

FLYING BLIND

What landing an airplane can teach us about Divine Adventure.

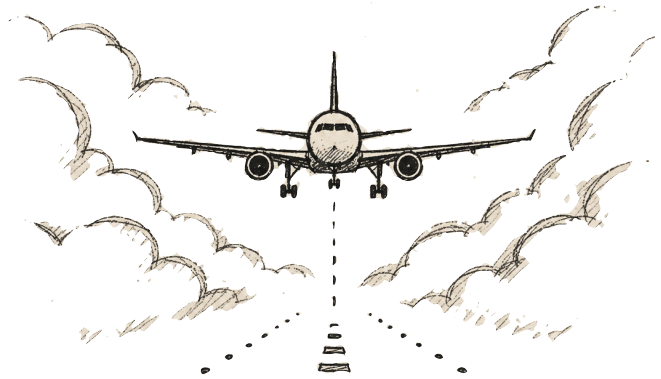
Harvest Forward is built around three postures:

EXPLORE.
EXPRESS.
EXPERIMENT.

EXPLORE is the posture of Holy Curiosity. We enter the harvest paying attention. We listen, notice, and ask questions. We resist the urge to arrive with answers before we understand the people and places around us. Its simplest sentence is, "Tell me more."

EXPRESS is the posture of Sacred Relationship. What we discover through curiosity begins to shape how we relate to people. We express value, form trust, and plant Jesus. We recognize the sacredness of the person sitting across from us before we decide what we want from the relationship. Its simplest sentence is, "Me too."

Then comes *EXPERIMENT*, and this is where things get uncomfortable. *EXPERIMENT* is the posture that asks us to move without knowing exactly where all of this is going. Its simplest sentence is, "What if...?"



Flying Blind

Imagine an airplane descending toward an airport completely surrounded by clouds. The pilots cannot see the runway or the ground. They cannot look through the windshield and visually determine whether they are lined up correctly. They are flying blind.

Yet airplanes safely land in these conditions every day. How? They have instruments.

An Instrument Landing System (ILS) provides guidance that tells the pilots whether the airplane is aligned with the runway and whether it is descending at the proper angle. If the airplane begins drifting left or right, the instruments reveal it. If the aircraft is too high or too low, they reveal that too.

So the pilots make corrections constantly. A little left. A little right. Adjust the descent. Correct for the wind. Keep moving. The remarkable thing is that the pilots don't need to see the runway to know whether they are moving toward it. They need trustworthy guidance, and they need to remain responsive to it.

That's EXPERIMENT

We often want Jesus to give us the entire flight plan before we leave the ground.

Where are we going?

What will this become?

What's the model?

How will it work?

What happens next?

We want the runway visible from thirty thousand feet.

But Divine Adventure rarely works that way. EXPERIMENT is not wandering around without direction. It is moving without complete visibility.

There is a difference.

We aren't throwing random ideas into the air and hoping Jesus blesses one of them. We are paying attention to what we discovered through EXPLORE and the relationships being formed through EXPRESS. We are watching for what Jesus is doing and responding to what we see.

Then we take another step.

This is why the rhythm of EXPERIMENT is **Assess. Adjust. Advance.** Assess what is happening. *Adjust* to what you are discovering. *Advance* in the direction Jesus appears to be leading. Then do it again and again.

Correction Isn't Failure

This may be one of the hardest things for leaders to embrace. When an airplane makes a course correction on its approach, nobody in the cockpit says, "Well, apparently the flight failed."

Correction is part of flying. Wind changes. Conditions change. The airplane drifts. The instruments reveal the drift, and the pilots respond.

What if we began seeing our Kingdom experiments the same way?

Something didn't work.

Good. What did we discover?

People responded differently than we expected.

Good. What are they telling us?

*The relationship moved in an unexpected direction.
Pay attention.*

*The thing we thought would become something large remained small.
Stay curious.*

*A door we expected to open closed.
Look around.*

*Another door opened that we never noticed before.
Go explore it.*

Correction isn't evidence that the experiment failed. Correction is how the experiment works.

We Don't Need the Runway Yet

One of our deepest temptations is demanding certainty before obedience. We want to know what something will become before we're willing to begin. We want the model before the relationship, the destination before the journey, and the outcome before the experiment.

But following Jesus has never offered that kind of certainty. "Follow me" is an invitation to movement, and movement means we will eventually encounter territory we have never seen before.

That's Divine Adventure.

We don't need to see the runway from thirty thousand feet. We need enough light for the next step, enough awareness to recognize when we're drifting, enough humility to make the correction, and enough trust to keep descending through the clouds.

EXPLORE teaches us to notice. EXPRESS teaches us to connect. EXPERIMENT teaches us to move.

And somewhere inside that movement, something remarkable happens. We discover that we weren't flying blind after all.

We simply couldn't see the runway yet.