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**The Faith Vineyard Christian Fellowship**

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis contains what I have considered to be significant identifiers and characteristics of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, and, more specifically, of the Faith VCF of Calgary. I have briefly described the historical origins of this new religious movement, with some reference of similarities and differences when compared to previous charismatic movements. The Calgary Faith VCF is for the most part the focus of this thesis. The descriptive chapter deals with the leadership, goals, methods, and philosophy of the church. It is in this chapter which we discover that the Faith VCF is a unique VCF in that it has as its model the Cell Church model, unlike any other Canadian VCF. In 1986 Robin Perrin compiled a survey which had been completed by over 1000 American VCF members. I used this survey in the study of the Faith VCF and had 36 completed. The results from Perrin's survey was compared with the results from my survey in a desire to discern the differences and similarities between American VCFs and a Canadian one. To further understand the Faith VCF, Mary Douglas' grid/group theory of the relationship between social structure and cosmology was used. It provided models which allowed the widening of the comparative circle from other VCF's to African tribes such as the Dinka and Nuer. Thus compared, I was able to place the Faith VCF on a grid/group graph which helped in the understanding of the social and cosmological make up of the Faith VCF.

I dedicate this thesis to

My encourager, motivator, and companion, Marci Loewen

&

In the memory of my Father, who would have been proud.

\*

With special thanks to the following for their support:

Vi Loewen

\*

Ralph & Mary Malloy

\*

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## Chapter 1

### The Vineyard in History

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship (VCF), a branch of which is the subject of this thesis, did not arise in a vacuum, nor is its presence unexplainable from a historical perspective. The VCF was born as a hybrid out of two vital and powerful movements of Christianity in the USA. The two 'parents', if you will, are the Evangelical and the Charismatic movements. It would be best to begin the discussion of the VCF with an overview of the environment which gave it birth. The following discussion of the VCF and its historical preconditions is largely taken from Chapter 2 of Robin D. Perrin's work *The Signs and Wonders Movement*<sup>1</sup>. He provides an excellent overview and summation of the movement's history which has proved invaluable to me.

The post WWII Evangelical movement arose out of the dissatisfaction with the separatism, intellectual mediocrity, and critical spirit of the Fundamentalist movement. The Evangelical movement stresses beliefs that they consider to be orthodox, which include: 1) a belief in the supreme authority and inerrancy of the Bible; 2) a belief in the divinity of Christ; 3) a belief in the actual death and resurrection of Christ; 4) the devil as an active spiritual being; 5) the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus; 6) the importance of proselytising all non-believers<sup>2</sup>.

Pentecostal renewal movements have been influencing both Protestant and Catholic churches around the world since before the turn of the twentieth century<sup>3</sup>. The first of these

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<sup>1</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter, James Davison (1983) *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Robert (1979) *Visions of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

renewal movements created Pentecostal denominations early in this century. Subsequent renewal movements have brought charismatic influence into the mainline churches, such as the Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, and the Roman Catholic<sup>4</sup>. The early Pentecostal movement began predominantly among the uneducated black communities of the south of the USA. Later charismatic movements usually attract people of middle class who are dissatisfied with their traditional religious denominations and the surrounding secular society.

### **The Rise of Fundamentalism**

Around 1890 the ideas of modernism were becoming troublesome for traditional Protestant Christians in America. This resulted “in the emergence of a ‘New Christianity’”<sup>5</sup>. Emphasis on the social gospel and “co-operative Christianity”<sup>6</sup> were characteristics of the “New Christianity”. Such ideas and their effect on theology were seen by conservative Protestants as a compromise of the traditional creeds and doctrines of the Protestant church. By the end of the 1920’s conservative authority was no longer strong. The churches of the “New Christianity” began to make changes according to the new secular philosophies and sciences, joining forces with secular society in attempting to “tone down the offences to modern sensibilities of a Bible filled with miracles and a gospel that proclaimed human salvation from eternal damnation only through Christ’s atoning works on the cross”<sup>7</sup>. To the “old line” conservatives, soon to be called

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Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p36.

<sup>6</sup> Hunter, James Davison (1983) *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Marsden, George (1987) *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New*

Fundamentalists, any such changes by “modernists” were inexcusable. This disagreement led to much debate between the two sides centralising on the issue of the authority of Scripture. In the end the majority of denominations tended, with varying degrees, towards modernity and its ideas. This is the development of what are commonly termed as the liberal mainline churches. The fundamentalists declared war on the perceived compromises of these churches, such as the belief in the human and fallible characteristics of the Bible.

One of the anti-modernist ideas developed by the fundamentalists, according to George Marsden, was the doctrine of dispensationalism. This doctrine divides history into seven different “dispensations” of time. Each of these dispensations is characterised by humanity’s inability to please God<sup>8</sup>. This present age, the “church age”, is, according to many fundamentalists, predicted in the Bible to be a time of apostasy of churches and the moral collapse of ‘Christian civilisation’<sup>9</sup>. This, then, was a time for the ‘true’ church to fight against modernity. Thus, dispensationalism provided the framework from which the fundamentalists withdrew from society and fought the liberals to preserve the ‘true’ faith. Two factors developed from the doctrine of dispensationalism which would eventually aid in the development of the new evangelicals in the 1940’s. These factors are the commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible and separatism from the ‘apostasy’ of the mainline church.

### **The New Evangelicals**

As a part of their fight against liberalism and apostasy, the fundamentalists developed a highly antagonistic attitude towards any who did not agree with the fundamentals of their faith. Due to the intellectualism of the liberals and the effect this intellectualism had on their theology,

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*Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing. p4.

<sup>8</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1978) *The Worldly Evangelicals*. New York: Harper and Row.

<sup>9</sup> Marsden, George (1987) *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

the fundamentalists developed an anti-intellectual emphasis<sup>10</sup>. This anti-intellectualism and antagonistic attitude towards the other churches was in part significant in the development of a group of Christians who are now known as the evangelicals and who wish “to distinguish itself from the extreme separatism, bad manners, obscurantism, and anti-intellectualism so characteristic of fundamentalism, but not from the fundamentalist insistence on the authority and inspiration of Scripture, the necessity of conversion, and the mandate for evangelism”<sup>11</sup>.

There were a number of influential factors in the rapid development of the evangelical movement in the 1950's and 1960's. One of these was the formation in 1942 of an organisation called the National Association of Evangelicals which was brought into being to unite like minded believers to the cause of bringing the truth to the mainline churches by persuasion, rather than by criticism<sup>12</sup>. Another of the factors was the swelling popularity of Billy Graham. He disliked the critical and aggressive methods of the fundamentalists and sought to bring about prayer rather than controversy and rhetoric that was harming Christianity and evangelism<sup>13</sup>.

Another important factor was the founding of the Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947. This can be seen as the beginning of modern evangelicalism<sup>14</sup>. The leaders of the new evangelicalism were concerned with two trends in the fundamental ranks. These two factors led to the founding of the Fuller Theological Seminary. The first factor was the concern over the mediocre intellectual standards held by most fundamentalists. The liberal Christians were holding to the highest intellectual standards and Charles Fuller felt that one could both hold to

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<sup>10</sup> The death of a large number of young conservatives during WWI may have been decisive in the formation of the fundamentalist movement, however, this effect has not been studied.

<sup>11</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1974) *The Young Evangelicals*. New York: Harper& Row. p10.

<sup>12</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1974) *The Young Evangelicals*. New York: Harper& Row.

<sup>13</sup> Marsden, George (1987) *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

<sup>14</sup> Perrin, Robin (1986) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: U. of W. Press.p39.



the fundamentals of faith and pursue high levels of scholarship<sup>15</sup>. The second concern was over the issue of separatism. Many fundamentalists were proponents of separatism and the modern evangelicals thought that more benefit would be found through dialogue<sup>16</sup>. Thus the new evangelicals strayed from the dispensationalist path so as to allow more influence on the mainline liberal churches. A major source for this hoped for influence would be the Fuller Theological Seminary.

Thus distinguished and distanced from the mainline churches by their ideals and from the fundamentalists by their methods the evangelical movement became a separate entity that grew into its own distinct version of Protestantism in America.

## **The Charismatic Movements**

### **Pentecostalism**

Originating in the same environment and time as the fundamentalist movement was the Pentecostal movement. However, instead of adopting a dispensational doctrine, the Pentecostals affirmed that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were still occurring today<sup>17</sup>. They still held to the traditional conservative beliefs, such as the inerrancy of the Bible, making them similar to the fundamentals.

Tracing the Pentecostals beginning brings us to Charles Parham, founder of Bethel Bible College in the early 1900's. It was during a study of Acts and the idea of the filling of the Holy Spirit that Parham laid hands on a student and prayed for her to be filled. She immediately began to speak in tongues. This is significant because this is the first instance in which the idea of the

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<sup>15</sup> Marsden, George (1987) *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

<sup>16</sup> Cornel, E.J. (xxxx) *The case for Evangelical Theology*. . . .

<sup>17</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit was connected with the sign of tongues<sup>18</sup>. In the next few weeks most of the students and Parham himself had experienced such a Baptism in the Spirit.

After numerous unsuccessful evangelistic efforts Parham moved to Houston, Texas, in 1905 and started another Bible College. One of his first students was a black preacher called William J. Seymour. In 1906, Seymour moved to LA to begin the now famous “Azusa Street Mission”. The revival at Azusa Street, it is argued by the Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan, “is commonly regarded as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement. Although many persons had spoken in tongues in the United States in the years preceding 1906, the meeting brought this belief to the attention of the world and served as a catalyst for the formation of scores of Pentecostal denominations.”<sup>19</sup>

The renown of the Azusa Street Mission is not easily explained<sup>20</sup>. No doubt that the spontaneity and miraculous gifts drew attention. World-wide attention was given to the Mission, with people travelling from all ends of the globe to experience this ‘outflowing’ of the Holy Spirit. Out of this interest and perceived experience of supernatural gifts was born a world wide movement that established Pentecostal churches everywhere<sup>21</sup>.

As mentioned earlier the early Pentecostals were not entirely different in belief from the fundamentalists. However, although they shared in the belief of the ‘fundamentals’ of the faith, they could not agree on the issue of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Poloma points out that there is also much similarity between the “statement of truth” held by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and that held by the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA).

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<sup>18</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>19</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers. p8.

<sup>20</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

There is one difference. The PFNA includes a section stating, “We believe that the full gospel includes the Holiness of heart and life, healing for the body and the baptism in the Holy spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.”<sup>22</sup> This idea of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit leading to speaking in Tongues is an idea particular to the Pentecostal denomination, not found in the Evangelical or fundamentalist circles. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is, for the Pentecostals, something that occurs after salvation, usually involving the laying on of hands by someone who has already been “filled”. The practice of Glossolalia is not the only method by which the charismatics determine the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is merely one of the most common. However, for the Pentecostal the evidence of Glossolalia is vital to their acceptance of one as being filled by the Holy Spirit. Other indications of the presence of the Holy Spirit include prophecy, healing, words of knowledge, and while there is no one list in Scripture, there are many gifts of the Spirit mentioned.

The Pentecostal emphasis on the miraculous and Spirit baptism was not well received by other Fundamentalist, liberal, or conservative Christians. This was mainly due to the relatively extreme and emotional behaviours and ideas which was thought to have characterised the movement. As Quebedeaux<sup>23</sup> states, the causes of such extremism, individualism and subjectivism, were inherent in the Pentecostal movement. “Despite the emphasis on biblical authority, it was really personal experience that validated religious belief and commitment. Experience and testimony preceded doctrine.”<sup>24</sup> It is without question that the Pentecostal emphasis on the Holy Spirit and ones experience of Him often led to what was popularly considered to be excesses and justified in the minds of those observing the pejorative term ‘holy

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<sup>22</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers. pp6-7.

<sup>23</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p31

rollers' that was ascribed to them. It was this perceived excess in behaviour which was the cause of much of the opposition<sup>25</sup>.

There were other issues that led to the opposition of other churches. Originally the movement was most popular with low income, uneducated blacks, which created a social crevasse between it and the established churches. The problems of racism no doubt had a part to play in the condemnation of the Pentecostal movement. This social gap and condemnation of the Pentecostal movement led to the formation of new denominations, such as: the Assembly of God; the Church of God; the United Pentecostal Church; the Pentecostal Church in America; the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel; the Pentecostal Holiness Church. Much to the amazement of the established churches the Pentecostal movement now finds itself as the largest subgroup within Protestantism (larger than the Anglicans, Baptists, and Lutherans) and has some of the largest churches in the world<sup>26</sup>.

As with any movement, as it aged it became less extreme (at least in most cases) in its behaviour and settled down to a somewhat institutionalised norm<sup>27</sup>. However, the separatism and exclusivism of the Pentecostals did not moderate in the least, and in this they are much like the fundamentalists.

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<sup>25</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>26</sup> Wagner, C.P. (1973) *Look Out! The Pentecostals are Coming*. Carol Stream, Ill: Creation House.

Wimber, John (1986) *Power Evangelism*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

<sup>27</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers.

## **The Charismatic Renewal**

As time progressed there arose a renewal movement within Pentecostalism, the neo-Pentecostals, who wished to influence the mainline churches. This movement came to be known as the Charismatic renewal. Unlike the older Pentecostal movement, the Charismatic movement did not primarily result in the establishment of new churches. Instead it has, since the 1960's, made its presence known in every mainline Protestant denomination and even in Roman Catholicism<sup>28</sup>. This movement has had as its goal and ideal ecumenism and spiritual unity amongst all churches<sup>29</sup>, a goal which was most assuredly not highly regarded amongst the Pentecostal denominations.

In 1936, David du Plessis, a South African Assembly of God minister, claimed to have received a "prophecy". It reads,

Through the old-line denominations will come a revival that will eclipse anything we have known throughout history. No such things have happened in times past as will happen when this begins . . . It will eclipse the present-day, twentieth-century Pentecostal revival that already is a marvel to the world, with its strong opposition from the established church. But this second blessing will become acceptable to the churches and they will go on with this message and this experience beyond what the Pentecostals have achieved. You will live to see this work grow to such dimensions that the Pentecostal movement itself will be a light thing in comparison with what God will do through the old churches.<sup>30</sup>

This "prophecy" was not to be fulfilled until the 1950s when du Plessis was invited to speak at a number of ecumenical gatherings, one of which was the National Council of Churches.

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<sup>28</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers.

<sup>29</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>30</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers. p12.

The envisioned renewal began in an Episcopalian church in California in 1959. Episcopalian church members John and Joan Baker, via some Pentecostal friends, received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. Upon weighing the alternatives the two decided to stay with their church. Their Vicar thought that their excitement and enthusiasm would wane when surrounded with their Episcopalian Brethren and encouraged them to stay. This was not the case, however, as soon a dozen other members had also experienced this Spirit baptism<sup>31</sup>.

At this point the minister became concerned and went to a colleague and friend, Dennis Bennett, who was Rector of a successful Van Nuys Episcopalian church. Bennett, upon meeting with the Bakers was also experienced the Spirit baptism. Over the next months eight ministers and over a hundred Episcopalians experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These occurrences became increasingly difficult to keep hidden and finally, on Passion Sunday in 1960, Bennett explained to his parishioners his charismatic experience. He resigned two days later<sup>32</sup>. He did not leave the Episcopalian church, however, nor did he encourage others to leave.

With such a black mark on his Episcopal name it was difficult for Bennett to find another church. Eventually in July of 1969 he was assigned to a small struggling church in Seattle, St. Luke’s Episcopal. Inside of a year over 85% of the little church had experienced Spirit baptism and it had begun to grow dramatically. This resulted in fame for Bennett as he became a popular speaker both in the Episcopalian church and in other denominations<sup>33</sup>. Thus, through Bennett’s influence, the Charismatic renewal began.

The group of followers left behind in Van Nuys continued to grow and thrive, organising the Blessed Trinity Society. This was the original charismatic renewal fellowship. DuPlessis was

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<sup>31</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

an original member of the board of directors of this society. Bennett continued in his popularity and the movement grew mostly because of his efforts. The movement branched out to Lutherans and Presbyterians as well<sup>34</sup>.

Despite the general non-separatist attitude of the charismatic renewal a number of new sects and independent churches did arise out of it. An example of this is the independent churches of the Jesus Movement who were clearly impacted by the charismatic and evangelical movements. The rule of thumb, however, was that the charismatic movement worked within the existing mainline denominational boundaries. It is thought that the needs of the members were not being sufficiently met by the formal liturgies and thus sought out more feeling and fervour in religious expression. Interestingly these charismatically 'renewed' members appeared to become better and more committed parishioners. While all members were not thrilled with the influence of charismatics in their churches, they tolerated its presence, whereas the clergy often welcomed it. This is especially true of the Roman Catholic church which has endorsed charismatic activity among its members, going so far as to organise retreats and prayer groups for such activities<sup>35</sup>.

In the spirit of the movement those affected by the charismatic movement did not leave their church, nor did they attempt to take over the church. Instead they sought reformation in character, seeing the re-enlivening of their traditional church through its members as the goal of the movement. So they attended their usual Sunday services and held weekly meetings for the special bestowal of the gifts of the Spirit. Those most influenced by this movement were similar to those in the evangelical movement, of middle class lacking spiritual vitality.

### **The Third Wave: Charisma in the 1980's**

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<sup>34</sup> Quebedeaux, Richard (1976) *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>35</sup> Poloma, Margaret (1982) *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?*. Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers.

C. Peter Wagner, a professor at the Fuller Theological Seminary, is convinced that there is another wave of charismatic phenomena developing in North America and the world. He views the Pentecostal movement to be the first wave which had as its focus people of lower social and economic classes and led to the development of new denominations. The second wave, the charismatic movement, was a denominational movement which influenced more middle class, educated and refined members of the traditional mainline churches. Then comes the third wave, which is moving among the new evangelicals. This new movement, claiming to have learned from the errors and successes of the earlier movements, hope to bring the charismatic renewal to the evangelicals who previously rejected charismatic gifts. Wagner claims, "the Third Wave began around 1980 with the enlightenment of an increasing number of traditional evangelical churches and institutions to the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit, even though they were not, nor did they wish to become, either Pentecostal or charismatic."<sup>36</sup>

### **History of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship**

#### **The Jesus People**

Contrary to popular opinion and stories in the press, the Jesus Movement was not a unified movement with a set of easily identifiable leaders or association. However, there are some distinctive characteristics of the movement in general that can be pointed out. The movement began in the West (primarily in California) in 1967 and had spread to other part of the USA by 1970. As a whole they emphasised the simple fundamentals of the Gospel that included an "anti-intellectual, anti-cultural interpretation of the message of the Bible for contemporary

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<sup>36</sup> Wagner, C.P. (1988) "God wasn't pulling my leg." Pp. 43-56 in Kevin Springer (Ed) *Power Encounters Among Christians in the Western World*. New York: Harper & Row.



Christians”<sup>37</sup>. Another characteristic of the Jesus People was their “disdain for the traditional Christian and his/her church”<sup>38</sup>. Their level of cynicism varied from group to group with the Children of God being known for their hatred of all institutionalised religion. However, all of the Jesus People felt that religious institutions were out of touch with the Jesus of the New Testament and had failed miserably in transferring what truth they did know to their children<sup>39</sup>. This separation from the institutionalised church was manifested in a number of ways, not least of which was the adoption of a ‘christianised hippie’ lifestyle including long hair, communal living, coffee houses, and contemporary approach to worship and praise music (even rock and roll). The Jesus People also had a charismatic emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They also had a style in their services which can only be termed Pentecostal. Despite the variance in the emphasis of the gifts of the Holy Spirit among the different groups, the overall movement became associated with the charismatic gifts<sup>40</sup>. Another characteristic was the style of worship, which included Christian rock concerts.

Despite the anti-institutional nature of the Jesus Movement, institutions were born from it. The most renowned was the Costa Mesa Calvary Chapel, led by Reverend Charles (Chuck) Smith. His church was characterised by rapid growth and unique clientele. It was said in *Christianity Today* (January 29, 1971) that in 1970 over 4000 individuals were converted. The majority of these were under 21 years of age who were typical of those interested in the Jesus Movement. Despite the end of the movement in the mid 1970’s, its existence left an indelible mark on evangelical Christianity, especially in the West Coast. Some of these influences include

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<sup>37</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p53.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.p53.

<sup>39</sup> Enroth, Ronald M. (1972) *The Jesus People: Old-Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmanns.

<sup>40</sup> Enroth, Ronald M. (1972) *The Jesus People: Old-Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmanns.

stylistic, in the areas of music and dress, and in language. The spirit of acceptance of alternative modes of Christianity, by which I mean differing styles of worship, dress, and focus, also left its mark on the attitudes of the evangelicals.

It is recognised by the evangelical leaders that the Jesus Movement, and in particular the Calvary Chapel, has fuelled the fires of renewal throughout the West Coast area, with many leaders coming out of Smith's church and Bible school.

### **The Vineyard**

The story of the development of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship has two phases. The first, and the shortest, is the beginning phase under the leadership of Ken Gulliksen. The second is the phase under the leadership of John Wimber.

One of those loosely affiliated with Calvary Chapel was Kenn Gulliksen, who had served with Chuck Smith as an assistant pastor. Gulliksen felt he was called to begin a church in California named the Vineyard. His church grew steadily for five years, moving from house to house, then to rental facilities, to a beach, and at last, in 1978, to a Methodist church. Around 1980, Gulliksen felt he needed to go to West Los Angeles and start a Vineyard there. Within a year this church had grown to over 1 000 members. Later, he moved again to Newport Beach, where, once again, he soon had over 1 000 followers. As Gulliksen moved, he left Vineyards in his wake. Vineyards were even starting without his direct input. By the early 1980's there were several Vineyards in the LA area<sup>41</sup>.

In the mid-1970's a small group of Christians who considered themselves 'spiritual ill' formed a small worship and study group. These Christians came from the Yorba Linda Friends Quaker church in Yorba Linda. This church had been pastored by John Wimber, who had just

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<sup>41</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

left to teach church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary. The small group was led by Wimber's wife, Carol. This group sought spiritual healing through the presence and experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They did not have any concrete problem with their church, they merely needed more than it was giving. They wanted to know the power of God in their lives, meaning they wished to experience healing they knew was from God. This sort of activity was not encouraged by the Quaker church.

For most of their lives John and Carol Wimber were very antagonistic towards the idea of spiritual gifts<sup>42</sup>. Carol in particular had been very active in speaking out against healing and speaking in tongues, and as a leader in the Quaker Church had driven away several members who were practising spiritual gifts. However, due to a "prophetic dream" Carol received one night in which she woke up from a dream, wherein she was giving a sermon on the evils of speaking in tongues, filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Due to this experience she became a proponent of the gifts of the Spirit. Convicted of her past condemnation of those who practised the gifts of the Spirit she visited those she had offended (over 30) and sought forgiveness. It was out of this number that she visited that the aforementioned prayer group began. This small group eventually became the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Anaheim<sup>43</sup>.

Within a few weeks of its origin Carol's group grew from twelve to fifty. Realising they needed to have experienced leadership they requested John Wimber to become their pastor. Under his leadership many, who had been hurt by past church experiences, began to experience healing spiritually. It was not until the group had grown to over 150 members that they were asked to leave the Yorba Linda Friends, which had been the home church to many of the

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<sup>42</sup> Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin (1987) *Power Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

<sup>43</sup> Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin (1987) *Power Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

members. The split was not bitter, in fact blessing was given to the group from the church. For the first time, the group met as its own church body. This day was May 8, 1977<sup>44</sup>.

The first two years of the church's life was a nomadic one where they moved five times. They moved from their first rental, a Masonic Lodge, to a Junior High School, and thence to three different High Schools. The last of these was the Canyon High School in Anaheim Hills where they stayed from June, 1979 to spring of 1983. Reluctant to remain independent, Wimber requested to join the Calvary Chapel, and so they were named the Yorba Linda Calvary Chapel. Regardless of where they were, or what their name was, the church continued to grow.

In 1982 Wimber decided to leave the Calvary Chapel and join Gullikson's Vineyard. The reason for the change is not completely clear. Some have thought that it was merely the problem of accommodating two strong personalities (like Chuck Smith and John Wimber) in the Calvary Chapel denomination. While this may be true to some extent, it is not the only possible explanation. It would appear that there were some differences concerning the issue of the spiritual gifts. Smith, while being "charismatic", did not encourage the use of tongues and healing during services. As Wimber did encourage such activities, and more, it seems that the separation of the two may have had more to do with emphasis than with ego or theology. Several Vineyard pastors who were ex-Calvary pastors said that Smith's theology does allow for the 'signs and wonders' Wimber was emphasising at Yorba Linda, but Smith felt that such manifestations were being over emphasised by Wimber<sup>45</sup>. Neither of the two have publicly acknowledged the reason for the separation, and for all appearances it was an amicable one. It is clear, however, according to Perrin, that some hurt feelings are felt in the Calvary Chapel

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<sup>44</sup> Springer, Kevin (Ed) (1988) *Power Encounters Among Christians in the Western World*. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>45</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

leadership. In leaving, Wimber brought with him many Calvary pastors and members with him. This could very easily bring some hard feelings for those left behind. Indeed, it would appear that it has, because of some very outspoken Calvary leaders comments and criticisms of Wimber. Chuck Smith has not spoken out against Wimber, however<sup>46</sup>.

Regardless of the circumstances, in fall of 1982 Wimber asked Gulliksen to permit him to join the Vineyard. Wimber felt that his vision was more similar to the Vineyard's than to Calvary's<sup>47</sup>. Gulliksen also realised that he and Wimber were similar in their vision. Gulliksen, according to some Vineyard pastors working with him at the time, had recently come to the conclusion that he had a talent for bringing people together but then had no clue what to do with them. Gulliksen was also impressed by Wimber's abilities in church growth and in his vision for the future of the Vineyard. This led Gulliksen to not only allow Wimber to become a part of the Vineyard, he gave him the movement to lead. It was clear to the both of them that Wimber was called by God to lead the Vineyard<sup>48</sup>.

Having inherited an entire movement, Wimber wasted no time in taking leadership of it. He came into the first pastor's meeting ready to give his plans to turn the Vineyard into a world-wide phenomenon. This 'take charge' style did not sit well at first with the Vineyard pastors and they failed to see God's hand in Wimber's leadership of the Vineyard at first. Wimber managed to keep things together while these pastors worked their way over to his side<sup>49</sup>. There were some immediate responses to Wimber's leadership within the Vineyard. Catching the dream of planting 10 000 Vineyards world-wide, the Vineyard has grown tremendously under

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<sup>46</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

<sup>47</sup> Lawson, Steve (1985) "The Vineyard: Where Spiritual Gifts Blossom" *Charisma*. (Sept):26-34.

<sup>48</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

Wimber's direction. Wimber's Anaheim VCF is now well over 5000 in membership, and Vineyards can be found throughout North America, South America, Europe, a few in Africa, in Asia, in the Asian Pacific, Australia, etc.<sup>50</sup>.

## **The Signs and Wonders Movement**

### **Its beginnings**

While Wimber had resigned from Fuller, he continued to help Wagner teach a course on church growth once per year. It was in 1981 that Wimber suggested that one or two sessions in the course be devoted to the effect of signs and wonders on church growth. Wagner agreed to the suggestion and had the Dean of Fuller's School of World Mission, Paul Pierson, to observe the lecture. Wagner and Pierson were suitably impressed with the lecture and eventually supported the decision to offer course MC510 – "Signs and Wonders and Church Growth." While Wimber was the primary lecturer, Wagner was the professor of record<sup>51</sup>. The course was first offered in 1982 and "was designed to deal with the contemporary application of signs and wonders to the growth of the church"<sup>52</sup>. Included in the course was a lab section wherein the students could apply what they had learned in the class. This lab consisted of practice healings and exorcism. While the class was extremely popular, it was also very controversial.

MC510 was cancelled by the Fuller Seminary in January of 1986 as the result of pressure from members of the theology faculty who questioned both the Biblical basis for an emphasis on

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<sup>49</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

<sup>50</sup> 1997 Church directory found on the Association of Vineyard Churches web page.

<sup>51</sup> Wagner, C.P. (1983) "MC510: The genesis of a concept." *Christian Life* expanded edition of October, 1982: Pp38-44.

<sup>52</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p72.

signs and wonders and the appropriateness of the laboratory session in an academic setting<sup>53</sup>. Despite the controversy, the fact that Wimber had taught such a course in such a setting provided him with a level of credibility which he has used to good measure. Not only that, but the course also gave Wimber a time to organise, clarify, and formulate his ideas and beliefs with regard to the use of signs and wonders.

### **What is the Signs and Wonders Movement?**

A central belief of Wimber's is that every Christian has access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the Christian has a responsibility to use these gifts in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. This had been the central message of the 1980's and has been the main reason for a large portion of the attention that he has received. The focus of the conferences held throughout the world by Wimber and his team was the equipping of Christians to use the spiritual gifts in their ministry. As such they were mainly directed to lay leaders and pastors. Wimber's MC510 course was modified for some of these conferences. A significant portion of the influence of the VCF has been felt through these conferences, as pastors from various denominations and backgrounds attend them and bring that influence back with them to their churches. While there is no claimed focus on promoting the growth of the VCF through the conferences, this is none the less happening where pastors who attend eventually join the VCF. Much of the growth of the VCF has occurred because of this switching<sup>54</sup>.

When one talks of the signs and wonders movement, one must understand that one is not necessarily talking of the VCF in particular. There are a number of churches that have adopted similar emphasis on the spiritual gifts in the church, via Vineyard influence, but do not call

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<sup>53</sup> Chandler, Marjorie Lee (1986) "Fuller Seminary cancels course on signs and wonders." *Christianity Today*. (Feb 21): Pp48-49.

<sup>54</sup> Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.

themselves Vineyard, nor do they wish to. The term that is used to describe such churches is that they are 'friends of the Vineyard'. Grace Christian Fellowship of Calgary is one such church, although they had spent some time as a Vineyard CF, they are now independent. Other denominations, such as Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist, etc. are listed as having been influenced by the Vineyard in Springer's *Power Encounters Among Western Christians*<sup>55</sup>.

### **Differences Between Movements**

How is this so called Third Wave different than the previous two? What differentiates the Pentecostal and charismatic movements from the Signs and Wonders movement? A number of obvious differences between the Pentecostal and Third Wave movements are readily noticed. Some obvious differences include: the Pentecostal emphasis on the evidence of tongues as proof for the Baptism of the Spirit; the separatism that predominated in the Pentecostal growth; the lower socio-economic demographic among the Pentecostals in its origin.

There are difficulties in identifying differences between the charismatic and the Third Wave. They are similar in that they are non-schismatic, and they focus on renewal and revival within pre-existing denominations, rather than starting new ones. The VCF is, however, a new denomination in its own right. In a sense, the VCF is a blend of the two ideas of reform held by the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. It both uses the formation of a new denomination and seeks to work within and change existing denominations. Wagner feels that one of the main distinguishing features of the Third Wave is that it is targeting the conservative evangelical audience<sup>56</sup>. This group had gone largely untouched by the charismatic movement. Wimber is

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<sup>55</sup> Springer, Kevin (Ed) (1988) *Power Encounters Among Christians in the Western World*. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>56</sup> Wagner, C.P. (1988) *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit*. Ann Arbor: Servant.



considered a viable candidate to bring this Third Wave to the evangelicals because of his background and style.

Wimber considers himself to be in the line of descendants from the Pentecostal movement, yet he feels that he is doing things differently than either the Pentecostals or the charismatics<sup>57</sup>. He believes, as mentioned previously, that he differs from the previous two movements in that he emphasises the Word, not the experience as the arbitrator of belief and behaviour. He wishes to “take the ammunition of the best of conservative Evangelical theology, the best fire power of mainstream Pentecostal practice, fuse them, and hit the biblical target of making and nurturing disciples.”<sup>58</sup>

There are those who characterise the Vineyard members as educated charismatics with a Hawaiian/Californian flare. As there is some similarity in the style of the services and the use of the spiritual gifts in services, there is some justification for this characterisation. Of course, there is great variety in the worship and service style among VCFs as they all come from different backgrounds. However, the Third Wave people do not wish to be known as charismatics because they wish to be perceived as having mostly avoided the perceived errors of their predecessors in spiritual renewal.<sup>59</sup>

Another difference of the VCF from previous movements is the emphasis. Wimber is most widely known for his ministry of healing and this is so because of his book on the matter and the conferences done world-wide on the topic. Despite this fame, Wimber does not focus on the healing, but on the power. This is obvious if one reads his titles in the bibliography (i.e., *Power Healing, Power Evangelism, Power Points*). The supernatural acts of God, such as

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<sup>57</sup> Wimber, John (1986) *Power Evangelism*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

<sup>58</sup> Wimber, John “The Church Jesus Builds”. *Voice of the Vineyard*. Spring 1997.p12.

<sup>59</sup> Wagner, C.P. (1988) *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit*. Ann Arbor: Servant.

healing, exorcism, words of knowledge, and prophecy, are demonstrations of God's power over Satan. The goal of such power is to demonstrate God's presence and love which greatly aids the task of evangelism. Power evangelism is a very important part of Wimber's plan and through it "resistance to the Gospel is overcome by the demonstration of God's power in supernatural events, and receptivity to Christ's claims is usually very high."<sup>60</sup> Wimber shares a number of stories about times when a supernatural gift brought immediate salvation throughout his numerous books.

When it comes to the practice of the spiritual gifts, Wimber likes to think that they approach it differently than the Pentecostals or charismatics. He feels that he goes from conservative Evangelical theology to orthopraxy, unlike the others who based their theology on their version of experience which is defined as orthopraxy. He also has a more academic approach to the teaching of the gifts. For example, before a person is allowed to pray for healing in the church they must first learn how to do it. In this way Wimber attempts to control excess in behaviour while the heady stuff of spiritual gifting goes on.

Thus, the VCF feels that it falls nicely between the conservative evangelicalism and the highly emotional and experiential Pentecostalism. In this way the VCF appears, to its members, to deal with the whole being, the body, mind, and spirit. This apparent balance between the common evangelical concerns of excess and empty intellectualism has made this movement popular amongst those evangelicals seeking power in their lives. This is seen in many comments by those interviewed at Faith VCF and in their additional comments in the surveys.

Another difference separating it from the other movements is the style of the worship service. Worship is a key part of the VCF service, usually lasting 30-45 minutes, due to the emphasis on worship as releasing God's power and on its usefulness as a tool of spiritual

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<sup>60</sup> Wimber, John (1986) *Power Evangelism*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. p35.

warfare<sup>61</sup>. The music is often a chorus style with few parts (i.e. little harmony), the words to which are projected onto a screen for general reading. During this worship time there is a freedom of expression and a mix of worship techniques that all blend to make a very distinct style.

Vineyards tend to rent facilities rather than build their own. This may be due to the newness of the movement, or it may have to do with the desire to get away from the traditional method of 'doing' church. Schools, community halls, other denominations churches, and so forth are all facilities that are used.

### **Summary**

It is apparent from this brief survey of the history of the VCF that a number of factors have influenced its growth. These influences include John and Carol Wimber's life experience. I have not dealt with these in any great detail as they have been well covered within the numerous books written by John Wimber, as well as by Perrin, who devotes a section to this history. Other influences include the new evangelicals, the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements, fundamentalism, and the Jesus Movement. These influences have all had a part in the formation of the unique movement which is called the Vineyard Christian Fellowship.

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<sup>61</sup> See sermon notes from February.

**Chapter Two**  
**A Short Description of the**  
**CALGARY FAITH VINEYARD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**  
**and Its Founders**

This chapter will contain what I have perceived to be the essence of the Faith VCF. The data has been gathered over a seven month period by attending the services of the Faith VCF, through the attendance of the cell groups, celebrations, member classes, interviews, through various discussions during the services, and discussions with the leadership. This chapter will be descriptive in nature, leaving the analysis to a later chapter. I will divide my description into three parts. The first will deal with what I consider to be the church proper. This will contain the nature of the Sunday worship service, the leadership styles, the goals, and life stories of the pastoral leaders. The second section will contain discussions and descriptions pertaining to the cell groups. This will involve discussions of the goals, methods, numbers, style, and philosophies of the cell groups. The third section will be a catchall section that will deal with any programs, conferences, or other events which are not easily discussed in the other sections.

**Tim Schultz's life history in brief:**

This life history of Tim is patched together from a Life History Interview and from page 6 of the booklet explaining what the Faith VCF is all about to new visitors. Born in Jos, Nigeria to missionary parents, Tim spent much of his young life in boarding schools. His elementary years were spent in a school run by Sudan Interior Mission, the mission group that his parents were a part of. When he went to High School he went to a boarding school that served a wide variety of denominational mission organisations. It was here that Tim began to develop the character and intellectual traits that would carry him on a journey around the world. Tim takes a broad view on

many things. Before we get to Tim's eclectic gathering of influences and ideas, we should first cover the basic facts of his life.

Tim was born on April 20, 1964. His mother is Plymouth Brethren by history and preference, his father a Mennonite raised in Waldime, Saskatchewan. When Tim was eighteen he returned to Canada, which was home base to his family. He entered into Mount Carmel Bible School, attending there for one year. He intended to go on to University of Lethbridge after his one year at Bible school, seeking a degree in either business, teaching (coaching), or international affairs. Instead, Tim returned to Africa for around eight months. While there he discovered a desire for missions and ministry. This was made clear by God "nudging" him and showing him the reason for his interests, that all three could be used in ministry. Tim then went to Briercrest Bible College and received a Bachelor of Religious Education. While there Tim met his wife Esther (nee Friesen). During his time at Briercrest Tim travelled extensively. Upon completion of his degree, Tim and Esther became Youth Pastor at the Crescent Hights Baptist Church in Calgary. They did this for three years, eventually "hearing" a call to missions and church planting. To this end they sought further training in Amsterdam under Youth With A Mission. Their training in urban evangelism, and church planting took them to Hong Kong, and China.

Although Tim and Esther felt that they would be planting a church in Europe somewhere, they felt a strong "calling" to return to Calgary and start a Vineyard. With this in mind they returned and interned at Grace Vineyard Christian Fellowship (now no longer a Vineyard) for one year. They then brought 30 (thirty) people, a seed group for the new church plant, who came from various areas of Calgary, to Montgomery and went public in May 1992.

Tim chose to be a part of the VCF because he felt that the movement had a very good balance between conservative evangelical theology and pentecostal experience. Tim had been investigating the Vineyard since 1987. He had done much reading and had attended a number of

conferences. He felt that he could fulfil the vision God had given him best in the VCF. Apparently the VCF appreciates his vision and capabilities as they have named him the regional director for the VCF.

When asked his influences Tim overwhelms with the breadth of his perspective. Tim refers to himself as a self learner. He is highly effected by the contemplative stream of Christianity, such as the monastic sects of the Anglican and Catholic churches, as well as by the social gospel/justice aspect of the mainline churches, by the conservative evangelical community, and by the charismatic aspects of Christianity in general. The influence of the contemplatives on him is evidenced by his support for the spiritual disciplines, specifically those of solitude, sacrifice, and fasting. One can see the influence of the social gospel in the goals, and types of programs and resources that Tim seeks to bring into being, as well as in his choice of neighbourhoods to place his church. The conservative evangelical influence gave Tim his love and respect for the Bible, as well as his desire to reach the unsaved with spiritual salvation. The charismatic influence is clearly evident in the predominance of the spiritual gifts and their centrality to carrying out the above goals, disciplines, and evangelism.

Tim accounts for this eclectic mix of spiritual influence by pointing to his childhood, spent in an interdenominational setting, as well as to his extensive travel to all parts of the world. It wasn't until Tim was Youth Pastor at the Baptist church that he began to understand the concept of denominational loyalty.

When asked to describe his gifts Tim responds confidently. He understands his main leadership gift to be twofold. He claims that he is both visionary and manager in his leadership. He feels that this is an unusual mixture as most visionaries are not interested in structure. He, on the other hand, has a vision, a set of future goals and direction, and goes about setting up a structure that will bring this vision and goal into reality, with God's help of course. Some of his

other gifts include teaching, preaching, and faith. He feels that he receives revelation in two ways, the subjective revelation, meaning dreams, visions, and prophecy, and in objective revelation, meaning through logic, church growth theory, and biblical exegesis. For the most part these two sources of revelation are balanced and Tim feels he has one foot in each source. By balanced, I mean that the subjective revelation (prophecy or word of knowledge) must be consistent with Biblical theology, both in method of receiving and in content received.

### **Greg Tweedie's Life History in Brief:**

Born in Perth, Australia, on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1964, Greg was soon brought to Saskatchewan, Canada. His Australian father had left his mother within four months of his birth. His mother divorced his father and brought Greg to a small prairie town in Saskatchewan. Greg's mother remarried when he was nine years of age. Greg felt a "connection" with his step-dad. Before his mom remarried Greg was aware of his uniqueness in that small prairie town where single mothers were unheard of. This led to Greg having low self esteem and low self confidence. When his step-dad came into his life Greg began to change, gaining self confidence and self esteem. Greg considers this to be a turning point in his life. Greg's youth in the prairies instilled a love for the open plains, and for sports activities. Greg considers all of these points in his past to be defining of his character as non-religious factors.

At present, Greg feels that religion, or God, does, and has done, three main things for him. The first of which is it protects him from himself. Greg explains this to mean that he has several self destructive tendencies, such as a predisposition for addiction, which the power of God has protected him from. The second thing is that Christianity and it's God give Greg meaning in his life. He felt that all else, when analysed, does not bring meaning to our existence, that without God there is no life. This is a philosophical meaning for Greg, as he feels that he has a need for a

intellectually satisfying meaning for life. The third role religion plays in Greg's life is the removal of the fear of death. He is comfortable in the fact of his eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Of the three roles of religion in his life, Greg attributes only one to his attraction to the VCF. This one is the first one mentioned. Greg feels that his need for the power of God is realised most fully in the VCF because of their emphasis of this aspect of God.

There were a number of things which Greg refers to as religiously defining moments. The first of these is, not uncommonly, his conversion and baptism. This occurred through a neighbouring family, with whom Greg had spent much time. He said that he noticed that there was something different about this family almost immediately. It was this families faith that apparently set them apart. This event occurred when Greg was thirteen. From the ages thirteen to fifteen Greg sought God, reading the Bible, writing poetry to God, and worshipping him while in the fields. He felt he was being moulded. This all came to a halt upon Greg's intellectual awakening in High School. The teachings of evolution, and the fact of the plurality of religion confused and clouded Greg's mind with doubts and questions which the Christians around him could not, or would not, answer. Seeking, as all teenagers do, to belong, Greg began running with the 'wrong crowd'. This led him into drugs and drinking.

In 1982, at the age of eighteen, Greg graduated from High School and was enrolled in the University of Saskatoon. Then, on what he describes as "an unexplainable whim", Greg decided to go to a Bible College in Calgary two weeks before he was to go to the U of S. While at the Bible College, many of Greg's doubts and questions where answered with an intellectual honesty that cleared most of the problems away. In the course of his study it became quite clear that Greg was gifted in many of the ministry skills. In his final year Greg was introduced to, and became an excited follower of, the church growth movement. He read the books of Donald McGavron and Peter Wagner, the ideas of whom are still highly influential in Greg's life now. In this same



year at the Bible College, Greg married his wife Jolayne, whom he describes as his best friend and confidant.

His wife, feeling called to be a church planter's wife, encouraged Greg to use his ministry skills to start a new church plant in Calgary under the auspices of the Christian Churches/Church of Christ. He began the plant in 1987, eager to try out his many ideas and skills. For three years Greg and Jolayne tried their hardest to make the plant work. Things were not going well, of their original thirteen team members, only one was remaining.

In May of 1990, full of despair, sure that the plant was not likely to succeed, Greg and Jolayne were convinced by a church member to go to a Vineyard conference that was being held in the city. When Greg went up for prayer at the end of the conference, he felt pierced to his very soul. God spoke to Greg, saying that Greg had been doing this church plant without seeking Him. Greg left the conference humbled, and sought to seek God in the planting of the church. Greg now realised that his relationship with God up to that point had been almost completely intellectual. He was not sure of how to have a personal relationship with God.

In 1992 Greg and Jolayne's church plant was declared dead. The process of the birth and death of his church plant was very painful for Greg and Jolayne. As a break, they went to Australia, and in the process meeting Greg's biological father for the first time. This was a revelatory experience for Greg as he saw many of the traits he had in his father. At this point Greg, who had previously believed that nurture moulds most influentially, switched to believing that nature had a strong hand in his character and personality.

In January of 1994 Jolayne was found to be pregnant with their first child. Greg became clinically depressed after hearing this news. He felt panic and had a powerful desire to leave her and the baby, just as his father had done to him and his mom. Apparently, this behaviour was traced as far back as two generations, and may have gone back even further. Greg received

counselling for this issue. During this emotional crisis Greg and Tim Schultz went to the Toronto VCF. When Greg was prayed for there he displayed a number of physical manifestations of the Spirit. These included shaking, falling down, and not being able to get off the floor for one hour. Not entirely sure of why this happened the way it did, this experience none-the-less left him free from his depression and desire to leave Jolayne. Today Greg has two children.

### **The Church Proper**

#### **A typical Sunday:**

10:00 AM People begin to gather for the 1/2 hour visiting/coffee time before the service. It is fairly well attended. Coffee waits in the foyer, with the choice of tea as well. There is a bucket in which to put your contribution to the coffee fund. A table is set up to hold the various pamphlets, papers, and announcements that the church wishes to have available. People slowly arrive and chat, and sit down. A general hubbub of conversation is heard.

10:30 The pastor, usually Tim, requests that people come in and sit down. He blesses those who wish to continue talking, but asks them to do so in the foyer. A prayer is said by Tim that is usually a request for the Spirit's presence during worship, it is still noisy when this prayer is said.

10:33 The worship band, which was warming up during the visiting time, now begins to lead those gathered in worship. The songs range from mellow, introspective songs to highly energetic celebration type songs. The overall tone of worship is introspective, seeking the presence of God through emotive, mellow song. All are lead using an overhead projector. Most songs have been written in the last forty years, a number by Wimber, and are not of a hymnal nature. There is little said in song about the cross of Christ, or of his blood and sacrifice. Many songs focus on the Spirit, and talk of the grace, power, and beauty of God. Freedom is also a major theme. Depending on the mood of the song, the congregation's behaviour varies. Common behaviours

include the raising of hands, stamping of feet, a swaying style of dancing, banner waving as person jogs around the congregation, kneeling, shaking arms, clapping, playing of tambourine, closing eyes with head heavenward, and children running in various stages of chaos. Some less common, but certainly not rare, behaviours include screaming, physical collapse, weeping, groaning, and a violent physical shaking and bending. There are usually between six and eight songs sung during the overall service, usually all in the beginning, however, at times they will shorten worship at the beginning so as to use worship in the Ministry time.

approx. 11:00: Announcements given, either Greg T., Tim, or Greg X. These usually include future events, births, and deaths. Also included here are any new missions ideas, commissioning and interviewing of newly called or soon to go out missionaries. There is a prayer of blessing and thanks given with re: to the offering, offering is then taken as two or three people hand around baskets.

11:10 (approx.) The children are invited forward for a brief time with one of the pastors, a prayer is said over them and they are dismissed downstairs for children time out<sup>62</sup>.

11:15 (approx.) Either Tim or Greg comes up to give the sermon. The themes vary, but the style for each is similar overall. Tim is an exhorter, he challenges, and he has an allegorical style of understanding the Old Testament, wherein many of his messages are heavily based. Greg is a healer, seeking to bring peace to the many sufferers in his congregation, and much of his content is on overcoming past hurts<sup>63</sup>. There are often fill in the blank handouts to accompany the message.

12:00 (approx.) Ministry Time.

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<sup>62</sup> More on this a bit later.

<sup>63</sup> I will analyse their styles and methods later on in this section.

This time can include any number of activities. Some of the more common include specific prayers for physical healing, spiritual healing, emotional healing, or deliverance or freedom from fear, sin, Satanic influence, and other negative spiritual forces. This is usually not a free for all time, there is a method to the apparent madness that at times accompanies these activities.

Whenever prayer is requested by an individual at these times, anywhere from one to four people will gather around the individual and either lay hands on or over the individual. There can be as many as twenty of these prayer clusters around the church. The actual philosophy and method of the ministry time will be discussed later. During ministry time a number of people leave, begin conversations in the back, or just sit, so participation is not 100%, more like 50-75%, depending on the activity. Ministry time can last from 10-50 minutes, depending on the energy and interest of the congregation, or, if you ask the church members, on the extent to which the Holy Spirit presents Himself.

12:15 Children's Time Out ends and the church is flooded with running kids, causing little disruption, or at least as far as I can tell, to ministry time.

One must understand that this is an example of what I have experienced to be a typical service. There are instances in which this pattern is followed much more loosely with the various sections, i.e. ministry time, worship, sermon, children's time out, are intermixed in different patterns. However, while some sections are emphasised more than others at times, all of the sections are dealt with in some manner or form during the morning. Some parts are never reduced, i.e. worship and ministry time, while others are easily reduced or changed, i.e. sermon and children's time out. There is always an emphasis on the spontaneous rather than on the structure.

## **Children's Time Out**

Around ten minutes after eleven o'clock children classified kindergarten age up to grade six are invited to the front for a brief talk and prayer and are then dismissed to the downstairs facility. Once downstairs they are divided into three groups, the kindergarten class, the grades one to three class, and the grades four to six class. Also provided is a nursery for children too young for Sunday school but old enough to walk.

This children's time out is run by the same philosophy as the other programs at the Faith VCF. The main distinctive here is that the program is adjusted for the age of the child involved. Believing the children to be not just the church of tomorrow, but also the church of today, the programs are set up to equip the children to be "little ministers". This means that they can function, in their childlike ways, in the everyday activities of the church. In the areas of worship, evangelism, building up family, and in creatively expressing God's "truth". The children's time out is meant to nurture the child both cognitively and experientially. This is so they can function in the spiritual gift that is believed to have been given to him/her. This time out is seen as a secondary instructional tool wherein the family provides most of the teaching and guidance. This last is not yet a reality, it is a goal for the next year or so. What follows is an example of how one class attempts to meet these goals.

The grade one to three class has three teachers who rotate through on a time share arrangement that they make amongst themselves. The teachers are provided with a module to teach. The most recent module was on worship, and they are beginning a new module on the Holy Spirit titled *The Holy Spirit is our Friend*. The class begins with a discussion of the new topic, then there is some colouring of pictures. This is followed by a time on the floor where there is dialogue between the teacher and the kids. This is concluded with prayer, the children are encouraged to pray if they want to and prayer requests are taken. Following this there is more colouring. This completed, a memory verse is copied from the board onto a piece of paper they are to take home. It is then time for snack which is taken out in the main area of the basement

with all the other children. Once the snack has been consumed there is a time of singing Christian children songs, usually ones requiring action of some sort.

This whole process takes approximately one hour, so the children are released to the upstairs area. At this time the service is usually in the middle of its ministry time. This normally results in the children running into the emotionally charged ministry time. This means that the parents are usually busy, either praying for, or being prayed for. The natural consequence of this is children running unhindered about the church for a time. What really amazed me coming upstairs from the children's time out was the disorder of the service, over half the people were up front, a number of which were on the ground. There was one woman screaming and wailing at the top of her lungs. While this is not a daily occurrence, it is far from rare and did not seem to surprise or bother the kids.

## Ministry Time

This is a common feature in the VCF circles. It is present in most formal (i.e. structured) gatherings. The Sunday service is always ended with a ministry time, as are conferences and cell groups. The ministry time in cell groups is somewhat different than in the other situations. Of course, the most common ministry time occurs after the Sunday service. Ministry time is considered to be a vital part of the service. It is the time in which the teachings of the morning are usually put into practice and the issues raised by it are dealt with.

Most of the ministry times deal with issues of healing, either physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual, but there are also ministry times which seek prophetic words. For the most part the method of prayer that has been developed for healing by Wimber is used, whether the prayer is for healing or not.

When there is a seeking for prophetic words, only those who are in relationship with the church, i.e. part of a cell group, are allowed to give prophecy. Those who fit that criterion must first speak to the pastor before publicly giving their prophecy.

Wimber gives a five step method for healing prayer<sup>64</sup>. Step one involves an interviewing process. Step two is the diagnostic stage. Step three asks the question “*What kind of prayer is needed to help this person?*”<sup>65</sup> Step four is the prayer engagement, step five is the post prayer directions.

The first step is usually the shortest. It involves determining what the individual desires prayer for. The answer must be considered on two fronts; the natural and the supernatural. The

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<sup>64</sup> Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin (1987) *Power Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. Pp198-210.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p204.

first involves biblical knowledge, personal knowledge, and past experience. In the supernatural front one can expect a word of knowledge, or some other special insight into the persons needs.

The second step is the diagnostic one. The prayer team must determine what is really in need of prayer. In this step the prayer team wonders what the root cause of the problem is. It is in many ways the supernatural part of stage one. Wimber feels that a person will rarely know the true root cause of their situation. This true cause is discovered by the prayer in consultation with the Holy Spirit, who will clarify either through words of knowledge, words of wisdom, or through discernment of spirits. These last are not necessary for successful prayer, but they are very helpful. Insights can lead to a perceived understanding of the true cause of a physical, spiritual, emotional, or mental problem. For example, chronic back pain could be a symptom of a bad relationship with parents, and if that relationship is improved, then the back pain will go away. This is just a simple case, other cases may involve demonic possessions mixed in with genuine physical ailment topped with emotional disfunction. The main point here is that the obvious explanation for an ailment is rarely the main cause of it.

Step three deals with the issue of what to pray. Through steps one and two one has determined what is to be prayed for. Now one must decide what to pray. The first assumption here is that God wants to heal. He may not wish to heal right now, however. So, one must decide if God wishes to heal immediately. This is done through consultation with God. If he wishes to heal right now, one can determine this by the presence of an anointing, "An anointing is a knowing in the deepest part of our hearts that God wants to heal someone."<sup>66</sup> This is essentially the basis for the act of healing. It has little to do with the person praying, they are merely agreeing with the will of God and through that prayer the Holy Spirit heals. The prayer

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<sup>66</sup> Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin (1987) *Power Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. p204.



that is used in these instances varies. Prayers of intercession and petition, words of command, and others are used. Wimber breaks healing prayer into two categories. The first is petitions addressed to God and the second is words that are given by God and “speak to a condition or demon.”<sup>67</sup>

The prayer engagement step “consists of prayer, laying on of hands, and, when needed, further interviewing.”<sup>68</sup> The laying on of hands is an important part of the prayer process. It involves placing one or both hands on the area afflicted. There are steps taken to avoid embarrassment should the affliction lie in an area considered private. It is often the practice of prayer teams to have one hand on the persons afflicted area and one hand hovering just above the head of the person. Those further away who are agreeing in prayer extend their hands out towards the person they are praying for. There is then an invocation for the presence of the Holy Spirit and His power. This can result in a number of different responses in both the prayer team and in the individual prayed for. There can be a complete absence of any outward effect, or there can be a very obvious manifestation. These manifestations range from laughter to weeping, from collapse to shaking, and from hysteria to utter calm. There are also some extreme manifestations that are related to demonic possession. Because of these manifestations, it is advised that the prayer team keep their eyes open during their prayers. This is for a number of reasons. The first is to provide queues for the prayers as to whether the Lord is manifesting Himself or not. If He is then the faith of those praying goes up, thus making their prayers more effective. The second reason is so that if the person prayed for is going to fall over they can catch him/her. It is part of the teams purpose to explain to the individual prayed for what the Lord is doing to them,

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<sup>67</sup> Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin (1987) *Power Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. p207.

<sup>68</sup> Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin (1987) *Power Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. p211.

especially if this is their first experience with the Holy Spirit manifesting in their body. When it comes to diagnosing a demon, Wimber recommends that only when you have actually talked to the demon do you diagnose it as such.

The final step, post-prayer directions, deals with the issues that have been raised during the prayer ministry. Any issues, such as sin, bad relationships, or bad habits are spoken to. If the person has not been healed there is some discussion about how God heals, how if one is not healed it does not mean that God does not love them or that they have little faith. These cases are referred for long term prayer. Those who are healed are encouraged to stay away from sin and to practice the spiritual disciplines. It is important in both cases for the individual to be accountable to a church or Christian group.

Now that the way that Wimber says prayer ministry should look like has been described, we must ask, does the Faith VCF do it this way? For the most part they do, at least during conferences and church services. There are certain qualifications that a person must have to be present on a ministry team. They must be a part of a cell group and they must also have had some training in the prayer methods. When I went up for prayer most of the five steps were done with me. The only one which I think may have been missed, or at least not done on the supernatural level, was the diagnosis of my ailment. According to Wimber the cause of an ailment is almost always hidden from the person suffering the ailment. The team that prayed for me did not come up with any diagnosis beyond what I had told them, so either I am a rare bird and know why I have this chronic shoulder impingement syndrome or there was no special effort made to discern the actual cause or God was not telling anyone the true cause. I can not guess as to which is the actual reason.

During what passes for ministry time in the cell groups, there is a reduced level of methodological precision when it comes to prayer. There is usually a shortened interview time,

mainly because the people already know each other fairly well. There is also a tendency for more than two or three people to pray for and lay hands on the person requesting prayer.

One thing that I found interesting about the prayer times in the cell groups is the fact that only the major items are prayed for in most instances. Usually once prayer requests are asked for, the most common issues involve healing, spiritual emptiness, a desire for overcoming problems, unsaved relatives and friends. There is very little, if any, time given to day to day type issues such as trouble at work, exhaustion, upcoming tests, etc. unless they are couched in terms of spiritual battles or successes. There is little recognition that a bad week may have been just that, a bad week with no particular spiritual value. This surprises me because I thought that a smaller group of individuals, especially ones with the level of intimacy as high as these, would seek to meet all the needs of a group member, regardless of how small or insignificant it may appear to be.

The church service ministry times cover a range of topics. At times people with a certain affliction, either physical or emotional, are called to the front for prayer. At other times they are only asked to stand and those around them are to pray for them. Each time ministry time is done the worship team leads in music. The music is very similar to that played at worship time at the beginning of the service, often introspective and prayerful. The idea behind the music being played during ministry time comes from the belief that worship is a form of spiritual warfare, that it will diminish the power of Satan to come against the prayers. Also, worship is one of the most reliable and consistent ways in which God's Spirit can be called into presence.

## **VCF's philosophy of Cell Groups:**

When one gets into the philosophy of any part of an organised church, one must, of necessity, also talk of other portions of the church as well. This is particularly true of the Faith VCF's philosophy of cell groups. The concept behind the cell groups is the definition of what a true church is to be. The Faith VCF pastors have set up a system of values which they feel are best exemplified in a cell church. Tim Schultz mentions that they are taking the concepts from the super churches in Korea, Argentina, and in other parts of the world. It is not clear at this point that these are concepts that are followed by the VCF in general. So far the bulk of the philosophical inf. has come from my attendance at a visitor's 'get to know the church' gathering. In a rather structured way, the two pastor's introduced their church and its philosophy and methodology, specifically of the cell groups.

In a handout titled "Kingdom Values of Cell Church" Tim Schultz covers in some detail the philosophy behind their program. The first value is taken from the consumer metaphor of church, as Bibby understands it. It reads, "We are committed to making disciples not growing a crowd/mob of consumers." Under this are three sub-points: this requires a covenant relationship that remains throughout the five stages of relationship and life in the church; each member of the church is to be an active participant in the growing of the Kingdom of God; there is to be accountability, holding disciples to their commitment even when personal issues must be dealt with.

The first sub-point refers to a set of five stages that are considered to be universal in church participation and they are: the honeymoon stage, the conflict stage, the disillusionment stage, the convergence stage, the cause stage. The first stage is the one wherein everyone shows their good side and little fault is found anywhere. The second stage occurs when differing values, opinions, methods, and personalities come into conflict, a realisation of the imperfections of the

other church members. This stage leads to the next which is disillusionment with the church and its members, this is the stage at which most people will leave the church and go to another. However, if one decides to remain with the church one will come to a stage of convergence, wherein one goes beyond disillusionment and judgement to acceptance and love. Once this last stage happens it is possible to go to the cause stage where the church can then unite wholeheartedly in achieving a common cause. All of these stages are best carried out within the boundaries provided by a cell group. The cell group will precipitate the first three stages, and makes the possibility of moving to the fourth and fifth stages much more likely because of the intimate, personal, and caring environment it provides. Tim feels that one must go through those five stages before it is possible to perform any real leadership role.

The second sub-point emphasises the idea that all must be active participants in the church, either through leadership or through the use of a spiritual gift. This is best accomplished in the cell group because there is more opportunity to become involved, to feel comfortable stepping out into areas of discomfort, and to be recognised for strength of character. Once one has been recognised as gifted in an area in the cell group, one can then be used in the larger church.

The third sub-point deals specifically with accountability to others in the church, specifically the cell group, or one's sponsor within the cell group. The pastors feel strongly that if you have a problem with sin in your life that it will come up in the course of cell group attendance and that when it does the disciple must remain and deal with the issue so as to become a better Christian and member of the church.

The second value expressed by the Faith VCF leadership is this, "We are committed to investing in people first and foremost out of which the organisation/structure will form." There are four sub points under this value and they are as following: investing in the building up of

individuals is a long and time consuming process which requires patience and grace, the structure/organisation/programs are there to serve people, not visa versa; when investing in people you must take the long view and not be upset by apparent set back; this value discourages the using of people to achieve the goals of the church.

The cell group is thought by Tim Schultz to be the best place to “invest” in people. The size of the group allows for personal issues to be raised, for intimacy, and for active care in life’s hurdles. It is here that the abilities, gifts, skills, and attitudes can be developed so that when the individual is just learning they can do so in a protected environment where their errors will not affect much. So, when a new member comes to the church, the pastoral leadership requires that they build relationship in a cell group, discover and develop their gifts and skills, before they are allowed any position of leadership in the church. This relationship building stage is vital to assessing the character and abilities of potential leaders. Everyone who is new, regardless of past experience, is required to go through this process. Even a former pastor of another church, or worship leader, or prophet, must go through this. Thus the greater church is protected from charlatans and false teachers, new members are given time to get to know the church and people before responsibilities are given, and gifts are ready for public consumption when they are released in the corporate church.

The third value is that it is the values behind the programs/structures that are integral in their success or failure. As such, it is the value system that must be addressed before one changes the program/structure.

Unity with diversity is the fourth value. Included in this value is the understanding that ‘birds of a feather tend to flock together’. This is a tendency they would like to avoid. Thus, while there is a worship team meeting, each worship team member must also be a part of a cell group. This is true of all other specialised leadership groups in the church. This ends up giving

each cell group a good mix of gifts and abilities, thus enriching the group experience. It is necessary to have people of different ideas, skills, personalities, and perspectives around us to stimulate thought and growth. There is no reason why one should seek the basic Christian community anywhere else than the cell group.

Discipling within the church is primarily to be done through the sponsor/sponsee relationship which is contained within the cell group format. Discipling is the process in which a new or “immature” Christian learns how to be a disciple of Christ from a “mature” Christian. The lesson subjects range from emotional wholeness, to biblical knowledge, to leadership skills, to spiritual gift development, and so on. The teaching is not to be done solely through didactic/lecture/classroom style, but is to include one-on-one relationships and mentoring. The building is not the church, the people are. The primary building unit of the church is the cell group, “a small band of believers meeting in cells weekly for basic Christian community.” The weekly gathering of these cells on Sundays is considered to be a celebration. The purpose of the gathering is to get an idea of what the bigger picture of the cell church is all about.

When the Faith VCF considers the primary goal of the Kingdom of God, it is about intimacy/family and growth/army. This is what Tim refers to as divine tension between community and cause. It is through prayer that the power and energising motivation comes to the cell life and structure.

While each cell leader is considered to be the pastor of those under him/her, the paid pastoral staff are the primary equippers, visionaries, communicators, and prayers. This provides unified direction in goals, method, and effort.

Tim Schultz informed me during an interview that this value system, or cell church system, is derived from two sources. First, his experience in Korea, Argentina, and Taiwan, where the obvious success of this method is seen in the gigantic churches that are vital and churn

out new leaders and cell groups in great numbers. The second is through the book *Where Do We Go From Here* by Ralph Neighbour which deals with the model of a cell group church.

There are some more practical methods contained within the cell group that I will now mention. The format of each cell group is outlined by the pastoral staff and each group follows it with more or less success. Each meeting begins with an ice breaker. This time consists of a question which is addressed to each of the members of the group and is answered by each one. The question is usually personal in nature, such as “Tell us about the best gift you ever received and why is this gift special?”. This is intended to get the group gathered, allow latecomers to arrive, and to allow for greater depth of relationship.

The second phase of the meeting is the worship singing phase. In this time well known songs, or songs from a songbook, are sung. There can be any number of songs sung, depending on the leader, the mood of the group, and whether or not the Spirit comes with power during the worship. This last variable can lengthen or shorten the period of worship, depending on the type of manifestations that come with the Spirit. This is considered a time of entering into God’s presence. There is then a time for a response to worship. At this time any words of knowledge, prophecies, or other communications from God are shared. Depending on what is shared, this time may derail the format of the rest of the groups time together. Tim likes to provide structure, but he also likes to allow for spontaneity within that structure (another divine tension between structure/spontaneity). If there is no great issue raised during the worship phase in the evening, the group moves on to a discussion time.

At this time a set of questions that relate to the last Sunday’s message are discussed. The questions are provided by the pastors, so every group gets the same questions. This allows for continuity between groups, and reduces the work load for the cell group leaders.



Next comes the prayer ministry time. This is a time of sharing of praise items, healing requests, deliverance requests, or whatever the members feel they need prayer for. There can be circle type prayer where each member in turn prays about an issue, or the member(s) expressing the prayer item may be surrounded, hands laid on them, and prayed for at random by those who feel led to pray. Also, the group may break into smaller segments and prayer issues are dealt with by the two or three that are together.

The last segment of the evening is devoted to a time called share the vision where the goals of the corporate church are addressed, prayed for, discussed, and practical methods of carrying out said goals are shared.

One important feature of the cell group is called the equipping track. This refers to the method by which baby (new) Christians are disciplined to become mature Christians. This discipling method is carried out by a sponsor/sponsee relationship that is like a mentoring relationship. It is primarily carried out one-on-one, with a number of supplementary training sessions carried out in a classroom style.

As the cell group is an important part of this study I decided to attend all of the cell groups once and one, selected at random, a number of times. I have not been able to attend any of the Friday night gatherings due to conflicts in scheduling. The long term group was not an ideal choice either, mainly because they were experiencing leadership problems, having changed leadership a number of times, and the chief leader was in a difficult stage of life and could not provide strong leadership. Of the six cell group meetings that I monitored, two were potlucks, two were movie nights, and two were cell group meetings. Only one of the last was done according to the methods proscribed by the church and it was lead by Tim Schultz, the senior pastor. The continued commitment to meet, despite a less than predictable format, was strong and there was a strong sense of community, intimacy, and friendship. I do not feel that this group

was in any way typical of the cell groups in the Faith VCF. I can say this because the other four groups that I attended all had established leadership and were following the methods given by the church.

## **Conferences**

During my time at the Faith VCF I attended the two conferences they held. Each was distinct from the other. The first conference was held at the new German Canadian Centre and had a very large turn out and had a significant charge for attendance. The second was held in the Bowness Community/Bingo Hall, was free and smaller in scale.

The first conference was on Prophecy and had a speaker who came up from California. There was a general gathering in the morning in which the main speaker, John Paul Jackson, talked about prophecy, spiritual discipline, and practised prophecy for a time. He was a good speaker who tended to ramble on. His talk included seven principals of a good prophetic ministry. He also provided some interesting methods of understanding exactly what a prophetic gift is and why there are those out there who are not Christians who are able to exercise the gifts as well. Overall, the morning session contained some very theologically evangelical ideas about what it means to have a prophetic ministry. When I say theologically evangelical I mean that there was an emphasis on the individual and their Christian character as more important than the gift itself, i.e. that prophecy without love is like a loud useless noise. Before JP Jackson spoke there was a time of worship and prayer. At the end of his talk, Jackson spent some time prophesying to people in the crowd. Apparently he could see things around the people he asked to stand up. He spoke of personal struggles, decisions, gifting, future events (i.e. 'you will come into a time of blessing'). He did this for some time, talking to approximately ten different individuals.

The afternoon was taken up in four workshops. Workshop A dealt with 'Pastoring the Prophetic/Growing Up in the Gift of Prophecy'. This workshop was run by Jackson and Tim Schultz. I was not able to attend this one. Workshop B was on Prophetic Evangelism. This was led by a fellow from Edmonton. It was well attended and dealt mostly with receiving 'words of

knowledge' and their effect on evangelism. The terminology was quickly set aside and the emphasis was on the relationship to God and listening to His voice. There must be a love for the lost and the courage to go beyond our ability into God's ability. Workshop C had as its topic 'Prayer For Your City'. I was unable to attend this one. Workshop D considered 'Prayer and Prophecy in Small Groups'. This workshop dealt with the use of prophecy in the cell groups and was instructional in nature. The methods, techniques, pitfalls, and corrections that are useful, even necessary for the use of prophecy in one's cell group. This one was led by Greg Tweedie.

The evening began with worship and then Jackson spoke for a time on what God is doing in the church today. He told a number of narratives that related the amazing works of God today. He is convinced that events of "Biblical proportion" are happening to day. There was some talk of the 'watchmen' found in the Song of Songs chapter 5. These watchmen were those people who were attacking this latest move of the Holy Spirit. I had the distinct impression that Jackson was referring to Hank Hanagraph of CRI, and others like him. There was then some talk about the signs of the end times (i.e. severe solar flares, earthquakes, floods, disease, etc.) The conference was concluded with a ministry time, some prophecy was done by Jackson. The ministry time had people come to the front for prayer for whatever was needed, with some emphasis on the gift of prophecy. As is usual during ministry time the worship team played background music. There were some fairly typical "manifestations" of the Holy Spirit, i.e. falling over, weeping, shaking, and other physical occurrences.

The next morning Jackson spoke at the Sunday service. It was a very interesting message that attempted to explain, using a mathematical model, the different types of healing with regard to where the faith involved was coming from. He gave a point system which gave healings a point value, the more miraculous the healing, the higher the point value given. Each person has so many faith points, some more, some less. Some, i.e. non-believers, had negative point values. If there are not enough points present, either in the healer, the sick person, and those around, or

God does not provide the additional points, a healing does not occur. There was more on this, of course, than can be said here. Suffice it to say I do not think he meant this system literally but instead intended it to be a helpful tool for conceptualising the process involved in healing. In my subsequent discussions with some members of the church it was clear that the system was not being taken literally, but was, to some extent, considered useful in understanding some aspects of the healing process.

The second conference had as its keynote speaker a pastor from Kelowna, Gord Whyte. The morning was spent 'imparting faith' and the 'gift of healing'. The importation of faith was attempted in two ways. Whyte spent a large amount of his time telling stories about miraculous healing, either out of his personal life or from situations he has been a part of. These were intended to raise the faith of those present because they were stories of incredible healings and they told them that these things were possible today and that the common Christian has access to this healing power. At the end of the first session Whyte asked those present to hold out their hands to receive the 'importation of faith' from God. He prayed for a short time for us to receive this faith for healing. After he was done he said we probably did not feel anything but that we had received. After the second session all those who had felt heat, or tingling, or clamminess, or weight in their hands, were called forward because these sensations were God telling the person that He wished to give them the gift of healing. Whyte had those who came up, there were around fifty, to hold out their hands. He was going to slap their hands when he was imparting the gift of healing upon them. When he began doing this people started falling over. Fortunately this was expected so there were two men who were designated catchers. They were kept rather busy for a time. There were around thirty of the fifty up front on the ground. When some were shaken by the hand slap, Whyte blew on them and they fell over. Some did not fall though, regardless what Whyte did. When I talked to Greg Tweedie about this event, he said that the slapping of hands was not typical of the Vineyard method. This act is considered too hype full and could be

used as an excuse for the falling, i.e. the shock of someone unexpectedly slapping your hands when you have your eyes closed and are focused inward can be very disorienting and cause you to lose your balance. I would agree with Greg that this method is not typical of those used by the Faith VCF. Tim was also praying at this time for people and he merely placed his hands around the head or neck, or just on the shoulder, of the person prayed for.

The afternoon was spent in what they called “servant evangelism”. This involves the attendees of the conference to volunteer their time that afternoon in some act of service to “Show God’s love in a practical way”<sup>69</sup>. This practical showing of God’s love was attempted in several different ways. One group, called the ‘Bold Ones’, went around door to door in pairs inviting those who answered their door bell to the barbecue that was being held in the park and asking if they had any need that could be prayed for. They were specifically looking to pray for healing and to invite people to the evening healing session. Another group held the previously mentioned barbecue, feeding around 250 people. Aside from serving the food people would engage those who came for the food in conversation and invite them to the evening session. The worship team sang worship songs in the park for one hour during the barbecue. Yet another group was involved in a coke give-away. They bought 96 cokes and went to the Bowness Safeway and area to give these cokes away, hopefully gaining the right to conversation and dialogue. There was also a cleaning crew which had two tasks. One half of the cleaning crew cleaned car windows in the Safeway parking lot, as well as in lots around Safeway. If the owner of the car was not there then a card was left in the window explaining why the windows were clean. The other half went to businesses near the park and washed their windows, cleaned toilets, and generally cleaned up. The final group was involved in garbage pick-up and general cleaning of the ground in the park

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<sup>69</sup> This was the phrase used on the pamphlets that were placed on cleaned windsheilds and was used when giving reason verbally for the act of kindness or servanthood that was performed.

and in the parking lot across the street. Armed with garbage bags and gloves they quickly made the area look quite pleasant and wholesome.

It must be noted that this afternoon coincided with the ongoing Safeway strike. Knowing this I went along with the two groups who were destined for the Safeway parking lot. As I anticipated, there was some friction. The coke give away people had already given a number of the strikers cokes. While drinking these the strikers descended on the car window washers to express their disapproval of their actions and to thank us for the cokes. They requested that the washers go to Co-op or IGA instead. The team leader politely refused and proceeded to wash windows, staying away from the front of the store. Shortly thereafter the store manager came out to see what was happening. He also asked the two groups to leave, citing legal liability and peace keeping needs as his reasons. At this point the two servant groups moved to the neighbouring lots and continued their activities there.

That evening the ministry teams, which were made up of members of the churches attending, met at 6:00pm for prayer, instruction, and preparation. They received a sticker which identified them as ministry team members. The evening began with worship, Whyte did some more "prophecy", and Tim Schultz talked for a time about healing and the message of Jesus Christ. It was then ministry time. The worship team went up and Tim and Gord began calling up certain types of affliction. Included in these were chronic depression, bowel problems, STD's, cancers, heart problems, and leg problems. Some were announced as general groupings, some were specific to one person. Prayer went on for approximately forty-five minutes, and slowly petered out. I went up for prayer myself, for my shoulder which has had an impingement syndrome for seven years. I was not healed. The healing was attempted in the same way as it has been done during the church services. The ministry teams had 2-3 members, at least one of which was considered a veteran. In this case that meant that they had been a part of a healing

team at some point in their recent lives. Prayer was not limited to the front of the stage this time, however, as I noted a number of individuals receiving prayer at the back of the meeting area.

The areas of commonality between the two conferences include the fact that they were both one day events with the keynote speaker giving the Sunday morning sermon. Also common to both was the use of prophecy by the keynote speaker at the end of their talks. Another similarity is that of ministry time and worship time, essential to most VCF gatherings.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Calgary Faith VCF:**

#### **An Analytic Profile in a Comparative Perspective**

##### **Introduction**

According to Perrin who did a sociological study of the American VCF, it is one of the most significant evangelical movements around today. This judgement raised in his mind curiosity about the make up of the VCF. Who attends, where do they come from, and other demographic questions leap to his mind. To find out the answer to these questions, and more, Perrin set about developing a survey which would be self administered by a representative sample of the VCF, as found on the Western Seaboard, meaning California and Washington. After non-randomly selecting the 14 VCF's that would be sent the surveys, he mailed them out, either from membership lists, or the pastors handed them out to the church, or they were administered in cell groups. Perrin received 1009 responses, which amounts to a 60% response rate. This non-return of 40% of the surveys raises questions of the representativeness of the sample. However, if one is cautious about one's conclusions, Perrin feels it is still a useful sample.

My purpose in using Perrin data is to provide a comparison for the Calgary Faith VCF. Are the Western American VCF's similar to a Midwestern Canadian VCF? How do they differ? While Perrin uses his data in comparison with the General Social Data from the National Opinion Research Centre (NORC), using the subsample of Pacific respondents who go to church "2-3 times a month or more", I do not intend to make my comparison so broad. I wish merely to compare Perrin's VCF survey data with the Calgary Faith VCF data. The fact that the surveys are identical, except, of course, for the necessary adjustments made for the year difference and for the location difference, makes this comparison possible. I used Perrin's survey with his

permission. The only drawback from using the exact same survey was that I could not correct some of the poorly worded questions that brought confusion, and dissatisfaction among the respondents. Some questions were not answered usefully because they failed to speak to the respondent in the way that they were intended to. However, it is a useful tool for comparison as Perrin's respondents would have also dealt with these issues.

Like Perrin I will also have to be cautious in conclusion drawing. My response rate is at 43%. 89 surveys were handed out to a church having approximately one hundred adult members and 38 have been returned. While this is a workable number, it does hinder the confidence taken in any conclusions. It also raises question in the representativeness of my sample and needs some discussion as to why the response rate is so low.

Perrin states that the VCF is a church that focuses its efforts on the baby boomers. This is born out by the style of the service, the level of formality, and the youthfulness of the congregations. Perrin also finds that many Vineyard pastors speak of the desire to reach the baby boomers.

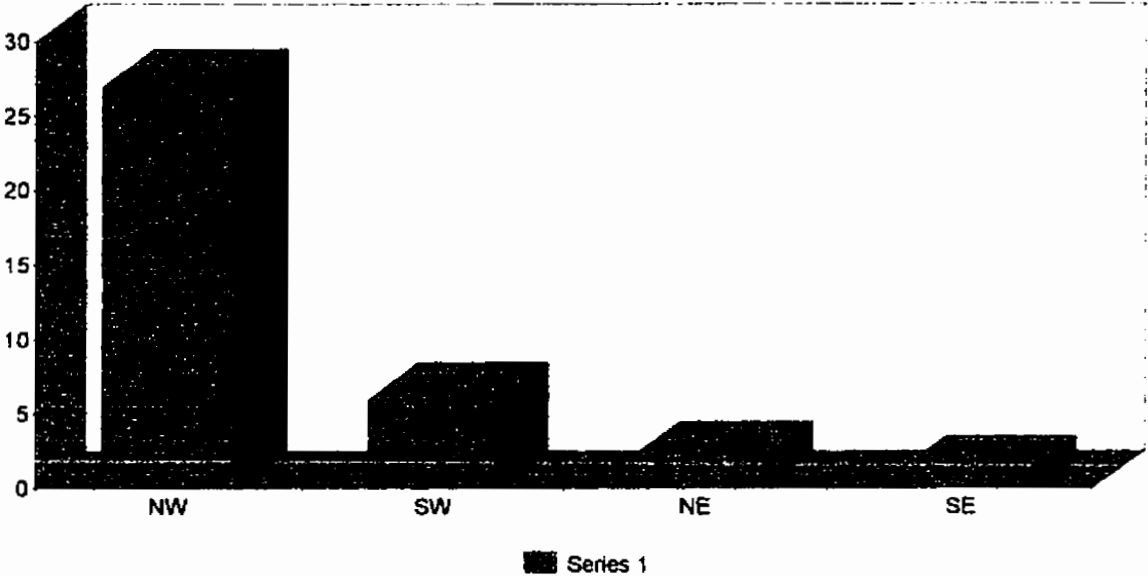
**Calgary Faith VCF Demographic Data**

The data found below here is taken from returned surveys that were given out to the members of the Calgary Faith Vineyard Christian Fellowship. Of the approx. 82 surveys handed out, thirty-six were returned.

The first piece of data is the breakdown of the places of residence that the members of the Faith VCF have. The graph is broken into NW, SW, NE, SE Calgary, with the unsurprising majority of respondees being in NW Calgary. Most of the graphs are self-explanatory, so I will merely provide legends, and where necessary, comment on the graph.

Illustration #1

**Places of residence**

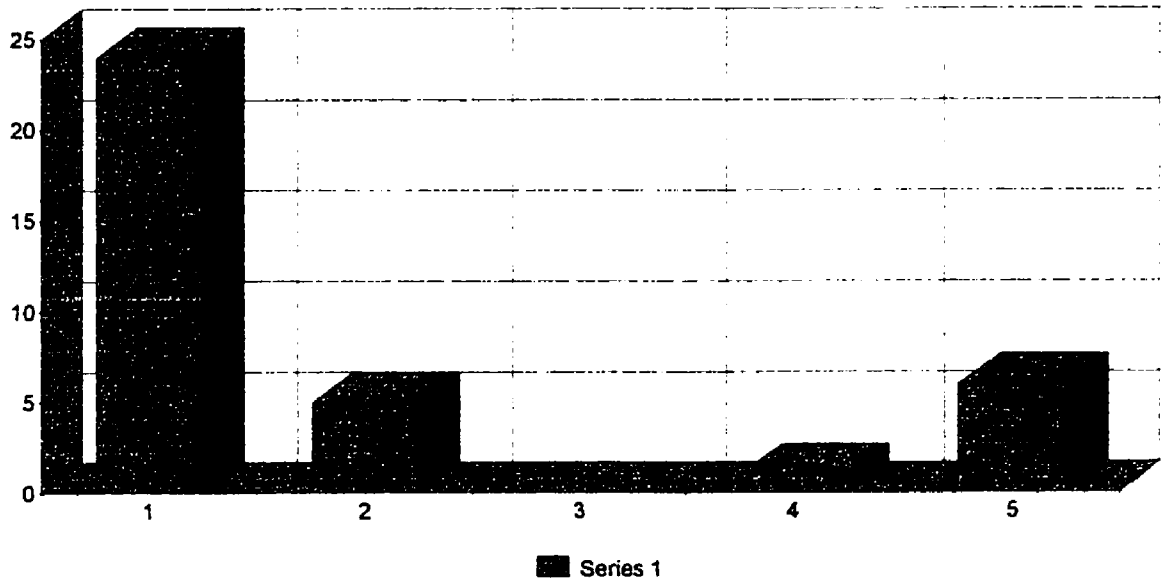


The next graph gives an indication of the age spread of the respondees.

**Illustration #2 - Ages**

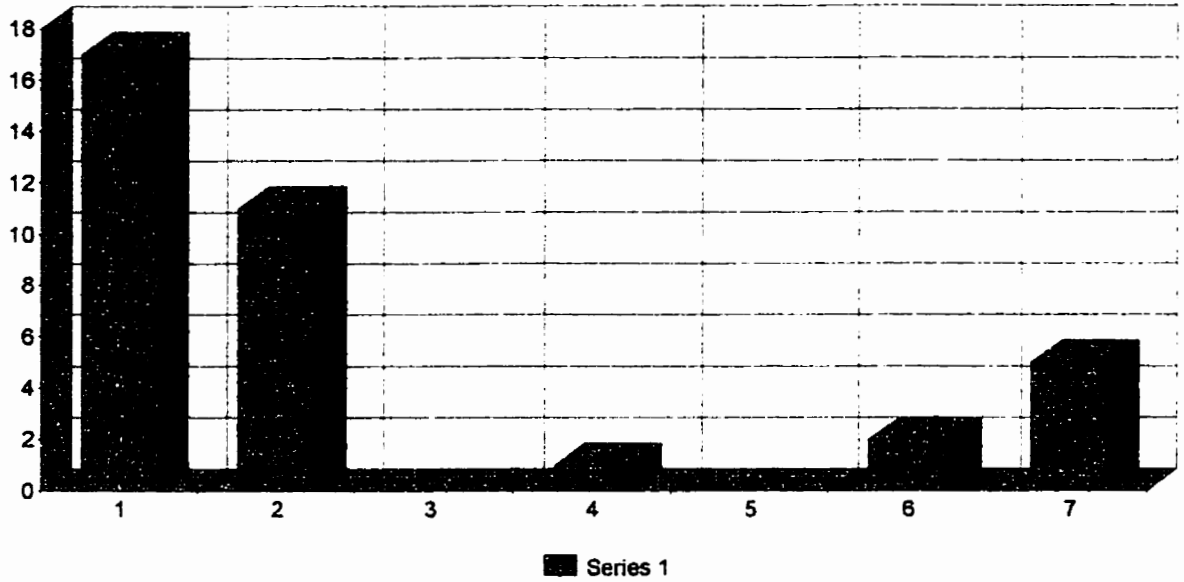


**Illustration #3 - Marital Status**



1 = Married 2 = Divorced 3 = Widowed 4 = Separated 5 = Never Married

**Illustration #4 - Job Status**



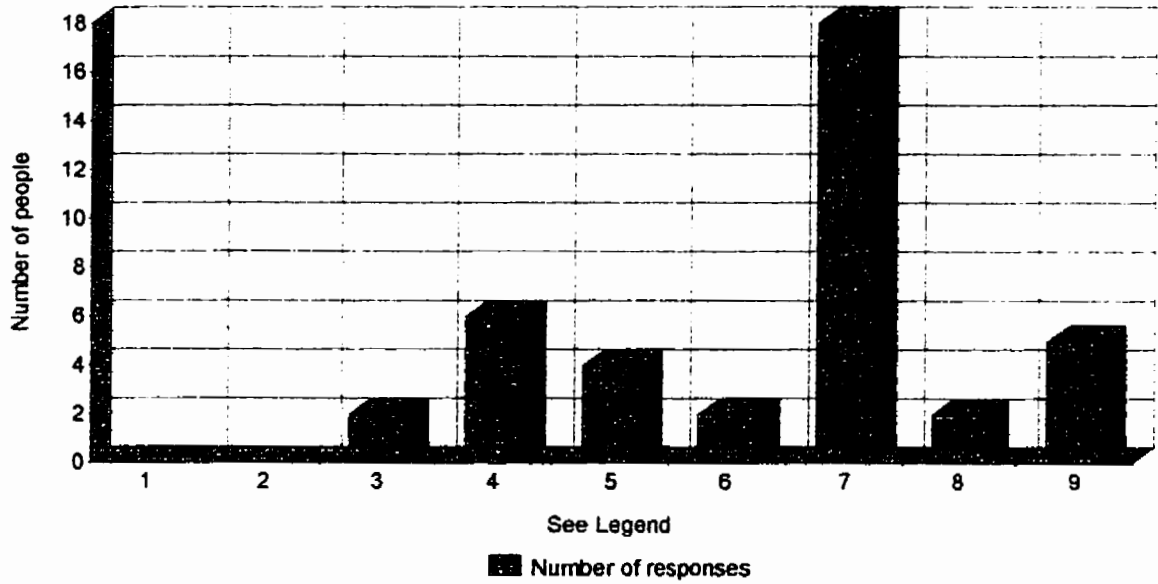
1 = Full Time Work 2 = Part Time Work 3 = Striking, Vacation, Sick Leave 4 = Unemployed and looking for work 5 = Retired 6 = In School 7 = Homemaker

**Illustration #5 - Class**



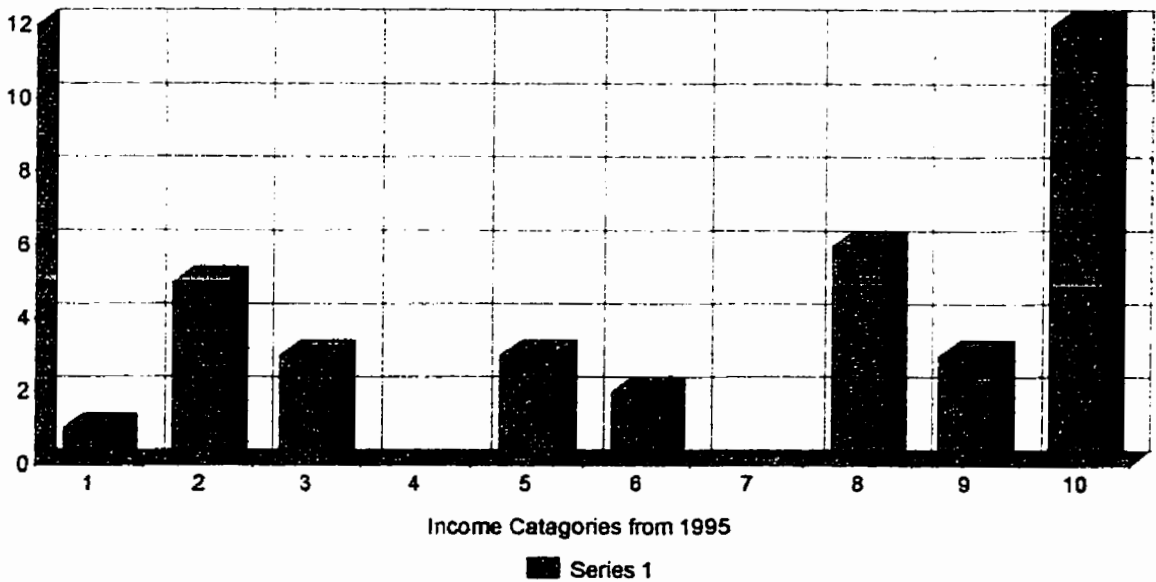
1 = Lower Class 2 = Working Class 3 = Middle Class 4 = Upper Class

**Illustration #6 - Education**



1 = No Formal Education 2 = Grade School 3 = Some High School 4 = High School Grad. 5 = Trade School 6 = Some College 7 = College Grad. 8 = Some Graduate Work 9 = Graduate

**Illustration #7 -Combined Family Income**



1=\$5000 or less 2=\$5000-\$9999 3=\$10000-\$14999 4=\$15000-\$19999 5 = \$20000-\$24999  
 6=\$25000-\$29999 7=\$30000-\$34999 8=\$35000-\$39999 9=\$40000-\$44999  
 10=\$45000 or more

The mean age of those respondents to Perrin's survey, of those 18 and older, is around 36. So far the mean age of the Faith VCF is 38 years, making it even younger (relatively speaking as Perrin's respondents age's would be averaging 46 now) than the VCF in the Pacific USA. This indicates that the Canadian Faith VCF also focuses successfully on the baby boomers. Perrin defines the age of baby boomers to range from 33 to 53 (although when he wrote his thesis it was between 23 and 43 years of age). He found that there was 74% of the respondents in that age group. Similarly there is 75% of those of corresponding age in the Faith VCF. This would indicate that there is a similar goal of reaching the baby boomers now in Canada as there was ten years ago in the USA.

When Perrin wrote his thesis the average number of children in the VCF per person, 1.7, was lower than any other religious grouping. He attributed this to the younger age of the VCF members. This is not born out by my findings as mine are higher than his at 1.9 children per respondent. This would support Perrin's hypothesis that the youth of the sample had an effect on the number of children as now, ten years later, the average number of children is the same as or higher than other religious groups.

As far as marital status is concerned there is little difference between my findings and those found by Perrin. The few differences, i.e. the slightly higher percentage of widows and divorced, can be accounted for by the ageing baby boomer population. Worthy of note, however, is the notable difference in the response ratio between men and women. Traditionally it has been considered in evangelical circles that more women go to church, in the area of 60% women to 40% men<sup>70</sup>. Also, we may note that a vast majority of Bibby's questionnaires were filled out by women<sup>71</sup>. However, this was not true in the case of the Faith VCF respondents. Here there is a

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<sup>70</sup> Hunter, James Davison (1983) *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>71</sup> I'm not sure of the number, but it was well over 60%, according to Dr. Brinkerhoff, an

perfect 50/50 split between men and women. Perrin had a 59/41 split between female and male responses. Perhaps this indicates a mere blip on the screen of an overall trend, or perhaps it means more than that.

Table 1 Demographics<sup>72</sup>

Mean Age	35.7	38.1
N	996	36
Age Grouping		
post-baby boomer	5%	27%
baby boomers	74%	66%
pre-baby boomer	21%	6%
N	996	36
Mean # of Children	1.7	1.9
N	984	36
Marital Status		
Married	69%	67%
Single	17%	15%
Divorced/Separated	13%	15%
Widowed	1%	3%
N	1001	36
Gender		
Female	59%	50%
Male	41%	50%
N	1001	36

### Socio-Economic Data

Perrin says a great deal about of the theory of deprivation, its proponents, its assumptions, its errors, and its support. He does, however, note that the evidence he gathered on the VCF seemingly does not support this theory. He points to his survey data to prove his point.

associate of Bibby's.

<sup>72</sup> Perrin's data comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 90.



The first point involves the fact that one indicator of socio-economic status is one's level of education. In comparing his survey data to the data from other sources (i.e. NORC) with regard to education levels he found that the VCF respondents had a significantly higher level of education than other Pacific area religious groups. 97% of Perrin's respondents had graduated from highschool, and 38% graduated from college. According to the information given by Hunter<sup>73</sup> this is an unusual finding as he found that evangelicals still have a lower level of education than others. My data is similar to Perrin's in that 95% of respondents graduated from High School, and dissimilar in that 70% of respondents have at least a university degrees. This last could be explained by the fact that those who have had higher education are more likely to respond to surveys and 'do their homework' than those who have had less education. However, such a large percentage, 25 out of 36 (even 25 out of a hundred), having university degrees indicates that the Faith VCF is attracting a highly educated class of people. The church's location in Bowness would suggest that there should be a lower level of education. This is due to the fact that the residents of Bowness have an average family income of \$40 770 and the Calgary average family income is \$57 211. Also, the fact that only 7% of the residents have a bachelors degree and with 40% not even having a high school diploma, one would expect the church to have a lower level of education. However, the surveys did not support that hypothesis.

In an associated area of soci-economic status is the number that work full time, part time, etc. Perrin found that 59% of Vineyard respondents were working full time, whereas only 47% of Faith VCF respondents are working full time. This can be attributed to two factors aside from socio-economic ones. The first of these is the fact that the American unemployment rate has always been significantly lower than Canada's. The second is that most people experienced the mid-80's as better economic times than are the mid-90's. With these taken into consideration,

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<sup>73</sup> Hunter, James Davison (1983) *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

the difference in full time employment is not as large as one may first think. These two factors are further supported by the fact that 30% of Faith VCF respondents work part time, compared to 13% of the Perrin respondents.

Considering the high level of education found within both Perrin's sample and my own, one would expect a high level of income and perceived class ranking. The income data found by myself does not lend itself to comparison to the data found by Perrin for a number of reasons. The first is that Perrin's data is ten years old, thus wages have no doubt increased in that time and it is difficult to adjust the numbers properly for comparison. The second is that Perrin's numbers reflect an American wage scale, which does not translate well into a Canadian wage scale. Thirdly, the questionnaire does not allow for any scaling or modification of data because it remained unchanged in its format. This is because I left in the wage scale used by Perrin, which does not, I believe, accurately represent a current day, Canadian pay scale. None-the-less, I will give you my results. 43% of the respondents made over \$40 000 in 1995, 17% made between \$30 and \$40 thousand, 14% made between \$20 and \$30 thousand, 9% made between \$10 and \$20 thousand, and 17% made less than \$10 000. I find this average of \$32 000 per year fairly low for such a highly educated group of respondents.

Equally surprising is the number of respondents who consider themselves of the working class. With 56% of respondents having at least a Bachelors, one would expect at least that number to consider themselves to be of the middle class. However, only 50% of respondents placed themselves in that class. There were none in upper class. 42% of respondents named themselves a part of the working class and 8% as lower class. There is significant difference between my respondents and Perrin's. 64% of his respondents named themselves middle class, 4% were upper class, 32% considered themselves working class, and a mere 1% were thinking they were in the lower class. This higher impression of social standing is accomplished with a lower education level.

From the comparison of the data, it is reasonable to think that the conclusions Perrin draws of the American VCF, with regard to the deprivation theory, are also generally applicable to the Faith VCF. I think that a case could be made that perhaps the attendance of the respondents to the Faith VCF may be attributable to the disparity between their level of education and their economic and social status.

Table 2 Social Class Data<sup>74</sup>

EDUCATION	PERCENT	NUMBER
Less than High School Grad	3%	6%
High School Grad	59%	28%
College/University Grad	28%	56%
Graduate Degree	9%	14%
N	995	36
WORK STATUS		
Working Full Time	59%	47%
Working Part Time	13%	30%
Retired	1%	0%
In School	6%	6%
Homemaker	18%	14%
Unemployed	3%	3%
N	995	36
SOCIAL CLASS		
Lower Class	1%	8%
Working Class	32%	42%
Middle Class	64%	59%
Upper Class	4%	0%
N	982	36

<sup>74</sup> Perrin's data found in Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 94.

## **Religious Commitment**

Perrin breaks this section down into three parts: belief; practice; experience. I will do likewise for the sake of comparison.

### **Belief**

When one notes the dissimilarities between Liberal Christians and evangelical ones, one of the most important characteristics is the element of belief. To find out where the VCF stands, Perrin used three questions as indicators of belief. The first asked about the status of the Bible. In his study 49% agreed with the statement, "The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.", and 51% agreed with the statement that, "The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything should be taken literally, word for word.". This, Perrin found, was more similar to the Liberal Protestants than the evangelical. When the second question was analysed, however, it became clear that the VCF was strongly conservative in belief when it came to the divinity of Jesus. This statement, "Jesus is the divine Son of God and I have no doubts about it." had 98% approval as 'completely true'. This was much higher than the liberal response.

How does the Faith VCF compare to Perrin's study? In the same order as presented above, the Faith VCF had 39% in agreement with the first statement, 61% in agreement with the second, and 97% in complete agreement with the last. The first two numbers indicate a more liberal interpretation of the Bible. However, through my participation in the church, I realised that there was an emphasis on any non-literal interpretation standing up to rather strict requirements. Wimber is also committed to Evangelical theology.

According to Hunter<sup>75</sup>, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the evangelicals is the recognition of both the physical and spiritual realms. In this spiritual world there are God and His angels, and Satan and his demons. Satan is no symbolic creature, representing the evil in the world, he is an actual living being. Considering the heavy emphasis of the VCF on the Spirit, spiritual warfare, and power encounters, one should have a fairly high percentage of people believing that Satan really exists. This is certainly true with Perrin's study where 96% of respondents felt that the statement, "I believe the Devil actually exists." was "completely true". In my case there is an equally large majority (97%) believing the same thing.

Table 3 Belief in the Bible and the Closeness to God<sup>76</sup>

	Perrin's Study	My Study
% believing the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word	49	39
% believing the Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything should be taken literally, word for word	51	61
% believing the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men	0	0
N	975	33
How close do you feel to God most of the time?		
Extremely Close	44%	37%
Somewhat Close	52%	63%
Not Very Close	4%	0%
Not Close at all	0%	0%
N	980	35

Table 4 Religious Beliefs and Religious Experiences<sup>77</sup>

\*see next page\*

<sup>75</sup> Hunter, James Davison (1983) *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>76</sup> Perrin's data comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 99.

<sup>77</sup> Perrin's data comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 100.

Jesus is the  
divine Son of  
God and I have  
no doubts

Perrin's Sample	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%	999
Loewen's Sample	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	36

I believe the  
devil actually  
exists

Perrin's Sample	96%	3%	1%	0%	0%	997
Loewen's Sample	91%	3%	0%	0%	0%	36

I personally  
know of times  
when God has  
healed someone  
who was  
seriously ill.

Perrin's Sample	75%	12%	8%	3%	3%	990
Loewen's Sample	69%	12%	3%	3%	3%	36

I have spoken  
to God in  
tongues

Perrin's Sample	73%	5%	6%	1%	15%	994
Loewen's Sample	67%	3%	11%	6%	14%	36

There are times  
when I know  
God has  
answered my  
prayers

Perrin's Sample	95%	4%	0%	0%	0%	1000
Loewen's Sample	94%	3%	3%	0%	0%	36

I can feel the  
presence of the  
Holy Spirit in  
my life

Perrin's Sample	83%	15%	2%	1%	0%	997
Loewen's Sample	72%	28%	0%	0%	0%	36

<sup>78</sup> Due to formatting restrictions this table could not follow the previous method of tabulation.

## **Practice**

A common method of determining the level of religious practice is looking at church attendance. This is an important indicator to Perrin because he thinks that peoples actions are a good indicator of their beliefs.

When one looks at the attendance rate of the VCF respondents, one is amazed by the overwhelming majority that attend nearly every week or more (for Perrin it is 95%, for my respondents it was 97%). Even more significant is the number of respondents who attend church related events such as cell groups, prayer meetings, devotionals, and so on. Perrin's VCF respondents had 72% attending these nearly every week or more. My respondents had 89% of those attending nearly every week or more. This seems to attribute to the heavy emphasis of the Faith VCF leadership on their cell groups being a vital and necessary part to the church and to any members part in the church. In fact, one cannot be involved in any way in leadership without being a part of the cell group system. I am not sure if this is just a local emphasis, or if it is merely an emphasis that has occurred recently within the VCF.

One of the most important activities to an evangelical Christian, at least in theory<sup>79</sup>, is the conversion of unbelievers. Hunter reports that 77% of evangelicals evangelise, or witness their faith, "less than monthly". Perrin's respondents felt an equally strong desire to witness their faith. 76% of them said that they "encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ" "A few times a year" or more. This is not surprising, considering Wimber's emphasis on evangelism. How does Faith VCF stand up to this test of practice? They responded at 77%. Thus the Calgary sample and the Perrin sample have the same level of response to evangelism.

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<sup>79</sup> there are many individuals, both in the evangelical church and out, that feel that this belief in evangelism is not carried out in action, evidenced by extremely low evangelistic results.

An interesting counter to this data is the response to the question: what is the top priority for a Christian. A large majority of Perrin's respondents (70%), and mine (71%), felt that "concentrating on the spiritual growth of one's family and self" was the most important priority. A mere 24% minority of respondents in both our study groups said that they felt that to "help to win the world for Jesus Christ" was the most important priority. This disparity between the number of people witnessing their faith and those feeling that this is the most important activity would perhaps indicate that when a VCF member thinks of developing their own and their families spiritual growth, evangelism is a significant part of that development. This would be in line with the way that the Faith VCF members promote personal development. They are aware of the fact that one who is not developed in the faith and fruit of the Spirit will have little success in evangelism. However, evangelism plays a part in the development of faith and of obedience to God.

Table 5 Religious Practice<sup>80</sup>

How often do you attend church services?		
Once/Month or less	1	3
2-3 times/month	4	0
Nearly every week	17	6
Every week	42	64
More than once/week	34	28
How often do you attend church related activities?		
Once/Month or less	21	8
2-3 times/month	7	3
Nearly every week	13	11
Every week	34	50
More than once/week	26	28

<sup>80</sup> Perrin's sample data comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 103.



Table 6 Witnessing to Others<sup>81</sup>

How often do you try and encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ?		
Every day	9	9
Once a month	21	21
A few times a year	45	47
Once or never	25	22
Which of the activities below should be top priority for Christians?		
Spiritual Growth of self and family	70	71
Help win the world for Jesus Christ	24	24
Improve the community	2	0
Strengthen the local church	3	0
Influence legislation	0	0
No opinion	1	5

## Experience

One of the distinguishing characteristics that sets the VCF apart from the wider North American evangelical community is its emphasis on the spiritual gifts and an experiential awareness of the power of God. Many critics, however, feel that such an emphasis lead to excesses and controversy. Wimber argues that he has, and will continue to, avoid what they, and he, consider to be the problems and excesses of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. Not only that, but the use of spiritual gifts will greatly increase the effectiveness of evangelism.

Wimber's emphasis on the experience of God is well documented in his numerous books wherein he tells the effect of the experience of God on himself and those around him. It would follow that members of the VCF should share this emphasis. This is certainly the case in Perrin's sample of respondents. 75% of them were sure that the statement "I personally know of times when God has healed someone who was seriously ill." was "completely true". Of the Faith VCF sample a smaller number, 69%, expressed this certainty. When it came to the statement "I have

<sup>81</sup> Perrin's data from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 103.

spoken to God in tongues.”, 73% of Perrin’s respondents and 67% of mine said it was completely true in their lives. Of the statement “There are times when I know God has answered my prayers.”, 95% of Perrin’s group and 94% of mine felt that this was “completely true” in their case. As far as Perrin’s data is concerned, 83% of Pacific American VCF members feel the statement “I can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life.” to be “completely true”. 72% of the Faith VCF respondents felt the same way about the statement.

### **Recruitment**

This next section deals with the issue of the source of the members of the VCF in general and of the Faith VCF in specific. The ideas that must be dealt with in this section include Bibby’s concerns about the circulation of the saints, retention of membership, retention of children, and conversion factors. These all must be looked at to explain the growth of the VCF in its few years of existence, as well as the growth of the Faith VCF, which started only five years ago with 30 core members and now has well over one hundred members.

From the data that Perrin had collected, he determined a five year conversion rate. He did this by looking at the number of respondents who had become Christians via Vineyard members, and at those who attended a Vineyard immediately after becoming a Christian. Perrin found that 10% of the respondents had been converted by a Vineyard member, and 13% had gone to a Vineyard immediately after conversion. This is a noticeable growth rate of 23% through conversion that is not found in many other denominations, as is noted by Bibby<sup>82</sup>. It certainly is not being found in the Faith VCF where only 3% of respondents claiming to have been converted because of association with a Vineyard member. Likewise, only 3% attended the Vineyard immediately after conversion. This is an interesting number because the Faith VCF has more

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<sup>82</sup> Bibby, Reginald W. (1987) *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing.

than tripled in size in the last five years. When I talked to Tim Schultz about this low conversion rate over the last five years he responded that the church has been going through a “season of renewal”. By this he meant that the majority of the growth in the church is not numerical, but is in maturity of members, in a growth in the leadership, in healing of the injured, and in growth in the power and disciplines of the Spirit. Tim assured me that a “season of evangelism” was in the near future (i.e.. spring and summer).

At this point the comparison between my conversion data and Perrin’s becomes difficult. This is because he looks at the percentages of unchurched and so forth among the converts, and I cannot do that because only one(1) person in my sample fitted that category.

Of Perrin’s sample 19% of respondents were considered religious nones, i.e. have no religious affiliation from their youth, 43% had an affiliation but were relatively unchurched, i.e. attended church once a month or less when growing up, and 58% were churched, in other words went to church more than twice per month. For the Faith VCF respondents, the percentages were 8%, 17%, and 83%. This is a significant difference in makeup between the Pacific American VCF’s and Faith VCF. It is obvious that the Faith VCF drew from a different base of people than did Perrin’s sample. There is a much larger number of churched respondents. I am not yet sure why. It may have something to do with the fact that of Perrin’s 14 sample churches, 7 were originally Calvary Chapel. As mentioned in the history section the Calvary Chapel was part of the Jesus Movement, a movement that involved primarily young converts and could conceivably contribute to a higher unchurched percentage.

It is apparent that within the Faith VCF most new members have come from other churches. This is referred to as denominational switching or the circulation of the saints<sup>83</sup>. This

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<sup>83</sup> Bibby, Reginald W. (1987) *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing.

is a phenomenon that Bibby spends much time looking at as it is one of the possible reasons for the apparent growth of conservative churches. So where do all these Faith VCF respondents come from? Most attended conservative churches (94%) right before coming to the Faith VCF, with 3% each from liberal and Catholic churches. This is a high number of people coming directly from conservative churches compared to Perrin's sample, where only 79% were from conservative churches, with 15% coming from liberal churches, and the last 6% coming from the Catholic church. This data tells us that the focus, or at least the impact, of the VCF is indeed on the members of the conservative churches, as is claimed by the Third Wave proponents.

When one considers the denominational affiliation that the respondents were born into the numbers change somewhat. For Perrin, a majority of respondents (68%) were raised in liberal or Catholic churches, but had switched to conservative churches at some point in their lives. This is not the case with the Faith VCF respondents. Here the majority (64%) of respondents were raised in conservative churches, leaving only 36% affiliated in their youth with Catholic or liberal churches.

Table 7 Number of Vineyard Converts<sup>84</sup>

Percentage who became converted in association with Vineyard members	98/998 (10%)	1/36 (3%)
Percentage whose first church after converting was a Vineyard	124/982 (13%)	1/36 (3%)
Percentage whose first church after converting was either Vineyard or Calvary	224/982 (23%)	2/36 (6%)

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<sup>84</sup> Perrin's data in Table 7 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 123.

Table 8 Numbers Unchurched, Churched, and Religious Nones<sup>85</sup>

Unchurched	43	17
Churched	59	83
Religious None	19	8

Table 9 Switching Patterns<sup>86</sup>

PREVIOUS CHURCH	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL
Church attended just before coming to the Vineyard		
Conservative	79%	94%
Liberal	15%	3%
Catholic/Anglican	6%	3%
N	113	35
PREVIOUS CHURCH	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL
Denomination in which the respondent was raised		
Conservative	32%	64%
Liberal	39%	27%
Catholic/Anglican	29%	9%
N	837	35

### Social Strength

Part of the explanation that is given by Perrin, who relies on Kelly<sup>87</sup>, for the success of the conservative churches during a time of secularisation is the idea that they make demands. These demands create a level of social strength which can be measured by a response to a set of questions. These questions determine areas like commitment, missionary zeal, and discipline.

The first question (23A) finds out how committed the respondents are to their church by asking for a response to the statement, "I would be willing to give up everything for my Christian

<sup>85</sup> Perrin's data in Table 8 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 126.

<sup>86</sup> Perrin's data in Table 9 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 131.

<sup>87</sup> Kelley, Dean M. (1972) *Why the Conservative Churches are Growing*. New York: Harper & Row.

faith.”. Perrin’s sample responded with an eighty-five percent agreement or strong agreement with that statement. My respondents were even more in agreement with that statement: 92% agreed with it. In the area of missionary zeal, two statements were used and the level of agreement or disagreement with that statement asked for each one. The first statement is, “I am hesitant to share Christian convictions.” to which there was a 64% disagreement among Perrin’s respondents and a 75% disagreement with mine. The second statement reads, “My heart aches for people who are not saved.”. The Faith VCF respondents had an 83% agreement rate to this statement, and Perrin’s respondents had an 86% agreement rate. Missionary zeal is also measured by the behavioural question which determined the number of times the respondent witnessed his/her faith. Over 92% of the Faith VCF respondents responded that they do it a few times a year or more, and Perrin’s respondents ranked at 76%.

The concept of discipline is not quite as easily measured, according to Perrin. This difficulty is made worse by the fact that the question he used to measure this element of social strength is significantly flawed. The Statement reads, “I trust the pastors and do whatever they ask.”. This appears to be asking the respondent to be a mindless robot when it comes obeying their pastor if they want to rate high on the discipline scale. However, despite this possible *understanding of the question*, 66% of Faith VCF respondents agreed with the statement, and 65% of Perrin’s respondents said the same thing. All of these numbers would indicate that there is certainly a strong element of social strength in the VCF. This social strength is found to be even stronger in the Faith VCF than in the fourteen churches that Perrin surveyed.

### **Traits of Strictness**

Also known as particularism, traits of strictness are often a product of the commitment and conviction level of a group. In this case, one would expect that the VCF members would have a relatively high level of strictness traits. There are two ways of measuring this

characteristic. The first is to measure the conformity of the members , the second is to measure the absolutism of the members . Both measures involve two statements with which the respondent is asked to agree or disagree.

The first measure has as its statements, “It’s nobody’s business how Christian friends act”, and “I confront my sinning friends.”. The first statement finds a high percentage of disagreement within the respondents. 86% of Perrin’s sample disagreed, and my respondents had an even higher level of disagreement at 97%. The second statement indicates a much lower majority agreeing with this statement. Only 57% of Perrin’s respondents agreed, while a higher percentage of 67 of Faith VCF respondents agreed. The results of these answers brings into question the level of conformity required within the VCF. What concerns me is the lack of other data to compare with these results. Exactly what percentage of respondents are needed to be willing to confront sinful behaviour in their friends in order for that sample to be considered high in conformity? In my experience of conservative churches, I would be of the opinion that any response over 50% would indicate a sample that valued conformity fairly strongly. If one can take my intuition as an indicator, then these results would indicate a relatively high level of conformity in Perrin’s sample, and a notably higher level of conformity among the Faith VCF sample.

The two statements used to measure the level of absolutism are as follows: “I believe that anyone who does not accept Christ as Saviour will not go to heaven”; “I have no more religious answers than anyone else.”. Vineyard members, both in Perrin’s sample and mine, tend to be absolutist in the sense that 89% and 83%, respectively, feel, and most strongly, that the only way to salvation is through Christ. However, when it comes down to being particular about truth, they feel that they do not have any corner on the market with a mere 49% and 54%, respectively, feeling that they had more answers than most. This last result may be a bit misleading, however. The statement can be taken two ways. The respondent may read the statement as them having no

more religious answers than any other Christian, or they may read it as them having no more religious answers than any other religion. I believe that the respondent will respond differently, depending on the way it is read. This is, of course, difficult to measure without rephrasing the question. However, in my discussions with Tim Schultz, I have gotten a strong sense that he at least, feels that they do have something more than other religions, even than other denominations.



Table 10 Kelley's "Social Strength" and "Strictness"<sup>88</sup>

Q23A I am willing to give up everything for Christ						
Perrin's Data	978	1.7	84.6	13.9	2.1	Commitment
Loewen's Data	36	1.39	92	6	0	
Q23D I trust pastors and do whatever they ask.						
Perrin's Data	961	2.4	65	20.5	14.2	Discipline
Loewen's Data	36	2.55	66	6	28	
Q23H I am hesitant to share Christian convictions.						
Perrin's Data	991	2.5	94.5	10.2	63.8	Missionary
Loewen's Data	36	2.64	72	3	75	Zeal
Q32I My heart aches for people who are not saved.						
Perrin's Data	991	1.8	86	9.1	4.9	Missionary
Loewen's Data	36	2.03	83	11	6	Zeal
Q23E I have no more religious answers than anyone else.						
Perrin's Data	968	2.9	49.1	10.7	40.2	Absolutism
Loewen's Data	36	2.89	54	6	40	
Q23G You accept Christ to go to heaven.						
Perrin's Data	989	1.5	89.4	5.5	5.1	Absolutism
Loewen's Data	36	1.69	83	0	17	
Q23F It's nobody's business how Christian friends act.						
Perrin's Data	984	4	6.9	6.7	86.4	Conformity
Loewen's Data	36	4.27	3	0	97	
Q23M I confront my sinning church friends.						
Perrin's Data	966	2.6	57.1	23.8	19.1	Conformity
Loewen's Data	36	2.49	67	16.5	16.5	

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### Commitment Mechanisms

Retention of members has as a factor in its success commitment mechanisms. Within the heading of commitment mechanisms is included the willingness to sacrifice, to invest oneself, to

<sup>88</sup> Perrin's data in Table 10 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 149.

<sup>89</sup> Due to formatting restrictions this table cannot be set up in the same way as the others.

enter into communion, and to renounce outside influence. As seen in the previous analysis of the element of sacrifice, 92% of Faith VCF respondents say they are willing to give all for their faith. When we look at the measure Perrin uses to test the level of investedness that the VCF members have we can see that there is perhaps a weakness in it. The statement used reads, “I assume responsibility in the success of the Vineyard”, and they are to agree or disagree with it. However, when one considers the “all glory goes to God” attitude that is present, at least within the Faith VCF, one begins to note that while the members may be investing themselves highly in the success of the movement, they feel that it is God who is responsible for bringing success out of their efforts, not their efforts themselves. So it is possible that a respondent would disagree with the statement, and yet be giving up his job, home, and friends to go to China and start a VCF there. None-the-less, over half of each sample does feel that they have some role in the success of the VCF. When it comes to the measure of the level of communion felt amongst the respondents, we note that a large majority of the members of both samples spend a significant amount of time with other VCF members, and feel that their Vineyard church is like a family to them. A notably larger percentage (91% rather than 77%) of Faith VCF respondents spend time with other church members than in the sample used by Perrin. Looking at the issue of renunciation, neither sample felt strongly about avoiding friendships with non-Christians. Of the Faith VCF sample 81% would not avoid these friendships, with 64% of Perrin’s sample feeling the same way.

Table 11 Kanter's "Commitment Mechanisms"<sup>90</sup>

Q23A I am willing to give up everything						Sacrifice
Perrin's Data	978	1.7	87.6	13.3	2.1	
Loewen's Data	36	1.39	92	8	0	
Q23J I assume responsibility in success of Vineyard						Investment
Perrin's Data	976	2.5	88.3	19.4	22.3	
Loewen's Data	36	2.5	88.3	19.4	22.3	
Q23B I do not spend time with Vineyardites						Communion
Perrin's Data	983	3.8	18.5	41	17.4	
Loewen's Data	36	4	81	0	91	
Q23C People at my church are like family						Communion
Perrin's Data	983	1.9	87.8	8.3	8.8	
Loewen's Data	36	1.8	86.1	5.6	8.3	
Q23K I avoid friendships with non-Christians						Renunciation
Perrin's Data	979	3.5	25.9	9.7	64.4	
Loewen's Data	36	4	11	8.3	80.6	

As noted earlier, the lack of data out there to compare these findings to significantly limits the usefulness of this data. We cannot make any hard comparisons with other Christian movements and so we can only say that the Vineyard appears to take their faith seriously. However, we do not know how they rank against other conservative movements, or even against the liberal churches. To solve, or at least mitigate, this dilemma Perrin had his respondents give their impression as to how their previous church compared to the VCF. In doing this he had them

<sup>90</sup> Perrin's data in Table 11 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 152.

<sup>91</sup> Due to formatting restrictions this table cannot be set up in the same way as others.

assess the commitment level and particularism of member of their previous church and of their present Vineyard.

According to Kelly, the respondents should feel that there is a higher level of commitment and seriousness in the VCF than in their previous church. Whether this was so or not was determined by the asking of two questions, of which each had the same subset of six questions. The question reads “Compared to church goers in general, members of my previous church . . .”, and was followed by six items which measured things like missionary zeal, commitment, discipline, absolutism, conformity, and fanaticism. The first three items deal with the seriousness of religion, and the last three deal with the traits of strictness. The respondents were also asked to compare their current vineyard with church-goers in general, with the same six item subset.

According to the results, the respondents feel that Vineyard members are more willing to sacrifice everything for Christ than were the members of their previous church. This is seen in the fact that there is a significant difference between the average rating in this item. The Faith VCF rated at 1.7 and the previous churches came in at 2.7. In this case the lower the number, the more willing the members are to sacrifice everything. 1 would mean that everyone felt that the VCF was much more willing to sacrifice everything than church goers in general. 5 would mean that everyone felt that compared to church goers in general, VCF members seemed unwilling to make sacrifices. Thus, a rating of 1.7 is significantly better than one of 2.7. Perrin’s study had the ratings at VCF = 1.9 and previous church = 2.6. This would indicate that Faith VCF is perceived to be even more committed than your average VCF.

In the measure of missionary zeal, similar results are found. With Faith VCF comparing in at 1.9 and the previous church coming in at 2.9, it is clear that the Faith VCF is perceived to be more committed to evangelism than were previous churches. When it comes to the discipline

issue, the VCF members fair no better than their previous churches with results at 2.5 and 2.7 respectively. Perrin's respondents felt the same with similar results in both areas.

One would expect, according to Kelley, that those who take their religion seriously will have a higher level of the traits of strictness, or particularism. An example of this would be the Hutterites who are very serious about their faith, and very particularistic about it. This, however, is not the case with the Vineyard members. For the most part they perceive their previous church members to be more strict than those of the VCF. The item measuring absolutism shows that the respondents, both mine and Perrin's, feel that their previous church members thought they had a fairly strong grip on the Truth at 2.0 (Perrin had 2.1), whereas the VCF members are not quite so sure at 2.8 (Perrin had 2.5). The issue of conformity has the VCF as slightly more conformist than their previous church, however. The VCF gets a rating of 1.9 (2.1) on willingness to confront sinning Christians, with the previous church rated at 2.6 (2.5). The VCF member is not perceived as being fanatical about their faith, or not as much as their previous church members. This is seen in the rating of the VCF members at 3.5 (3.3 for Perrin) and the previous church members at 2.5 (2.6). One must realise in these last figures that the previous church for 94% of the respondents was a conservative church.

Table 12 Means for "Social Strength" and "Strictness" for Vineyard Members and Their Previous Church Members<sup>92</sup>

<b>SOCIAL STRENGTH</b>				
Q-9A and Q16A				
1=Willing to sacrifice all				<b>Commitment</b>
5=Reluctant to make sacrifices	1.9	1.7	2.0	2.71
Q-9B and Q-16B				
1=Do not question leaders				<b>Discipline</b>
5=Reluctant to follow leaders	2.1	2.5	2.2	2.69
Q-9C and Q16C				
1=Driven by desire to win others				<b>Missionary Zeal</b>
5=Reluctant to share beliefs	2	1.9	2.0	2.94
<b>STRICTNESS</b>				
Q-9D and Q-16D				
1=Personal beliefs are "The Truth"				<b>Absolutism</b>
5=No one has all "The Truth"	2.5	2.8	2.1	2
Q-9E and Q-16E				
1=Confront sinning Christians				<b>Conformity</b>
5=None of their business	2.1	1.9	2.5	2.6
Q-9F and Q-16F				
1=Annoyed by different views				<b>Fanaticism</b>
5=Appreciate different views	3.3	3.5	2.6	2.5

One very interesting statistical analysis that Perrin provides is dividing up the responses of the respondents into groups that are defined by their previous church affiliation and then analysed in the same manner as above to indicate how the VCF compares to liberal, Catholic, and conservative church members. I cannot do this, however, due to the small size of my sample,

<sup>92</sup> Perrin's data in Table 12 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 154.

which would contain only one entry for the liberal, and one for the catholic, with thirty-three for the conservative.

As with the previous analysis, my ability to compare my data to Perrin's is severely limited by the size of the sample. However, I can compare the results of the subgroup of those whose respondents previously attended a conservative church because 33 of the 36 respondents were of this group. This will provide some idea of the level of demands required by the VCF as opposed to those required by conservative churches. In Perrin's study, 55% of the respondents felt that their Vineyard emphasised giving money to the church the same as or more than their previous conservative church, of this the majority (47%) of respondents felt that it was the same level of emphasis. 39% of the respondents felt that their previous church emphasised giving more. From the Faith VCF sample, 70% felt the emphasis was the same, 9% felt it was more, and 21% felt it was less.

The issue of discretion in the choice of movies, tv, and in reading is one of the demands that churches can make on their members. How the Vineyard relate to conservative churches on this issue? For both Perrin and I, 9% of the respondents felt that the VCF emphasised this issue more. 38% of Perrin's respondents felt that the emphasis was similar, and 37% felt that there was more emphasis in the conservative church, with 16% saying neither has any emphasis in this area. Respectively, Faith VCF respondents had 45%, 33%, and 12%.

The concept of being in, but not of, the world is a fairly common in Christianity, and is one of the demands that can be placed on a church member. This question had slightly different results than the previous two. First, there was a fairly high percentage of respondent, 66% for both sets of samples, who felt that the emphasis was equal between the two. For Perrin, the percentage who felt this concept was emphasised more by the VCF was higher than those who

felt it was emphasised less (21% to 11%), whereas for mine, the numbers were opposite to that pattern (19% to 16%), which, considering the size of sample is fairly close to equal.

The demand that one give up alcohol and smoking is one which the VCF members felt is not emphasised much by the VCF. With 4% of Perrin's sample, and 0% of mine, saying that the VCF emphasised this more, and only 24% of each of our samples feeling it was emphasised equally, this is clear. 41% of Perrin's sample, and 61% of mine, felt that the conservative churches were emphasising this more, with 31% and 15% respectively feeling it was not emphasised in either. It is interesting to note that such a large percentage of Perrin's American VCF sample feel that churches make no demands on the drinking and smoking lifestyle, when less than half that number feel that way in a Canadian VCF. We may speculate that the nationality makes the difference, or perhaps that in the last ten years alcohol and smoking have become more taboo, or is it an element of both.

Living a distinctive life, for the most part, is equally emphasised in the eyes of the VCF respondents, with 58% of Perrin's and 55% of mine responding to that effect. This leaves 18% and 9%, respectively, who feel it is emphasised more by the VCF, 14% and 27% respectively feeling it emphasised more by the previous conservative church. There were 10% of respondents who felt no influence for this distinction in either church.



Table 13 Lifestyle Demands of the VCF<sup>93</sup>

This table only involves those respondents whose previous church was conservative.

<b>Q-10D GIVING MONEY TO THE CHURCH</b>		
% Emphasized more by VCF	8	9
% Emphasized Equally by both	47	70
% Emphasized more by previous church	39	21
% Not emphasized by either	6	0
<b>Q-10L DISCRETION IN T.V./MOVIES/ READING</b>		
% Emphasized more by VCF	9	9
% Emphasized Equally by both	38	45
% Emphasized more by previous church	37	33
% Not emphasized by either	16	12
<b>Q-10M BEING IN, BUT NOT OF, THE WORLD</b>		
% Emphasized more by VCF	21	16
% Emphasized Equally by both	66	66
% Emphasized more by previous church	11	18
% Not emphasized by either	2	0
<b>Q-10N GIVING UP ALCOHOL/ SMOKING</b>		
% Emphasized more by VCF	4	31
% Emphasized Equally by both	24	24
% Emphasized more by previous church	41	61
% Not emphasized by either	31	15
<b>Q-10R LIFE DISTINCT FROM NON-CHRISTIANS</b>		
% Emphasized more by VCF	18	9
% Emphasized Equally by both	58	55
% Emphasized more by previous church	14	27
% Not emphasized by either	10	9

These numbers show that most respondents feel that there is an equality of emphasis in areas of demand between their VCF and their previous conservative church. However, there is a

<sup>93</sup> Perrin's data in Table 13 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p162.

stronger tendency to feel that there was more requirements in their previous church rather than the opposite. Both Perrin's VCF respondents and mine were of the same mind on these issues, showing a consistency in demand over time and over national boundaries.

Table 14 Personal Devotion Demands of the VCF<sup>94</sup>

\*see next page\*

Due to formatting restrictions the following table could not be shown in the same way as the others.

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<sup>94</sup> Perrin's data in Table 14 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. Pp164-5.



In looking at Table 14 we can see that the majority of respondents, both Perrin's and mine feel that the VCF has similar or higher emphasis in areas of demand on their members than do their previous conservative churches. In twelve of the fifteen measurements of the personal devotion demands the majority of respondents felt that their VCF emphasised them equally as much or more than their previous conservative church. This would indicate a higher level of commitment and effort on the part of the VCF than is normally required. When we compare Perrin's data in these twelve measurements with mine, we see that Faith VCF has a higher percentage of respondents who feel that their present church places more emphasis on almost all of these areas of personal devotion than their previous conservative church. This could indicate two things. First that Canadian conservative churches are not as demanding in personal devotions as are American conservative churches. This means that the Faith VCF has a similar emphasis to the American VCF. Second, we can assume that the conservative churches in America and Canada are similar in their emphasis on personal devotions. This means that the Faith VCF is more demanding in the area of personal devotions than is the American VCF. It is impossible to tell from this data which is the most likely.

Of the three measurements that were not rated as emphasised more by the VCF, two were considered to be equally emphasised, and one to be emphasised poorly by either church, but with the conservative church emphasising it more. This last is in the area of giving up non-Christian friends, which would be considered somewhat counter to the activity of evangelism. The area of personal bible study is of particular interest due to the claims of conservative churches that bible study is often left behind by charismatic churches in the wave of experience. This is also a criticism of Wimber against the charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Wimber perceives the

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<sup>95</sup> Due to formatting restrictions this table is not shown as the others.

Vineyard to avoid the down playing of scripture in the pursuit of experience. When one looks at the responses of the VCF members however, this is not necessarily the case. According to Perrin's data, 34% of respondents felt their previous conservative church emphasised bible study more. This goes down to 18% in my sample. A majority of respondents (65% Perrin, 82% Loewen) feel that the VCF is emphasising this aspect of devotion equally or more. I would say that this indicates that the VCF is, by and large, avoiding the tendency for de-emphasis of Bible study. This is somewhat tempered by the fact that Tim Schultz stated that the Cell groups were not set up as a bible study, nor is Bible study to be a major part of the Cell group.

Table 15 Extent to which respondents feel the church should make demands<sup>96</sup>

A. Should avoid close friendships with non-Christians.				
Perrin's Data	3.9	16	6	78
Loewen's Data	4.4	3	0	97
B. Should accept validity of other religious teachings				
Perrin's Data	4	13	11	76
Loewen's Data	4	9	14	77
C. Should be willing to do what pastor asks				
Perrin's Data	3.3	34	15	53
Loewen's Data	3.9	23	9	68
D. Christians are duty bound to witness				
Perrin's Data	2.5	72	8	20
Loewen's Data	2.8	64	6	30
E. No need for Christians to separate from the world				
Perrin's Data	3.9	19	6	76
Loewen's Data	3.6	25	6	69
F. Christians are commanded to give all				
Perrin's Data	1.8	85	6	9
Loewen's Data	1.7	86	3	11
G. Christians should confront friends				
Perrin's Data	2.4	66	17	17
Loewen's Data	2.1	89	5.5	5.5
H. Church should not tell people how to live				
Perrin's Data	3.8	18	6	76
Loewen's Data	3.8	14	6	80
I. Church should demand that Christians be committed				
Perrin's Data	2.6	56	11	33
Loewen's Data	2.5	61	6	33

<sup>96</sup> Perrin's data in Table 15 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 169.

## **Demands**

The data in the previous table deals with the measurement of the agreedness that the respondents had with regard to whether a church ought to put demands on its members. The results clearly show that the majority of respondents, both Perrin's and mine, agree that being a Christian should carry with it certain demands, or behaviours. This is seen in the fact that 72% of Perrin's sample, and 64% of mine feel that Christians are duty bound to witness their faith. Also, 85% and 86%, respectively, agree that Christians are commanded to sacrifice everything for Jesus.

There is also a feeling amongst the respondents that the church should have a role in generating commitment. 76% of Perrin's respondents and 80% of mine disagree with the statement "it is not the job of the church to tell Christians how to live their lives" (Q-19H). A smaller majority, yet still a majority, of respondents (56% Perrin, 61% Loewen) feel that the church has every right to demand commitment from its members. There is an unwillingness to do "whatever" the pastor asks. I do not find this surprising at all because the press has commented a great deal on the abuse of power by certain pastors, and everyone is aware of this as such abuses are highly publicised. As such, no self respecting individual is going to blindly obey their pastor, unless what he/she asks makes sense to the individual asked. Many of the individuals that I have talked to in the church expressed concern over this question because of its blanketing nature. A number of them stated that as long as the request lined up with Biblical principals they would obey.

One significant difference between Perrin's sample and my own is the degree to which the respondents agree with the statement, "As Christians we should confront friends who do not act in a Christ-like manner" (Q-19G). While Perrin's respondents have an agreement rate of 66%, a majority, my respondents have a rate of agreement at 89%, a significantly higher number.

This indicates that there is a higher level of accountability in the Faith VCF than in the other VCF's in Perrin's study. A less significant difference between the two samples is found in the question dealing with the avoidance of non-Christian friends. While a significant majority of both samples disagreed with the statement "As Christians we should avoid close friendships with non-Christians", Perrin's sample was 19% less against that statement. As this is a measurement of renunciation, it would appear that the Faith VCF has a lesser degree of renunciation in its social requirements than does the American VCF.



Table 16 Extent to which respondents are stronger Christians since coming to the VCF<sup>97</sup>

<b>A. Personal Prayer Life</b>		
% Stronger Christian	50	67
% The Same	48	33
% Weaker Christian	5	0
<b>B. Personal Bible Study</b>		
% Stronger Christian	35	21
% The Same	50	67
% Weaker Christian	15	12
<b>C. Witnessing to Others</b>		
% Stronger Christian	8	52
% The Same	53	46
% Weaker Christian	5	0
<b>D. Involvement in Church</b>		
% Stronger Christian	56	18
% The Same	35	76
% Weaker Christian	12	6
<b>E. Giving Money to Church</b>		
% Stronger Christian	38	48
% The Same	56	52
% Weaker Christian	5	0
<b>F. Helping the Poor</b>		
% Stronger Christian	43	67
% The Same	51	30
% Weaker Christian	6	3
<b>G. Living a Distinct Life</b>		
% Stronger Christian	39	27
% The Same	57	73
% Weaker Christian	4	0
<b>H. Obedience to God's will</b>		
% Stronger Christian	63	67
% The Same	36	33
% Weaker Christian	1	0

Looking at table 16 we see a number of significant differences between my data and Perrin's. Some of the more significant ones are different by more than 40% of the total sample. One that is very obvious to me is the response to the area of involvement in the church. 56% of

<sup>97</sup> Perrin's data in Table 16 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press. p 180.

Perrin's respondents feel they are stronger in their church involvement, with 33% remaining the same. In my data, however, only 18% feel that they are stronger in the area of church involvement, with 78% remaining the same.

This could indicate any number of things. But I believe the most reasonable assumption is that the Faith VCF is attracting a large number of people who were very committed to church involvement in the past, and continue to be so in their present church. Whereas, the VCF's in the Pacific US were not highly committed to church involvement before they went to the VCF. Another consideration could be that Canadian VCF's are not as demanding in the area of church involvement as the American ones. There are numerous other scenarios which could explain this finding. One could be that those returning the surveys at VCF are the responsible ones who give their time to church related things. This last is a definite possibility as only 40% of surveys have been returned.

Another area of significant difference is the area involving helping the poor. While this may be a recent emphasis of the VCF, it is certainly a strong emphasis of the Faith VCF. This is seen in their choice of location, as well as in their goal of starting a relief kitchen in Bowness. It is also seen in their response to the area of helping the poor. 67% of Faith VCF respondents felt they were stronger in their faith with regard to helping the needy. Only 43% felt this way in Perrin's sample.

In the area of personal bible study, Perrin's sample fairs reasonably well with 35% feeling they are stronger and 50% the same in this area of personal growth. My sample is not as good with only 21% feeling stronger, and 67% remaining the same. This leaves 15% and 12% respectively who are doing worse in their personal bible study. This is the largest percentage of all the areas of personal growth to have gotten worse. This is interesting once again because of the tendency for charismatic churches to de-emphasise Biblical study.

In the other areas of personal growth, the Faith VCF fairs slightly better in giving financially, obedience, witnessing to others, and personal prayer life than does Perrin's sample. I say this meaning that more Faith VCF respondents felt stronger than did Perrin's respondents. Perrin's sample had a higher percentage of stronger Christians in the area of living a life distinct of non-believers.

### Reasons for attendance at the VCF?

Now that we know where they come from and how the change has affected them, we can look at why they changed in the first place. Why did the 97% of respondents change from their previous church to the Vineyard? According to the table above, there are numerous reasons, as well as a few not mentioned in the table.

Table 17 Reasons Vineyard Members Give for Switching Churches<sup>98</sup>

A. Ineffective job of preaching gospel	28	24
B. Was not meeting my fellowship needs	57	55
C. Seemed to formal or "churchy"	49	65
D. Did not stress winning others to Christ enough	12	24
E. Put up with too much un-Christian behaviour	17	12
F. Did not stress an inspirational worship service enough	62	56
G. Did not challenge me in my faith enough	49	50
H. Seemed somewhat uncertain about beliefs	14	15
I. Had different views on important priorities	64	82
J. Too open-minded concerning other religious beliefs	4	0

<sup>98</sup> Perrin's data in Table 17 comes from Perrin, Robin (1989) *The Signs and Wonders Movement*. Washington: Washington University Press.p 211.

The most popular considerations in choosing a different church are the sections I, C, B, F, and G. Most people left their church because of the issue of priorities in the church. 82% of my respondents and 64% of Perrin's felt that the priorities of their previous church were not appropriate, or were not their own at least. The "churchyness" of their previous church bothered them as well. The level of formality held in conservative and Catholic churches was felt to be uncomfortable. This was more true for the Faith VCF respondents than it was for the Perrin respondents. This may be because of the fact that most of Perrin's sample was in California and the conservative churches there would have already become less formal due to the social and religious climate. It may also be due to the variety of styles in VCF's as some are more formal than others. I would say that the Faith VCF is a very informal VCF as far as dress and behaviour is concerned.

Both Perrin's data and mine show that the meeting for fellowship needs is important in the decision to join the VCF. 57% of respondents felt that their fellowship need were not being met by their previous church. The meeting of fellowship needs is a fairly important one to the VCF. One of the most important needs the VCF attempts to meet is the need for inspirational worship. According to 62% of Perrin's sample and 56% of mine, this was a consideration in the choice to join the VCF. The 8% difference, while not large considering my number of respondents, may indicate that there has been an increase in the inspirational nature of worship in the conservative, and other, churches. This would have come about partially out of VCF influence. The worship in the VCF may considered more inspirational because of its more contemporary style, which I would compare to a folkish style which involves acoustic, electric, and drum instruments, numerous signers, and some spontaneity in its form. The songs are generally not highly energetic, although those are certainly used, but contemplative, introspective, praise oriented. They consist mostly of choruses, which have little musical complexity for the congregation.

It is interesting to note that 50% of the respondents did not feel sufficiently challenged in their faith in their previous church, and that they were finding that challenge in the VCF. This data is of interest because it relates directly to theories as to why conservative churches are growing. These theories consider the costliness, challenge, and demands of the conservative churches appeals to those searching for an all inclusive faith. This data would help confirm this idea I think.

## **Conclusion**

It is apparent that in many ways the Faith VCF is similar to the VCF that Perrin surveyed. When one takes in the breadth of the topics dealt with it is remarkable how similar the two samples are. The differences that are there can often be explained by the change of time, and the differing economic settings of the two countries. There are, of course, some differences which cannot be so easily explained. Such as the difference in conversion rates, the difference in the make up of the church as far as previous churches and previous affiliations. These last may be attributable to a distinctly Canadian occurrence, but I cannot come up with a reason for it at this point.

## Chapter 4

### Theoretical Reflections on the Calgary Faith VCF

Anthropologist Mary Douglas theories provide a framework in which to discuss the ritual, or lack of ritual, and its relation to a cosmological structure in the Faith VCF. I chose grid/group theory due to its claim to universality and its ability to predict the cosmology and stability of a group. This will be mainly for the purposes of description, with some analysis of the effectiveness of the grid/group theory in this particular study. There are two ways in which this theory can be used to describe the Faith VCF. The first is locating the church socially. The second is to look at the church as a whole society in and of itself and determine its cosmological and ritual structure.

#### **Introduction**

In order to analyse the VCF, and specifically the Faith VCF, one must first have a clear understanding of Mary Douglas' theories. Despite the difficulties of this process, it is an important one, Douglas states, "The cosmological scheme connects up the bits of experience and invests the whole with meaning; the people who accept it will only be able to justify their treatment of one another in terms of these ultimate categories. Unless we can make the process visible, we are the victims."<sup>99</sup> While I do not feel as strongly as Douglas, I do feel that self awareness, and awareness of the influences, controls, and possible sources of our belief is very important.

Mary Douglas argues that, "We should be able to say what kinds of universe are likely to be constructed when social relations take this or that form."<sup>100</sup> This concept of social relations

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<sup>99</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p10.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p9.

affecting ones cosmological outlook is a very interesting one. What kinds of social relations affect this universal view? How do they affect it? What sorts of groups ought we look at for these social relations? Areas of social relation that are of interest to this study involve ritual/anti-ritual, personal/positional, control mechanisms, and formality levels. These are all a measurable, or at least observable feature of a social group.

One must understand how the choice of a societal group for this study is accomplished. One guideline I felt was helpful was Douglas' statement of, "The more limited the cultural ranges within which the comparison is made, the more significant the results."<sup>101</sup> Thus, in making a choice of whether to look at the VCF within the North American society or to look at the VCF within the narrow bounds of the Faith VCF, I chose to go with the narrow comparison, as Douglas recommends. It would be foolish of me to assume that I could even expand the bounds to include the VCF in general, as it is a diverse movement, and my experience of it is limited.

### **Ritual/Anti-ritual**

In our society today, "Ritual is become a bad word signifying empty conformity."<sup>102</sup> Douglas feels that this is an offshoot of the Reformation. Of course, ritual is a difficult word. There is no one understanding of what ritual means. In my interviews, I asked the interviewees what came to mind when I used the word ritual. There was not a single time that the same response was repeated. The responses ranged from satanic worship to man's attempt to reach God. However, for the purposes of this thesis we must come up with a single definition of what ritual is.

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<sup>101</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p16.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*.p19.

Douglas decided that the definition of ritual will need to be neutral in value. This is because to do otherwise would require constant clarification. She looks at the definition used by anthropologists because of their need to communicate to both sociologists and zoologists. They define ritual to mean, “action and beliefs in the symbolic order without reference to the commitment or non-commitment of the actors.”<sup>103</sup> Thus, the value statement is removed and the bare action is left. Douglas goes on to define ritualism. She defines ritualism to be “most highly developed where symbolic action is held to be most certainly efficacious.”<sup>104</sup> This is when there is a belief in the efficacy of instituted signs, a sensitivity to condensed symbols, and a desire for the proper sequence, words, and actions within the ritual. She feels that over time there has been a movement away from ritualism towards anti-ritualism. She then identifies three phases of this movement; a) a contempt for external religious form, b) the private internalising of religious experience, c) a move towards humanist philanthropy.

Looking at the Faith VCF, one can see elements of all three of these phases within their church. While I initially thought that it would be difficult to come up with data regarding the contempt for external religious form, it was not. Tim Schultz actually made ritual a part of one of his sermons. On January 26, 1997, he handed out an outline of his sermon. I was surprised to find a section titled “Counterfeit Worship (Ritual)” which, through his sermon was defined as external motions which have no effect on the internal man. True Worship was defined as “spontaneous affection for the Lord Jesus because of what he has done for us” and as a “deep emotional response to God”.

In keeping with Douglas’ theory Schultz’s sermon clearly indicates a contempt for external religious forms. While contempt may be too strong a word in this case, it is clear from

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<sup>103</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p20.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.p26.



the emphasis on spontaneity that ritual, or religious form, is in his view not a highly respected version of worship and communication with God. Further, the internalising of religious experience, is definitely the case within the Faith VCF. In their view the external appearance or actions of an individual can only be judged by the internal experience of that individual. An example of this is the occasional screaming and shaking of a person during prayer or worship which is accepted as appropriate because of the internal meaning this has to that person. Finally, the move towards humanist philanthropy, or towards applied ethics, is also apparent in the Faith VCF. One of the main issues of the church at this time is to overcome the 'spirit of poverty' in Bowness. They do this through prayer, equipping services, and through servant evangelism wherein they do a service for the people of Bowness which raises spirits and shows that kindness and Christian love are not things of the past. They also provide a counselling service, and seek to open a store front operation that deals with the special needs of Bowness. Thus, Faith VCF has entered and perhaps passed all stages which are indicative of a move towards anti-ritualism according to Douglas' theory.

Another of Douglas' claims concerns the exclusivity of a society. She argues that a society which is closed will tend towards higher levels of ritualism. The opposite is true also, if a society is open. There we ought to find less tendency towards high levels of ritualism. If this is the case, then the Faith VCF ought to tend towards lower levels of ritualism, as one of its goals is to be as open a social group as possible. This openness is held only towards those who have a similar faith, however. Once Christianity is professed, one's race, economic standing, social standing, worship style, and mental and physical ability is irrelevant to membership in the Faith VCF. Of course, non-Christians are welcome to attend, but they are not allowed membership until they are 'saved'.

Another element in Douglas' theory affecting the level of ritualism in a society is its fluidity. In this instance the society she used to illustrate the reduced level of ritual in a highly

fluid group is the pygmy culture in Africa. According to Douglas they have a highly fluid social structure. This, she claims, has led to a dearth of ritual. Applying her insights to the Faith VCF we should expect it to have a lower level of ritual, as their membership is somewhat fluid. This fluidity is seen in the fact that many of the present members have switched from previous churches, and that these previous churches were rarely the same church that had been their original birth church. The Faith VCF fluidity is not nearly as expensive as the pygmy fluidity, so we should not expect as great a lack of ritual. Compared to the pygmies there is not the same level of poverty in religious symbols and ritual. Never-the-less when these two societies are compared and their attitudes to ritual analysed there are some remarkable similarities thus demonstrating the value of a grid/group theory.

### **New Religious Movement**

Since the VCF is considered a new religious movement it is helpful to see what Douglas feels is a model for a typical new movement. She states the following are part of a new movement,

“... a denunciation not only of irrelevant rituals, but of ritualism as such; exaltation of the inner experience and denigration of its standardised expressions; preference for intuitive and instant forms of knowledge; rejection of mediating institutions, rejection of any tendency to allow habit to provide the basis of a new symbolic system. In its extreme forms anti-ritualism is an attempt to abolish communication by means of complex symbolic systems.”<sup>105</sup>

These characteristics are, or at least a large number of them, are part of the make-up of the Faith VCF. Some of them have already been discussed as the phases of moving away from ritual. I have already pointed out the anti-ritual sentiments of the Faith VCF and that spontaneity in worship, action, and spirituality are highly valued. Inner meaning, feelings, and thoughts are more important to the Vineyard member than are external actions, which I have also pointed out

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<sup>105</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p40.

previously. Also, the seeking of knowledge, i.e. words of knowledge, and other wisdom via prayer and fasting shows a desire for the more intuitive and instant forms of knowledge. One characteristic that has not been discussed yet is the rejection of habitual responses. It is important for those of the Faith VCF to always encourage the breaking of habit, which they understand as the allowance for God to speak into any situation. This is made apparent in the preaching of the Pastors who often bring into the service ideas that came to them during the prayer time prior to the service, or even will completely change the set-up of the service to respond to a special call of the Spirit. It is also apparent in their cell group philosophy where if a special word comes to someone during the worship time the entire plan for the evening could be chucked in order to respond to that special word.

According to Douglas, these characteristics are only true of the early stages of a new movement, and eventually the need for ritual, or complex symbolic systems, becomes apparent. This is because, “Ritual is pre-eminently a form of communication.”<sup>106</sup> It is inevitable that over time an anti-ritualist group will develop complex systems of communication to properly codify and simplify their way of seeing the world. It is the desire of the Faith VCF not to do this, although there are signs of a growth of ritual.

As I have listened to the sermons of the Faith VCF pastors, it has appeared to me that they are instituting some fairly complex systems of communication, or rituals. There has been an emphasis on the worship, and its power not only to cause one to enter into the presence of the Holy Spirit, but also to act as spiritual warfare. I consider this ritualistic because certain acts are considered to be imbued with a power that is beyond what one could understand by merely observing the acts. Also, certain instruments are taught as having certain effects within “spiritual

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<sup>106</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p41.

warfare". For example, a trumpet, when played, will proclaim the purpose of God and call on God's help and power. A cymbal or drum when played, if the power of the Holy Spirit is working through them, will aid in the releasing chains and communicate God's anger at evil. Other instruments that the Holy Spirit can work through include harps, or other stringed instruments, tambourines, and flutes. Clapping, marching, shouting, dancing, laughter, bowing, and other actions all have special spiritual significance as well. There are a number of words that can be considered to be have highly condensed meanings, such as the word 'spontaneous'. An example of this word being used ritualistically, if you will, is in the goal statement of the church. This statement includes the goal to have 100 churches planted spontaneously around the world. In this case spontaneous means that church planters will go over and plant a church in a foreign land and out of that church will go church planters native to that land who will plant within their own society. It was necessary for me, an outsider, to ask what the word meant because its meaning is condensed.

## Code

If one considers ritual, like speech, to be a form of communication of ideas and a transmitter of culture, then one can speak of both being codes. One must know the code, either of language, or of symbolism, to understand the communication. It is also possible that one can look to the speech codes, just as one can look at religious ritual, to find elements which will determine, or influence, the cosmology of a societal group. Following Bernstein<sup>107</sup>, Douglas argues there are two types of speech, or speech codes, that one can look for that will help understand the cosmology of a group. The first type is known as elaborated code and the second as restricted code. The restricted code is that communication which is "deeply enmeshed in the immediate social structure, utterances have a double purpose: they convey information, yes, but

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<sup>107</sup> Bernstein, Basil (1971) *Class, Codes and Control*. Vol. 1. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

they also express the social structure, embellish and reinforce it.”<sup>108</sup>. The elaborated code is much more flexible in its usage, and is adapted to “enable a speaker to make his own intentions explicit, to elucidate general principles.”<sup>109</sup>. The elaborated code is an expression of the division of labour. Due to the differentiation of the social system, there must needs be a highly flexible method of communicating between individuals who know little about each others worlds. Thus, by reason of societies pressures, i.e. for more articulate individuals, the higher the level of elaborated code.

These two codes are related to their respective parenting styles, or family role systems. Restricted code is found in what is known as a positional family. Common phrases heard here involve roles or position. i.e. “Because I said so (hierarchy). Because you are a boy (sex role). Because children always do (age status). Because you are the oldest (seniority).”<sup>110</sup>. In this environment a child will learn to think and act in role categories, thus promulgating and supporting that structure of role categories. He understands himself within that role structure only. Elaborated code is to be found in the personal family system. Instead of one acting in role prescribed by others, one must understand and respect the individuality and worth of each individual. When a question is asked, the response involves a highly detailed explanation that appeals to the person, not the role, for explanation. Thus, a typical response to a request would find the parent explaining why it is best to do as she said so as to avoid discomfort, displeasure, or to achieve understanding, love, acceptance. Thus the child is controlled by personal appeals. Within Diagram 1, it is obvious that one can have elaborated code in the positional family and restricted code in the personal family.

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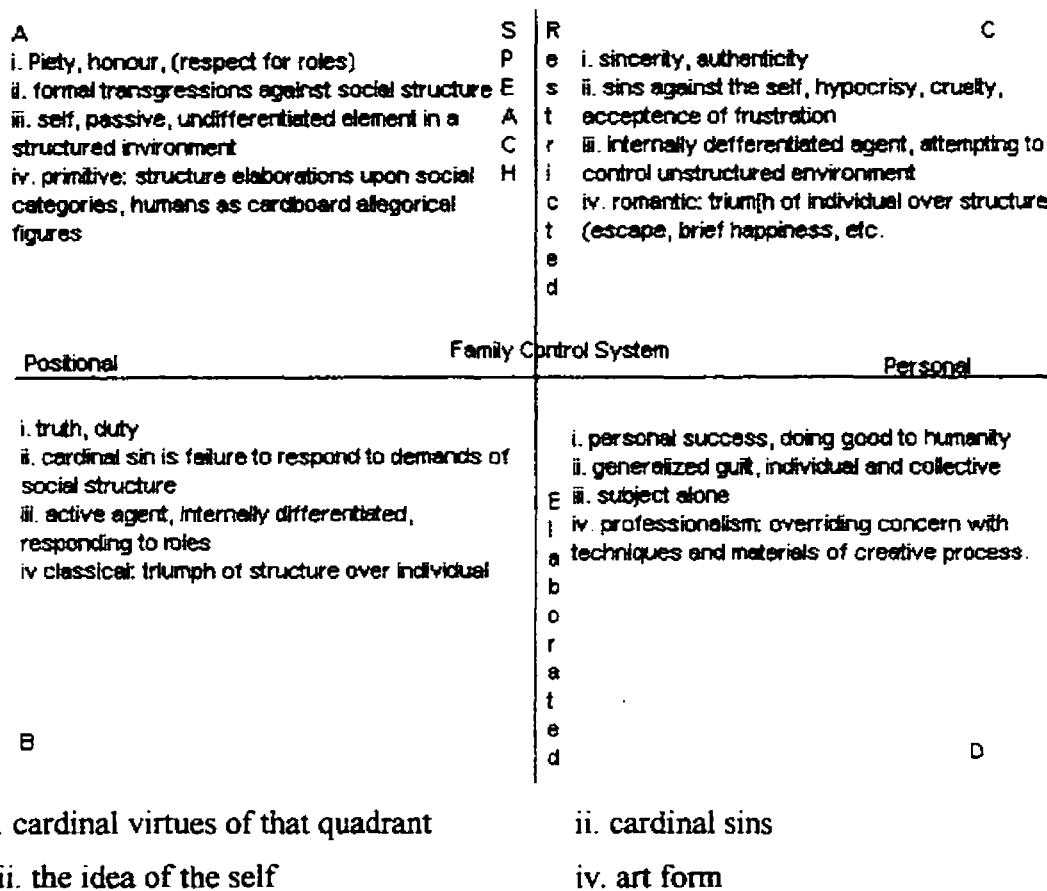
<sup>108</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p44.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.p44.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.p45.

With the first system the child is constrained by his role and position, or ritual, whereas with the second he is constrained by feelings and abstract principals, or ethics. One major benefit of the personal system is that the child will do better in school because of the increased emphasis on elaborate, clear speech. The following is a diagram which will help summarise some of the previous points, and elaborate on others.

Illustration #8: General Cosmological Ideas<sup>111</sup>



It is in section D that most individuals in western society now live.

### Cosmology and Society

<sup>111</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p50.

What does all this mean with regard to cosmology and society. Referring to Diagram 1

Douglas feels,

the idea of the self was progressively detached from the social structure. So, as ritualism declines, the idea of God becomes more intimate. But as God comes nearer he is diminished in glory and power . . . For the cosmology, based on its particular hierarchy of values and upholding a particular pattern of behaviour, is derived from society. As the grip of his immediate society of the individual tightens or slackens something happens to his religious attitudes.<sup>112</sup>

According to Douglas an individual who is more involved in industrialised society will believe in “spontaneity, friendship, freedom, and goodness of heart: he rejects formality, magic, doctrinal logic-chopping and condemnation of his fellow humans for their wrong-doings.”<sup>113</sup> Faith

VCF members exhibit a number of these characteristics. They do believe in spontaneity, friendship, freedom, and goodness of heart. They value spontaneity in that they allow for God’s spontaneous intervention during all congregational gatherings, regardless of size. Further, one of their goals is that God will spontaneously plant 100 churches through the Faith VCF in the next ten years or so. Their valuing friendship is clearly evidenced by the number of respondents who have close friends within the church, and who feel that friendship with non-Christians is allowable. Freedom, from demonic influence and past mistakes, is a very important idea in the Faith VCF and they speak of it often, in prayer, preaching, and in conversation. Character, or goodness of heart, is also an important feature of the VCF. They emphasise character over giftedness, and seek to teach and practice the spiritual disciplines which will result in a crop of spiritual fruit. They do reject formality, and over emphasis on doctrinal differences. The rejection of formality is clearly seen in their choice of dress for the service and for other church related occasions, as well as in their order of service where there is some joking, slang, and

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<sup>112</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p57.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.p56.

personal comments allowed in the course of the service. The Faith VCF is also desirous of unity among Christians, that mere doctrinal differences, at least those of a secondary nature, do not keep brother from brother and sister from sister. Their stance towards magic is unclear because it is difficult to understand what this would look like in our society. I do feel that it is likely that there is some admittance to the existence of magic, in the sense that magic is demonic power used by those who serve or use demons. The Faith VCF does not reject the condemnation of wrong-doing as they have very clear ideas about keeping each other accountable to doing good works and keeping away from evil works. So, it appears that the Faith VCF has enough of the societal characteristics identified by Douglas to suggest that they will embrace a cosmology that involves a God who is near, but not as glorious or powerful as it would be if it were less intimate.

At this point one should consider what it is that Douglas means by less powerful. She does not go into much detail here as to what she means. Power can be understood in a number of ways. Traditionally the Christian God has been understood to be omnipotent. I will take this omnipotence as the benchmark of what Douglas means by powerful. To be less powerful would then mean that the God would have less than omnipotent powers. Lets look briefly at what power really is. Is power the ability to do something, or the actual act of doing it? Is a crane considered powerful because it can lift a very heavy load, or because it does lift a very heavy load. When one is far away from a crane one perceives only that it is a crane, and one knows that cranes are capable of lifting heavy loads. When one is close to that crane, one can feel its engine rumbling, its weight crunching across the ground, and witness the immensity of the load it lifts. Did the crane loose any of its power by us getting closer to it, or better yet, operating that crane ourselves? I think not, rather the opposite is true in that we not only perceive the power, but we experience it. Would this not also be true of God? From a distance (i.e. a remote King figure) God will appear to us as powerful, for we know that a King is a powerful being. However, that power is made even more known to us when we experience it, either through judgement,



protection, or warfare. Perhaps Douglas means that if we know the God personally, we will see that God is not so unlike us, or that we are not so unlike God, and as we get to know it we see less of the power and more of the relationship, thus diminishing our perceived level of power in God.

Thus, it is not entirely clear what Douglas means by less powerful in the case of God when the worshipers become more intimate with it. There is perhaps an element of disbelief that comes into play here. Perhaps she thinks that it is easy to ascribe great powers to a distant God, especially if we do not expect it to use those powers in our everyday lives. It is when that God comes closer that we have to start accounting for the fact that this God cannot really do all those amazing things, and so we lower our expectations of it now that we seek everyday involvement of our God. A similar discussion can be had with regard to the diminishing of God's glory as it is brought closer in intimacy with, I suppose, similar results.

Regardless of what Douglas means by less powerful her analysis does not seem to hold with regard to the Faith VCF members. Societal conditions have led the members to a more intimate relationship with their God than is experienced by others. But this intimacy has not led to a reduced perception of power within God. They expect God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, to be involved in their daily lives, and they also expect incredible works of power from their God. They expect everything from forgiveness of sins, to emotional and physical healing, to resurrection from the dead, to salvation of thousands within Calgary and hundreds of thousands throughout the world, to warm fuzzy feelings during worship and prayer.

### **Universalising**

Mary Douglas argues that in looking at order within society, one realises that social relations require that there be clarity in categories, and proper understanding of orientations.

These are basic to communication. This system of categories, taken as a whole, will be considered to be a world view. This world view can have varying levels of coherence and scope depending on the society involved and on the individual within that societies access to their own and other's world views. This world view, or system of classification, is also understood to be the pressure of rules on an individual or group, and is one social dimension in which all people are involved. This social dimension will be referred to as *grid*<sup>114</sup>. There are varying levels of classification which, on Diagram 2, range from -ve to +ve. The high +ve range is the area wherein there is a highly comprehensive articulation of classifications which dictates all the given needs of the individual or group (+)<sup>115</sup>. The zero point is indicative of a complete lack of classifications. The -ve range represents a more and more privatised system of classifications which are more and more incomprehensible to those around him , leading eventually to what is considered to be madness.

To further clarify her argument Douglas uses the term “group” to refer to the amount of pressure felt by an individual or group from those around them<sup>116</sup>. This can range from the individual applying pressure himself to those around him (-) to those around him completely dictating the life of the individual (+)<sup>117</sup>. The zero point is where the individual is neither affected by those around him, nor does he affect any of those around him.

We must note some difficulties in applying this theory to a social system. First, one must operationalise the criteria so that one can consistently measure the range in which any particular group falls. This process is made difficult by the fact that, as with any system which attempts universalism, these operationalisations must be sufficiently broad so that they would apply in any

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<sup>114</sup>Douglas, Mary (1973). *Natural Symbols*. London: Barry & Jenkins. p82.

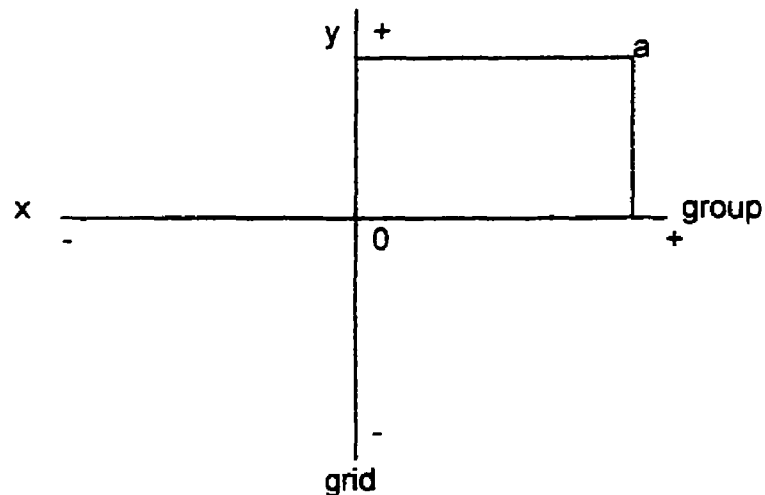
<sup>115</sup>Ibid. p83.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid. p83.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid. p83.

society. Mary Douglas operationalises her ideas of control by looking at a number of different aspects and levels of control. She refers to levels of ritualism, types of family control, restricted code, speech patterns, bodily restrictions/freedom, role, intimacy, and power.

Illustration #9: Grid and Group<sup>118</sup>



When one has looked at all of the categories above one can look to the above graph to place the society and determine the characteristics of the society. This is, of course, a process which is interrelated in that one cannot properly place a society on the graph to show its cosmology and control factors until one has a good idea of the control factors that are within that society<sup>119</sup>. This said, we can look at how the graph works.

When a connecting line is drawn from the x-axis and the y-axis, the point at which they connect can be used to predict the cosmological outlook of that society. For example a high group, high grid (point 'a' on diagram) society will have an attitude of subservience of the

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<sup>118</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p84. \*However, this is a modified version of the graph found there.

<sup>119</sup> We will note later that this process is even more complex as we must place each society in relation to others by means of comparison so as to be able to give context and validity to the placement.

individual, a holistic cosmology which is understood in terms of physical metaphors. A low grid and group society will have an individualistic, mystical cosmology. In order to determine where a group is on this scale one must observe the influences, actions, rules, and pressures of the group in question<sup>120</sup>. This will be accomplished in my case by participant observation and interviews. Some indications may also come from responses to the survey.

Let us look briefly at some of the operationalising characteristics. First, we will look at the aspect of bodily control. Douglas argues that the social body controls the way the physical body is perceived. The physical body is used to re-enforce the social controls through culturally learnt control. The use of the body is co-ordinated with other media to cause the highest level of continuity and harmony of expression of that culture. The use of the body in communication is also limited by the social system. Bodily control is an expression of social control, they are interrelated. If the social system is highly controlling, then the body and its processes will be highly controlled, if there is no concern for social boundaries, then there is no concern for bodily boundaries. This drive that co-ordinates bodily and social experience will inevitably affect ideology. Once we understand the correspondence between bodily control and social control then we can consider their effect on theology and political thought.

### **Formality/Informality**

When anti-ritualism is studied, one must, according to Douglas, focus on the expression of formality and informality. Formality is considered to have the following characteristics; social distance, well defined, public insulated roles, high level of bodily control. The high level of

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<sup>120</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff. Pp 82-86.

bodily control is seen in the higher level of grooming, kind of dress, medical aspects, the avoidance of natural physical occurrences in public (i.e. burping, flatulation, mention of waste, or of anything which is connected to the waste process). Informality is characterised by role confusion, familiarity, intimacy, and lower levels of bodily control. The lower bodily control is seen in less groomed appearance, less formal dress, reduced concern for the natural processes of the body, higher levels of touch, and different medical ideas.

On page 99 of her book *Natural Symbols*, Mary Douglas makes the statement, “bodily control is an expression of social control - abandonment of bodily control in ritual responds to the requirements of a social experience which is being expressed.”. Thus, the level of control placed on bodily actions is a measure of the level of societal control, i.e. the higher the level of bodily control, the higher the society is on the grid/group scale. One of the measures of bodily control is the level of formality/informality found within the society.

If one uses formality, or its lack, as an indicator of ritual, or its absence, then one comes to the conclusion that the Faith VCF is somewhat anti-ritualistic. This conclusion comes as a result of the observed informality in all areas. There is role confusion in that it is difficult to tell the leaders apart from the followers, that those with spiritual gifts are often indistinguishable from those without. It is even difficult to tell an unbeliever from a believer in most phases of the church service. It is also possible to be a leader in one area, a follower in the next, and a teacher in another, all the while a student of someone else entirely. There are some dominant roles which are apparent. One of these is the role of cell group leader. Thus, roles are not completely absent, they are merely somewhat confused, especially to an outsider. Familiarity is also a characteristic of the Faith VCF. First names are used almost exclusively in all dealings. Intimacy is a very important part of the Faith VCF. In the cell groups there is a remarkable level of intimacy wherein very significant issues in peoples lives are shared. It is not unusual for someone to break down crying and be offered prayer and support at any point of the meeting.

Issues shared are ones that can be extremely intimate in nature, up to and including serious past sin. This intimacy is so firmly rooted in these groups that my presence was not a significant disruption to these sharings. Another sign of intimacy, and also of reduced bodily control, is the element of touch. Touch is very important to the prayer life of the Faith VCF members. While some precautions are taken so as to reduce discomfort, such as men rarely, if ever, laying hands on women, there is a remarkable freedom in laying hands on an individual while praying. This is an increased level of intimacy, especially during prayer, which is considered to be intimate in nature.

Another indication of the level of informality at the Faith VCF is the lowered level of concern for ones appearance. It is not unusual by any means for one to wear jeans and a T-shirt to the Faith VCF Sunday service. In fact, Tim Schultz has made a point of asking the members to not react negatively to, or to make exceptional comment about, anyone who comes to church in the traditional suit and tie. I have even seen someone dressed in cut-off shorts and a muscle shirt on a particularly warm summer Sunday. For anyone used to a more traditional conservative church, this is a glaringly obvious lack of formality.



What do we make, therefore, of the fact that most revivalist movements go , in an early phase, through what Durkheim called 'effervescence'? Emotions run high, formalism of all kinds is denounced, the favoured patterns of religious worship include trance or glossalalia, trembling, shaking or other expressions of incoherence and dissociation. Doctrinal differentiation is deplored. The movement is seen to be universal in potential membership.<sup>122</sup>

She goes on to say that this effervescence is not necessarily restricted to the early phase of the movement. She states that, so long as the level of social organisation is sufficiently low and there is sufficient role confusion, effervescence can continue. It is clear from earlier comments about Faith VCF that the quote above describes it fairly well. The universal membership ideal has been expressed a number of times during the services, wherein it is desired that all races, cultures, and socio-economic groups be represented within the congregation. However, there has been a trend lately to have a more narrowly defined movement which has some definite characteristics and any part of that movement that does not have those characteristics is asked to remove the Vineyard name from their title. This has occurred in the case of the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, formerly a VCF, which was asked to leave because of the differing goals and styles of the congregation and leadership. Thus, there are some lines drawn where if you step out of them you are asked to change or leave.

Douglas has a useful chart that she introduces to deal with the conditions for ritualism and for effervescence, the latter I take to be the opposite of ritualism. It looks like the following:

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<sup>122</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p102.



## Illustration #10: Conditions for Ritualism and Effervescence<sup>123</sup>

Ritualism	Effervescence
<p><b>A. Conditions for Ritualism</b></p> <p>i. high classification, strong control</p> <p>ii. assumption that interpersonal relations must be subordinate to public pattern of roles</p> <p>iii. society differentiated and exalted above self</p>	<p>*condensed symbolic system; ritual differentiation of roles and situations; magical efficacy attributed to symbolic acts (e.g. sin and sacraments)</p> <p>*symbolic distinctions between inside and outside</p> <p>*symbols express high values set on control of consciousness</p>
<p><b>B. Conditions for Effervescence</b></p> <p>i. weak control by grid and group</p> <p>ii. little distinction recognized between interpersonal and public patterns of relations</p> <p>iii. society not differentiated from self</p>	<p>*diffuse symbols; preference for spontaneous expression, no interest in ritual differentiation; no magicality</p> <p>*no interest in symbolic expressions of inside/outside</p> <p>*control of consciousness not exalted</p>

According to this chart, a group that is exhibiting signs of effervescence must have the preconditions present at some level. Thus, if we consider the Faith VCF to be effervescent, then it would have the characteristics listed above.

Is the Faith VCF effervescent? I am not entirely sure that it is, despite the earlier evidence. Lets see if the Faith VCF has those characteristics, or preconditions, that Douglas feels it ought to. Weak control by grid and group. I assume that by this she means that there is a low +ve rating for both the grid and group scales, not that there is a -ve rating. This would mean that while there is some element of control of the ego by those around it, this is not strong, nor is there a strong set of categories and systems which control the actions of the ego. I am not sure

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<sup>123</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff. Pp103-4.

that either is the case with the Faith VCF. There is available a very strong set of categories and systems available to the members there. This comes from the long Christian traditions which have very comprehensive systems which are available for use. I would say, however, that the members of the Faith VCF are encountering experiences which are new to their particular system and are not explained, or for some even allowed, by their previous Christian experience, and thus their system of classifications and categories is weakened. This last may lower them enough on the grid scale to provide one of the necessary preconditions to effervescence. It is not clear how low the rating must be to give the appropriate conditions. The low group rating can also come into question simply because of the response in the surveys which indicates that a large percentage of Faith VCF members feel that the behaviour and social actions of their fellow Christians is their business and are willing to enforce these rules through loving confrontation. This only relates to moral behaviour, however, and not to the kinds of behaviour that are indicative of effervescence. That the indicators of low grid and low group involves diffuse symbols, such as preference for spontaneous expression, no interest in ritual differentiation and no magicality helps indicate that Faith VCF is indeed tending towards lower group and grid. The last, however, is still somewhat in question due to the not uncommon mention of overcoming and defeating the curses of the enemy, and the concern for those who have travelled in third world nations. This concern is over the possibility of them having been cursed or afflicted by witch doctor or other evil personages. These magical curses can be broken through prayer.

The lack of distinction recognised between interpersonal and public roles and relations is also clear. There is no difference in dress between the leadership and the congregation, nor is there any way to determine membership by external appearances. There is little sense of exclusivity, in fact there is a deliberate openness to the group. There is also a desire to treat those outside of their faith with love and respect, same as they would treat their fellow believers.

In effervescent, or ecstatic, religion the control of consciousness is not exalted. Society is not differentiated from the self. The result of this is that “the inarticulateness of the social organisation in itself gains symbolic expression in bodily dissociation.”<sup>124</sup>. This means that a group that has a low grid and group measure will have a positive view of trance because it is a form of bodily dissociation. This is Douglas’ theory. As the trance is an easy occurrence to measure, Douglas feels that it will be a good way to test this part of her theory. She identifies four types of trance.

The first is possession by a spirit wherein the person loses control and the spirit is in power over the body. This one is rarely seen as a positive occurrence. The second one is called spirit mediumship wherein the spirit speaks through a medium and there is some attempt by those around to gain information or power from it. A third type of trance is referred to as shamanism. In this case the spirit is a domesticated power that can be manipulated by the human host. A fourth type put forth by Douglas is one wherein “It may happen that the human person loses consciousness, but the state is not regarded as undesirable or dangerous; the onlookers may make no attempt to control and try to use, nor to change the state, pacify or send away the invading influence. They assume it is a channel of benign power for all.”<sup>125</sup> This last she considers to be the most rare and only occur in a morality cult where social life is almost non-existent. She gives a description of the Dinka Flesh ceremony and describes it as an example of the fourth type of trance. The visitation is sought for its own sake, so as to provide an unmediated communion between the god and the worshipers.

Douglas says this about those who do not feel trance is dangerous, but do feel it is a beneficent source of power and wisdom for the greater community, “I would expect to find a

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<sup>124</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff. p104.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.p105.

very loosely structured community, group boundaries unimportant, social categories undefined, or distant control but impersonal rules strong.”<sup>126</sup> Does the Faith VCF fit into this category. What is their view of trance? Do they have these characteristics?

It is my opinion that the Faith VCF has experienced and has policy for all four types of trance. The first type, possession, is considered incredibly dangerous, as it involve Satan and his forces possessing either a believer or non-believer so as to do them and those around them harm. It is possible to be possessed and not know it. Some of the types of spirits that can possess include fear, poverty, affliction, anger, deception, addiction, and many others. These spirits are driven out, and the people delivered, during prayer, worship, and healing. A number of Faith VCF members have mentioned deliverance from addiction to drugs and alcohol. There have been entire Sunday services devoted to driving out the spirit fear and apathy.

The second type, spirit mediumship, I would consider to be the most common understanding of the trance in the Faith VCF. When they call for the Holy Spirit to fill them, or to enter into them with power, it is usually for some benefit to themselves or the church. This type of ‘in filling’ can lead to prophecy, healing, deliverance, overcoming affliction, teaching, and other ‘gifts’ of the Holy Spirit. This trance is not, for the most part, as apparent in the behaviour of the one gifted, it is usually most obviously manifested by those around that individual. For example, when a person up front has the power of the Holy Spirit in him/her, there is usually a call for people to come up for prayer. When people come up and are prayed for the Spirit enters them, often knocking them off their feet. The person praying for them will at times have manifestations as well, but these are mostly less extreme than in those being prayed for.

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<sup>126</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p109.

The third form of trance, shamanism, is looked upon rather poorly by the Faith VCF. They hold firmly to the idea that the Holy Spirit is in complete control of every proceeding that He is involved in. One may request, beg, and pray for certain things or actions from the Holy Spirit, but one can never force Him to do anything. This is not the case in some charismatic and prosperity churches.

The fourth type of trance, beneficent presence, is also present in the Faith VCF. I wonder how different this previously mentioned Dinka trance is from some of the VCF trance experiences. In the beginning of worship the Holy Spirit is called to come as He pleases. It is presumed that the manifestations, which are much less predictable than with the Dinka, are from the Holy Spirit, unless some obvious act or statement shows it to be otherwise. Some of these manifestations are looked upon as is described in the fourth type of trance. In these cases the person under the influence of the Holy Spirit is either encouraged to experience it in the full, or merely protected from hurting themselves. They are considered to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and this communion between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit is of great value. When I have asked about the more recurring manifestations, there is a general conviction that the manifestation is beneficial in some way. Usually it is most beneficial to the person experiencing it, however, there are those manifestations which are perceived to be beneficial to all present because of the anti-Satan nature of such fillings.

It has been shown through other methods that the Faith VCF is most likely to be considered lower grid and group. If this is the case, then it is also likely that one would consider the conservative churches to be higher grid and group than the VCF. This would then mean that the conservative churches should have a less positive view of trance than does the Faith VCF. In my opinion and experience this is true. The churches that I have belonged to, all conservative, and the criticisms that are given of the VCF all show that there is a fear of the manifestations, or types of trance, that occur in the VCF churches. This is seen in the idea that any loss of control

of one's consciousness is dangerous. To go into trance, to open one's mind to spiritual influence, is to risk the manipulation and deception of Satan, which some feel is inevitable.

Now that it has been shown that most members of the VCF have a positive view of trance we must see if the other characteristics that Douglas claims should be there are there or not. She expects that a group who sees trance as a safe source of power and guidance will be loosely structured, give little thought to group boundaries, and have little definition of social categories. Loose structuring is seen in the easy movement of individuals from group to group, and the spitting off of new groups. There is some evidence within the Faith VCF that it has a loose structure, and that this loose structure is more or less shared with the churches in North America. I am referring to the circulation of the saints. In the VCF it is more apparent because almost everyone has switched to it from another church, and in most cases from another denomination. It is this last factor that makes the VCF unique. Most other switching is done between churches of the same denomination<sup>127</sup>; i.e. a Baptist will usually switch to another Baptist church. This would indicate a looser structure in the church, with little thought given to group boundaries. There is a desire within the VCF to break down the barriers between the different denominations of Christianity, as well as to welcome within their congregation a large variety of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences. There is also a transience about the group that allows it to move from rental hall to rental hall. Their weekly meetings are usually at the same place for years at a time, but move as the needs of the church change, i.e. the church grows to large for the old place. Any other meetings can be held in any number of places, other church buildings, community halls, schools, and cultural centres.

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<sup>127</sup> Bibby, Reginald W. (1987) *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing.

## **Grid/Group placement of the Faith VCF**

Mary Douglas uses the concepts of bodily control and trance to discern social control. She tests her hypothesis by looking at two neighbouring tribes who have different social and religious characteristics, yet have similar language, backgrounds, and economic sources. These two tribes are the Nuer and the Dinka. She finds through some analysis that the Dinka lie lower on the grid/group scale than the Nuer. To complete her point Douglas brings into the comparison a tribe that sits very high in the grid/group scale, the Mandari. For the purposes of my thesis, this chapter dealing with test cases is the most helpful in placing the Faith VCF in the grid/group graph. Douglas makes it clear that we can only place societies in relation to one another, it is difficult to arbitrarily decide a grid/group rating without anything to compare to.

So, where does the Faith VCF lie in comparison with these tribal groups? First we must acknowledge the fact that we are comparing a 1997 North American religious movement with a 1950's recording of a tribal society in Africa whereas she is comparing two local groups in the same time period with numerous levels of similarity. I will not attempt to compare on an equal footing. What I intend to do is determine which tribal group Douglas mentions is most like the Faith VCF in the areas of measurement. These areas include attitudes towards trance, sin, and bodily control. It is because of the claimed universality of these measurements that I feel that I am not doing injustice to Douglas' work.

I have already determined that the Faith VCF appears to be most like the Dinka, but it is useful to look at both the Dinka and the Nuer so as to show why. I do this because it is necessary for me to compare to all of the tribes to find a relative position for the Faith VCF as it is necessary to decide how closely to place it to the Nuer if it shows to be more strongly group and grid than the Dinka and vice versa.

Douglas states that “For the Western Dinka, the state of trance is treated positively as a central cult, the source of blessing and strength.”<sup>128</sup> They have at the centre of their religion a “benign form of spirit-possession”<sup>129</sup>. The Nuer, on the other hand, feel that trance is dangerous and expect harm to come to an individual who is possessed. The only time harm does not come to one possessed is if they stay possessed, at which point they become prophets and are shunted to the periphery of the Nuer society. If one is temporarily possessed one becomes ill from it and a prophet must be called to find out what the spirit wants. The spirit possesses the prophet and sacrifices are made to appease it then, and the sacrifices are continued so as to show the spirit is remembered and needn’t come back. Thus the Nuer attitude towards possession “is that it is dangerous in the first phase, and produces an abnormal, specialised role in the second phase; a role whose specialised task is to counteract the dangers of first phase possession.”<sup>130</sup>

The Dinka spirit possession has none of these negative consequences. It is assumed that abandonment to the spirit has good results. The spirit which is worshipped by the spear-masters is called Flesh and is evidenced in ceremonies by the fibrillation of the leg muscles, and eventually of the whole body. There is also a more dangerous form spirit possession by other lesser divinities which results in some personal danger, but these are at the periphery of the religion. The benign power that occurs upon possession by Flesh “is not restricted to a specialised role in the sense of calling for special initiation, by affliction, asceticism or training, but is open to all the adult males of a clan, and normally experienced by them all.”<sup>131</sup>.

It is apparent to me that the Faith VCF most closely resembles the Dinka attitude towards trance. In the Faith VCF trance is referred to as the filling of the Holy Spirit and is perceived as a

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<sup>128</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff. p119.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.p119.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.p123.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.p123.



positive event that cannot possibly have any negative impact on a persons life. This temporary possession by the Holy Spirit is available to any Christian who seeks it, and most in the Faith VCF have experienced it. There is also no specialised role that is required for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit, except for the one seeking the filling must be Christian, although this line is somewhat blurred when a non-Christian is healed or otherwise touched by the Holy Spirit. There is also a place in the periphery for possession by lesser spirits who are considered to be demonic in nature and can do nothing but harm while possessing an individual.

Another area of comparison is the area of cosmology. How do the tribes perceive their world? The Nuer believe the world to be rational and regulative. They connect sin and sickness together very closely, with sin causing sickness or disaster. Automatic pollution is a concern of the Nuer. They feel that an act will immediately have effect in ones life, regardless of the intention behind that act. Each class of offence has a particular outcome or consequence. God in this tribe is not an intimate god, but one that is kept away when not needed and brought close when it is needed.

The Dinka have much less concern for pollution. There is no expectation of a rational universe. Misfortune is rarely traced back to human fault, instead it is blamed on an unpleasant divinity named Macardit. The god Flesh is an intimate god who comes down with the people who worship it.

Once again, the Dinka are more similar to the Faith VCF than are the Nuer. There are some similarities to the Nuer here though that would indicate a higher grid/group rating for the Faith VCF. One is the area of the concept of sin. The idea that mankind is responsible for much of the evil that occurs is not foreign to the church members. One must take responsibility for the consequences of ones actions. However, there is no set rule of what consequences go with what sins. It is also possible to prosper for a time through sin. Also, one can suffer while one is doing

good. There is also a concern for the attitude of the spirit during the sin, which can temper the severity of the act and thereby reduce the consequence. Overall the attitude towards sin is that it is bad and has negative spiritual consequences that can affect ones physical and mental health if left unchecked. These consequences are removed, for the most part, by supplication for forgiveness and healing from God. In this area it would appear that the Faith VCF falls somewhere between the Nuer and the Dinka.

The Faith VCF members will link misfortune to four different sources. The first is personal sin, which can lead to misfortune, either as a natural consequence or as a special consequence from God. The second is where God decides to test an individual, as in the case of Job. The third case is when misfortune is caused by someone else's sin, either in bringing a curse or lie upon a person, causing them harm, or through a sinful act which has a natural consequence which brings unhappiness to the other individual. The last thing that can be linked to misfortune, and is commonly used as an explanation for negative things in the life of the church, i.e. apathy, poverty, etc., is the power of Satan and his minions. In this way does the Faith VCF fall neatly between the Dinka and the Nuer. This would indicate that the Faith VCF members have a higher level of social control than the Dinka, and less than the Nuer.

The Faith VCF (FVCF) once again lines up more closely with the Dinka when one considers their relationship with their God. Both have intimate relationships where their God comes down to be within them and benefit them.

One striking similarity between the FVCF and the Dinka is their political theory, which is based on the idea of expansion, "that groups expand, segment and break away from each other."<sup>132</sup> The Dinka feel that expansion is what is normal and, "They see their history as a

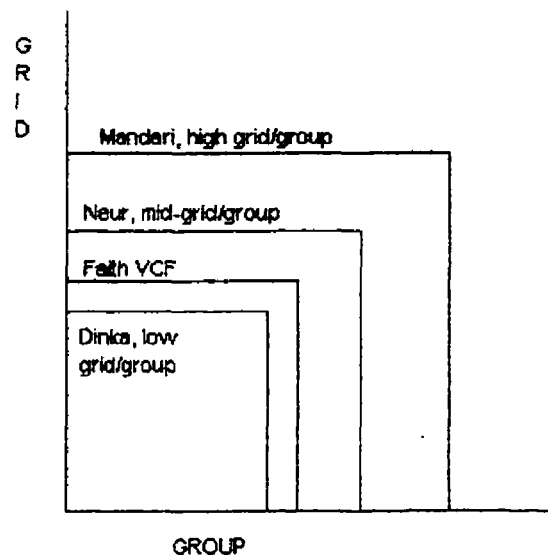
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<sup>132</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff. p126.

spreading out and separation of peoples on the ground”<sup>133</sup>. This is very similar to the FVCF in that they feel that growth and division (as a cell grows and divides) is part of the healthy cycle of the church and of cell groups. Existence without growth is death. The cell groups are called to grow and spawn new cell groups, the church is called to send out people to start new churches, and eventually grow to the point that it must form new congregations. This results in a looser structure of groupings so as to allow for the separation when the time comes.

To conclude this comparison it is clear that the FVCF is more similar to the Dinka than the Nuer, but it does tend towards a higher level of social control than the Dinka as evidenced by its view of sin, and misfortune. Thus I would place the FVCF higher than the Dinka, but closer to the Dinka than the Nuer.

Illustration #11 - Faith VCF in Comparison<sup>134</sup>



<sup>133</sup> Evans-Pritchard quoted in: Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p127.

<sup>134</sup> Douglas, Mary (1970) *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff.p129.

The Mandari are included here because Douglas used them as an example of a high grid/group rating. It merely shows relatively where the Faith VCF stands. I do not believe it necessary to go into any description of the Mandari as Douglas does that well enough.

Douglas goes on to discuss some of the possible reasons for the cosmological differences between the Nuer and the Dinka. She feels that an economy that is perceived as growing will have less emphasis on bodily control than an society who economy is seen as stagnant or shrinking. She shows that the Nuer have a pessimistic view of the growth of their cattle herds and the Dinka feel that their cattle herds are growing quickly. I am not entirely sure if I can relate this usefully to the FVCF. The FVCF does indeed have a positive outlook for the future. They feel that they will be growing in numbers significantly soon, if they are not already. This air of positivism may have a lightening effect on the bodily control of the church. However, when the economy is taken into account, the Canadian economy has been perceived as doing poorly this last while. Furthermore, the fact that the average income of the church is below what their educational level indicates it ought to be should cause a pessimistic attitude towards life. It is perhaps the balance between these positive and negative aspects of the FVCF life that places them between the Nuer and the Dinka.

### **Conclusion**

The task that I have undertaken with Douglas' theory is twofold. The first task was to use it as a framework in which to describe the FVCF. The second is to discuss briefly its usefulness in that task and the accuracy of her predictions in the case of the FVCF. This first task has been completed for the most part and only needs a summary to bring it all together. In our analysis of the FVCF we have used a number of different methods of determining the overall rating of the FVCF on Douglas' grid/group graph. These included looking at formality levels, characteristics of new religious movements and effervescent groups, ritual and anti-ritual, the Nuer and Dinka, trance, and natural symbols. While each one appears distinct from the other at first glance, they

are clearly not so. While one can fault Douglas for her haphazard approach, and for her difficulty in drawing them into a clear, understandable, single theme, one must admit in the end that these disparate ideas do complement each other nicely. I mentioned in the introduction to this section that Douglas' theory gives an indication of the stability of the society in question. In this case, the analysis of the society provides us with some ideas as to what stage it is in, and whether it is likely to stay in that stage or not. The FVCF has been seen to have characteristics that can usually be ascribed to a movement which is relatively young in its development. The criteria for a new religious movement, an effervescent group, and an anti-ritual society have been met for the most part by the FVCF. As each of these different stages, and they are considered to be stages, are temporary in most cases, it would not be surprising if the FVCF underwent some change in its characteristics and focus as it ages. Any group, even those starting out as anti-ritual, will in time recognise the need for ritual and restricted code as an important part of its identity. Effervescent groups will lose the preconditions necessary for its existence, and new religious movements become respected and established. None of these are irrevocably destined to occur, it is just that the large majority of movements follow typical stages of development. Thus, it is safe to assume that it will most likely occur with this movement, and in some ways, already has.

### **Analysis**

In terms of my own data the overall accuracy of Douglas' models is quite good. In most cases the cosmology and the characteristics were well tied together. The characteristics that she claims can predict an anti-ritual stance were accurate in predicting the feelings towards ritual in the FVCF. The same is true, although less so, of the effervescent characteristics. As well, her model of attitudes towards trance was extremely helpful in determining the placement for the FVCF on her grid. Her prediction that the FVCF would have a close and personal God was very

accurate, although her assumption of what that would mean with regards to the characteristics of this God left something to be desired. Her models also allow for a varied method in comparison with other societal groups, as in this case between the Dinka, Nuer, and the FVCF. To be able to compare such disparate societies constructively is useful in many ways. It is my conclusion that Douglas' theory, as presented in *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, is a useful tool in the observation and analysis of social groups.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

In writing this thesis I attempted to write with three different groups of readers in mind. The first, and primary, group are academics studying new religions. The second group are members of the Faith VCF. The third group includes those people who are genuinely interested in knowing what the VCF is about. I hope that this last group includes critics of the movement, who may not have time for an in depth study of their own.

In addressing the first group I sought to give a well rounded study that provides historical, demographic, and theoretical information. It was fascinating to look at a new religious movement through the lens of a theory like Douglas'. In Chapter three I compared results from two identical surveys administered to two different VCF groups. The comparison was possible because of the similarity of the survey and of the group studied. In the fourth chapter I compared the characteristics of the Faith VCF with those of two mid-twentieth century African tribes. How was such a comparison possible? Douglas' theories involving trance, social control, body control, and so forth, made such a comparison possible.

What is the benefit of such comparisons? Perhaps it is not the comparison alone which is of value here. Is it not valuable in and of itself to look at and try to understand religion, whether it be ours or anothers? I would say yes, it is, but it is not enough to merely study one religion. If my thesis were to have ended with chapter three, one would know much about the Faith VCF, but one would know very little about why it is the way it is. Why is the Faith VCF anti-ritualist, why is their God so intimate? It is in these types of questions that comparison is useful. We can look at other religions to discover their cosmology and society and, in comparison to religions we already know, gain a deeper knowledge of how religion and society work together. As we gain more understanding of others, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves.

Douglas' theory provides the framework for understanding which expands our ability to understand religions both near and far. She does this by providing symbols which she considers universal and can be used in comparison studies. The symbol of trance, with its different understandings, provides a wonderful arena for comparison between the Faith VCF and the Nuer and Dinka. This provides a deeper understanding of some of the other characteristics and provides an expanded arena of potential answers to the why questions. Through her theory we can come to conclusions about where the Faith VCF stands in relation to other religions with regard to grid and group measurements. In placing the Faith VCF on the grid/group graph we can discern more clearly which societies it most closely resembles and further the discussion as to the root causes and influences and interdependencies of the characteristics of those societies.

The value of this thesis for the Faith VCF members will be twofold. The first thing of value that the Faith VCF members can take from this thesis is a deeper understanding of self, of the history of the movement, and of the particulars of their own congregation. From this they can hopefully make clearer, more informed decisions with regard to their future as a church. They may, or may not, agree with what I say. While agreement is important in the areas of description and fact, it is not necessary in the areas of the analysis. I have desired for this thesis to accurately describe the Faith VCF. I have also desired that this thesis will cause the leadership of the church to reflect on the analysis and learn about themselves, and others. The second item of value is that the Faith VCF will have a snapshot of their church to which they can return to remember their past, reflect on their present state, whether it is improved or regressed. They will remember their goals, and their visions for the future and be able to ponder their progress.

The third group that will be able to find value in this work are those who wish to understand the VCF. Many critics of the movement, mostly from conservative evangelical and fundamentalist groups, speak out against the VCF. Whether they do so from informed or uninformed positions is not for me to say. However, the example of a single church, rather than



the generic VCF, can show that all VCFs are not created equal. There is a certain amount of flexibility within the VCF movement which necessitates some study before one can tag even a VCF with any perceived problems with Wimber, or with other VCFs. This flexibility involves areas like church structure, preaching patterns, some minor differences in methods of use of spiritual gifts, and many others. These differences can lead to differing emphases on Bible teaching, differing attitudes towards spiritual gifts, differing strategies in evangelism, etc.. I would contend then, that the person or group wishing to criticise the VCF had better do so cautiously, making sure to recognise the large potential for exception from their criticism.

In my opinion the VCF is having, and will continue to have, an impact on the conservative evangelical world. It will be interesting to note through the passing years how the face of conservative evangelical Christianity changes because of this impact.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Definitions:**

**Liberal:** this term refers to those denominations which, in the early 1900's, are considered to have begun a compromise of what the evangelicals believe to be the fundamental theologies of the Christian faith through an accommodation with contemporary scientific theories and modernity.

**Compromise:** a watering down, elimination, or criticising of traditional reformation Christian beliefs. eg. when biblical miracles are considered to be textual additions to the New Testament by later Christians who mythologised Jesus.

**Evangelical:** that group of denominations which hold to the traditional creeds and doctrines formulated during the Protestant Reformation.

**Excess:** this term refers to the emotionalism and behavioural freedom which led to some unique theological interpretations in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. These interpretations and behaviours were not well received by the Evangelical, Fundamental, and mainline churches who used the word excess to connote a negative feeling of these events.

## **Appendix II**

### **Survey and Consent Forms**

The following are the tools used during the study. Included is the survey, the response data of which is used extensively in Chapter 3. Also included are the consent forms used for the surveys, for the life history interviews, and for the cell group meetings.

## **Life History Interview Consent Form**

Research Project Title: A study of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship  
Researcher: James Loewen

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please ask. Please take the time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.



- This project is being carried out with the intention to create a clearer understanding of the Vineyard movement. This study will provide additional information to the discussion of new religious movements, as well as provide an understanding of your particular church in the context of the larger charismatic, evangelical, and conservative environment.
- This study will involve life history interviews which will take the form of an informal question time intended to gain an understanding of the importance of religion in your life and how you came to participate in the Faith Vineyard Christian Fellowship. Also included in the study, although not during the interview, is an extensive survey form that will be given to as many members as possible. The study will also include participant observation of the services, home groups, and Sunday schools. The interview process will take approximately one hour to complete.
- While this study does not appear to contain any risks for you, the participant, it is my intention to be aware of any discomfort that my questions may cause you. Please feel free to inform me of any concerns that you may have at any point in the interviewing process. If you feel at any time that your participation will jeopardize your standing in the church, or your well-being in any way, do not hesitate to inform me or discontinue your participation.
- It is my intention to provide a high level of confidentiality to any and all participants who are involved in this study. Any identifying names, anecdotes, or circumstances that would identify an individual will be removed from any public data. The data collected will be used to produce generalities, and any specific data will be sufficiently disguised so as to protect the

confidentiality of the participants. The data collected will be stored under password in my personal computer, accessible only by myself. Any and all recordings or backup disks will be kept under lock and key in a cabinet. All data involving specific names and circumstances will be destroyed five years after the end of the study (approx. July 2002).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research please contact:

James Loewen  
286-4465

If you have any questions concerning your participation in this project, you may also contact the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and ask for Karen McDermid, 220-3381.

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Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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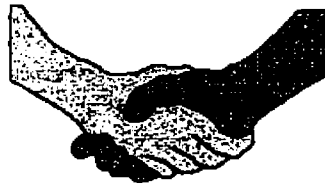
Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

## **Cell Group Consent Form**

Research Project Title: A study of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship  
Researcher: James Loewen

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please ask. Please take the time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.



- This project is being carried out with the intention to create a clearer understanding of the Vineyard movement. This study will provide additional information to the discussion of new religious movements, as well as provide an understanding of your particular church in the context of the larger charismatic, evangelical, and conservative environment.
- This study will involve life history interviews which will take the form of an informal question time intended to gain an understanding of your involvement in this church. Also, the study will involve the observation of both the Sunday worship service, as well as a number of Cell groups. Your participation in this study of the Cell groups will provide me with some information with regard to your church in its more intimate form.
- Your particular involvement will merely be the role of the observed, that is, I will be passively observing the content, method, and practice of your, and others, cell groups. There is no time commitment for you in this part of the study.
- While this study does not appear to contain any risks for you, the participant, it is my intention to be aware of any discomfort that my presence may cause you. Please feel free to inform me of any concerns that you may have at any point in the observation process. If you feel at any time that your participation will jeopardize your standing in the church, or your well-being in any way, do not hesitate to inform me or discontinue your participation.
- It is my intention to provide a high level of confidentiality to any and all participants who are involved in this study. Any identifying names, anecdotes, or circumstances that would

identify an individual will be removed from any public data given. The data collected will be used to produce generalities, and any specific data will be sufficiently disguised so as to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The data collected will be stored under password in my personal computer, accessible only by the researcher. Any and all recordings or backup disks will be kept under lock and key in a cabinet. All data involving specific names and circumstances will be destroyed five years after the end of the study (approx. July 2002).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research please contact:

James Loewen  
286-4465

If you have any questions concerning your participation in this project, you may also contact the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and ask for Karen McDermid, 220-3381.

Participant	Date

Researcher	Date
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A copy of this consent form has been given to your group leader to keep for your records and reference.

## **Survey Consent Form**

Research Project Title: A study of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship  
Researcher: James Loewen

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please ask. Please take the time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

- This project is being carried out with the intention to create a clearer understanding of the Vineyard movement. This study will provide additional information to the discussion of new religious movements, as well as provide an understanding of your particular church in the context of the larger charismatic, evangelical, and conservative environment. Your participation in this phase of the study is extremely important as it will help provide a true reflection of the thoughts, ideas, and characteristics of your congregation.
- This portion of the study will involve an extensive survey form that will be given to as many Faith Vineyard regular attendees as possible. Also included in the study are six life history interviews which will take the form of an informal question time intended to gain an understanding of the importance of religion in the interviewee's life and how they came to participate in the Faith Vineyard Christian Fellowship. The study will also include participant observation of the services, cell groups, and passive observation of Sunday schools. The survey will take approximately three quarters of an hour (45 min) to complete.
- While this study does not appear to contain any risks for you, the participant, it is my intention to be aware of any discomfort that the survey questions may cause you. If there are any questions which you would rather not answer, please leave them unanswered and continue on with the survey.
- It is my intention to provide a high level of confidentiality to any and all participants who are involved in this study. Any identifying names, anecdotes, or circumstances that would identify an individual will be removed from any public data. There are no identifying marks or numbers on the surveys. The data collected in this portion of the study will be used to produce general tables, and any specific data will be sufficiently disguised so as to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The data collected will be stored under password in my personal computer, accessible only by myself. Any and all recordings or backup disks will be kept under lock and key in a cabinet. All data involving specific names and circumstances will be destroyed five years after the end of the study (approx. July 2002).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research please contact:

James Loewen  
286-4465

If you have any questions concerning your participation in this project, you may also contact the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and ask for Karen McDermid, 220-3381.

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Participant

Date

Please return this signed consent form with the completed survey.

A copy of the Survey consent form will be given to your pastor to keep for record and reference.





Q-6 Did your conversion to Christianity result from association with Vineyard members?

(15) 1) YES 2) NO

Q-7 What was the first church you attended regularly after becoming a Christian?

(16-17) \_\_\_\_\_ SPECIFIC  
CHURCH/DENOMINATION

Q-8 Just before coming to The Faith Vineyard Christian Fellowship, what was the last non- Vineyard church you attended regularly? (That is, prior to involvement in your current fellowship.) During approximately what years did you attend this church?

(1B-Ig) \_\_\_\_\_ SPECIFIC  
CHURCH/DENOMINATION

(20-21) \_\_\_\_\_ CITY AND PROVINCE

(22-25) 19 to 19 APPROXIMATE YEARS OF ATTENDANCE

(26-27)

\_\_\_\_\_ PLEASE CHECK HERE IF YOU HAVE NEVER ATTENDED  
ANOTHER CHURCH REGULARLY AND SKIP TO Q-17

Q-9 WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND YOUR OPINIONS OF HOW THE MEMBERS OF YOUR PREVIOUS CHURCH (THE LAST CHURCH YOU ATTENDED REGULARLY BEFORE THE VINEYARD, AS SPECIFIED IN Q-8), APPROACHED THEIR FAITH, BELIEFS, AND CHURCH LIFE. FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PAIRS OF STATEMENTS (PAIR A, PAIR B, ETC.), PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE MORE WITH THE STATEMENT ON THE LEFT OR THE STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT. ASSUME THAT:

- 1 = COMPLETELY AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE LEFT
- 2 = SOMEWHAT AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE LEFT
- 3 = UNSURE
- 4 = SOMEWHAT AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT
- 5 = COMPLETELY AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT

For each pair of statements, circle the number you feel best represents your feelings in completing the statement:  
**COMPARED TO CHURCH-GOERS IN GENERAL,  
 MEMBERS OF MY PREVIOUS CHURCH....**

- (29) A. seemed willing to sacrifice everything for Christ 1...2...3...4...5 .. seemed reluctant to make sacrifices for their beliefs
- B. seemed willing to follow church leaders without question 1...2...3...4...5 .. seemed reluctant to accept instruction of the leaders
- C. seemed driven by the desire to win others to Christ 1...2...3...4...5 .. seemed reluctant to share beliefs with non-Christians
- D. seemed to feel their religious beliefs are "the truth" and all others are in error 1...2...3...4...5 .. seemed to feel that all religious insights are incomplete and one religion has all of "the truth"
- E. seemed willing to confront fellow Christians not living in a Christ-like manner 1...2...3...4...5 .. seemed to assume it is not their business how fellow Christians live their lives
- (34) F. seemed annoyed by people with religious views different from their own 1...2...3...4...5 .. seemed to appreciate the religious views of people who believe differently than themselves

Q-10 In this question we would like you to compare The Vineyard to the last church you attended regularly (as specified in Q-8). For each of the following aspects of church life, please indicate whether it is **EMPHASIZED MORE BY THE VINEYARD**, **EMPHASIZED AN EQUAL AMOUNT BY BOTH CHURCHES**, **EMPHASIZED MORE BY YOUR PREVIOUS CHURCH**, or **NOT EMPHASIZED BY EITHER CHURCH**.

EMPHASIZED MORE BY VINEYARD = 1  
 EMPHASIZED EQUALLY BY BOTH = 2  
 EMPHASIZED MORE BY PREVIOUS CHURCH = 3  
 NOT EMPHASIZED BY EITHER = 4

- (35) A Personal Bible study 1 2 3 4
- B Personal prayer life 1 2 3 4
- C Winning others to Christ 1 2 3 4
- D Giving financially to the church 1 2 3 4
- E Gifts of the Holy Spirit 1 2 3 4
- F Giving up close relationships with non-Christians 1 2 3 4
- G Christianity as the only way to heaven 1 2 3 4

H	Looking after the spiritual well being of other Christians	1	2	3	4
I	Christian fellowship	1	2	3	4
J	Inspirational worship service	1	2	3	4
K	Having a personal commitment to Christ	1	2	3	4
L	Discretion in what is read or watched on T.V./movies	1	2	3	4
M	Being in but not <u>of</u> the world	1	2	3	4
N	Giving up alcohol or smoking	1	2	3	4
O	Challenging believers to be better servants for Christ	1	2	3	4
P	Sacrificing everything for Jesus	1	2	3	4
Q	Being open-minded concerning the religious beliefs of others	1	2	3	4
R	Living a life distinct from non-Christians	1	2	3	4
S	Being obedient to God's will	1	2	3	4
(54) T	Believers acting in a Christ-like manner	1	2	3	4

Q-II For each of the following, please indicate whether you are a STRONGER CHRISTIAN, THE SAME, or NOT AS STRONG A CHRISTIAN since coming to The Vineyard.

SINCE COMING TO THE VINEYARD, ARE YOU A  
 STRONGER CHRISTIAN = 1  
 THE SAME = 2  
 A WEAKER CHRISTIAN = 3  
 IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS

(55) A	Personal prayer life	1	2	3
B	Personal Bible study	1	2	3
C	Sharing your faith with non-believers	1	2	3
D	Involvement in church activities	1	2	3
E	Giving money to the church	1	2	3
F	Donating time or money to help the poor/need...	1	2	3

G	Living a life distinct from non-Christians	1	2	3
(62)	H Obedience to Gods will	1	2	3

Q-12 Are there other ways you feel you are a stronger Christian or not as strong a Christian since coming to the Vineyard? (Please explain briefly)

---

(63-64)

Q-13 WE ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBLE REASONS YOU MAY HAVE FOR ATTENDING THE VINEYARD INSTEAD OF YOUR PREVIOUS CHURCH (AS SPECIFIED IN Q-8). PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING WAS OR WAS NOT A CONSIDERATION IN YOUR DECISION TO CHANGE CHURCHES.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR CHANGING FROM YOUR PREVIOUS CHURCH  
 WAS A CONSIDERATION IN THE DECISION TO SWITCH CHURCHES =  
 WAS NOT A CONSIDERATION IN THE DECISION TO SWITCH CHURCHES =

My previous church . . .

(65)	A Did not do an effective enough job of preaching the Gospel to the followers	1	:
	B Was not meeting my fellowship needs	1	:
	C Seemed too formal or "churchy"	1	:
	D Did not stress enough winning others to Christ	1	:
	E Put up with too much un-Christian behavior	1	:
	F Did not stress enough an inspirational worship	1	:
	G Did not challenge me in my faith enough	1	:
	H Seemed somewhat uncertain about what it believed	1	:
	I Had different priorities from what I felt were important	1	:
(74)	J Was too-open minded concerning other religious beliefs..	1	:

Q-14 Were there other important considerations in your decision to change churches? (Please explain briefly)

---

Q-15 Now look back over the list from Q-13 on the previous page (and your own responses from Q-14 on this page) and circle the response that was THE ONE MOST IMPORTANT REASON for you had for choosing to change churches?  
(9-10)

Q-16 WE WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSTAND YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT HOW MEMBERS OF THE VINEYARD APPROACH THEIR FAITH, BELIEFS, AND CHURCH LIFE. FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PAIRS OF STATEMENTS, ASSUME THAT:

1 = COMPLETELY AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE LEFT

2 = SOMEWHAT AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE LEFT

3 = UNSURE

4 = SOMEWHAT AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT

5 = COMPLETELY AGREE WITH STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT

For each pair of statements, circle the number you feel best represents your feelings in completing the statement:  
COMPARED TO CHURCHGOERS IN GENERAL,  
MEMBERS OF THE VINEYARD....

- |      |   |                   |   |
|------|---|-------------------|---|
| (11) | A. seem willing to sacrifice everything for Christ                                  | 1...2...3...4...5 | ..seem reluctant to m sacrifices for their be                           |
|      | B. seem willing to follow church leaders without question                           | 1...2...3...4...5 | ..seem reluctant to ac instructions of the lea                          |
|      | C. seem driven by the desire to win others to Christ                                | 1...2...3...4...5 | ..seem reluctant to sh beliefs with non-Chri                            |
|      | D. seem to feel their religious beliefs are "the truth" and all others are in error | 1...2...3...4...5 | .. seem to feel that all insights are incomple religion has all of "the |
|      | E. seem willing to confront fellow Christians not living in a Christ-like manner    | 1...2...3...4...5 | .. seem to assume it i of their business how Christians live their li   |
| (16) | F. seem annoyed by people with religious views different from their own             | 1...2...3...4...5 | . seem to appreciate th religious views of peo believe differently tha  |

UP TO THIS POINT, WE HAVE PRIMARILY BEEN CONCERNED WITH AN EVALUATION OF THE VINEYARD COMPARED TO YOUR PREVIOUS CHURCH. IN THIS SECTION, WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR PERSONAL VIEWS CONCERNING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN AND YOUR PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CHRIST.

Q-17 How close do you feel to God most of the time?

- (17)
- 1) EXTREMELY CLOSE
  - 2) SOMEWHAT CLOSE
  - 3) NOT VERY CLOSE
  - 4) NOT CLOSE AT ALL

Q-18 Which of the following actions would you say should be the top priority for Christians? (Please circle only one)

- (18)
- 1) CONCENTRATE ON THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF ONE'S FAMILY AND SELF
  - 2) HELP TO WIN THE WORLD FOR JESUS CHRIST
  - 3) SUPPORT CAUSES TO IMPROVE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY
  - 4) STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL CHURCH
  - 5) INFLUENCE LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION
  - 6) NO OPINION

Q-19 Each of the following statements represents an opinion that various Christians might have about what it means to be a Christian. Please indicate whether you STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, are NOT SURE, DISAGREE, or STRONGLY DISAGREE with each statement.

STRONGLY AGREE = 1  
 AGREE = 2  
 UNSURE = 3  
 DISAGREE = 4  
 STRONGLY DISAGREE = 5

- (19)
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| A As Christians, we should avoid close friendships with nonChristians              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B As Christians, we should accept the validity of other religious teaching         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C As Christians, we should be willing to do whatever our pastors ask of us         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D As Christians, we are duty-bound to try and convert non-believers                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E There is no reason Christians should try to separate themselves from the world   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| F As Christians, we are commanded to sacrifice everything for Jesus                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| G As Christians, we should confront friends who do not act in a Christ-like manner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

H It is not the job of the church to tell  
Christians how to live their lives 1 2 3 4 5

(27) I The church has every right to demand that  
Christians be totally committed to Christ. 1 2 3 4 5

Q-20 How often do you attend church services?

(2B) 1) NEVER 5) 2-3 TIMES A MONTH  
2) ABOUT ONCE A YEAR 6) NEARLY EVERY WEEK  
3) SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR 7) EVERY WEEK  
4) ABOUT ONCE A MONTH 8) MORE THAN ONCE A  
WEEK

Q-21 How often would you say you attend other church related activities such as  
devotionals, prayer meetings, Bible studies, etc?

(29) 1) NEVER 5) 2-3 TIMES A MONTH  
2) ABOUT ONCE A YEAR 6) NEARLY EVERY WEEK  
3) SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR 7) EVERY WEEK  
4) ABOUT ONCE A MONTH 8) MORE THAN ONCE A  
WEEK

Q-22 How often do you try and encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ?

(30) 1) A FEW TIMES A DAY  
2) ONCE A DAY  
3) ONCE A MONTH  
4) A FEW TIMES A YEAR  
5) RARELY OR NEVER

Q-23 Assume that the following statements represent how different people approach their  
faith, beliefs, and church life. Please indicate whether you STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE,  
are UNSURE, DISAGREE, or STRONGLY DISAGREE with each as a statement of your  
own personal position.

STRONGLY AGREE = 1  
AGREE = 2  
UNSURE = 3  
DISAGREE = 4  
STRONGLY DISAGREE = 5

(31) A. I would be willing to give up everything  
for my Christian faith 1 2 3 4 5

B. Other than at church, I generally do not  
spend time with people from The Vineyard 1 2 3 4 5

C. The people at my church are a family to me 1 2 3 4 5



- D. I trust the Pastors of The Vineyard and am willing to do whatever they ask of me.. 1 2 3 4 5
- E. There is no reason to believe I have more religious answers than anyone else 1 2 3 4 5
- F. It's none of my business whether my Christian friends act in a Christ-like manner 1 2 3 4 5
- G. I believe that anyone who does not accept Christ as Savior will not go to heaven. ... 1 2 3 4 5
- H. I am hesitant to share my Christian convictions with non-believers 1 2 3 4 5
- I. My heart aches for people who have not accepted Christ as Savior 1 2 3 4 5
- J. I feel a personal responsibility in the success of The Vineyard church 1 2 3 4 5
- K I generally try and avoid close friendships with non-Christians 1 2 3 4 5
- L. As a Christian, I do not feel compelled to sacrifice worldly rewards 1 2 3 4 5
- (43) M. When my Christian friends do not act in a Christ-like manner I confront them 1 2 3 4 5

Q-24 Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- (44) 1) THE BIBLE IS THE ACTUAL WORD OF GOD AND IS TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY, WORD FOR WORD.
- 2) THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD BUT NOT EVERYTHING SHOULD BE TAKEN LITERALLY, WORD FOR WORD.
- 3) THE BIBLE IS AN ANCIENT BOOK OF FABLES, LEGENDS, HISTORY AND MORAL PRECEPTS RECORDED BY MEN.

Q-25 For each of the following, please indicate whether you feel the statement is COMPLETELY TRUE = 1, SOMEWHAT TRUE = 2, are UNSURE = 3, SOMEWHAT FALSE = 4, or COMPLETELY FALSE = 5.

- (45) A. I have spoken to God in tongues 1 2 3 4 5
- B. There are times when I know God has answered my prayers 1 2 3 4 5
- C. I can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life 1 2 3 4 5

- D. I personally know of times when God has  
healed someone who was seriously ill                    1    2    3    4    5
- E. I believe the devil actually exists                    1    2    3    4    5
- (50) F. Jesus is the divine Son of God and I  
have no doubts about it                    1    2    3    4    5

FINALLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT  
YOURSELF TO HELP WITH THE ANALYSIS  
OF THE RESULTS.

Q-26 In what part of Calgary is your residence located?

(51-52)                    \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION OF CALGARY

Q-27 In general, on a Sunday morning, how long does it take you to drive to church?

(53-54)                    ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_ MINUTES

Q-28 Not including your spouse (if you have one), how many of your 5 closest friends  
attend church at the same Vineyard you attend? (Please circle the appropriate number)

(55)                    0        1        2        3        4        5

Q-29 Your sex?

(56)                    1) MALE                    2) FEMALE

Q-30 Your age at last birthday?

(57-58)                    \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

Q-31 Your marital status?

(59)                    1) MARRIED  
2) DIVORCED  
3) WIDOWED  
4) SEPARATED  
5) NEVER MARRIED

Q-32 How many children do you have, if any? (Please circle the appropriate number)

(60)                    0        1        2        3        4        5+

If you have children, please fill in their ages below

(61-62)                    THE YOUNGEST IS \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD  
(63-64)                    THE OLDEST IS \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

Q-33 During the past 5 years, how many times have you been a patient in a hospital, mental hospital, convalescent home or nursing home (apart from having a baby)?  
(Please circle the appropriate number)

(65)            0        1        2        3        4        5+

Q-34 Since the time you were 16, how many of your closest relatives have died? (Closest relatives include spouse, parent, father or mother-in-law, child, child's spouse, brother or sister, brother or sister-in-law)

(66) 0        1        2        3        4        5+

Q-35        Your occupational status?

- 1) WORKING FULL TIME
- 2) WORKING PART TIME
- 3) HAVE A JOB BUT NOT WORKING BECAUSE OF TEMPORARY ILLNESS, VACATION, STRIKE
- 4) UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK
- 5) RETIRED
- 6) IN SCHOOL
- 7) HOMEMAKER

Q-36        What is your usual occupation when employed?

(68-69)            TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
(for example; System's Analyst)

(70-71)            KIND OF WORK \_\_\_\_\_  
(computer programming)

(72-73)            NATURE OF BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_  
(install business computer systems)

Q-37 If you were asked to use one of four names for your social class, which of the following would you say you belong to?

- (74)
- 1)        LOWER CLASS
  - 2)        WORKING CLASS
  - 3)        MIDDLE CLASS
  - 4)        UPPER CLASS

Q-38 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- (75)
- 1) NO FORMAL EDUCATION
  - 2) GRADE SCHOOL
  - 3) SOME HIGH SCHOOL
  - 4) HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
  - 5) TRADE SCHOOL
  - 6) SOME COLLEGE
  - 7) COLLEGE GRADUATE
  - 8) SOME GRADUATE WORK
  - 9) GRADUATE WORK

Q-39 In which of these groups did your total family income from all sources fall before taxes in 1986?

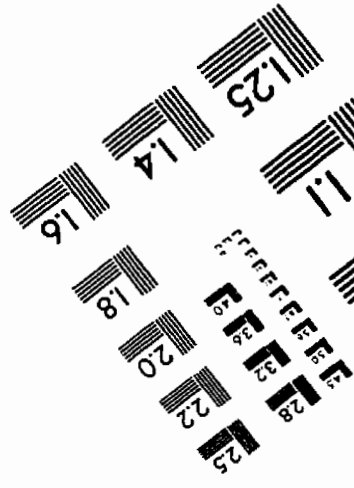
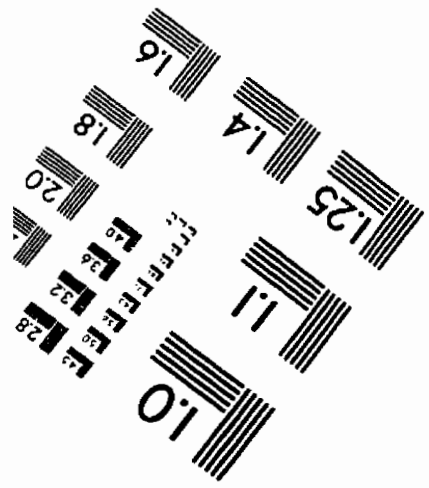
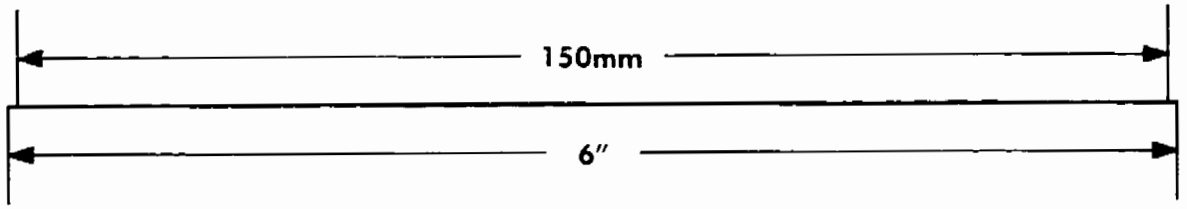
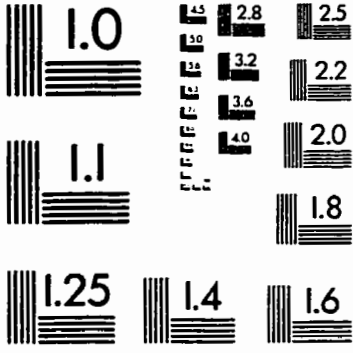
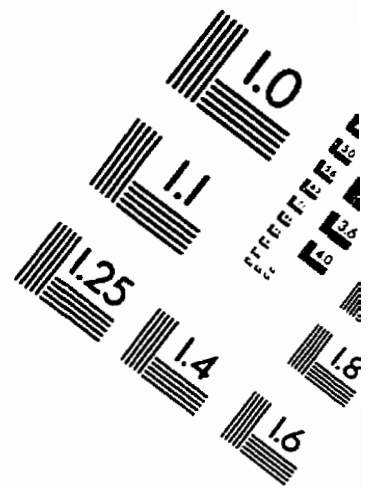
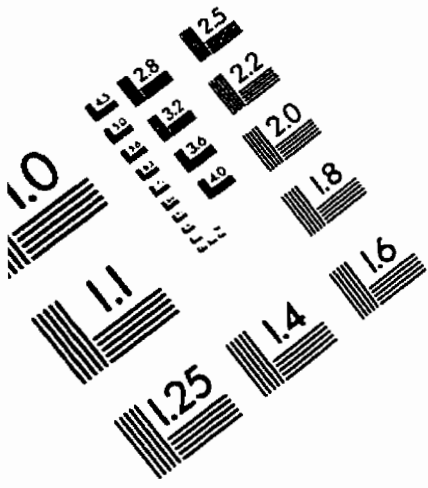
- (76-77)
- 1) LESS THAN \$5,000
  - 2) \$5,000 TO \$9,999
  - 3) \$10,000 TO \$14,999
  - 4) \$15,000 TO \$19,999
  - 5) \$20,000 TO \$24,999
  - 6) \$25,000 TO \$29,999
  - 7) \$30,000 TO \$34,999
  - 8) \$35,000 TO \$39,999
  - 9) \$40,000 TO \$44,999
  - 10) \$45,000 OR MORE

I HAVE ASKED SEVERAL QUESTIONS THAT GIVE ME AN INDIRECT INDICATION OF WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT THE VINEYARD. HOWEVER, I HAVE NOT GIVEN YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN TO ME THE REASON OR REASONS YOU HAD FOR CHOOSING THE VINEYARD AS YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP. IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ME ABOUT HOW THE VINEYARD MEETS YOUR NEEDS (OR FAILS TO MEET YOUR NEEDS) PLEASE DO SO ON THE BACK OF THIS LAST PAGE. ANY COMMENTS YOU WISH TO MAKE WILL HELP ME IN FUTURE EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCHES LIKE THE VINEYARD.

REMEMBER THAT EVERYTHING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE ANALYZED CONFIDENTIALLY BY MYSELF. NO ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS. THE RESULTS WILL BE REPORTED IN STATISTICAL FORM ONLY.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS EFFORT IS VERY GREATLY APPRECIATED. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SEEING A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS, PLEASE CHECK WITH THE CHURCH OFFICE IN THE MONTHS TO COME.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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