging* the powers and systems of the age; *living* the Sermon on the Mount; *engaging* in the hard justice work of the in-breaking gospel of the kingdom. *Doing* what we see the Father doing.

practice 9 *Risk*

We practise a faith that is not without risk. We hold loosely to title, privilege, reputation, and resource - ready to lay it all down for the sake of obedience to Christ. This could mean everything from praying for a sick neighbour to global mission.

practice 10 *Naturally Supernatural*

We practise a faith that is anchored to real life. We repudiate hype and over-spiritualized ministry. The incarnation of Jesus - His life on earth, His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection - really mean something. He is the way, all the way to the cross. His journey and vocation lead us deeper into what it means to be fully human, here, on earth. Receiving the *dunamis* of the resurrection and walking in Spirit-filled communion, we remain naturally supernatural.

practice **11** *Worship*

We practise an expression of communal worship where the goal is intimate encounter and transformation, beyond mere experience. In the Vineyard, congregational singing has been integral to attaining this kind of intimacy. Those who are filled with the Spirit, sing. Those who have the Word of Christ dwelling in them richly, sing. More than stage presentation and band arrangements, we value the voices of the people. Though the song is key, it cannot achieve the entirety of the goal we desire. Visual art, the motion of dance, instrumentation, liturgy, the use of light, colour, and other gestures are necessary for giving full expression to our worship.

Vineyard Initiatives

"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care." (1 Corinthians 3:10)

Our national initiatives are the building blocks of Vineyard Canada. They lay a foundation for dialogue, co-creation, and innovation. *Formation* synchronizes our theology, spiritual health, and equipping strategies from cradle to grave; *Engage* unifies our efforts in justice and societal impact; *Pulse* distills what we are leaning into in prayer and what we are hearing as a prophetic people; *Emerge* sharpens our local, national, and global missional edge; *Creative* inspires the "right brain" of our Movement.

Formation

Vineyard Formation is about theological and spiritual formation. This means that we are committed to growing strong disciples of Jesus. That process is the work of a lifetime. Learning more about our God and King is a key element of formation and growth.

The goal of all the initiatives under the *Formation* umbrella is to help you grow in your understanding of God, in your maturity as a disciple of Jesus, and your effectiveness in doing the Kingdom-bringing work that He calls us to do. Formation spans the lifetime of a disciple from our Children and Youth ministries, to continuing education and spiritual direction at any age.



**We come together
because we can't
make it alone.**

Engage

We are committed to becoming just communities. We welcome the gifts and voices of those who have been excluded. We are inspired and empowered to humbly engage with justice locally, nationally, and globally.

We believe we have a role and a responsibility in “setting things right”, both in our relationships and society. Sometimes this looks like action and initiative, sometimes it is simply learning to listen.

We believe Jesus is encountered in those our world deems “least”.

Pulse

We believe that God is speaking to us, not just as individuals but as a Movement.

We are focused on creating a culture that leans into prayer, waits, and listens for what the Holy Spirit is speaking across the country. We call out to God and then communally discern the themes and insights coming out of this rich soil.

We look to identify, support, train, connect, and cheer on those individuals within our family who carry the heart, character, and gifting of these key Kingdom life practices. Together, we dream and pray as we press in, setting our compass by the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Emerge

Always desiring to discern the expanding edge of the Kingdom, we develop systems to ensure that our equipping and implementation are relationally based and sustained. Community is at our core. We embrace the risk-taking, innovative work required to grow and develop communities of faith, both in the Canadian and international contexts. We are reimagining what the intersection of vocation and culture-shaping could look like. This may look like church plants, entrepreneurial business ventures, community outreach, cross-cultural engagement, and everything in between.

We understand there is no lasting discipleship without community.

Creative

Creativity and innovation are deep in the roots of the Vineyard. These are expressed both within and without our gathered spaces of worship. We are called to be a patron and protector of the arts. We want to be a safe place for artists of all stripes and hues, celebrating their influence as they create beauty, celebrate truth, and challenge the status quo through fresh language, imagery, sounds, movement, and every other kind of expression.

The work of God is always to create and restore. We are passionate to join in this work.

Vineyard Discipleship

"All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:17-20)

Jesus makes discipleship non-negotiable. To follow Him requires complete obedience and surrender that takes us through the waters of baptism and into a lifelong pursuit of being equipped, equipping others, and making known the words and works of Jesus. The idea of *legacy* is inherent in this endeavour. Authentic disciples model, partner, observe and debrief, all with the intention of eventually stepping aside and releasing others to carry on. We go beyond an exclusive focus on personal development and achievements, to a place where we actively encourage and celebrate the development and achievements of others. We believe this is what Jesus was trying to teach us when He said in John 14:12 that we would do *even greater works than He did*.

It is this understanding of discipleship that compels us to develop leaders, plant churches, and see *all* in our communities mobilized. In the Vineyard, we call this "doing the stuff" - making known the words and works of Jesus, inviting people from all nations to join us in this Great Commission.

Healthy discipleship is not only concerned with the mission, but also has regard for soulcare, spiritual direction, and accountability. Each aspect of life matters. Every season has value. Health begets health.

We see three Spirit-directed moments in the life of Jesus that are important for us to reflect upon. They are found in the Gospel of Luke, chapters 3 and 4.

As His followers, we should expect to experience the same. God is found in all three. Each is sacred. We will enter these spaces again and again on this Kingdom adventure.

Immersed in the River

At times we feel love. Embraced. God is closer than our skin...

He is surrounded by love. His cousin, John, had praised Jesus before the crowds with a stunning accolade: he didn't even deserve to tie Jesus' sandals. Then, he immerses Jesus in the Jordan River. Jesus feels His body submerge in the warm water. As the water parts and His face emerges, Heaven also parts and a voice declares that Jesus is the Beloved Son. Surrounded by the praise of earthly and Heavenly family, His body and soul is drenched in the warmth of embrace.

Sent to the Desert

At times we feel abandoned. Alone. Tested. Taken to the edge...

At once, Jesus is driven into the desert - by the Spirit. Where previously the praise of John, the voice of the Father, and the warmth of the river itself were all around Him, now only sand, wind, and scrub. This is the moment to show His faithful love to the Father, defying the harsh heat, wind, hunger, and lies thrust at Him. The river is within, while desert surrounds Him in a time of tempting and proving. The devil is now mocking and tempting Him. Is the love gone? No. That river is underground as Living Water flowing in His innermost being. It is from this depth He must draw strength.

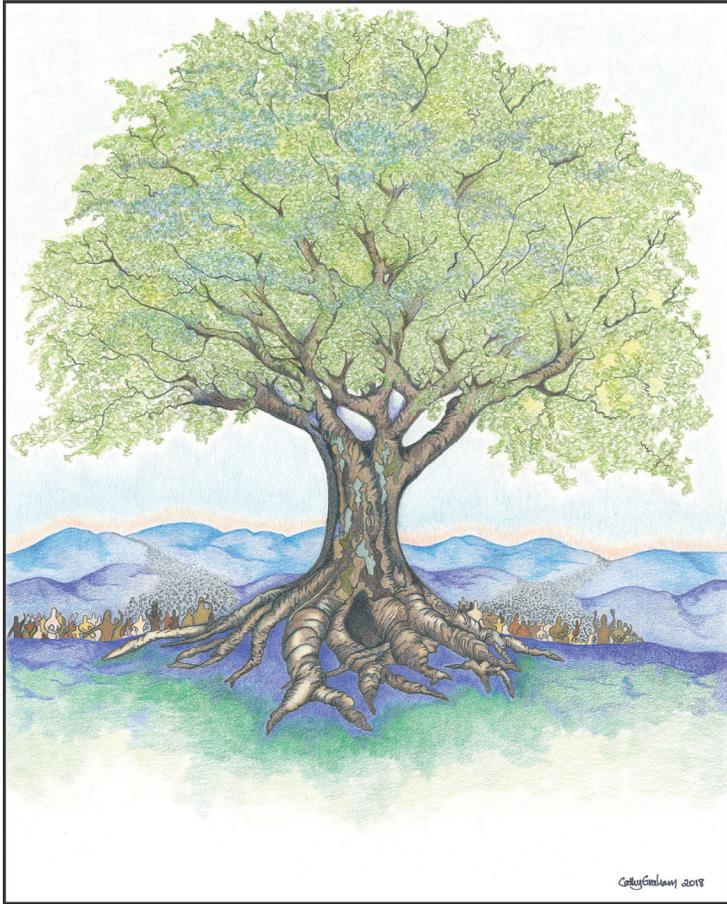
Into the City

At times we feel abandon. Empowered. Engaged in the mission...

Luke tells us that from the desert, the Spirit fills Jesus and leads Him to the city - to Nazareth. Then Capernaum. And He begins to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God. He moves right in with the suffering people of the city. He teaches, He heals, and casts out demons. He announces the year of God's favour; He releases the debts of the poor.

The Sycamore Tree | by Cathy Graham

While in Montreal for the 2018 National Team gathering, I had a powerful dream in the early hours of July 23. I saw a huge sycamore tree break through the ground and rise up rapidly to full maturity, sprouting branches and unfurling its leaves. It was so huge that it cast a shadow over the land - not in a negative sense - but like a shade and a covering. I watched as people of every race and ethnicity began to come in droves over the mountains. They streamed towards the tree to take refuge beneath it. Many were carrying heavy loads that they put down; some were even carrying others on their shoulders that they lifted off with great relief.



Cathy Graham has served as a prophetic voice and leader within the Vineyard for a number of years as a member of the National Team. This rendering is remarkable for its precision and technique, given that Cathy is not a trained artist, nor has she spent any significant amount of time in this discipline. Her dream occurred during the first ever Vineyard Canada National Gathering to be held in the Province of Quebec. That this prophetic metaphor would be given on French Canadian soil adds to the profound nature of its meaning.

Slowly, people began to relax and sit together in the shade of the massive tree. Ease settled over the crowd, and they began to talk to each other. Conversation flowed and laughter could be heard. There was a strong sense of connection and safety beneath the umbrella of the sycamore tree. I heard the Lord speak to me as I was waking up: *"This is the Vineyard Church."*

So, I did what I always do. I researched and prayed for wisdom about what God was showing me. This is what I learned: *Across different religious texts and literature, the sycamore symbolizes strength, protection, reliability, and clarity of sight. As a species, it is highly valued for its durable, lightweight wood and its fruit. There are several references to the sycamore tree in scripture. King David had a special overseer to care for these trees, just as he did for the olives. It is interesting to note that sycamore trees are frequently planted and flourishing in the "waysides". Their leaves are heart-shaped, downy, and fragrant. The fruit grows in clusters like grapes, directly from the trunk in little sprigs. To make the fruit edible, it must be punctured with a sharp instrument a few days before harvesting. The tree is always verdant and bears fruit several times in a year, without being confined to fixed seasons. Therefore, it's a permanent food-bearer and invaluable source for the poor.*

These are the facts about the tree, but I felt that God was drawing parallels through the symbolism to us as a Movement. This is what I believe He spoke to me: *The Vineyard Movement brings strength, reliability, protection (justice), and clarity of sight for those it serves. It is a source of these qualities because it has embraced being broken to bear fruit, and seeks out the waysides and low-lying areas to grow and flourish. Its leaves bear the image of His heart, and its trunk bears fruit in and out of season to feed the poor. Therefore, God has made it a shade and refuge for the nations.*

I knew I had to put this image onto paper as a form of Visio Divina.

“What would God do if we gave Him the chance? What if fear or self interest didn't restrict us? What if the need for control didn't overwhelm us? What would God do?

If our own ministries were not the important issue, what would it be like? If 'church' wasn't about us, our place, and our ways, but instead was about Jesus and what He wanted to do here on earth, what would He reveal of His heart?

What if it did not matter to us what was said about us - good or bad - and the only opinion that mattered was Jesus'? What would it be like?

What if we loved what Jesus loved? What if we let God be God and we just be His people?

What if self protection wasn't the issue and we didn't care about looking foolish? What would God do?

Don't you want to know? Don't you want to find out?”

John Wimber (1934 - 1997)

