



Update

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Vernon & Martha Hedge

Ministry for This Season

Our walk with the Lord is a journey, sometimes in a straight line, but often with unexpected turns. All servants of God go through a *process* of arriving at the will of God for the expression of their ministry for that season in life. The Scriptures demonstrate a pattern of servants of God receiving a vision, which goes through a death of the vision when it looks like there is no way it will happen, then God comes through with supernatural provision and the vision happens.

I've worked through Calvary Commission over 20 years in different capacities. Sometimes traveling to other countries to teach pastors and leaders, sometimes in jails and prisons, and most recently teaching again at the Calvary Bible Institute at the base in Lindale. During all that time, I have also been active in a local church, teaching and counseling people. As I've often said, not all prisoners live behind bars. Human need is the same in the free world as in the inmate nation.

Now another process has been at work that is making another adjustment in my ministry through Calvary Commission. Join me as I share my journey with you.

It began while living in Raleigh, NC. It was August 2, 2011, while I was in my morning devotional in Psalm 32:3-4, *When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer.*

I said out loud, "Boy, that is certainly true!" I realized then that I

had been in a struggle on a deep level for some time.

In that moment, the Lord said, *Vernon, I have called you to a ministry in North Texas, but you keep rebelling against it. You have been resisting Me now for more than a year. You have come before Me and prayed to be used; you have brought your heart before Me to present it to Me for anything that needs change.*

But I can't use you if you're not obedient. If you continue this rebellion, it will be your demise.

I reacted inside and questioned whether or not this was a word from the Lord, and said, "But Lord, this doesn't sound like You. You are full of mercy and grace."

I was concentrating on that phrase *it will be your demise* when the Lord spoke again.

Oh, I won't do it to you. You will do it to yourself. Your internal conflict will invite all kinds of diseases and negative forces to attack your life. You see you have set yourself to serve Me. That requires Me to require you to walk in full obedience. If you were to continue resisting Me so that I should have to lift my favor off of your life,

and you had the sense that you had been set on the shelf, it would do you in.

I thought to myself—yes, to be set on the shelf WOULD do me in. Things had been going well the last 11 years of teaching ministry at the Federal Prison at Butner, NC. Then I remembered one day the word came to me, "*You will not be here long.*" That couldn't be the Lord because things were going so well at the prison. But—the Lord had been speaking. I had not been listening.

After Martha and I intensely prayed about it, we accepted the word to move from Raleigh. Michael Gamble our son-in-law was visiting in Raleigh to perform a wedding ceremony. He was starting a church in McKinney and said, "Dad, we need your help in our new Radiant Life Church." So, in the fall of 2012 we moved here, McKinney, Texas.

Soon the new church moved from the Gamble's home to a rented place on Sundays. If you know anything about start-up churches, there is usually a turnover of people until the pillars of that work become identified. As Pastor Gamble sought the Lord for the vision for the church, the Lord focused his attention on Ezekiel 34:1-4. The vision of Radiant Life Church is to Feed the flock, Strengthen the weak, Heal those who are sick, Bind up the broken, Bring back the scattered, and Seek the lost.

I continued the Calvary

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Commission ministry in McKinney soon after arriving. The local Collin County jail engaged me as a volunteer to have what they termed a church service each Tuesday afternoon. But in the fledgling Radiant Life, nothing was happening for me—death of the vision.

After a couple of years at the county jail, I turned my attention back to ministry at the Calvary Commission base. A position was open and I started driving the 100 miles each week to teach two courses each semester in the Bible Institute.

In addition to teaching, I began doing one-on-one counseling with some of the students, and they were getting real breakthroughs. The students not only have eight classes each week but have work assignments on the base each afternoon. I began to see the need to move there to be available for the counseling to fit into the students' busy schedules. I couldn't accomplish that one night a week.

However, after Martha's time of prayer and consideration, she said, "I just don't believe it is the will of the Lord to move to Lindale; I don't bear witness to it." She reminded me of the phrase in the original word in Raleigh—*called you to a ministry in North Texas*. Lindale is in East Texas. I didn't have any explanation other than nothing was opening up for me here—that said, the ministry at the base was going so well.

After about a year of indecision, we decided to submit the idea to the Elders of the church. We did, and to a person they said that "We don't bear witness to your moving to Lindale. It seems the Lord has something else for you."

That decision left me torn inside. I had submitted to the counsel of the Elders, but what is my ministry at Radiant Life? It's an alive church where the Spirit of the Lord is moving, but it's still a young church.

Pastor Gamble understood and was praying about it. We got together in December where he outlined some ministry that he felt was the leading of the Lord for me and my teaching ministry. We agreed that I should finish the Spring Trimester at the Calvary Bible Institute which ended this April.

As a young church, there are no funds in the general account to make it possible for me to come on staff with a living salary. Any support comes through the mission's department. That support would only be about a third of what we need to live.

During all this, the Lord has moved the focus of my heart to Radiant Life. After talking with Director Jody Fauss and International Director Joe Fauss of Calvary Commission, they agreed that I can continue serving through them as a missionary outreach of Calvary Commission. Although I will no longer be going every week, I plan to teach a one or two-day seminar each trimester and speak on special occasions. I do love the students! I already know one of the seminars to the student body will be on the *Life of Joseph*.

Recently, I met with Pastor Gamble for more clarification on my role. The more he talked, the more excited I got. He has a vision that before he retires, he wants to plant at least 12 churches out of Radiant Life. We planted our first one last year in Salt Lake City where

Jason Chatham is the pastor. Jason was music director and preached on occasion for over two years here at Radiant Life.

We have at least three men whom we think will plant a church. Pastor wants me to prepare theology curriculum, offer it to anyone in the church who is interested, and out of those will come the couples qualified for ordination. He said, "I want to know that the men we ordain have a solid bases in balanced theology." I jumped in my seat when he said that! That is right down my alley!

Systematic Theology was my major in Dallas Theological Seminary. My motivational gift in Romans 12 is that of a teacher. Most of my life, I have always studied the Scripture to produce a balanced view of God. It will be my special delight to teach theology to our men and women.

In addition to preaching to the congregation occasionally, I will be involved in Transformational Prayer Ministry, sometimes called prayer counseling. It is a ministry of the Holy Spirit to help a person find the embedded lies which create bondage in their lives. (Bondage is always some form of an embedded lie.) When He speaks His truth to that embedded lie, truth will set the person free. Eventually I will train interested people in this ministry.

The Lord has caused me to arrive where He wanted me all along—the fulfillment of the vision He gave in 2011. It will take some time to get the curriculum written, but I can hardly wait to get the classes started.

So, to my supporters, I still need your prayer and financial support. You have made the difference many times. My heartfelt *Thank You!* ✨
