We continue our study today of the charismatic movements in America by shifting our focus away from our current studies to what is called the Vineyard movement. What I’ve tried to argue in our time together can be summarized very briefly this way. I tried to argue that the charismatic movements are born out of a Methodist heritage via the Holiness Movement and finds themselves generally expressed in the twentieth century in three basic movements: in classical Pentecostalism, born about 1901 to 1906, as we have tried to describe it, and then in the late 1950s, early 1960s in the birth of charismatic renewalism, and we drew the contrast between those two major Pentecostal or commonly charismatic renewalist expressions.

We come to the third expression today, and that is commonly called the Vineyard movement, sometimes called the signs and wonders movement, and from this movement born in the 1980s has sprung a variety of sub-movements that we can eventually describe. So today our purpose, very briefly, is to begin our discussion and summary as best I can in the time we have of the Vineyard movement as an expression of charismatic phenomenology.

The signs and wonders movement is the latest mushrooming expression of charismatic phenomena in America. It is, however, unique in its emphases from prior expressions as well as its constituency. Perhaps some perception of it can be gained from the titles used to denominate the movement. The term “third wave,” not to be confused with Alvin Toffler’s book on futurism, began to be used for the movement in 1983. C. Peter Wagner refers to three waves of the power of the Spirit in this century, which in a way became part of our outline—classical Pentecostalism in 1906, charismatic renewalism of both Protestant and Catholic varieties in 1959, and the Vineyard movement, which was born in the early 1980s.
Though C. Peter Wagner and John Wimber assert that the movement is neither Pentecostal nor charismatic, they are making reference to its historic origins and constituency, not to theological affinities.

Dr. Wagner, in an interview in *Pastoral Renewal* in July/August 1983 entitled “The Third Wave,” describes the movement this way. “It is a movement from those traditionally outside the Charismatic Movement that have rediscovered the Spirit’s power.” Dr. Wagner, for instance, says,

> Although I don’t see anything in the Charismatic Movement that is not valid, I’m tremendously impressed by it and supportive of it; however, I just do not consider myself a part of it. We like to think that we are doing it in a congregational way. We’re not doing it in a Charismatic way, but we’re getting the same results. I myself have several minor theological differences with Pentecostals and Charismatics which don’t mar any kind of mutual ministry, but keeps me from saying I am a Charismatic. I see historically that we’re now in the third wave. The first wave of the moving of the Spirit began at the beginning of the century with the Pentecostal Movement. The second wave was the Charismatic Movement which began in the ‘50s in the major denominations. Both of those waves continue today. I see the third wave of the ‘80s as an opening of the straight-line Evangelicals and other Christians to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that the Pentecostals and Charismatics had experienced, but without becoming either Charismatic or Pentecostal. I think we’re in a new wave of something that now has lasted almost through our entire century.

That quote from Dr. Wagner is terribly instructive as to the relationship of the Vineyard movement and its varieties to the other movements, the other waves of charismatic phenomena.

The term “signs and wonders” is derived from a popular though controversial course taught for the first time in 1982 at Fuller Seminary entitled “MC510, Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth,” later entitled “The Miraculous and Church Growth.” It is popularly known as the Vineyard movement. The movement’s leader, John Wimber, formerly pastor of Yorba Linda Friends Church, a Quaker church, founded an independent church in 1977, the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Anaheim, California.
The church began publishing a newsletter in 1986 entitled *The Vineyard Newsletter*. So it's called signs and wonders. It's sometimes called the Vineyard movement. Another term that is synonymous with movement, though not part of its official nomenclature, is power evangelism or power encounter. Power evangelism or encounter is the presentation of the gospel which is confirmed by a prior evidence of the miraculous direct communication from the Holy Spirit—healings, demonic exorcism, and other clearly supernatural events. Dr. Wimber, for instance, in his influential book called *Power Evangelism*, says,

> By Power Evangelism I mean a presentation of the gospel that is rational, but that also transcends the rational. The explanation of the gospel comes with a demonstration of God’s power through signs and wonders. Power Evangelism is a spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, empowered presentation of the gospel. Power Evangelism is evangelism that is preceded and undergirded by supernatural demonstrations of God’s presence.

In defining a power encounter, Dr. Wagner cited the Elijah episode on Mount Carmel as an illustration. He says, for instance, in *Pastoral Renewal, 1983*,

> It takes many forms, but the most recognizable form for Christians is Elijah on Mount Carmel where the prophets of Baal got together against the prophets of Jehovah and in a very public way the power of one was pitted against the power of the other. This is what we are learning more and more needs to be done, public, outward demonstration of the fact that the power of God is stronger than the power of the gods and the spirits that the people have been worshipping. I have been in Brazil and I found case after case of this. In Brazil, 40 percent of the population are practicing Spiritists and another 40 percent have some direct experience with it. The way the gospel is spreading there is by confirmation, healings, miracles, signs, and wonders. The gospel is growing rapidly among people who are Animists and Spiritists because they are already in touch with the supernatural and they are tyrannized by the evil one and know they need help, but they need help in the realm of the supernatural.

So we are describing first the meaning of the movement. Its titles are descriptive of its meaning. It's called signs and wonders...
movement, called power encounter movement, power evangelism movement, the Vineyard movement, or sometimes by its leaders it is called the third wave movement.

Now let me turn from the titles given to the movement in a brief definition to the leaders of the movement, and here I would like to dwell upon principally the central leader, which is Dr. John Wimber, and then in a minor way C. Peter Wagner, although there are other prominent and important leaders in the movement like Jack E. Deere, C. Samuel Storms, and the list can be ad infinitum. But let me describe, then, the two leaders who will be illustrative of the movement, and at the very center of the movement is Dr. John Wimber.

Dr. John Wimber, whom has been recently described as an engaging, humble, bright, responsible leader, is the central figure in the movement. He describes himself as an ex-hippie, jazz musician, fourth generation. He was converted to Christ in 1962, along with his wife. In the late 1960s, he began to pastor the Yorba Linda Friends Church. So what I’m saying is that Dr. Wimber was born in the Midwest in about 1934. In 1946, he moved to Anaheim, California. In 1962, he was converted to our Lord from the background of the work of a musician, songwriter. For instance, he sang with the Righteous Brothers and played Las Vegas. He came out of that type of a background is what I think he alerts us to.

After his conversion, some years later in 1970 to 1976, he pastored a Friends church, a Quaker church in Yorba Linda, California. In 1974, he was one of the founding directors of the Department of Church Growth of the Fuller Evangelistic Association, now known as the Fuller Institute for Church Growth. I’ll continue my narrative.

He resigned his church in 1974 to become the founding department head of the Department of Church Growth at the Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth in Pasadena, California. At the same time, he became an adjunct professor at the School of World Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary, where he worked with C. Peter Wagner, Donald A. McGavran, and Charles Kraft, among others.

He notes, for instance, in Power Evangelism, “I became familiar with the practice of Power Evangelism in third world countries, particularly with reports of signs and wonders and dramatic
church growth. These reports caught my attention.”

At this juncture, his wife underwent what has been described in the literature as a personality meltdown, relative to the charismatic movement. She was hostile to the charismatic movement, but through some events that occurred in 1976, she became much more interested. She says,

In 1976, I went to God asking Him what was wrong with our local Quaker Church. John had left the pastorate there 2 years earlier and all that we had worked so hard for seemed to be waning. Instead of pointing his finger at the church, God started showing me where I was wrong and that December I had a disturbing dream. In my dream, I stood preaching to a large crowd on a soapbox at the end of my street. My topic was the gifts of the Spirit. I considered myself an expert on the subject, after all for years I was responsible for running off church members who practiced gifts like tongues, healing, or prophecy. Tongues I considered dangerous and divisive. I preached through my well-rehearsed seven-point sermon when suddenly at the final point, a sensation like a hot electricity hit my head, traveled down my body, and up and out of my mouth, I awoke speaking in tongues.

I felt so troubled by the dream and experience of speaking in tongues that my confidence and self-assurance began draining way like a bag of sand with a hole in the bottom. Perhaps I thought, “I don’t know as much as I thought I did about the Christian life. Maybe I’ve been a Pharisee all these years.” What frightened me so much was that I thought I’d been sincere with God, and I earnestly judged everyone else’s relationship with God according to my personal standards. The closer they came to believing and behaving as I did, the closer I thought they were to God. This was a pitiful confession, but that is the way I lived. The pressure of these thoughts continued building. A few weeks later, I fell on my bed in tears, “Oh God,” I cried out. “If all that stuff [meaning spiritual gifts like tongues and healing] is for you, then I’ve barely known you all these years.” There was long silence. Then I sensed in my heart a gentle answer. “You’re right.”

In the book *Power Healing*, Dr. Wimber describes and rehearses the details this way:
During my time at the Fuller Evangelistic Association, unknown to me God was altering Carol’s attitude toward Charismatic gifts. Up to that time, she was hostile, more hostile than I to anything supernatural, especially healing. In fact, in women’s Bible study groups around Orange County, Carol taught against divine healing and as an elder at our local church, she had been responsible for driving out several members who were praying for others’ healings and speaking in tongues. Also her strong feelings against divine healing had always influenced me greatly. But about this time, she started pleading with God to change some of the people around her. She saw that I had been unhappy for several years and was praying that I would work through my problems. One night through a dream [all these words dreams, gifts, healing, tongues make it really an expression of the charismatic movement, though not traditionally so], she was filled with the Spirit. In the dream, she saw herself preaching a seven-point sermon on why tongues were not for today. There was nothing unusual about that. She knew the script quite well except for one change at the seventh point. She woke up speaking in tongues. After this, she repented of her attitude toward the supernatural, weeping on and off for three weeks. Away in our bedroom, anguishing before God, she opened herself to God and she learned what that meant as time went on. Her prayers for change in me were answered through change in her.

In 1976, a few people from the Yorba Linda church began meeting in the Wimber home to encourage one another. In the same year, Dr. Wimber met Don McClure of the Calvary Chapel Churches, Don, of course, being connected to the Lake Arrowhead Calvary Chapel Church and is introduced to a form of the charismatic movement there. In May 1977, John, who had been asked to lead the Friends, became the pastor of the new group, and he called that new group in 1977 the Vineyard Fellowship. From seventeen people in 1976 the group grew to over six thousand and the movement to over two hundred churches with a combined membership of forty thousand nationwide.

In 1977, in addition to Don McClure of Calvary Chapel, Dr. Wimber met Ken Gullickson of Calvary Chapel. In that context, he left Yorba Linda Friends and was ordained by the Calvary Chapel in Lake Arrowhead, California. In 1977, he founded and pastored Calvary Chapel of Yorba Linda, California. And then in 1981, he met Lonnie Frisbee, and Lonnie Frisbee seemingly introduced
Dr. Wimber to power evangelism or power encounter, the Elijah experience of Kings. In 1982, Chuck Smith, the leader of the Calvary Chapel Churches, and Dr. Wimber parted company. and that led in the same year, 1982, to the founding of the Vineyard Ministries International or the Vineyard movement, as we commonly call it, so that dates from 1982.

In 1982 to 1985, Dr. Wimber’s notoriety took a spurt when he began teaching the course I alluded to, “MC510 Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth.” I say notoriety for Wimber’s insights came through “MC510 Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth,” which was offered in the School of World Mission. Dr. Wimber offered the course as an adjunct factory member with C. Peter Wagner. In December 1985, the course was revised and entitled “The Miraculous and Church Growth,” but mounting criticism caused the course to be discontinued. In 1985, following the context of the discontinuing of the connection with Fuller Seminary, relative to teaching, Dr. Wimber formally founded the Association of Vineyard Churches Incorporated or AVC. That was in 1985. In 1988, another influence came into Dr. Wimber’s life, and that was the influence of Paul Cain, a follower of William Branham, the 1950s miraculous faith healer, and that influenced Dr. Wimber into what is called the Latter Rain Movement as we had described it.

If you take a look at Dr. Wimber’s life, which is instructive of the movement and Dr. Wimber is in the very center of that movement as the titular head, we can say this, that in 1962, the Lord brought him to Himself, later Dr. Wimber attends and graduates from Seattle Pacific College in Los Angeles. In 1974 to 1977, he is associated with the Yorba Linda Friends Church in California. From 1974 to 1977, the last three years of his relationship at Yorba Linda, he is connected with the Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth. There he becomes influenced by teachers on the staff like Paul Hiebert, Kraft, the writings of George Ladd, and the church planting philosophies of Donald McGavran. These become very influential in the life and ministry of Dr. Wimber.

From 1977 to 1982, he is associated with the Calvary Chapel movement of Chuck Smith and pastors the Calvary Chapel at Yorba Linda, and during those five years, there are three distinct emphases in Dr. Wimber’s ministry as you look at it and as you study it. The first emphasis in those five years, 1977 to 1982, the first emphasis was clearly upon music and worship. Dr. Wimber is a very fine musician, pianist. Very winsome. Very gifted in moving
people to worship the Lord. The second phase of the Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda ministry was an emphasis upon healing, and he becomes famous for that in a way through his connection with the course “Signs and Wonders.” In the latter phase of the Yorba Linda Chapel emphasis was upon the gift of tongues, so you can see different emphases in his ministry—worship first, healing, and then tongues. In 1982, he found the Association of Vineyard Churches Incorporated and then is also adjunct professor teaching “MC510” in the Fuller School of Missions.

If you look at the signs and wonders movement, which we could say dates from 1982, the founding of the Vineyard movement, through 1988, it seems to be described this way: From 1982 to 1988, there was a strong emphasis on power encounter, power evangelism, and there was an increase of miracles and miracle working within the Vineyard churches. In 1986, perhaps, there was a decline of signs and miracles and power evangelism within the Vineyard churches. That led to Dr. Wimber’s influence by Mike Bickle, Paul Cain, and others in the Kansas City fellowship called the Kansas City Prophets movement. And it seems in 1988 that Dr. Wimber took another change of emphasis into the Latter Rain Revival movement or the Prophetic movement or Joel’s Army movement from 1988 to 1991. Since 1991, since we’re so close to it, it’s kind of hard for me to describe new directions or new emphases within the movement itself, but that at least is a capsule of the life of Dr. Wimber, who was so central to this entire movement.

Let me move on to a second leader in the movement, and that is C. Peter Wagner. Dr. Wagner, unlike his counterpart, holds advanced degrees from Fuller Seminary (MDiv), Princeton Theological Seminary (ThM). After training, he and his wife labored with SIM International in Bolivia for sixteen years. Initially anti-charismatic, his mind began to change when E. Stanley Jones came to his mission station in Cochabamba. Then followed a series of contacts with Chilean Pentecostals, and Dr. Wagner is influenced and brought into increasingly the orbit of charismatic phenomena.

In 1971, after sixteen years in mission, Dr. Wagner was appointed to the Donald McGavran chair of church growth at the Fuller School of World Missions. In 1973, he began to have severe physical problems, headaches, that he sought medical help, and even Paul Chow of Seoul, South Korea, he gained no relief. With John Wimber’s instruction, he was able to rebuke the headache
and gain deliverance. So there is a connection between the two men. Describing it in 1985 in a magazine article in *Christian Life* it is this:

Then in 1982, I attended Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Anaheim on a Sunday night as I occasionally do. The pastor is my colleague, John Wimber, who teaches the MC510 course, “The Miraculous and Church Growth” with me here at Fuller Seminary. After John preached, several people spoke words of knowledge, one indication there that someone there was suffering with migraine headaches caused by a tumor in the brain which had not been diagnosed as such. And so it happens that it was on those days that I did not have a headache, but responded anyway, hoping God would minister to me. A group gathered around me, began to pray, and in the group was my good friend, Blaine Cook, one of the associate pastors, and they prayed and I felt Blaine’s hand suddenly rush and push my head. “There it goes,” he said. Since I had no headache, I didn’t know for sure if anything happened or not, but after the meeting, John Wimber came up to me. “Blaine says your problem is a spirit,” he said. “Let it go at that.” I let it go at that, went home, and still had headaches for five days out of seven.

Then our MC510 class began in January 1983. Sure enough, the first Monday night, I went to class with a headache. So during the break, I asked John to pray for me. John and his wife Carol, as well as Blaine and his wife Becky, all prayed for me, the pain left, but about an hour later it came back again. “How is your headache?” John asked after class. “It went away, but came back,” I replied. “Don’t forget about that spirit,” he said. “Okay,” I said, “but what am I supposed to do about it?” John replied quickly, “Treat it like a cat on the back porch. Yell at it. Tell it to go away.” That gave me a problem. As a Christian, I was used to talking to God whom I didn’t see, but I was not used to talking to anyone else I didn’t see. Furthermore, I thought, “God is omniscient and can hear our prayers, but demons do not have that attribute. They cannot read our mind.

We must speak to them in a loud voice.” Because I didn’t want people to think that I was crazy, I kept quiet.

A few days later I was in the shower early in the morning and the symptoms of a headache began. It always started
in exactly the same place on the back of my head. I said, “Oh no, another headache,” and planned to take a pill when I got out of the shower. Then it dawned on me that I was all alone. My wife was still in bed. The shower was making plenty of noise and no one would think I was crazy. So I went for it and treated the spirit like a cat on the back porch. I rebuked it in the name of Jesus and told it to get out of there once and for all. Being an absentminded professor, I forgot about the whole thing until 10:30 that morning. Suddenly I realized that I did not have a headache.

That’s the continuation of intense connection in the early movement between C. Peter Wagner, a Congregationalist, and Dr. Wimber. Wagner invited Wimber, thereafter, to the Fuller Evangelistic Association in 1985 and co-taught MC510. In fact, in one of the optional ministry sessions later held at a local Methodist church to accommodate the participants, Wagner was cured or healed of high blood pressure. The two, Dr. John Wimber and Dr. Wagner, became linked tightly in the Vineyard movement.

What I’ve tried to do is this: One, I’ve tried to describe the terms within the movement—third wave, signs and wonders, power evangelism, Vineyard movement—among other titles or power encounter sometimes. So it’s a movement that is certainly open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be practiced in the church in the context of evangelism. Its appeal is largely to people who are not traditionally of a charismatic heritage. Mostly not mainline denominational people, but often people who are often evangelical from nondenominational settings. Then I tried to describe the life and ministry of Dr. Wimber, and I’ve tried to argue that Dr. Wimber is the center hub of the movement. I think that’s fair from the literature, and his connection with C. Peter Wagner is fundamental.

Now, in the few moments that we have left on this side of our tape, I’d like to move to a third thing, and that’s the basic fundamental assumptions that are inherent in the Vineyard movement. As I see it, I think there are three, and what I’d like to do is go through some of these, perhaps breaking in our tape and continuing it on the next one.

It seems to me that the assumptions boil down to three, and then there are many spinoffs from those three, but first, what are the assumptions? First, that many Christians have unwittingly adopted an Enlightenment, rationalistic skepticism toward
the supernatural. Citing Harry Blamire’s *The Christian Mind*, a disciple of C. S. Lewis, and Charles Kraft in his book *Christianity and Culture*, and Paul Hiebert’s *Notion of the Law of the Excluded Middle*, Wimber suggests that many evangelicals practically operate naturalistically. He would say that many Christians talk about God as though He were real and powerful in our life and experiences, but when it comes to practical living, it would seem that many earnest Christian people act very naturally as God can’t come to their aid, can’t answer prayer, can’t intervene miraculously for the children of God. So that’s his first assumption: that unwittingly Christians, many of us, have drunk deeply at the well of enlightened rationalism, skepticism, and have neglected the deeper meanings of the Spirit of God.

For instance, Dr. Wimber says in *Power Evangelism*,

> Many Christians either exclude the supernatural from their worldview or consign it to the transcendent tier where it can have no effect in their lives. By doing so, they exclude God’s power from their theology and its practice. Resisting what they cannot fully control or always resisting what they cannot fully control or understand, they miss out on doing God’s works today.

I think what Dr. Wimber is saying is that he believes that there is a tremendous power available for Christians today, but we’re living at a very thin minimalist level in which we depend more on natural law than we do upon the intervention of the miraculous and of the Lord Himself. He continues,

> All that I have said about the worldviews points to one conclusion: Christians’ worldviews affect their theology. If Christians have a worldview that is affected by Western Materialism, they will probably deny that signs and wonders are for today. Though they may use a theological rationale, the real issue is that it upsets their worldview.

In contrast to this, a second group of Christians have a worldview that is affected by Western rationalism. They might acknowledge signs and wonders but consign them to the irrational.

> These people seek signs and wonders for the thrill of the experience as an end in itself. They do not understand that the purpose of signs and wonders is to demonstrate the kingdom of God or the power of God.
Or again he says,

Of course the world does not divide neatly into two groups of people, primitive animists and rationalistic materialists. There are many variations between these two extremes. For example, people do not believe that there is a transcendent reality, modern atheists for example, would deny there is an upper tier. The biblical worldview opens but does not obliterate the barrier between the lower and upper tiers. Completely removing the barrier led to Pantheism, equating God with creation. The Christian world makes room for mystery in the relationship between the spiritual and the material worlds. For example, the Christian world sees some illnesses as caused directly by demons and other illnesses as having physical causes.

So I think the assumption that Dr. Wimber is making is this: that too many Christians are living as though the power of God to change and affect their lives do not exist, that we’ve entered into a sterile, worshipless, bland, routine Christianity on Sunday mornings and through the week that in many ways is unbiblical and subpar religion.

There’s a second assumption within the movement. There are many spinoffs and deductions, but I’m looking at essential assumptions. The second assumption that is really crucial is this: that the kingdom of God is present on earth today because Christ reigns through His church. That seems like it’s a benign assumption that would be held by most Christians today, but he seems to take it in a very particular way.

In the New Testament the Greek word *basilia*, meaning “kingship” or “royal rule,” is normally translated “kingdom.” It implies exercise of kingly rule or reign rather than simply a geographic realm over which a king rules. This is largely derived from his reading in George Ladd’s works. Westerners conceive the kingdoms largely in terms of realms. For example, the United Kingdom conjures up thoughts of the territory encompassing British lands. The biblical concept goes beyond the idea of a realm to an emphasis on rule.

So it’s a power over more than a geographical region to be conceived. This is what Jesus meant when He said that the kingdom or rulership of God has come to Him. The authority of God to claim what is rightfully His. The future age, the kingdom of God, invaded the present age, the kingdom of Satan. To use
an expression of George Ladd’s, “We live in the presence of the future.” We are between the times, as it were, between the inauguration and the consummation of the kingdom of God.

This explains the twofold pattern of Christ’s ministry, which I think Dr. Wimber would mean by what I’m saying that we live in the first century, though we are in the twentieth century, that the miracles of the apostles and the miracles of our Lord Jesus are miracles that we should perform and partake of today; that as Jesus had power encounters with the Pharisees and the demons and the demoniacs, and the epileptics and paralytics, and as the apostles did—the power of Peter, the power of Paul and the missionary journeys—we should have that kind of power today, because we live in the first century in a sense in the kingdom of God. The power to perform miracles, the gift of miracle working, exorcism, healing, tongues, has not at all ceased. We have been misled on that point, and there is a power available as was available to the Lord Jesus. There is a power available to us as was true of the apostles of the first century, that it’s through the working of miracles, Christ reigning in His kingdom that we can perform power encounters in an increasingly pagan world that will turn people when they see the miracle that we perform to an opening of their ears so that they will be made available to the power of God in miraculous conversion.

He says, “This explains the twofold pattern of Christ’s ministry, repeated wherever He went. So as the kingdom was present in Christ, not as a geographical thing, but as a realm of rule, that kingdom is available today. The present is the future. The present is the past.” There’s a continuity between the first century and today, and today and the kingdom of God when it fully comes. That’s what he means. This explains the twofold pattern of Christ’s ministry, repeated wherever He went. First proclamation, then demonstration. First he preached repentance and the good news of the kingdom of God. Then he cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, which proved that He was the presence of the kingdom, the Anointed One.

As we gather up our thoughts about basic assumptions, I’ve only listed two thus far, and they are these: One, Dr. Wimber believes that we have unwittingly bought into a sterile, mechanicalist, materialist worldview and that has inundated our churches and blighted people and caused them to be empty, and that’s why they’re turning from the traditional evangelical movement to the more open and vibrant Vineyard movement. The second
assumption is that the kingdom is here, and as Christ performed miracles in His day and the apostles, you and I can perform miracle, power encounter, power evangelism in our day and call many to the Lord Jesus.