

# VISION & VALUES

## COURSE

## VISION & VALUES COURSE – Course Pre-Reading for session 1

### 1. COURSE PURPOSE.

We are delighted that you are going to join our Vineyard Vision and Values Course. The course will run for 7 sessions. It is designed to give you a clear understanding of our Vision as a Christian community. It attempts to clearly define what we value and why, and as a consequence explains the priorities and practices that we consider to be important. We hope it will help you to understand, in some depth, not only what we do, but the way we do it and why. It will also help you to understand what we believe commitment to one's church means in practice and what our hope is for those who wish to play an active part in furthering the Vision of this community.

We aim to encourage each participant to think through what they believe, value, give priority to and practice and what they expect from their relationship with their church community. By making our position clear and you thinking through your position, you will be able to make a valuable comparison and assess how aligned we are together. People can work most effectively together when they share a common Vision based on common Values that determine common Priorities and Practices. How can two walk together unless they agree to do so? (Amos 3v3).

Our purpose in this course is **NOT** to try to RECRUIT you to our point of view **NOR** get you involved in our ministry activities. Our highest value is to help every believer find the part of the body of Christ where they can be most effectively mobilised to extend the Kingdom of God. By clearly stating Our Vision, Values, Priorities and Practices we hope to enable you to accurately determine the call of God on your life as well as your placement within His body.

While our vision may experience ongoing development, our underlying values and priorities have remained relatively constant. Responding to them, however, pre-supposes that you have had the opportunity to identify the Vision God has given you. For this reason our **first step** is to help you identify, as well as you can, your own personal vision, values, priorities & practices.

The **second step** will be to challenge you with the particulars of the Vision God has placed upon us as a church community. (Of course, much of our vision and values is simply a reflection of essential biblical Christianity and therefore should be embraced by all. However, at least some of what we propose is an outworking of our specific calling within the larger church).

The **final step** will be to determine how God's call on you is interwoven with the call of God upon the Vineyard. So whether or not the Vineyard is your place of belonging, the good news is: you will be closer to discovering your place/part in the body of Christ. A good situation to be in.

**Pre-reading & Questions for each session.** One of the most important parts of the course is the preparation and advance reading before each session. This allows you time to consider your position on some key topics ahead of the session. Some of you may not have had time or opportunity to think about such things before and that is perfectly OK. For some, these things will be very new and you may be unsure of what you believe – that is perfectly OK as well. Do not feel intimidated, you will not have to share your answers with anyone else if you do not want to. It is for your own benefit, so have a go anyway. Experience has shown that the more you put in to such a course the more you will get out of it. To get the maximum out of this course we strongly recommend you make a special effort to attend each session. Should there be any reason that you are unable to make one of the sessions please advise the course leader, in advance, as this helps with session planning & catering.

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### 2. WHO IS THE COURSE INTENDED FOR?

We have written this course with four groups of people in mind :-

- **New Believers converted through the Vineyard:** to further instruct young Christians that have been growing up within Vineyard churches. In your case we are assuming that the foundations of the Christian faith have been established and that you are ready to more fully take your place within the church & together see His kingdom furthered.
- **Those raised in the church as children and now growing into adulthood.** This course should give you "language" that will enlarge your understanding of what you have already been experiencing ---- enabling you to more effectively commit yourself to it.
- **Those who believe that God is leading you into the Vineyard** as the place where you can most effectively fulfil his call to ministry. While you have been connected with another part of Christ's body for some part of your Christian life, you believe that you are being led by God's Spirit towards us. We believe this course will greatly help you in your process of confirming this and getting integrated.
- **Vineyard Brussels Members** who are attending to learn more about Vineyard. As a member, you may want to know more about what this means for the church and yourself. We believe this course will reassure you and give you a fuller understanding of our values and at the same time positively challenge you about the progress still to be made.

### 3. COURSE STRUCTURE & TOPICS

Each session will be in two parts. After a welcome & introduction, participants will divide into small groups to discuss issues or questions arising from the background material and questions given out in the previous session. It is important to emphasise that the preparation you put in before a session will greatly determine how much you get out of it. The groups will be invited to report back after 15-20 minutes, and the session leader will attempt to summarise the issues raised before the coffee break. After the break the leader will provide teaching arising from the topics under discussion , and there will be time for individual ministry or prayer before the session ends. The aim will be to end promptly at 10.15 pm

In the sessions offered in this course we will cover the following topics :-

Session 1: The Purpose of the Course, The Purpose of the Church

Session 2 : Values 1 :- Our Personal Walk with God & Christian Lifestyle

Session 3: Values 2 :- Church Community Life & Leadership

Session 4: Values 3 :- Church Style & What You Think We Reflect as a Church

Session 5 : Priorities 1 :- Intimacy with God, Fellowship, Teaching & Training

Session 6 : Priorities 2 :- Ministry & Mission

Session 7 : Beliefs & Practices :- Statement of Faith, Genetic Code, Vision / Mission, Vineyard & "You":- Getting Involved

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### **4. INTRODUCTION TO THE VINEYARD**

A brief historical sketch of the origins of the Vineyard movement worldwide, in the Benelux and of Vineyard Brussels will enable you to gain an understanding of how our calling has emerged and give you an idea of how we came to be where we are today.

The Vineyard movement was founded by John and Carol Wimber in the USA in the late 1970's. There are two important things to note about the origins of the Vineyard movement:

1. It was always John Wimber's intention that the Vineyard would be thoroughly evangelical both in its theological orientation & acceptance of the Great Commission (the goal of Evangelical churches). At the same time, however, he pursued the goal of including Pentecostal experience in that framework. The driving force behind this somewhat radical association was his firm conviction that the so-called "Great Commission" is a call to both "Words" and "Works" (Proclamation and Demonstration). It includes doing the "works of power" that Jesus did as well as "teaching what He taught" - the works confirming the words, by God's grace.
2. John had always been a risk taker believing that praxis (learning by doing) was and is a primary method of discipleship. Therefore he was not afraid to pursue a given direction before fully understanding it. He was also one who took the attitude of a learner.

### **5. THE HISTORY OF THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT**

In one sense, Vineyard Christian Fellowship was born out of repentance. In 1976 Carol Wimber began to develop an insatiable hunger for God. She saw her own religious expertise and opinions in the light of his truth and began to seek him. Carol retreated to her bedroom for weeks on end, weeping, repenting, crying out to God. Soon she left her place of hiding and sought those who she had wronged through harsh and misdirected instruction. Not long afterward, many of these people began to meet together to worship God and pray. This small group seemed innocent enough, but God had given Carol a vision that these people would one day be a mighty church.

As this small fellowship began to grow, their home church became alarmed and the growing group was asked and blessed to leave. Knowing only that they had a new heart for God, they decided to make an organizational effort to begin formal services and on Mother's Day, 1977, Bob Fulton led the first meeting in Yorba Linda. Soon Carol's husband, John, resigned his position at Fuller Evangelistic Association to lead the fellowship. By 1978 their first facility was too small, and the group began meeting at a Junior High School.

Early on the church became part of the Calvary Chapel system. It was a young church then, with the median age around 23. Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda, as they were then called, began to develop a reputation as being a church that was a little "out of control." God had already instilled within them the priority of worship. As worship songs were sung, sometimes for an hour, people wept, raised their hands and knelt on the floor. Not only was worship slightly outside the norm, but soon the church began to experience God's supernatural power. It became evident that the church was going in a different direction than the Calvary Chapel philosophy. They made an amicable change to the name Vineyard Christian Fellowship, the name used by a small group of churches originally started by Kenn Gulliksen.

The church at this time began to grow in an astounding way. God began gifting them with evangelism. During 1978-79 approximately 1,000 people were baptized and by the time they moved to Anaheim in late '83 they had already filled their new facility with 2,000 people. As Anaheim became their home, the priority of sending began to take effect.

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What began as a small group of 15 people was truly becoming a movement as the few initial Vineyards quickly began to multiply - first on the west coast of the U.S. then across the country, into Canada, England and eventually throughout the world. Since that time the movement has grown and matured. In 1995, Canada was the first nation to be released to their own National Association followed by England in the spring of 1996. This marked the beginning of a new stage of development in the Vineyard: the forming of a consortium of nations joined together by God for the common purpose of extending; the kingdom of God in every nation. By 2002 there were over 1,000 Vineyard churches in more than 50 countries of the world.

The central ingredient in experiencing this favour, in the past & present, is also the key to the future – a hunger for God that was nurtured in Carol's heart in the privacy of her bedroom. If we keep that focus as our primary concern we can be assured of his continued mercy & blessing.

### **6. THE HISTORY OF THE VINEYARD IN THE BENELUX**

The origins of the Vineyard in Benelux can be traced back to 1987, when Jan-Bernard Struik had contact with the Vineyard movement at a conference in Germany. He was so impacted that the following year he went to California to take part in the Vineyard Pastors' School. In 1989 he helped to set up an organisation (called Kana), which in subsequent years held conferences bringing prominent Vineyard speakers such as John and Carol Wimber to Europe.

In 1994 the church which Jan-Bernard was leading in Wageningen, in the East of the Netherlands, became the first Vineyard church in the Benelux, through the process of adoption. About 4 years later, in 1998, Jan-Bernard handed over the leadership of this church to the leaders they had trained up and he and his wife Tineke set about pioneering a new Vineyard church in Utrecht. Once established the Utrecht Vineyard became the centre for coordinating Vineyard Benelux. Just before the Utrecht Vineyard was planted, a new Vineyard church was set up in Zwolle in 1997, though this was closed in 2001. In 1999 a Vineyard church in Dieren came into being, and in 2002 a new church planting initiative was launched in Rotterdam. This has also now closed. In 2008 a church in Kollumerzwaag, became a vineyard and there were church plants in Amsterdam & Amersfoort.

Meanwhile the Vineyard started in Belgium, first in Gent in 1996, then with the International Christian Fellowship (ICF) church plant “La Vigne” in Brussels in 1997, then in Antwerp in 2000. We joined in Jan 2004 and in Sept 2007 a second Vineyard has been established in Gent.

In October 1998 Jan-Bernard and Tineke were named National Director of the Vineyard in Benelux and National Coordinator for Poland and the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Vineyard Benelux thus has a particular responsibility for developing the Vineyard in these four countries. It also has contacts in Russia.

## **7. THE HISTORY OF VINEYARD BRUSSELS (formerly ICF)**

International Christian Fellowship (ICF) was born in 1986 when a team of five couples came over from the United States with the vision to plant a French-speaking church in Brussels. They started meeting together for fellowship in one of their homes; other people joined with them; and eventually it became clear that God was bringing into being an international church. ICF grew steadily and moved out of the home, into the British School, then subsequently into the German Church, then St Michelle, then Centre Lumen, then in Av Franz Guillaume.

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In the mid 1990's ICF had significant contact with the Vineyard movement in the UK. Teams from London visited Belgium and brought great blessing. The elders adopted much of their material and practices, though it was felt that it was not the time to join in more closely with the Vineyard churches. In 1997 one of ICF's elders, David Floyd and his wife Mary, who had a vision for French-speaking Belgians, were encouraged to start a French-speaking church. David wanted to plant a Vineyard style church and progressed this dream with the support of Jan-Bernard, the co-ordinator of the Vineyard in Benelux. The French-speaking plant was appropriately called "La Vigne" and is run under the overall leadership of the Benelux Vineyards. ICF supported the new plant but did not seek to become part of the Vineyard at this time. It remained aligned with the local Belgian Antioch Network of churches, while maintaining close contact with both the Vineyard movement in the UK and the Benelux.

In 2002 the ICF leadership believed that the church should seriously explore the possibility of becoming a Vineyard. During 2002 we became a friend of the Vineyard and began to build much stronger links with the Benelux Vineyards. We had to re-examine both our beliefs and practices and see if we were truly aligned with the Vineyard in both practice and relationship. We were officially welcomed into the Vineyard movement in January 2004 when we became a full member of the Association of Vineyard Churches (AVC). Vineyard Brussels is committed to supporting Christian mission work both in Belgium and abroad.

(A more comprehensive history of the Vineyard movement can be found in Alexander Venter's book "Doing Church"; or Bill Jackson's book "The Quest for the Radical Middle.")

**8. QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 1**

Throughout the course we will be asking you to discuss your own vision and values, etc with each other in small groups. so that you can use that information to compare with our Vineyard positions as presented in the main teaching session. You can use the notes you prepare below to help you in this discussion. Please try to answer the following questions for session 1:-

Why has God left us here on earth until finally Jesus comes again?,

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In your own words, try to describe what you think should be the overall purpose of every church

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