

PROPOSAL

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Albany

The Pastor

The senior founding pastor of VCF/Albany is Rick Colquhoun. Rick and his wife Brenda are both from up-state New York, but have lived in California for the last 11 years. While in California, Rick served on the pastoral staff of the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship (mother church and denominational head quarters for the 600 member Association of Vineyard Churches; AVC) and completed seminary at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission. Rick and Brenda have 4 children.

Rick has been in pastoral ministry for over 13 years, serving as a youth and children's ministry pastor, Christian School principal, and was director of the pastoral internship and church planting programs at the Anaheim Vineyard. While working with AVC's California Regional Church Planting Task Force and with the potential church planters at the Anaheim Vineyard, Rick and Brenda began to seriously reconsider how they could best fulfill the call of God on their lives to raise up and release new church planters. After several months of seeking specific direction, they visited Albany in March of 1997. While Brenda had grown up in the Capital District, Rick had only briefly visited the area many years ago. After this visit, however, they both felt certain that they were to relocate to the Capital District in June of 1997.

Rick's passion is to see new churches developed which will reach this generation with the gospel. He is committed to seeing young leaders trained and released in order to impact this generation with the gospel of the Kingdom. While there are many different models for ministry which all aim toward introducing people to the good news, Rick and Brenda are committed to the planting of new churches. They believe that the most effective means under Heaven for evangelism, discipling people, training new leaders and releasing workers into ministry is the establishing of congregations which will in turn sponsor and plant new churches. They have a desire to create a community of disciples who give their hands to serve and their hearts to love.

The Community

Colonie Demographics

The Albany VCF will be located in the Town of Colonie (pop. 84,000) in central Albany County, the heart of the four county Capital District. The population of Colonie and other suburban communities north of the city of Albany are growing. Albany County's growth was second only to neighboring Saratoga County during the last 10 years and is expected to top 300,000 by year 2000. Regional trends forecast the most rapid increase in population to occur in the 35-44 year age group, followed closely by the 45-64 "year age group. The 1990 census determined that the median age in the Capital District is 33.9.

Albany County residents are, over all, better educated than most population groups. There are over 70,000 college and university students in the region on 17 different campuses. Albany resident's educational attainment is well above the national average: 28.3% have completed 4 or more years of college (23.1% is the US average) and 80.1 have completed 4 years of high school (75.2% US average). This can be expected in a region where over 46% of the work force is employed in either Public Administration, Educational Services, Health Services or other Professional Services. Over 63% of the Capital Region's work force is employed in White Collar jobs, compared to the national average of 53%. This has resulted in a degree of prosperity for the Region: the per capita income is \$15,459, 26% higher than the national average.

Religious Heritage of the Region

The community has many large Catholic and many struggling traditional denominational churches. The following is a brief out line of some of the significant events in the early religious history of the region:

¥ 1760-1775 The Albany region is not significantly impacted by the Great Awakening

¥ 1776 Ann Lee and Shakers form first community in Colonie

¥ 1828-1836 Evangelicals grow from a minority of 25% of population to over 54% (Janssen, p. 39), along with rapid growth of Spiritualism and birth of Mormonism in near by Wayne County

¥ 1843 World does not end as predicted by William Miller and in nearby Washington County the Seventh-day Adventists movement is birthed

¥ 1858 Reformed churches in Albany report cheering revival and special services (Janssen, p.84)

¥ 1868-69 Reformed Churches see nearly 500 people "received on confession" and report that home prayer meetings begin to meet seven days a week (Janssen, p.85)

¥ 1898 "Pentecostal Blessing" hits First Church in Albany with 1200-1300 people attending a series of morning meetings. The report says "hundreds have been brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ & multitudes have testified to the quickening influences they have experienced in the spiritual atmosphere that has filled the temple of God" (Janssen, p. 85).

The Need For New Churches

¥ America is the third largest unchurched nation in the world, with over 195 million people who do not go to church.

¥ During the last 10 years, the combined communicant membership of all Protestant denominations has declined by 9.5%, while the national population has increased by 11.4%.

¥ No county in America has a greater percentage of churched persons today than a decade ago.

¥ Declining percentage of Americans who attend church:

1991	49%
1992	47%
1993	45%
1994	45%
1995	45%
1996	37%

¥ Churches lose 2,765,000 people to nominalism and secularism each year, and between 3,500 and 4,000 churches close their doors each year for the last time: while only 1,100-1,500 churches are started.

¥ The United States- the largest post-Christian nation on earth- the third largest unchurched nation- this supposed Christian nation leads the world in every category of violent and domestic crime and social decay. Tom Clegg

While the Region has a rich religious history, there do not appear to be many churches that are rapidly growing. There are very few growing evangelical or charismatic churches over 300 and most of the historic churches appear to be in decline (the annual report of one historic church in one of the fastest growing communities in the region indicated the church is in decline and that less than 15 people have joined the church over the last three years). There are two newer evangelical churches in Colonie that are experiencing good growth (Grace Fellowship and Christ Church) and there is a growing sense of unity among evangelical and charismatic churches. Many are gathering to pray for revival.

At the same time, a recent Times Union front page article (April 6, 1997) was entitled " Capital Region is a spiritual draw". The article went on to say "The Capital Region is not only the seat of state government. It is also a hotbed of alternative religious groups...The region's history of religious experimentation, proximity to major cities and numerous colleges has made it a natural draw for spiritual groups looking for a welcome place to practice their beliefs." It is our conviction that most of the people involved in these alternative groups were not able to connect with existing traditional churches in the region, but that they might be enfolded into newer non-traditional Christian churches like the Vineyard.

A front page story in the Times Union on Saturday March 22, 1997 was entitled "In a wealthy community, hunger still grows: Colonie mirrors state in having more people seek meals from pantries and soup kitchens. Staff writer Lara Jakes went on to describe the dramatic increase in activity in local food banks and the growing population of homeless people living in motels along Route 9. County Legislator Paulette Barlette from Colonie notes in the article that people have the misimpression that everyone in the town of Colonie is well off and there is no need. That is not true. People have to be aware that the demographics are changing. Something needs to be heard.

We believe that there is also a growing spiritual hunger in the town of Colonie. It is our hope that establishing the Albany VCF in Colonie will have an impact on the both the physical needs of the poor in that community as well as on the spiritual poverty of those without Christ in this community.

Vision and Mission of VCF/Albany

Vision Statement:

hands to serve - hearts to love

Mission Statement:

The Albany Vineyard is a community of disciples who give their hands to serve and their hearts to love , fulfilling Jesus' command to love God and our neighbor as our self.

Community:

A people who have found a vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and each other through the power of the Holy Spirit .

Disciples:

A people who are fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ and have chosen to be equipped to live as citizens of His Kingdom.

Hands to Serve:

A people who's faith is put into action, touching the poor, broken and hurting in our community, region and world with the love of Christ.

Hearts to love:

A worshipful people who love the Lord their God with their whole heart, mind, soul and strength- and their neighbors as themselves.

Hands to serve- heart to love

Small things, done with great love, will change the world.

Our Values

Every church has it's own unique personality or philosophy of ministry that reflect the values of that group. Our values are rooted in scripture and influence our style and approach to ministry. They are:

¥ The passionate pursuit of God and hunger for intimacy with Him in worship (John 5:19-20, John 4:23)

¥ The equipping of every believer for life and ministry, expressed through an emphasis on multiplying and releasing people to serve in the power of the Spirit (Eph. 4:11, 5:18-20)

¥ The authority of the Bible as our guide for all faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16, James 1:22)

¥ Love for the whole church of Jesus Christ and the unity of the saints (Eph. 4:3-6)

¥ Personal relationships that are based on compassion and mercy for the hurting and acceptance of those who come to us (James 2:13, Rom. 12:9-13)

¥ The desire to share and be generous stewards of all of the blessings that the Lord has given to us (Math. 10:39, 2 Cor. 9:6)

¥ Simplicity and humility expressed in an approach to ministry that draws attention to God and His faithfulness and not to ourselves (Jam. 3:13, 1 Cor. 2:2-5)

¥ The establishing of a community and environment in which it is safe to risk and serve in new areas of ministry (Gal. 5:22-26, 1 Cor. 12: 27-31)

¥ The building up of families and the nurture of children, while embracing every adult believer who identifies with our church family (Math.18: 1-10, Col. 3:12-15)

Vineyard Philosophy of Leadership

Leaders are marked by the following characteristics:

¥ Integrity:

Leaders are trustworthy, morally sound, pure of heart, godly in character, and vigilant to avoid bringing disrepute to the Lord, the church, and their calling (Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

¥ Calling:

Recognition of the Holy Spirit's anointing, gifting, and calling are the primary qualifications for leadership in the church (Acts 6:3).

¥ Biblical:

All leadership practices, policies, and decisions are submitted to and shaped by Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16).

¥ Spirit Led:

Leaders seek God for direction, expecting to hear his voice and lead the people in fulfilling his word. In other words, our strategy of ministry is led and empowered by the Spirit of God (Acts 13:1-3).

¥ Servant Leader:

Leadership authority is rooted in calling and service. Titles are played down in recognition of servant-leadership function. You are what you are, not what you say you are. (Matt. 20:25-28)

¥ Equipping:

God fulfills his purposes through the whole church; a significant part of the leader's task is to identify, train, deploy, monitor, and govern the body's members (Eph. 4:11-13).

¥ Loyal:

Leaders work together in committed teams, willing to listen to each other and defer to each other in order to fulfill God's purposes (Acts 15:1-4).

¥ Humble:

Appropriate self-disclosure, meekness, and submissiveness to God's will closes the gap between and among those in professional and lay ministry, and reflects the humility of redemption (1 Tim. 1:15-16).

¥ Teachable:

Leaders are willing to receive instruction, correction, and encouragement from others (Prov. 9:9; 13:1; Gal. 2:11-14).

¥ Merciful:

As recipients of God's mercy, we freely extend it to the broken among us--especially the poor, needy, and imprisoned (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

¥ Visionary:

Vision is the ability to see things that are not as becoming reality (Heb. 11:1). A vision of Christ and his kingdom is all-consuming; it give leaders and the people they lead the meaning and purpose for which they all long (Prov. 25:18; Acts 2:17; Heb. 2:2-3).

¥ Reproducing/Fruitful:

Leaders are those who can identify, train and multiply other leaders in ministry via mentoring relationships (Acts 11:25-26).

THE PLAN: Objectives

1. Vision Meetings

¥ monthly meetings to discuss vision and mission of new church

¥ develop network of people interested in a Vineyard church

¥ fun backyard bar-b-q format with 20 minute sharing, written proposals given out

2. Gathering Activities

¥ door to door in neighborhood with surveys (Rick, 10 hrs/week)

¥ mailing to interested people (invite to back yard party)

¥ begin evangelistic small groups (start one per month)

¥ SE (Servant Evangelism) Team activity (once per month)

¥ form team to plan Halloween Harvest Night

¥ form team to plan Healing Seminar

¥ form team to do Alpha Group

4. Leadership Development

¥ 8 week bible study on Vineyard Values and Leadership Philosophy (3xØs year)

¥ Quarterly retreat day to pray over vision/planning/refocusing

¥ Attend regional Vineyard Conference together

¥ Monthly Ministry Team Meetings

¥ Monthly Leadership Team Meeting

5. Celebration Meetings

¥ add Saturday night once a month worship event in February

¥ begin with first Sunday night of month for Christians

¥ begin a Sunday morning outreach service when:

- 3-4 small groups up and running

- ministry team of 30 people to serve at service (greeters, children ministry, etc.)

- worship team in place

- facility found to meet in/right timing (i.e Easter, September or January)