

## Outline History

### A Brief History of the Vineyard Movement

The Association of Vineyard Churches is one of the fastest growing church-planting movements in the world. The Vineyard story is about ordinary people who worship and serve an extraordinary God. The Vineyard is simply one thread in the rich tapestry of the historic and global Church of Jesus Christ. But it is a thread of God's weaving.

From the beginning, Vineyard pastors and leaders have sought to hold in tension the biblical doctrines of the Christian faith with an ardent pursuit of the present day work of the Spirit of God. Maintaining that balance is never easy in the midst of rapid growth and renewal.

John Wimber was a founding leader of the Vineyard. His influence profoundly shaped the theology and practice of Vineyard churches from their earliest days until his death in November 1997. When John was conscripted by God he was, in the words of Christianity Today, a "beer-guzzling, drug-abusing pop musician, who was converted at the age of 29 while chain-smoking his way through a Quaker-led Bible study" (Christianity Today, editorial, Feb. 9 1998).

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

Throughout this time, John's conservative evangelical paradigm for understanding the ministry of the church began to grow. George Eldon Ladd's theological writings on the kingdom of God convinced John intellectually that the all the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit should be active in the church. Encounters with Fuller missiologists Donald McGavaran and C. Peter Wagner and seasoned missionaries and international students gave him credible evidence for combining evangelism with healing and prophecy. As he became more convinced of God's desire to be active in the world through all the biblical gifts of the Spirit, John began to teach and train his church to imitate Jesus' full-orbed kingdom ministry. He began to 'do the stuff' of the Bible that he had formerly only read about.

As John and his congregation sought God in intimate worship they experienced empowerment by the Holy Spirit, significant renewal in the gifts and conversion growth. It became clear that the church's emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit was not shared by some leaders in the Calvary Chapel movement. In 1982, John's church left Calvary Chapel and joined a small group of Vineyard churches. Vineyard was a name chosen by Kenn Gulliksen, a prolific church planter affiliated with Calvary Chapel, for a church he planted in Los Angeles in 1974. Pastors and leaders from the handful of Vineyard churches began looking to John for direction. And the Vineyard movement was born.

John Wimber had considerable impact during his visits to the UK, especially at St Andrew's Chorleywood and Holy Trinity Brompton. There was a real thirst for what the Vineyard offered. John and Eleanor Mumford spent 18 months at Anaheim Vineyard with John Wimber prior to returning to England in 1986 to plant the first UK Vineyard church in South West London. Further churches followed and today there are over 90 in the UK.

Internationally, there are now more than 1000 Vineyard churches worldwide, an international church planting movement, a publishing house and a music production company. Vineyard worship songs have helped thousands of churches experience intimacy with God. Many churches have been equipped to continue Jesus' ministry of proclaiming the kingdom, healing the sick, casting out demons and training disciples.

The Vineyard's journey has not been a straight path. It winds through many trials and triumphs. If interested in more, we recommend Bill Jackson's book, "The Quest for the Radical Middle." This readable history explores the events, issues and people who shaped the Vineyard in its first two decades.