

January 2010



HAPPY NOTES *at home*

for the Vineyard Church family



A Financial Miracle

by Happy Leman

The Impossible Situation

Our budget was over \$120,000 behind! The Vineyard begins a new fiscal year each September 1. After just 2 months we were almost 25% behind on our budget of \$270,000 per month. In the entire 31 year history of this church, we have never been that far behind in any given month. We immediately realized that we were under an all out attack of Satan and his evil forces. His goal was to dry up our finances so we could no longer do the things that God was calling us to do.

Our Response

In the Vineyard, we've long been taught that when Satan attacks, we must counter-attack. We must come at him with the help of the Lord in the very ways that he comes after us. Thus as a leadership team we sent out a Happy Note in November (title: "Update on Finances and Offerings") and shared the problem in our Thanksgiving message. In both of those, we shared that we wanted to do 3 things.

1. Rejoice in all the blessings and miracles God had provided in our 31 year history.
2. Pray diligently that the attack on our finances would be broken.
3. Give generously of our tithes and offerings. In fact we asked everyone to seriously pray about giving at least 10% of their income from all sources every month and to give offerings as blessed above and beyond.

God's Response

God promises that He will bless people who give generously. In fact, in Malachi 3:8-12, the Bible promises that those who give will find the windows of heaven opened so that we receive blessings beyond what we can contain and the enemy himself will be rebuked and stopped. We prayed in faith based on that promise corporately and personally as we went after the forces of the evil one.

The Outcome

The outcome is nothing short of amazing. In November, after 2 short months we actually made our budget of \$300,000 (combined budget with multi-sites) with a small amount extra to spare. We sensed the tide was beginning to turn. In December God opened the floodgates. In that month, we received over \$500,000 in our general funds and almost \$300,000 in our building fund. Our total income from all 3 sites was over \$800,000. Surely it was more than we had even dared to dream (Ephesians 3:20).

Building Debt Erased

Through the years, we have enjoyed enormous generosity from our people in paying for our \$8,500,000 expansion and renovation which began in 2004. Gradually we had worked the building debt down to \$420,000. With the new funds that we received in December for the building as well as some we had saved, we are able to pay the debt off completely on January 5th, 2010. **To pay off \$8.5 million in less than 6 years is an absolute miracle.** Each person that gave toward this amount is to be thanked and appreciated. We as a people truly have much we can celebrate.

Keep Up the Counter-Attack

As Christians, we sometimes win victories and then take “spiritual vacations.” In other words, we go after Satan when he causes problems and then we ignore him when things go well. I recommend we keep the pressure on him continually. Again we need to do what we did in November.

1. Rejoice at the blessings we’ve received, including this one.
2. Keep praying that the enemy is pushed back in every realm – finances, healing, salvation, etc. Remember our combined budget is \$300,000 per month.
3. We keep giving generously. To do all that God has given us, we need to have everyone in the church giving 10% of their income. Those who have more obviously can give offerings on top of that. As they do so, we will all prosper and the Kingdom will advance. The impact that we can leave on Central Illinois will stagger us over our lifetime.

Final Thoughts

I have often shared that I see God’s generosity in a picture from Psalms 23. The last part of psalm 23 verse 5 says “**My cup overflows with blessings.**” I often see the picture of being in a restaurant and having coffee. When I ask the waitress to refill the cup, she comes with a 5 gallon pail and overflows the cup everywhere. This is a picture of God’s generosity of how He treats His kids. **He has never been the God of just enough; He’s the God of more than enough.**

I want to thank everyone for this amazing miracle. We need to celebrate this fact corporately and among ourselves personally. It is a testimony that we can talk about for many, many years. Thanks for being a part in making this happen.

Happy Notes at Home are a monthly reflection of community life at The Vineyard Church and are produced by Happy Leman.