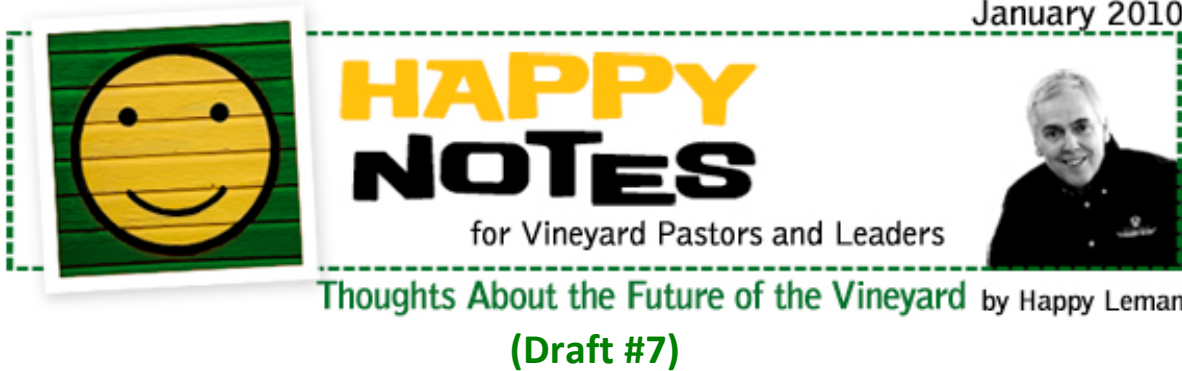


January 2010



Holy Spirit Visitation

At a November 2009 meeting of the Midwest Vineyard Leadership Team, the Holy Spirit came in a powerful way. We'd been talking about the future, where our movement was headed, and how we needed to respond. One of the leaders suggested we listen to the YouTube video of Jack Hayford speaking to the Vineyard in 1999. **(On YouTube as "Jack Hayford speaks to the Vineyard.")**

His presentation was essentially a 6 minute prophecy during a longer message that he gave at a Vineyard National Conference. In this, he stated that we had been birthed as a supernatural movement. Our main contribution was to see the salvation of many souls through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (Power Evangelism).

Hayford went on to say that the supernatural anointing was our roots (our birthright / DNA) and we were called to be carriers of that to the entire Body of Christ. He challenged us not to back down and to press ahead. He stated that we were like the early church in that we did not overwhelm people with academic brilliance but with supernatural power. (He clarified this by stating that our academic insight, like the early church, was very good but not our leading edge.)

Near the conclusion he made a very pointed statement. He asked us whether we would **"be willing to be jump in the river or simply be content just to have a map to know where the river was."** Obviously when he put it that way, we all agreed that we wanted to not only jump but live in the river.

As the Spirit came into the room, we stopped what we were doing and realized that we were having a special visitation. As we prayed and waited on the Lord, the visitation had a powerful impact on all of us. Some were weeping, others were quietly praying, and all of us were convinced that this had been a moment in which the Lord wanted our attention. We believe the Lord was firmly underscoring the words of Jack Hayford in his prophetic message.

This event led to a lengthy and ongoing discussion of our movement. The following thoughts have been collected over 20 years and are not the final word on this subject. Rather, they are intended to spur further discussion and to sharpen our focus in the days ahead.

A Point on the Spear

At various levels of the Vineyard, there have been discussions where we are going as we head into the future. **What will we focus on, what will others know us as, and what will be the "main and plain."**

Some have stated that the Kingdom is broad and wide and includes many things. In truth, it certainly does. Any good thing could easily fit in a Kingdom context.

Others have noted that we need to be more focused. There's been a long held belief that no church/movement can do everything and we are no different. Some of us have lobbied that we need to have a very clear **"point on our spear."**

To those of us purporting the latter point of view, we believe that the **point on our spear** is close to what we call **"being a people of the presence."** We live this out with our focus on passion (for Jesus) and compassion (for others). Others would call this our twin focus on worship and ministry (for the lost, sick, and poor). In the past, we called this the **"main and plain."** However we say this, a portion of us still believe this should be our leading edge or **point on our spear**. We believe it should be our starting point and everything else flows from that.

A People of the Presence

The points below are simply thoughts I've developed over many years. They're not necessarily in order although I believe the first one is the most important.

1. In being a "people of the presence," we need to go back to Exodus and see what Moses said in Exodus 33: 15-16 **"If you don't go with us personally, don't let us move a step from this place. If you don't go with us how will anyone ever know that your people and I have found favor with you? How else will they know we are special and distinct from all the other people on the earth?"** We believe it's absolutely essential that we keep the Presence of God first and foremost among us. We want our people to experience God above all else.

To do that, we believe we need focus on the twin foundations of the Vineyard – worship and ministry (or we could say passion and compassion). We believe these two best fulfill the great commandments of loving God and loving others. The focus of our loving others is to reach to those who are lost, sick, and poor.

This point also fits nicely with Bert Waggoner's belief that the most important sign of the Kingdom is the emergence of the community. We agree that this people is indeed to be the ones in whom God dwells (His presence resides) and represents the **community of hope** to a despairing world.

2. To help elaborate on this point, we go back to what John Wimber called the **Vineyard Man**. This simple drawing spoke volumes to us in the beginning as the Vineyard was being built. As you can see from the drawing, we're built upon the foundation of the Word of God (the Bible) as viewed through the lens of the Kingdom of God. The 2 legs were labeled worship and compassion. We also call them worship and ministry or passion and compassion. That is still what the Vineyard is best known for around the world. To be true to our roots, we must keep these strong and well.



3. In 1994, John Wimber invited all the National Leaders to Mexico. At the annual meeting, he was speaking to us about the future. He started to weep over the fact that we had never succeeded in the realm of power evangelism. He stated plainly **“I don’t believe power evangelism has so much failed as it has simply not been tried.”** He challenged us to become power evangelists.
4. Many authors write about the Kingdom. In fact the Kingdom of God viewpoint of scripture seems to be the way that the majority of theologians approach the Bible today. Yet for all the writers (many of them very good), basically only John Wimber seems to have a supernatural healing element in his writings. Most talk about the Kingdom having come, the already and not yet, but they simply leave signs and wonders aspect lying on the sidelines. **John Wimber on the other hand stated that healing was one major sign that the Kingdom had come. He drew his support from the ministry of Jesus Christ.** We think that John emphasizing these points is very special to us as we live out our lives as members of the Vineyard movement.
5. Some writers such as N. T. Wright have described the Bible as a **“5 Act Play.”** Act 5 always has to do with us as believers living out the message in a contemporary context. Following that analogy, each of us has a part to play. It appears that the Vineyard has been given the part of supernatural ministry, salvation, and work with the poor (power evangelism). For us to not play our part or to play another part creates problems. The entire Body of Christ works best when we each play our part.
6. Speaking of playing our part, there is a principle from the world of economics that applies to the Kingdom. In economics the **“Law of Comparative Advantage”** says that if one country can make two products better than another country, it should make the one that it makes relatively better and let the second country make the other product. Using this concept, all countries of the world actually benefit. This principle is the understanding of why countries trade (exchange goods and services) with one another.

In regard to the Kingdom of God, we’ve all been assigned something which we do better than others. In this sense, the majority of our energy should probably go to what we do best – which for us is **“being a people of the presence.”** We then freely give it away to others and receive from them what they do best. If we all did what God assigned us to do, the Kingdom of God would prosper at a level way beyond what it currently does.

7. In regard to playing our part, all movements have DNA and birthrights. Ours is clearly in the supernatural realm. (See the part on Hayford above.) For us to walk away from that birthright causes a problem for us and others. Yet some Vineyards have moved their birthright of signs, wonders, and evangelism to an equal or lesser role than other aspects in the Kingdom. We are appealing that we return strongly to our birthright.
8. The discussions in points 6 and 7 are underscored by an article by Charles Park in the Fall 2009 edition of Cutting Edge. In the article, he references a book called **“Blue Ocean Strategy.”** This business book states that companies do best when they compete in the **blue ocean.** This is defined as areas of uniqueness, fresh ideas, and innovative concepts. They struggle when they compete more in the **red ocean** which is full of competition, flowing blood, and everybody doing the same thing.

In Park's article, he believes the Vineyard is perfectly aligned to be a blue ocean institution. He believes what we have been given is very unique as we attempt to reach this next generation. Most of us holding the "**worship and ministry view**" would believe that our blue ocean is somehow involved with these simple concepts. We are one of the few movements in the entire world that presses into the Kingdom of God as **enacted, inaugurated eschatology** (Derek Morphey). We are lobbying for the Vineyard as a movement to reconsider what this means to us and how we can effectively be functioning in the blue ocean. We actually believe almost every church would have blue ocean territory if they would stay in it and enjoy the assignment God has given them. Unfortunately we as believers often try to slip over into the red ocean and encounter trouble that was not supposed to happen.

This article is somewhat related to the message Charles gave at the 2007 National Conference. In that address, he stated that the Vineyard was perfectly aligned to meet the needs of this generation because of the following 3 things.

- An understandable message.
- A culturally relevant presentation
- **Supernatural power**

Again he is lobbying for us staying strong on the aspect of supernatural power and intervention. He clearly believes it is who we are and we must not lose it.

9. When we have questions of where to focus, we simply resolve it by looking at the ministry of Jesus Christ. The majority of His time was helping people who were struggling in the realm of separation from God or sickness. The majority of His focus went into those 2 aspects. **We want to continue His ministry in this generation.** Thus we believe it's important that we focus on the healing ministries.
10. As we look at Luke 4:18-19, we see one of the great verses that underscores the ministry of Jesus Christ. That verse says "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, **he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor**, he sent me to see that the captives be released, that the blind see, and that the oppressed be set free and that the time of the Lord's favor has come." **The word that has changed in meaning over the years is the word "poor."** When we were first in the Vineyard, most of us took that word to mean poor as including all men and women who were apart from the fullness of God. While it had a financial connotation, it had a broader connotation as poor in spirit, poor in relationships, etc.

Today, the word "poor" has taken on almost exclusively a financial implication. This is especially true in secular settings and is bleeding into the church. As a result, there are a large number of efforts toward helping the financially poor among us. Unfortunately this sometimes is done without concern for their spiritual condition or tying it into salvation. We want to support aggressive efforts to help the poor (in all realms) within a Kingdom context.

What I'm Not Saying

When I've shared thoughts like this in the past, some have assumed that I wanted to return to a Word of Faith / Kansas City / California Healing or even a Pentecostal type of model. That is absolutely not what I'm saying.

Di and I spent time in the Word of Faith movement in the late 70's. We are good friends with the people from Kansas City and have many friends in the California Healing Movement. We have gleaned valuable things from them such as learning more about the Bible, seeing many wonderful promises in the scriptures, and observing the Spirit moving powerfully. We came to appreciate their zeal and focus on pressing into healing and evangelism.

At the same time, we realize that what they were doing was not what we wanted to do. Their overemphasis of the **“Kingdom now”** as compared to the **“Kingdom not yet”** was troubling. They often left people without a proper **theology of pain** to go with their **theology of power**. We greatly appreciate how the Vineyard has brought balance in this area.

We also completely bought into John Wimber's idea that we should be **“naturally supernatural.”** We often felt that the camp from which we came used forms of hype, manipulation, and positive thinking to achieve their ends. We fully bought into the concept of simply **“doing what the Father's doing.”**

Having said the above, we do not want to return to any of the models listed above. That has never been our goal. We do want to emphasize the supernatural power of Jesus Christ as a healing God (John 14:12). We want balance in the **“already – not yet”** and without hype or manipulation. We truly want to be a naturally supernatural people as we go about our lives – whether it's in church, small group, in the marketplace, or simply with family and friends.

In some ways, we are striving for that **“radical middle”** which is so elusive. We want to maintain high enthusiasm and passion while staying natural and culturally relevant. Many groups have tried and struggled to maintain their balance.

Summary

We are not opposed to anything the Vineyard is doing at the moment. In fact, the Vineyard is involved in many wonderful, diverse, and exciting ministries – all of which have God written upon them.

We are simply stating that we want to have a clear, crisp “point on our spear” so that people will know who we are and where we're going. We want to stay sharp and true to our focus so that we can make a big difference in the lives of the people around us.

We want to maintain this sharp focus for our own members as well as those who are looking toward us from the outside. We want to have a direction that we can sustain for many generations to come.

Note: Since this is still in “Draft Form,” your response is welcome and appreciated. Let's start a dialogue on our future.

*(Happy Notes are simply thoughts, opinions, and reflections of Happy Leman. They are not intended as official Vineyard statements. Happy can be reached at: The Vineyard Church
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