

Refocusing, Resourcing, Reorganizing

Beginnings

In March of 2020, at the Leadership Team Meeting in San Diego, Phil Strout formally announced the beginning of our Vineyard USA ReOrg process. From its inception, the purpose of the Vineyard USA ReOrg process has been to intentionally refocus, resource, and reorganize Vineyard USA, in order to more effectively equip, encourage, and empower local church pastors for the work of ministry.

For the past forty years, the pastors and leaders of Vineyard USA have sought to respond faithfully to God's calling, and we have seen much fruit borne of that faithfulness. However, the world has changed in all sorts of dramatic ways since the founding of our movement. There are new and different challenges to reaching people, and more demands on our pastors than there ever were in the past. Furthermore, the pace of change is now quicker than ever. As individuals, our pastors have sought to adapt to changes as they came, but as a community of churches, we may have left too much to each individual church. At times, we have assumed too much that each could "plough their own field" without necessary support and resources from our broader movement.

All this means that if we are to continue to be faithful to our calling, we have to be better at responding to the changing culture around us, and smarter in how we do so. We need to refocus, resource, and reorganize Vineyard USA to more effectively equip, encourage, and empower our pastors and leaders to meet the challenges of the next forty years. As a people of the presence of God, we have to pray, "Lord, lead us forward," and then be ready to move with His presence where He leads, as an interdependent community of churches. We need to be faithful to our characteristic gifts and values, and find a fresh way to express them in a changing, challenging world.

Interim Report #1

In October of 2020, Phil Strout and the ReOrg Team circulated an [Interim Report](#) to Vineyard USA pastors. This lengthy report contained much important information about the process and content of the ReOrg, including clear details about a series of significant decisions that the Executive Team made at its meeting in September 2020.

The conclusion of that report made clear that the ReOrg process was not over, but rather that there were several more months of decision-making work yet to be done. The broad array topics still to be addressed were listed on the report's final page.

When we published that report, we hoped to be able to offer another ReOrg update in January 2021. However, we discovered that, in order to report thoroughly and accurately about the next steps in the ReOrg process, it was necessary to delay that update until now.

April 2021 ReOrg Update - Transitions

Associations

Associations are formally constituted groups of typically under-represented pastors and leaders within Vineyard USA. As described in Interim Report #1, the Executive Team voted in September 2020 to formally establish Associations within Vineyard USA.

Our starting point for developing the Associations model was our observation of the transformational work that the Evangelical Covenant Church has undertaken in the area of multiethnicity over the past couple of decades. Angela Yee, Chief Ministry Officer of the Evangelical Covenant Church has worked closely with us in developing this process.

Associations serve two basic purposes:

- Establishing intentional environments for leadership development, mentoring, and hospitality, within the structure of Vineyard USA, for typically under-represented pastors and leaders
- Establishing formal structures by which voices representing groups of typically under-represented pastors and leaders are consistently heard at the national leadership table of Vineyard USA

For many years, versions of such structures have existed within Vineyard USA, specifically La Viña, Vineyard Women, and Vineyard Diversity. On April 14-15, 2021, ten leaders representing these groups gathered in Denver for the first of a series of meetings about how to formally establish Associations within Vineyard USA. In attendance were Dianne Leman, Melanie Forsyth, Kathy Maskell, Dennis Liu, Ray Maldonado, Ruben Quintero, Geno Olison, Josh Williams, Deniqua Washington, Jay Pathak, Danielle Pathak, and Caleb Maskell.

Out of that meeting, which was full of a sense of the presence of God, it was decided that Vineyard USA will formally establish four Associations, no later than January 2022:

- Vineyard Latino/a Pastors and Leaders Association
- Vineyard African-American Pastors and Leaders Association
- Vineyard Asian-American Pastors and Leaders Association
- Vineyard Women Pastors and Leaders Association

The names of the above Associations are provisional, but the groups they represent are not. Over the course of 2021, the current leaders of these Associations will work together with the Vineyard USA National Team to establish leadership processes and rhythms of working relationship to accomplish the purposes stated above. You will hear more about this in the coming months. We have great hope and expectation concerning the value of Associations for the maturing of our movement.

Job Descriptions and Hiring Processes, Vineyard USA National Team

As described in Interim Report #1, the Executive Team voted in September 2020 to hire a National Team for Vineyard USA, consisting of the following positions:

- Associate National Director, Pastoral Health and Development
- Associate National Director, Church Health and Development
- Associate National Director, Evangelism and Justice
- Associate National Director, Theology and Education
- Super-Regional Leaders (up to four)
- Managing Director (formerly Controller)
- Communications Director

After September 2020, the work remaining to be done to fulfill the Executive Team's decision to make these hires included the finalization of job descriptions for each of these roles, as well as the finalization of the hiring processes for each of these roles.

In March 2020, the Executive Team received proposals from the ReOrg Team on both of these matters.

- They approved finalized job descriptions for the Associate National Directors, and discussed an update from the ReOrg Team regarding the job descriptions of Super-Regional Leaders. They also tasked Michael Gatlin to work alongside the ReOrg Team to develop a job description for the Communications Director role.
- They approved a hiring process in which each of these positions will be appointed in 2021 by the Vineyard USA Executive Team, on the recommendation of a hiring committee consisting of National Director-Elect Jay Pathak and a small team of interviewers. This hiring process will be an open application process, beginning May 1, 2021.

All of the specific details of these job descriptions and hiring processes will be presented at the 2021 Leadership Team Meeting in Phoenix, April 19-21, 2021. After that meeting, all these details will be circulated widely and openly to all Vineyard pastors.

Regional Reorganization

In September of 2020, the Executive Team voted to appoint full-time Super-Regional Leaders (SRLs) as a part of the National Team, to oversee and resource Regional Leaders in their roles, as well as to ensure that each region remained fully connected to national leadership initiatives.

Since September, with that decision made around team structure, we have been working through a variety of models for how to map each region and super-region. We have designed models that have considered between seven and nine regions, and between two and four super-regions.

While we have developed at least two models that were satisfactory to the Executive Team, the truth of the matter is that something has felt a little bit off about our proposed solutions. For all of the work we have put into this, each of the models we have developed have felt somewhat premature in their outcomes. Consultation with several RLs at different stages of our work has confirmed our sense of this. As such, given the critical importance of our regional structures, as well as our commitment to showing up as learners and transparently embracing reality throughout the course of our ReOrg process, we have decided to slow down the process of finalizing regional structures and maps.

Next Steps Regarding Regional Structures and Maps

By Autumn of 2021, we anticipate having hired at least two SRLs for the incoming Vineyard USA National Team, beginning their work no later than 2022. The first assignments given to these SRLs will be to conduct their own assessment of the state of our regions, and develop a regional map that they think will best serve local Vineyard pastors nationwide, as we move forward together into 2022 and beyond. At the same time, these SRLs will take responsibility for overseeing our current regional leadership structure. We believe by hiring these Super Regional leaders first, we will be guided in the best direction to build out the next iteration of regional maps and structures.

Concretely, this means that the current regional structure will remain in place through December 2022 and that each region should plan to host a Regional Conference in the summer of 2022. (If some regions want to work together to host joint regional conferences, that would be fine.)

Along with maintaining the current regional structure through December 2022, we have asked every current RL to remain in their role through December 2022 -- the duration of the current five-year commitment that they each made when initially appointed by Phil Strout. We hope that each RL will be willing and able to do this. However, if there are those who cannot, we will work with other leaders in the region to create a temporary solution through December 2022.

Naturally, the relational and leadership equity of each current RL is of great importance to the success of our current process. We are asking each RL to serve Vineyard USA by continuing to do exactly what they are currently doing through December 2022, so that we can allow the

incoming SRLs the time that they need to best situate our reorganized regions for the future flourishing of Vineyard USA.

Entities

In our first Interim Report, we acknowledged an ongoing need to define and establish some categories of relationship between Vineyard USA and any entities desiring formal or informal relationship to it. Obviously, this large group of organizations, with varied types and structures, required a clear process in consideration of how to move forward.

To get started, we defined a group of fifteen entities in closest proximity to Vineyard USA: Vineyard Resources, Vineyard Worship, Multiply Vineyard, Vineyard Missions, Vineyard Women, Vineyard Diversity, La Viña, Vineyard Justice Network, Society of Vineyard Scholars, Vineyard Large Church Initiative, Vineyard Kids, Vineyard Youth, Vineyard Young Adults, School of Kingdom Ministry, and the Order of the Common Life.

We then ran an in-depth survey of each of these entities, seeking to understand as much as possible about them, their mission, and their desired ongoing relationship to Vineyard USA. Out of that survey process – in which each entity enthusiastically participated – the ReOrg Team offered a provisional proposal to the Executive Team about potential categories for establishing clear ongoing relationship to these entities, and others like them that will emerge in the future. This categorization work is ongoing, and will be the work of the incoming National Director and new National Team, in dialogue with the current Executive Team.

In September 2020, the Executive Team voted to fully integrate church planting and international missions into the National Team structure of Vineyard USA, making oversight and budgeting for Multiply Vineyard and Vineyard Missions the responsibility of the Vineyard USA National Team. In order to fulfill this mandate from the Executive Team, we are in an ongoing process of clarifying all of the current operational and financial details of Multiply Vineyard and Vineyard Missions.

The purpose of this work is to create as much **continuity** as possible between what is currently happening in domestic church planting and international missions – stewarding well the good and important Kingdom work that the Lord has given birth to through Multiply Vineyard and Vineyard Missions over the years.

Dissolving the ReOrg Team, and the Work That Remains

There are a few important pieces of work remaining to be done as part of the ReOrg process that the Executive Team voted for in September 2020:

- Develop a broadly-consultative, transparent process for making proposals around pastoral affiliation to Vineyard USA, specifically regarding ordination
- Develop a broadly-consultative, transparent process for making proposals around church affiliation to Vineyard USA, specifically regarding church by-laws
- Develop a clear process by which Vineyard USA appoints board members, and by which the board of Vineyard USA operates
- Develop revised by-laws for Vineyard USA that reflect the reality of our reorganization, and allow for transparency and flexibility into the future
- Develop proposals regarding funding models for Vineyard USA, with special consideration given to fundraising, investments, and church giving models

None of these five remaining projects can be best accomplished by generalists. Rather, each of these pieces of work requires a team of Vineyard leaders whose members each have a specific set of skills, deployed in consultation with the best wisdom of those outside the Vineyard who can help us.

As such, In March 2021, the Executive Team decided that the current ReOrg Team will dissolve on April 20, 2021, with its work being gratefully celebrated at the LTM.

Going forward, each of the above five pieces of work will be undertaken by five smaller teams, appointed specifically for the task by the current Executive Team. They will begin their work as soon as possible.