

VENTURA VINEYARD

TOWN HALL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 13, 2008

Jim Owens Group:

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

The consensus of our group was that we liked the openness and lack of rules and regulations of the church, that it has nonjudgmental attitudes. Home groups help everyone in the groups to get to know people, they are an important component. The church demonstrates a real patience for newcomers – there is a lot of community outreach. We like the idea that there are no robes – pastor doesn't wear robes. It has a welcoming environment, and informal environment. The worship and music has an edginess to it, that really compliments the teaching style here. There is an opportunity to commune with God in the music. Everyone was very much in favor of Bob's teaching style and biblical knowledge.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

The second question – high points were Home Groups, V-Room, Women's Tea, Women's Retreat, Men's book club, Craveapalooza. The kind of things we were pointing out from those were the informal level that the holy spirit often intervenes in different settings and environments, in different outreaches. The prayer group is powerful – the prayer ministry within here is extremely powerful. A lot of prayers have been answered in the past. The Buoy outreach – the random acts of kindness – hot dogs at the beach, a lot of different areas of community outreach. Not about what we get from others, but what we can give, that seems to be the emphasis. Mercy Ministries and its El Rio Food Pantry and the demonstration of open arms to those in need. Those seem to be the highlights.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

The group indicated that there were some who had an evangelistic strengths, organizational strengths, website and those types of things; Lots of gifts of helps –

translator for MMI; Hospitality and organization – Coffee ministry; Strength of listening to the Holy Spirit – that is a gift in itself; Being available – not taking gifts for granted, and that the consensus was that we are using our God-given gifts. They weren't gifts that came from us, but that they were given to us by God.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

We actually came up with seven, but consolidated down to three. The first was that we would want to see the casual family environment, freedom to be yourself – that was very important. No, excuse me. Number 1, the first one, was sound Biblical teaching – to include innovative approach to teaching, realness through vulnerability, using movie clips, things like that, and the music and worship as a part of that. The second most important was the family environment, the casual family environment, the freedom to be yourself. And the third most important was the innovative community outreach, the association with Tender Life, Action, Mercy Ministries, and the different other groups that were associated with it.

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?

In answer to the fifth question, we fast forwarded to 2013 – the number one priority was focus on the children – at all levels. We believe the future lies in being able to reach the children in a relevant way because of all the competition there is with the environment and the changing times. We need to be able to reach the children here at the church, that we would live the Gospel in every way – through church, outreach, living example – that it would be genuine and inspired by a relationship with Christ. That is what we would see in 2013 as a very important component. The third one is that we would integrate our church in the community – go beyond just the outreach to these ministries, but also join with other churches. The way we began to talk about it was that our brothers and sisters in Christ in other churches, all of that is the family of Christ, and we would meet those that are unchurched by joining forces with those other churches.

Questions from the Leadership Community: None.

Bob Willcox Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

First I would like to say that we had the best table, especially given the very next comment in terms of the first question. The first answer was not the pastor. I dove into that just a little bit to find out why it was not necessarily the pastor – there were a lot of other good qualities in addition to that that came out. They talked about most often the health of the church – the “acceptingness,” the openness, worship certainly was key, they felt it was led by God and the Holy Spirit, and this is the kind of church personality, the makeup of the church, the people here that everyone was looking for. Especially when it came to missional outreach, and that came up again and again through several questions that we have. A lot of people came from acquaintances that they knew, but it certainly was the way of the church ambience and vibe. Not too small, but still needing to get involved.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

In terms of what was key in the memories, it had a lot to do with the small group – probably not a surprise to most of the people here. By the way, we picked up a new small group member today at the table. Interesting to see what you guys were able to do here. [Aside from B. Harper: Bob, before you go on, to be honest with you, that is a little bit of the reason we separated you by zip code, so you could see who lives in your neighborhood.] Seriously, small groups, the people at our table were pretty much in our small groups, and the small groups are really important. A lot of the memories came from the small group – the family environment, caring in scary and difficult times, sharing and really good experiences. And partially because the zip code is out East a ways, it is a community church, where we get together and plug in. That was shared by a lot of people. We've had physical healings in our group, and that was phenomenal. The health of the church came out again – Great memories with the mission work, the food pantry, the outreach that goes on, the workdays at Babash's Angels, and some of the things the church has done in the community, and really good memorable feelings in terms of serving. And then there was a real sense that the pastor – you, Bob – have been a warm memory for the group, connecting with people in individual ways. That was very important. There was some discussion about the topic of small group discussions about marriage and sex, but we won't . . . it was a fleeting thing for a couple people.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

Moving to the third question – this got answered in connection with our small group, interesting enough – so, the times we get together for dinners and holidays, we really enjoyed the small group and the strength we bring there in that community, and also, as we talked around the room, it is very easy to plug in here and think that we didn't necessary plug in to a nursery, or volunteering time, or, Tom didn't say a word, but obviously being on the stage and playing. Being able to bring in different perspectives in the church was on the list of all the things that we can bring here. We were relatively brief on that question.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

Most important qualities – several things came up. Intimacy and welcoming of the community, going back to the personality of the church, allowing people to get involved, listening, learning, all of that was very important. Focusing on small groups was important to our small group, strangely enough, and keeping the right balance between worship and preaching, the balance and emphasis we have now seems really good. Very strong sense that we want to keep the missional outward view of the church in terms of what's going on there.

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?

Lastly, looking forward – what is it we want to keep going? The community, and how this church interacts with the community; Having a bigger impact on the community – not that they would look at necessarily Ventura Vineyard as the answer to the questions, but good things would be going on in the community, and Ventura Vineyard would be plugged in and enabling those things. That would be really important. The church would be able to adapt to the times, we would be more involved with the fledgling growing things that are going on in the community, that we would see more excellence in Mercy Ministries, and then that the youth would be involved, and we would plug the youth in going forward, and that would be a growing part of what was happening.

Questions from the Leadership Community:

Margie Harper – [couldn't hear question] Response: Five years things are going to be different than they are today – so whether the community gets the idea of being greener, more embrasive, more collaborative, or whatever it is that is going forward, that we help to nurture those good things in the community going forward.

Melissa Adamo Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

All right, for the first question, things that attracted our group to this church were worship, Bob (there were a couple people who had history with you – in a good way), the church just felt like home. When they came, one spouse would say to the other, you know, it just feels right. The size is an attraction, history with the Vineyard, moving into the area and looking for a Vineyard and finding the consistency of that; that we are a church that focuses on our youth; Referrals from other members from our church, that was part of the motivating factor; Our unique format, the casualness of our church, and again a history with the Vineyard.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

Memorable things from our church – feeling welcome because they were remembered from week to week. Retreats were memorable. This came up more than once – it sounds kind of odd, but personal low points – where individuals found support, found comfort through worship, through the preaching, through groups that supported the individuals through difficult situations. The kids being excited about being involved in the youth ministry, being involved in outreach, the authenticity, the ability to be real. Seeing kids grow spiritually, being involved in the membership classes and seeing the opportunities to be involved. Personal spiritual growth being supported in multiple areas, through worship and through the message and home groups. People from outside the church can come to this church and feel comfortable and safe in a familiar environment.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

Qualities that we feel our group brings to the table – one person said “I brought my spouse...” – that was their quality. We have several musicians in the group, several teachers and organizers, people who are familiar with technology, people who are passionate about outreach and worship, intercessory prayer, there's an actor in our bunch, and a fix-it person.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

The most important qualities and strengths of the church – our openness and acceptance, our ability to equip the body to go out and do; Healthy attitude towards our community –

what we are doing both locally and globally. Continuing to seek intimacy in worship, because that provides the foundation for what we go out to do. Having an open leadership that enables the body to do the work. One comment that came up that I really liked was that we as a church view our door as an entrance to the world, not as an exit from the church. That kind of struck me.

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?

Lastly, five years down the road, the things that we see that we will be doing to reach our goals are: That we are reaching the next generation. We are fostering growth within our youth to bring on the next generation. We are carrying the message on. We are impacting the community – the community *knows* us. When we say we go to Ventura Vineyard, they know us in the community, good or bad, but they know who we are and what we are about. We are echoing the community's concerns and issues in our outreach. We are continually seeking to remain culturally relevant, and have an ability to adapt over time. We are continually updating our technology, our music, our methods. The church is remaining vital and meaningful in the community. People are involved in ministries that are launched *out* and not focused *in*. We are meeting people where they are and supporting personal change.

Questions from the Leadership Community: None.

Paul Janowski Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

Ok, Bob, thanks for the opportunity here. Our small group from Camarillo and East Oxnard – we have a lot of people from our group that were here before you were here – from when this was known as the “HOP.” Things that we thought were significant, or important to attracting us was this was a new kind of Christian gathering – something attractive and unusual here – the music, the atmosphere, a lot of people kind of centered on Bob and his teaching, not just that he taught about the Bible, but the *way* he teaches, and emphasizes different things, the way he breaks it down into – “all right, here’s what the Bible says, and here’s what it meant to them at the time, and here’s what it means to this age.” That kind of a thing. The fact that, when you come in here, the people are not intimidating. There’s nobody sitting back and judging you, and thinking “hmmm, I don’t know if they belong or not.” The fact that Bob remembers people’s names from week to week – believe it or not, that is very significant. That means you’re important. The message for God’s love for us as individuals. Something that kind of gets lost in some churches. The message that God’s grace, forgiveness and mercy, we are not a judgmental place. The music – this is not – people are not looking for a church necessarily, but seeing that this place was developing as an organization was very attractive. That God has kind of put each of us in this place at this time to be together – that is a very significant thing. That we are a humble and service oriented congregation – we are unusual. We may not understand that, but we are very unusual, especially in California.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

Ventura Vineyard memories and high points – a lot of people mentioned service, or benevolence towards us in a hard time. One person in particular had a very serious family issue and the Vineyard pulled together and took care of things, and really showed God’s love to a full family of people, some of whom were not believers, even. A wedding had been very significant. When people had gotten out of their comfort zone and participated in outreach – really feel God’s glory there. Picnics – the V-Room, the Staff Christmas Party, how caring and genuinely involved Bob and Margie are for the staff.... The MOPs retreat, getting re-connected with God, developing relationships in small groups. The prayer team and prayer ministry for just happenings in life, and just feeling very welcome. The three services we have, but also the service outside of the churches is very significant. The men’s retreat – shooting guns and blowing stuff up was very memorable to some..... in Jesus’ name, of course.

3. *Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.*

We are not a humble group, we are a bunch of loud folks over here. We have Sunday School teachers, people who specialize in 3-5 year olds – how do you keep those little kids together and looking towards God. People who are organized and gather people – jacket collection and distribution event was mentioned. Betty's our game-master at the Christmas Tea – I am sure a lot of people remember her and her games.... Yes, I know you do, I can hear you laughing. We laughed about that too. Behind the scenes service – a lot of people kind of feel intimidated at a church, and they don't want to be out front, but are willing to do a lot of things behind the scenes. Analysis/marketing – kind of analyzing a situation and seeing where we can go from there. Music – we have so many musicians at the church – we have a couple at our table at well. Just the music, service, and the leadership qualities – in my observation, we get a lot of people who have drive and ability to lead people forward in this church.

4. *In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?*

The three most important qualities we came up with – Teaching. Not just teaching about the Bible, but the way Bob teaches it, specifically – breaking it down and making it real for everyone. That includes the kids' ministries, the home groups, and other venues for teaching that we do. The worship – not just the worship, but it's our service to the community – acts of worship outside of this building, and benevolence. And the fellowship activities – the retreats, hospitality, and so forth. Those were the three most important things, we thought.

5. *Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?*

Five years in the future. We think we are going to have a church plant. Because of the uniqueness of how we do things here, we think that we should be having a duplicate of this philosophy, this way of teaching, this music, the kinds of values that we have, somewhere else in another community. Now the kids from 2008 Crave are our leaders. We have given them that space, and they have taken the initiative. Our coffee bar has become so famous that it has its own roaster. Practical teaching for kids – just helping them deal with day to day life, how the sins of the world want to draw them down, but we have developed teaching that helps them bring themselves up – kind of a hot line that they could call, mentoring, etc. Exporting our culture to the community outside. We have a great product here – in the last 5 years we have learned how to market that, how to

export it outside. We have also taken leadership in the environmental issues. We have a lot of things like SAM and Laundry Love project, and also to issues, cultural things, community things, that we can export outside. And we have also become racially more diverse. And that's it.

Questions from the Leadership Community:

[Lee Harlow – On that last point, on being more racially diverse – have you guys _____ -- how can we be more diverse?

I'm looking behind me at our group, and we are 100% white, so we probably don't know how. No, we don't know how, but it is something we should strive for.

Kathy: [can't hear question] Answer: Hot line for youth, mentoring for kids and youth.

Chuck _____ Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

Howdy. Let's see, our discussion about Question 1, the beginnings of how people found the Vineyard, and what attracted them to it, we came up with – some people found out about it through the yellow pages, through the internet, through their kids and word of mouth from other Vineyards. When they got here, what they really liked about it was excellent music, Bob's message style, honesty and passion for what he is talking about; They like the coffee break, the atmosphere, the couches, and the friendliness and size, and the lack of attitudes, where people are comfortable here. Some people like the Saturday service, wheel-chair accommodations, recliners. Someone had their name on one on one of the recliners, I guess.... [Bob – "That was me. It's still there, I hope!"]

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real "high points" for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

The second question, high points here, was: Christmas Tea, V-Room, small groups, something about the ushers asking for money??? Tuesday Bible Study, 101 and 201 classes, coffee bar, potlucks, men's book club, food pantry, high school group and BBQ's. [Bob: Just quickly, if someone doesn't know, the 101 Class is the membership class, and 201 class is "Discover Your Reach" class – we changed the names of them at some point.]

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

The third question – the strengths and qualities that our group brings to the Vineyard – we have some people who have been in the service business in the past – we have a lot of teachers, people who are patient and enjoy teaching; Working in Mercy Ministries, different home group leaders, and some people who do visitation. Some people say their strengths grew as they were in small groups and practiced these things – they got better at those qualities, and more teaching and leading Bible Studies.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

The most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – we had close knit caring community, lots of ministries and opportunities to serve – you could probably lump those into one. The worship is excellent, and Bob's insightful teaching.

5. *Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?*

The last one, number 5, was the vision for 2013. We tried to summarize it into a statement, and then have a couple of add-ons. We saw the Vineyard as becoming a group of more empowered individuals out in the world doing God's will, bringing the kingdom to earth. The goal. And then, someone else mentioned that the people who are serving now would later become the servers that would serve the next generation. Someone mentioned they hoped we would all have increased knowledge, both Biblical and theological knowledge, so they felt better equipped to serve in the world and community. And that this would be a place where anyone in town would be comfortable attending, which it is now, but it would continue to be that. Some people mentioned that they longed for a mid-week service or Bible Study group meeting, and then diversity, that we would continue to have more diversity as we go toward 2013 – and that's it.

Questions from the Leadership Community: None.

From Bob: Just before we go on to the next group, you were talking about mid-week, we actually had a mid-week at one point – someone mentioned Tuesday night. We had a Tuesday night Bible Study for a while. The reason we stopped that was to initiate home groups, and to try to give life to those. It's interesting to me that so far, several groups – we've had several groups mention small groups as a key thing, yet I would not think that was a key thing in our church. I want it to be, but I don't see it being the thing. We are down to five, and the biggest we have ever had was maybe 10 or so, and it seemed that even the format we have – 10 weeks on, 5 weeks off, like that, seems like it is hard for people to hang with that. To me, one of the things we have got to think about is how do we do that? How do we form those intentional communities where people can be together. I think our system – what I am hearing from you today is that people who participate in it like it. It helps them, and it's a good thing. But, for some reason, we are not getting that out to the larger group. Don't add it to your things, but if anyone has some thoughts on that, I'd love you to e-mail me on that. Thank you Chuck, very much.

Bryan White Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

I feel like I should do this like Elvis.... I dream of having that hair. [Bob: instead of just the jumpsuit?] Not to mention the rhinestones.... Thanks for breaking things up by zip codes. We have done a pretty effective way of hiding where we live, but now they know, and they have asked us to leave... So, number one, why people came. One of the best answers we got was, "I was Catholic, and walked in on a Saturday night at the HOP – I was blown away. There was daycare, powerpoint and drama..." and they stayed.... "a grace mentality, seeing and feeling the Holy Spirit during the worship." Other comments: It was like they read my mail – comfort, friendly place, that was repeated. A mix of everything we were looking for – and I put in parentheses "The Radical Middle" – the church encapsulated the whole idea of the radical middle – it wasn't too far this way or that way, it was striving to seek that place – a place of tension, but radical in the middle.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real "high points" for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

High points – marriage retreat (because we gave away wine, or Betty's games??). Betty's games after the wine.... Wow. I thought this was really cool, this goes to you – one of the high points was "coffee with Bob and Linn, and they listened and acted on what I asked them to do." When you think about church management, that's profound, and that was a high point for one of the people in our group – they talked to the pastor and the ministry director, and they sat down, listened and did something about it. Traveling Light, back in the day when we did Mark... Unemployed – one of the members of my group was unemployed, and the staff actually came over to his house to pray for him, and the day after he was prayed for, he got a job offer. Or two days later. So, that the staff would act on an individual basis.... Becoming an usher – led to developed relationship with the usher core, and outside that group. Connection with a caregiver, actually outside the church, one of the members of our group had a relationship because of the church, but then found herself in the hospital, and this member of Ventura Vineyard works at the hospital, so it was like "Aha, a family member" and helped them through a trying time, outside of the confines of the walls of the church. And this, I thought was the best ever – and I think if anyone can top this, then let's step outside. One of the members of my group said that they were drinking and dancing at a bar, with all their friends, and suddenly this group came in and they were drinking and dancing, and it was like "hey, man, what are you doing? This is my church!!" I'm sorry for my dance moves, my daughter said to never do that in public. I thought, you know what, that's profound. I think that is a statement of our church – if other places don't like it, well, too bad. [Bob: So, I guess you'll be joining me for whiskey?? Maybe we have found that

connecting point with the community?? --Laughter] They also said Saturday night has been absolutely critical to their formation as a Christian, especially early in their walk, because they walked in early on a Saturday night and it was a comfort, and a whole environment, and it led them to say.

3. *Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.*

Strengths? The number one strength that someone threw down, and you probably don't know who this, but they got Bob to curse in the pulpit. That was a strength? [Bob: it's important to note that I was not cursing AT her, but WITH her.] Other things: available to help, speak Spanish, that goes to becoming more inclusive, heart for kids, story teller, cheerleader, willing to do anything, available, analyzing systems, function of the organization, and then artistic vision and expressive – we have a lot of that in our church, people with an artistic vision and don't have a problem expressing it. We need more of that.

4. *In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?*

Views within the Vineyard – we had a bunch, and I broke them down while I was standing here in line, because I didn't want to look lame. I broke it down to Comfort, Outreach and Leadership – we have a definite comfort here. You walk through the door, and the idea with the couches, and just the way we set things up, that the bar is low, we are not a threatening community. You should feel comfortable. The best description I have heard of the Vineyard is that it is a hospital, and people come here to get healed up. We think outside of the box, there is a lack of rhetoric, Bob's teaching, especially of late, I've found, your teachings are becoming more personal, and your transparency is showing through, which is profound. It's not about the building, it's about people.

Our outreach – El Rio was mentioned numerous times, Russia, and that is going to go with our last thing, and I will get to that.

Our leadership team – the leadership is authentic,

5. *Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?*

And moving from number 4, that leadership needs to grow. There need to be more offices created, obviously, if we are looking 5 years down the road, there needs to be

some sort of executive pastor position to come alongside you, junior high and senior high leadership that is more of a full time basis, a pastoral office if possible. We need to return to respect for our faith, we need to overcome some of the perceptions of the church at large, [Bob: What does that mean, exactly? Bryan: Sometimes now as Christians, people are like.... If you are going to share your faith, that term “Christian” or “Born Again” or whatever has been captured and used in ways that it wasn’t intended, or that we don’t embrace as a community here at Ventura Vineyard. So, in the future, that we would stand firm and have the power of our convictions, as to who we are, and that we don’t let the church at large or the media or public perceptions define us. Does that make sense?] Focus on marriage, that we continue to grow in our men’s, women’s, singles, but not sorting people out into different areas – that we still have a very much inclusive, one community – that we are not just different labels, “married with kids,” “old people with big kids,” “kids that drink a gallon of milk a day,” “going bald”.... Sorry. That the rescue mission in Russia in 5 years would be up and running, that we actually have a building for that, and a building in El Rio – a physical presence – that we are expanding in areas that we have targeted, and are replicating ourselves. Last was, that pastors and staff be blessed with salary. I didn’t say that, but would vote for it. And the last thing is, that we would start a coffee company, and it would not be Mrs. Folgers, but Mrs. Jacobs. Thank you.

Questions from the Leadership Community:

From Bob: You mentioned we do have a lot of artists in the group, and it would be really nice for there to be some kind of fellowship or some kind of gathering for people like yourself to hang out with each other and see what might emerge from that. Some people say it would be a great place to hang paintings, sort of like a bare wall there, and I would love to push the envelope there, and I would like to do more things in video than just show videos from Hollywood... It would be great to make some of our own things. There are so many things we could do like that. If someone – if that is something that is throbbing in you, maybe God is calling you to do it. And maybe you are sitting out there, thinking “I would like to be a part of a small group, or lead one” – e-mail Catherine Anderson. You can catch her on the web, or get her e-mail from the bulletin each week, or you can get that from her. But, so about the artistic, and about the assistant pastor, I think that is a huge need in our church right now – we need somebody who is in that role, really. Kathy effectively functions as the executive pastor in my opinion, but the difference is that the executive pastor makes sure that everything runs, and that all the bases are covered. Kathy is really one of the strongest tactical leaders I’ve ever worked with. She does a great job at that. We need someone who is that sort of “go to” person when I am out of town, and other areas as well. I appreciate you bringing that up – that’s something we’ve talked about in all of the leadership circles, and kind of “how do we get there,” budget is obviously a huge issue when we look at the staff that we have, and feel that we are not paying them enough, how do we squeeze out \$400,000 for an assistant pastor [laughter]? That is the going rate.... Anyone have any questions or comments for Bryan?

[Several applicants for assistant pastor surfaced....]

Guy Bratton Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

I'm bringing balance to the hair equation in the room..... [Bryan: "He's my antithesis!! That's a hairy man!"] I wrote down notes on jokes, but.... So, how did we get here? Let's see. We came looking for windows and doors..... Lots of people, a recurring motif – friends who were coming here, friends who weren't coming here but sent people here for whatever reason – came with friends, friends, friends. The number one answer. A couple other people – we do have a very diverse representation in the group, from two people who have been to three services to some going back to the HOP, coming from the Bridge, coming from everything in between. It was interesting having that composition. In most cases, there were similar answers. [Bob: that's a good insight.] So, someone came from the Bridge, and I know there are a number of people who transitioned from the Bridge, found that the continuity as the Bridge had its last service here, and some of the ministries shifted to being supported by the Ventura Vineyard, it was a natural fit. The awareness of Vineyard in other situations, knowing the value of the Vineyard, coming here to see how that manifested. In one case, knowing that Vineyards can be "weird" and finding this one to not be "as" weird.... Actually, it was me.... I had a co-worker who assured me that it was not a "weird Vineyard". This is a classic HOP answer: someone who was attending another larger church in town, and accessorizing it with the HOP on Saturday nights, had an 11 year old.... (I think that was the mission statement of the HOP – accessorizing the other churches in town with a good worship experience....) So, their 11 year old said, "Mommy, why do we go to two churches, why don't we just go to one?" so they settled on what became the Vineyard for the intimacy and community and kind of the.... Settling in terms of putting down roots, no pun intended. And You're in trouble, because if you pick up a motif, people are putting a lot on your shoulders – your preaching style – your own DNA as it extrapolates into this community is a big deal. A lot of people, again as Bryan articulated, that is the balance of the well-studied academic sermon that is pragmatic and life-changing coupled with worship.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real "high points" for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

Highlights – the first few months of being involved at the Vineyard just hit at the right season at the right need. The _____ of a family leading a home group. Being involved in home groups – the couple that was involved with the young married group before everyone had babies and it ruined everything.... Again, my words, a little editorializing. I encouraged them to have babies.... 101 classes were cool. There was a little bit of a discrepancy as to whether the fruit of the 101 class is a "member" or not, and if it should be called a membership class – continuity of membership concepts. I

haven't been to the class, but anyway.... Several people said the 101 class was sort of a pivotal getting the values of the community and saying Yeah, this is a community I want to be a part of. Several people affirmed today as a highlight – the kind of thing, the interaction and transparency, the professionalism, the quality of a day like this – people who presented earlier being committed and intelligent about what it was that they were presenting and giving leadership to. Lots of threads of social justice, mercy ministry, social action, those kinds of things, were highlights for many people. The sense that the role of women and women themselves are respected and empowered for ministry. A place where unchurched friends could come and feel proud that they will be able to engage with what is happening here in a nonthreatening way. Men's book club, small groups, the community building activities like the picnic, those kinds of things. Also home groups, and I will testify to home groups, as a reluctant home grouper, who out of need for control began a home group, and often wondered if it was doing anything because it was kind of chaotic – 14 kids under 5, 12 adults.... And honestly didn't know until we did a little reunion a couple weeks ago, it was “hey, we should do this again,” so we may do something like that again, we will see.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

Youth – the contribution of youth, bringing that perspective. The contribution of a generation ... Experiences training as an artist who hasn't always found a good structure for that to be emerging. Gifts of teaching/academic interest, bringing different perspectives to questions people are asking; lots of leadership people, leadership creativity, organic, ability to herd cats, someone with a passion for the expression of feminism within the church in an appropriate way, someone who is real and transparent, and speaks truth. Another person who, counter to the youth contribution, gives the contribution of age, bringing life experience, having the ability to connect with an emerging generation and speak into it with relevance and wisdom; another with a simple passion for the church and for the emerging congregation. The ability to connect and see possibilities for the church. An encourager/cheerleader, someone who will do the work... We have leadership, and now someone who will “do it.” That's the balance, right there. Another who is involved with the welcome table, and contributing that hospitality, and the ability to arrange things – to take people and resources and create solutions out of that. So endeth page 3.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

One person said three things – Bob Harper, Linn Butler, and Mercy Ministries. Home groups – the quality of openness and self-examination, honesty with what is going on, Sunday morning teaching. The emphasis on social justice, being missional, the focus of the church – coupling a deeper level of study with a God who is also experienced in a mystical way – the gathering of the village. Worship – not just music, but the putting of feet to worship in spirit and truth and taking that not just worship as something that

happens in the musical portion of the Sunday morning service, but worship that goes out the door and has hands and feet to it. Worship, teaching, participation, authenticity. Music/worship connections, ministries that make a difference, and children and youth being a priority. And more music/worship. Lots of music and worship on that one.

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?

I have more jokes here..... Communion with real wine..... That came out of the marriage retreat. Okay.... So, taking back the social ministry that we have allowed the government to usurp from the church. Diversified leadership – full ownership by the participants in what is happening, shared leadership. A personal preference against the worship experience of a concert-like feel, it's dark and feels like a concert, a shift to a communal experience of worship that is not a group of individuals worshipping at the same time at the same place, but a communal experience of worshipping together with the united body of Christ. True discipleship permeates at all levels, shifting from a class-based, not class like tiers of social structure, but classroom – shifting out of a classroom setting into something that permeates with mentoring, guiding, accountability and growth as high priorities in relationships and potentially manifesting.... Again, 5 years from now – building buzzing with activity all the time. This is the nerve center of an engagement with the community, that there's always something going on, maybe using our musical abilities to engage with a broader community, taking it to the streets. Oh, and by the way, the building has been sold, and we are downtown..... I'm going to throw a bit out for the old Methodist Church, the gothic one that is for sale for \$2 million.... [Bob – is that place for sale? Guy – now, who is going to pay \$2 million for that? In this market?? Maybe an auction? How cool would that be??] Multi-ethnic, multi-national, a true reflection of the broader kingdom in the community we live in. This is not mine, I will see if I can capture it, if not help me out. A ministry driven by spiritual formation where the Sunday morning worship experience is the outcome, the fruit of what is happening in the body, not kind of the sum of the existence of the church. Did I get that? Sunday morning is the overflow, not the point of origin. I thought that was really cool. Being "Jesus" to the community.... Help our youth, grow the body, and turning our model of children's ministry upside down and move from kind of a curriculum and activity basis to a foundationally different – what is the experience we want our children to come away from church with.

Questions from the Leadership Community:

Bob: Kathy, did you want to say anything briefly about the Children's ministry? I would appreciate if you say it on the microphone – we can have it for everyone to hear.

Kathy Sochel: I wrote it down, but I'm not sure I got it right, about Children's ministry –

Guy: Just re-thinking the whole model of children's ministry – I think it's not a curriculum or activity driven, say, whatever you do with the children on Sunday morning, but when a child emerges from our children's ministry, after x number of years, what are the markers of that? What are the outcomes we want to see as we are developing _____ in Christ, and what is the best way to get them to that?

Kathy: Definitely, as far as moving away from the curriculum, something a little more structured, I am not against curriculum, by the way, I think curriculum can be really good tool. I will always encourage our teachers to move away from that as God leads, as an important discussion or something happens with children – I don't see us as being curriculum-based, I see us moving toward, which we talked about with the rotational model, which is more experiential, really getting a kid involved with what the Word says about how their world, and who they are in the world, can relate to their faith in Christ and how they can touch others, and it's kind of ethereal, but what I am trying to say is, the rotational model is something that, sort of like a place – I keep using the word experiential – I think the core of it is interactive. You want teachers to have the opportunity to take 4 weeks and really go through a whole series of teaching maybe who Jesus was as a shepherd, what does that mean, a shepherd – those are words our kids don't use. So, for example, bringing in a classroom that works mainly with, you know, the one classroom I am think of is our fine arts and science, kind of breaking that down a bit and finding out what that looks like in scripture, and how to really – can we draw for God, and what does it mean to experience God in poetry and be really real that way, and relevant to the other classrooms, maybe a media center room, we hope to have our young people be able to take a scripture and make pictures out of it, or using the computer, again trying to really catch kids where they are, and making that more relevant _____ the comment about there are so many competing things for our children, you know, media and all of that, and we want to be relevant to that. I don't want to go through each classroom, Bob, with the idea being that interactive and really trying to come out and away, and trying to do it differently, more innovatively than curriculum based.

[Bob: And the kids are going to rotate from room to room?]

Yes. So the idea is teachers stay in one room and the kids rotate, so it's almost like a VBS, what you do is go to the craft room, then the story telling room, then the music room. Our idea is that once a week the children would have that. One week they would be there, and the second week the children were in crafts would go to worship, the next week they would go to story-telling. I think the benefit of that too is definitely for our children all about, and also for our teachers, and books, in terms of being able to prepare something for a whole month, and they come and that's ready for the whole month, it's not having to take a curriculum and every week doing something differently, we really feel that also that would be the children's opportunity to really drink in what we are talking about, rather than "Oh, let's move on to something else, what does Noah have to say?" We really want to explore those kinds of things. The other benefit is involving the larger body, which is you all, because you talked about what does it look like to have a community that really reaches families? I've heard that mentioned quite a bit, that the environment does that, but I really think the children are for all of us, our community, our guidelines as to how we care for the weakest among us, and I think that the rotation model has a component which would encourage other giftings that don't necessary teach from curriculum, but just want to mentor – that word has come up quite a bit, children's -- in terms of anything,

careers, to showing art, there are artists and musicians here, so it wouldn't just be about a group of children's ministry team members, which we have now, but more of a community based children's ministry ownership. As far as the guidepost, maybe you would want to say a little bit more, Bob.

Bob: Yes, it has always been in our heart to have the kind of program where kids would go like that of a children's ministry into the middle school, and there would be a forming that happens in natural progression in the middle school, and then into high school. It's always out there as something we are aiming for. To be honest with you, those ministries – what makes it hard to make a lot of progress in those, is that there is a constant job of recruiting that has to be done if you are in leadership, and that just takes a lot of time. And it makes it hard to make a tremendous amount of progress in terms of kind of putting the philosophy in place, but that is most definitely our goal. I have got to tell you, I am so excited personally about the rotation model. Just thinking about how it would be to be a kid to be able to come to church and they will want to come to church, because they will have fun while they are learning. One day it will be, maybe, a climbing wall, one day it will be a video theme, and they'll be doing that.

Kathy: I just wanted to say, we talked about before, and I haven't had the opportunity to kind of update the larger body side from the ministry spotlight, but I did want you to know that we are kind of at the next stage, go the next steps. We have done a lot of good foundational things, in the classrooms, but I think our level of commitment from our teachers is greater than it has ever been, in terms of even camaraderie and team kind of feeling that we have amongst us is stronger than it's ever been, and I think all of that foundational things is going to help us go to the next step, which is the rotational model, and working from there, I am really excited about it. And talk to the kids, they are really excited about it too – saying “when is it going to happen?” and we have already been doing some experimenting with it. You know, reading some stories, _____ candle, puppets, really enjoy the process and that is the kind of thing we are working about. Thank you for that thought, I'd love to talk more to you folks about that.

Bob: I think there are many groups that have talked about the focus on children, and I hope one thing we are communicating is that we do care, and we are trying to move that way. A couple things that you mentioned too, guys, that I wanted to touch on – the thing with the membership class, you know, I don't want to call it the 101 class, because to me, if I go to a 101 class, I think “been there done that”. And of course, ours is incredibly wonderful.... It's urbane, it's sophisticated... it's the 101 class you always wish you had gone to. So, if you call it another name, I don't remember what it was now, I found myself spending 10 minutes explaining “it's really the 101 class” and people didn't quite get it, so we changed the name to the membership class, but the idea of membership is really family oriented. Like, if you have taken the class, there are 6 things that we say we want you to do. Three things we say we will do for you. One of those things is to seek your opinion. So, you know, this is a real part of that. And then, the worship and teaching part – a few people have mentioned that. I just want to say, if you didn't know, Matt and I – some times I walk away and think “man, it's like he read my notes before I brought them!” because it's so close. But usually what happens is that Tuesday at the staff meeting, he'll say “what are you talking about?” and I usually have kind of an idea. I mean, I have more than kind of an idea, but I certainly don't have the particulars. So I will tell him, this

is the verse, this is where we are going, sometimes we talk later, and most often we don't. I'll be sitting there sometimes during the music going, I cannot believe how much he nailed it with the song selection, because what we are trying to do is, we are trying to say something, something that you can grasp, but is a little academic – I hate a simple answer – I think a simple answer always leads to the wrong answer, so I like to have something that is a little academic, but is practical or somehow leads you to an encounter with God. And it's like, Matt comes and brings this worship set which lyrically ties in really concretely, _____. About the style, where we turn off the lights and all those kinds of things, I just want to say something about that. When we leave the lights on, what we find is that people don't engage. We are trying to not create a concert atmosphere, we are trying to find ways – we want you to meet God. I believe if you meet God in worship, that is the best thing that can happen for you. So that is kind of the method. We are constantly thinking about different ways to do things, but that is why we do it the way that we do it. Anyway, does anyone have any more questions or comments for Guy? Ok.

Ruth Hubiak Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

As I was saying, I wrote this on the head of a pin because I forgot I have the bigger sheet. I hope I can read it. Question number 1, what most attracted you to join or connect with the Vineyards? Most of us were invited by friends. Some came from another Vineyard, and why we stayed? People were attracted by the casual attitude, more so in the dress and so forth, and they felt at home, loved the worship, teaching and the people.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

The real high points – people were nurtured in a home group, and one said she thought the best way to make friends and she was really encouraged when she needed it. The women's retreat was a high point to some, and once again, Pastor Bob's teaching – he keeps it real, he shares his life, his failures, and also his knowledge of scripture was appreciated. Others were spiritually nurtured by the music, the classes and workshops we have had – the equipping – what were they? An equipping village/workshops, something.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

Strengths/qualities that you bring to the Vineyard? Some opened their homes to home groups, some people shared their culinary arts, which I really appreciate, and one gal felt that she was welcoming and making phone calls, reminder calls for the welcome table (some of us do forget at times). Another thing is being approachable and having a listening ear. Some of us were working with Mercy Ministries.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

Three most important things – the welcoming atmosphere, the worship, which I know a bunch of other people have said – it's great. Bob's teaching and leadership, and the fact that he is able to give and receive constructive criticism, and they mentioned the children's ministry. They felt it wasn't quite there yet, but the program was coming right along.

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our

community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that “bring to life” our greatest potential?

We had a lot of trouble with this – we couldn't make up our minds. We would like to see more extensive prayer and healing ministries, more teaching in the middle of the week _____ . More small groups, which would of course mean people opening up their homes, and more leaders. Oh, continuing to reach out to the community as we do in our outreaches, but not forgetting to reach inward to others in our church family. We need to be sensitive to the needs of our church family –oh, I got that twice. And to be welcoming to non-believers, and we would like to see a continuation of this town hall meeting, maybe in a briefer time period, because it kind of helps us to get in touch with others that we never see in the church community, and know what's going on.

Questions from the Leadership Community:

Bob: We will be having ... at least one, maybe two of these a year, but they won't be 4 hours like this, they will be shorter. Does anyone have any questions or comments for Ruth? There are 3 groups left....

Lance Livermore Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

I'm going to go out of order, since our group had a lot of "artistes" in it – we had a playwright, a published author, and so we are going to answer question 4 first. We made it simple – three things to keep – teaching, worship and outreach. So, we used that as kind of a lens for the other questions – what attracted people was kind of the sense of humor, as demonstrated by some of the personalities up here already. A lot of interesting and fun people, who have sort of a common sense of humor, a Mafioso sense of humor.... Sopranos.... Real connections with family and friends, community is about wanting to be here.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real "high points" for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

What things are memorable? Special events, like Jesus for President, not many churches would take that risk because of that end of the spectrum, so to speak, and if you came here, you would understand that. Pacifism has been talked about, but sometimes it's kind of lost in the war talk. Like, spiritual battle, and those kinds of things. The new members' dessert, that's been mentioned.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

Question 3 – quality – again, we are sort of a faithful, artistic group over there – we show up, we want to contribute, everybody has something to offer, and that's kind of the mission statement of the church, one heart at a time and all the hearts together. There was the idea that of course less is more, as we focus in on some of these things, we don't want to get so diverse that we do everything haphazardly. We want to keep the focus on teaching, worship and outreach. One of the things about this church that is appealing to me is that we do more than just talk – as has been mentioned, it is sort of like a huddle where we go out and do things with the community. Right now that seems to be the way the community reacts to churches more positively than if you hear phrases like Bryan mentioned just turns them off. They would rather see what you do as a church, and almost don't even care about what you say. That's been appreciated and noticed, and that's what keeps a lot of the people in our group coming, because we like to see that impact on the community.

4. *In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?*

[Already answered]

5. *Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?*

The vision, number 5 – we talked about the fact that any teenager is going to be in their 20's, and churches traditionally have a lot of structure – like Kathy talked about – how to take care of the younger ones, and if you look around, you see all the “non-teenagers” – but the idea is, we have the adults taken care of, and the children taken care of, but it's that transition time – the 20 year olds. Of course that shifts every generation, and right now that generation is somebody relevant to reach out to them, maybe that assistant pastor you're talking about, so that was the vision that we saw, that transition group that goes from Kathy's and Markus' folks into the “big church”. Of course it was appreciated with all the youth up here, that come on Sundays, and maybe we ride that kind of enthusiasm into the next 5 years and see how we can help them become the emerging leaders. So of course, I started to mention you've started to raise everyone's expectation as to where we are going, so of course, Tony Soprano needs to take us there, and I like the leadership definition that a group only needs a leader if the group needs help to go someplace they wouldn't go on their own. I think it's pretty consistent that the leadership here at Ventura Vineyard is trying to go toward that vision, and the “followership”, it was mentioned that we need someone to follow the leaders – As Gandhi said, “there are my people, I am their leader, I need to go catch up with them.” I think Bob is trying to do that, and the leadership here is trying to do that, by listening to everyone here today. A church plant would be great, why not Port Hueneme? But seriously, there is a lot of growth in the youth, so that is where the church plant should go – the 20 year olds. That is an editorialized comment. Did I miss anything, group?

Questions from the Leadership Community: None.

[Question – couldn't hear it]

Lance: They liked the idea of maybe doing special events like this, and maybe consuming a whole fifth weekend.....

Bob: The only problem with that is it is hard for newcomers – it's so different from what you usually do, for some people it is offputting. That's just my suspicion.

Lance: How about an outreach?

Bob: If we could, the advantage would be it would be easy for people to attend and participate. That's huge, too.

Question – couldn't hear.

Bob: Why church plants? May I answer that? Really, we need all of the above. We need church partnerships because it's not something that one could do. In a sense, we are partnering with a place called New Harvest – we give them a place for almost practically nothing. If we had more time and more things, we would also let other people. Planting has to be done, because if I am going to be completely blunt, most of the church is pretty irrelevant, and it is distancing itself socially from people. I am not talking about style or denomination or anything, but for most people, the journey of faith is that they believe something, and they stop going forward. It becomes institutionalized, and it becomes a generation away, then two generations away, and that has happened in places in the world. The church has to be constantly renewed. Church planting is something that has done that. We can talk about that later if you like.

I would comment from a business perspective. Employers are struggling to reach that same age group, because others have realized they are not the same type of workers that the generations before. So, just like we create new businesses, that's kind of the idea of new expressions of the church. It's not exclusive.....

Tim Edwards Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

Our group is over here in the corner – 93001. The first question – what most attracted you to join this neck of the Vineyard? We had a couple folks that were here from the HOP days, and they just stayed through the transition of HOP into the Vineyard, and what had attracted them initially was the music, and that is still attractive today. They thought – we had some people who thought there were diverse people and that the message was presented to everyone, it was all-inclusive. I think we had a couple Catholics in the group, so they liked the message here as opposed to what they had grown up with. Some people were recommended by friends, and they thought we had authentic and genuine people here at the church. Some people were impressed that Bob remembered their names when they were newbies. That made them feel good, very welcome. And we believe also we have an anointed, gifted worship here, I think our group in particular, we are a touchy-feely group. Spiritual experiences are important to us, and the players in the band, and especially Matt, is very gifted, an accomplished musician both in the natural and the supernatural. You allow the Spirit to take us with you, and that's a big plus here. Also, the size of the church lends itself to more intimacy, again, the relationship thing, and we like the size of the church. Where perhaps on the other side of the equation would be hey, the church is so big, I got in there and got lost.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

What were the high points, or memorable times? The Alpha Retreat and Alpha Courses were mentioned, as far as trying to engage the general population into the Lord's work. The Thailand Mission was mentioned. How long ago was that? [Bob: 2002. I'd love to do that again – that was lots of fun.] Bob's message was mentioned by 3 people. A particular message would really hit home with them, or they were just high points. And also none in particular, but moments when the Holy Spirit has filled the house here – they felt engaged, the congregation as a whole were family, united in one, and the Lord was here with us.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

We thought, well, I love tech stuff, audio and lighting, we have two musicians in the group, some thought they were very good with children, and actually, one practices as being a children's advocate as a ministry. Some felt they were good at prayer, and

service to the church in general, and a heart for the less fortunate, and we have a teacher in the group.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

The three most important qualities: First was the worship service, and I think in the worship service, we are talking about besides the singing and praise – just when we come here to be a body, a church body, we have actual worship, and from the time you walk in the doors, it begins the worship service. The teaching from the pulpit, and the fellowship amongst all the people of the church. Honorable mention was, the outreach and service to the community.

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?

Fast forward to 2013 – what would be our vision? What would we like to see, perhaps. It was mentioned and several people supported this – they would like to see the HOP again, maybe on a Friday night, we could have an extended music and worship service. Sometimes, again, to the same issues somewhat, sometimes when it comes to the service, we would allow the Holy Spirit to lead us a little bit more. In other words, maybe not be quite so structured as far as two songs, coffee break, you know, announcements, message, and then songs again.... Just sort of be open to allowing the Spirit to lead us and change and be able to be more fluid in the worship service. We would like to see improved prayer skills, in other words, be able to tap into the power of prayer, I think that is one of Liz Silvio's ministries, she can help you there. More prayer during service. And more missions overseas in 2013, and pray over the tithes and offerings.

Questions from the Leadership Community:

Kathy: What would it look like if there were more prayer in the service? Was anything said about that?

Tim: Not specifically, but perhaps if you do look at the way the service is now, it is somewhat segmented, right, the opening, coffee, etc. Over each thing that we do, ask for perhaps God's leading and blessing on it. Whether it is the worship, or the message, and so forth. The spotlight, right? Hey, we need help with Mercy Ministries. So, let's pray together and see if we can get some help, and maybe someone will be touched by the prayer.

Bob: Moments of silence, and that kind of thing? I think that that has been real powerful. I was going to say about praying over the segments of the various segments of the service – here is a reason why I have never been a fan of that, I will reconsider, but I think too many times it

becomes meaningless too quickly. It's like praying over a meal. I never pray over a meal – I think God for my food daily, but I never pray over a meal unless I'm with someone and I feel like for their – it would just take too much explaining for me not to pray. I feel like we... we aren't really engaging God, we are really just saying what we have been socialized to say, so that we can eat. For me, I want prayer to be something that is real. I would agree with this – I do hear this, though – there could be more prayer during the service – not necessarily over the elements, but ... I'll reconsider it. Sometimes people tell me something, and I go, "I don't like that," but as I think about it, it begins to make some sense to me. I'm not blowing it off though. But that's why I tell a joke at the offering, frankly. It's because so many times in church, "Let's bring the Elders forward with the baskets so we can pray for the offering..." and I feel what we really need is, now's the time to write your check. That's my feeling about that, that's why we don't do it.

Tim: I see the issue of it being rote, and the danger of it.. is not the fault of the prayer, but more a fault in how we look at prayer.

Bob: I think that's true, absolutely. You mentioned things being segmented – that's what happens with it a lot of times. I love those moments when we have had silence for people to kind of sit and think through, and actually, this weekend, I'll give you a little preview – I know you will all be there because you don't want to leave the building, but you are going to get to engage God in prayer this weekend. Thank you, Tim, very much.

Robert Valdivia Group

1. To start, we'd like to learn about your beginnings at the Ventura Vineyard. What most attracted you to join or connect with the Ventura Vineyard? Can you remember your moment of decision – the moment you decided to become part of the community and congregation? Please tell us about that time and what most attracted you.

I am the last one. Representing the great zip code of 93003. You will notice that the speakers – Hawaiian shirts beat plaid, Bob – sorry. At this point we have had a lot of entertaining, eloquent and deep responses. You will see that we are going to echo a lot of the same comments and there is a theme. Unfortunately for Brandon and Amanda, they had to listen to a bunch of old fogeys who have been here since the HOP, and so we had to explain what the HOP was, and how we got involved with that. You will see a theme here. First question – the beginnings. The energy of the HOP. Some of us wandered in, and some were brought in by 11 year old kids that wanted to come to the HOP. The acceptance, the “come just as you are” attitude. A lot of people felt comfortable with that. Our names and faces were remembered. Everybody there said the same thing, echoed that. You walk in, and next week, it's how are you doing, and how are you. That's important, you feel accepted. That was huge. Liz brought somebody a plant to their house, and invited them over. It had a card with information about the church, and after that, it brought her here, and she's been here ever since. She was invited in. [Bob: I have got to say, that was the most difficult outreach we have ever done, in terms of physicality. The idea was to get all these plants, put a card on them, we targeted neighborhoods, we went door to door with little wagons, and said “Hi, we want to give you a plant.” The idea is, it has your name on it, and nobody is going to throw away a living thing, right? So you give them a plant, and at the end of the day.... Well, I would never ever recommend this to anyone, but it actually worked!] A few times when we came during the HOP, we were warned ahead of time that the “Bald Cop” was going to speak, and those were very entertaining days. We would come back every week when the Bald Cop was going to speak. That actually came up a couple of times that we like to hear him speak – we would like to see more Bryan again – those were good times. Quit hiding. Again, small groups hooked people in, and they got involved that way, and it kept them here.

2. Thinking back over your Ventura Vineyard memories, what have been the real “high points” for you as a member or friend of this congregation – memorable times when you felt best about Ventura Vineyard – times perhaps when you felt most inspired, challenged, engaged, or spiritually nurtured; Times you were most proud about being part of this church family.

On to number 2. Memories – the 202 class was good times. The validation of spirit and gifts was something that brought people in and was memorable to them. The family retreat in the HOT desert was good. It was because the pool was so inviting.... That was a big thing, and the elevator, and the open bar.. the margaritas in the hot elevator? Again, the highlights were actually the lower times. My personal experience when a very public tragedy happened to our family, I've always been on the fence, for me personally, that moment when the church came together for us, and I remember the exact day on the sofa back in the corner, after it happened, everybody came together – it was an amazing thing.

That was a moment in our lives that affected us. Guitar classes? I guess there were guitar classes at one point, that I never got involved with, yeah, that was way back. Bob's "talk back" time about Revelation. The community action – MOB groups, that kind of thing. Things outside of these walls, so that's that one. Oh, and again, some of the kids that are now moving on to be young adults, specifically Markus and Matt have had roles in the lives of these kids, so obviously that is very memorable to us.

3. Without being too humble, what strengths or best qualities do you bring to the Ventura Vineyard community? Please tell us about one example – one way that you have shared those strengths alone or in combination with others.

Qualities – I will just sort of blow through these here. Works very well with babies and parents – everyone in our group pretty much works with children in some level. Personally I cover my ears when I go past the nursery and run, because that sound.... Again, with the youth – very gifted in prayer and leadership, speaking well, working with High School group, one of us has a very "suckrificial" attitude?? Instead of sacrificial attitude, it's like "ask me, and ok, I'll do it." That was actually a pretty good use of the English language! Enthusiasm – getting the quiet ones to open up and talk in groups, and Melody – organizational. She said she has started so many groups she can't remember. Very organizational.

4. In your view, what are the three most important qualities or special strengths of the Ventura Vineyard – those precious qualities and practices from our past and present that you want us to keep and continue, even as we move into a new and changing future?

Past and present – let's see. We actually came up with 4, but I'll break them down. One, the HOP atmosphere – they would like it back. There was something from the past that we would like to see back. [BOB – Are you talking about the future, or are you talking about the strengths that are there now?] Strengths that are here now – the children's ministry, echoing the same thing – emerging children's ministry. The atmosphere we currently have, the culture we have, the tables, candles, coffee bar, obviously, we like that. The atmosphere and culture we have here at the church is unique. So, those are the current things. Oh, and keep Bob, and pay him \$400,000/year. [Bob – oh, yeah!!!! You guys need to be on the board!! I want to make sure it's clear on the tape. \$400,000.....]

5. Let's assume that we've fast-forwarded to the year 2013. In the past five years, the Ventura Vineyard has become the church you would most like to see for yourself and friends, for our community and for our world. It's the kind of Ventura Vineyard and community you would most want to be a part of – one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways. So now, please share some highlights of what you see in this vision of 2013: What do you see happening that is vital and good? What is happening that is new, different, or better – things that "bring to life" our greatest potential?

The things we want to see for the future – more dramas would be good. The drama team that Bryan ran was phenomenal. Those little 10-15 minute dramas were great. That is something we would like to see more of. As for the future, as for number 5, we had – I should give a warning here, the end seemed a little negative, but it was very passionate

point that I thought should be brought out in light of what we saw fiscally, so...

A very focused structure on teaching scripture to children – kind of what we talked about earlier, get them prepared to move up into the high school, the “big room.” Give them a good basis in the Bible. New and innovative ministries (dance, art, etc.); Growth solutions – inevitably the church is going to grow, when we came we couldn’t fill one service Sunday morning. Ushers used one basket. So, inevitably we are going to grow, so we need to figure out how we are going to handle this growth. Add a room? Add a second floor? Buy another building, add another service? Something that we need to have, but it might disconnect us even more. Focus on small groups to keep that connection and community. Small groups are a good thing here, but again, as you said, it’s a topic that keeps coming up, but not a lot of people, myself included, take advantage of the small groups. So, The Crave, again, will grow, because a lot of kids are coming up. I know the middle school numbers are transferring over, and so the Crave is going to grow, and there is a concern that, you know, they had that giant room, and now they have about a third of that, so.. again, that’s a concern that was brought up at the table. Defining ministry in a tough economy – based on Dennis’s presentation. One I talked about earlier – I think it’s important to bring it up. Quit trying to do new projects and stop overextending ourselves and live in reality. Deal with what we have now and even eliminate some programs and ministries – live within what the Lord has dealt us now. It was a little bit of a discussion...

Questions from the Leadership Community:

Bob: Are you done? There are a couple of things from your thing there – actually, quite a few. First of all, regarding the money, one thing you have to understand is that this building is really central to everything. This building takes well over 1/3 of our monthly revenue. By the time you figure in the rent, utilities, and all of that, and even as you mentioned, Robert, the building itself has some shortcomings for how we do ministry – we are unable to keep middle school in here on Sundays. We are graciously allowed to use a room in another place which is not kind of the best room necessarily for them.... So, when you say live within your reality, is – the reality is that this building costs a tremendous amount of money. Secondly, as I mentioned earlier, the staff – I am the only one who gets a full time salary. So the people who are really sacrificing for that are really the staff. There isn’t really – hopefully you heard also Dennis talking about ministry being self-supported. One of the things we tell a new ministry is that you need to raise your own money as much as possible, and not depend on the general funds. So, we are really doing a lot of those kinds of things. The issue of dance.... I’ve got to tell you guys, that dancing for me is right up there with playing with food.... [Robert: It wasn’t just dancing....] Because honestly, I have rarely seen it done well. [Robert: Well, there was the thing about dancing with ribbons... that was a whole other thing....] Yeah, yeah. I understand. The problem for me with the dance is, it’s just so rarely done in a way that is inviting for people. If it were done that way, it would be different, but what I have found is it is often off-putting for people. That’s just, you know, ... Now, a few people mentioned the HOP a few times. I just want to refresh everybody’s memory, for people who maybe weren’t here. The reason we stopped doing the HOP on Saturday night, there were two. The first is, a financial nightmare. People didn’t give, no matter what I said to them. They came from other churches, they loved it, and had a great time, and really, we got off the ground from the HOP, so don’t hear me say that.... But the

reason we stopped, was one, because we were spending a huge amount of the church's resources, I felt, to babysit other people's Christians. And second, and those other people's Christians, they were not bringing people who were on the road to faith, and it wasn't becoming a community. I felt we were expending resources to babysit other people's Christians. I am very open, though, to the idea of having meetings where we can have sort of open-ended worship. Where we could do things like that periodically, but since that came up a few times, I wanted you to understand why we made that decision.

I want to honor everybody's time, it's almost 2:30, and I told you we would be done by 2:00. There is one more thing I want to do, and I promise it will be quick. I want to just say a couple things by way of summary of what you guys have said today. First of all, thank you enormously. Thank you for being willing to share your thoughts, and I hope the couple times I spoke bluntly, I hope that that was not off-putting, but I'd rather you heard directly from me, rather than oh yeah, I'll consider that, while inside I'm thinking there's no stinking way... or something like that. What I heard you guys say is that children are hugely important, and being intentional and purposeful and investing in children is hugely important, that you are very concerned about the next generation. I heard you also say that you are very concerned about the community, and in multiple ways – in being able to outreach to the community in a real way, being kind of woven into the fabric of the community, in a sense, in a really good way, and in doing things in the community in an excellent kind of way. I also heard you say a lot of things about the caliber of our – I guess I'll call it our "discipleship." I heard you say it in many ways – in small groups, I heard things like mentoring, I heard things like practical teaching. I heard someone else mention spiritual formation, and just as a footnote, we are going to have a Friday night/Saturday retreat in November with a really good friend of mine, Steve Summerell. He will be here in October, to talk to you and give you a chance to meet him. I highly encourage you – in terms of talking about prayer, he is a "king" if there is such a thing as that.

So, what I hope you take home from this today, is first of all, this. I think that we have a lot to be proud of. One thing that I heard throughout every presentation that warms my heart enormously – is, I heard people saying that other people attracted them, brought them, to this place. They connected with other people. They got involved with other people. It was this ministry or this outreach or this event, and almost they were things that didn't come from the staff directly. They were things that were being organized and done by people. So, you are obviously a very active group of people. So, if I could ask you to do one thing before you go – if you would gather your groups for a few minutes to pray about some things. Pray for us as leaders – that we could take this information that you have given us, that we could chew on it, digest it, and work well with it. Secondly, that you would pray for people you know who are outside the Faith, and the third thing is pray about the train wreck. I got an e-mail today, from _____, a family in our church, a friend of theirs was on the train, and has not been found. So, certainly there is more there than we know. Let me pray, and then if you would break up and pray, that would be awesome.