

Signs and Wonders

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning everybody. Good morning. It's great to see you all. The issue of closet charismatics is always an interesting one.

Coming from the background that they did, I don't know that we would have to take names. We just have to have the word of knowledge of who everybody might be and then we just, you know, write it down.

Yeah, it was an interesting moment when I looked at the Learners Exchange schedule and I saw my name next to an interesting phrase, signs and wonders.

And I kind of looked at it for a second. I think Amber saw it first and she leaned over and said, Jim, are you aware of this? Looked at it and I had to think for a second.

What the expectations might be for a Learners Exchange on signs and wonders. You know, you have to think, it's the expectations that signs and wonders can be performed or exhibited.

[1 : 13] So that caused some interesting little conversations. But when I spoke with Bill and when I spoke with Dr. Packer, their interest was more understandably on the signs and wonders movement that grew up in the early 80s particularly and has continued, although I think it's rather transformed at the moment.

And we can talk about that as we move on. But my connection with the signs and wonders movement is through the vineyard.

The signs and wonders movement is often associated with the vineyard movement or almost a one-to-one correlation between the two.

And given my experience of growing up in the vineyard, my spiritual life was profoundly formed in that movement. And so to talk about the signs and wonders movement is for me to talk a bit about my own family.

And that brings up its own set of interesting aspects. To talk about one's own family is to reflect on the best bits and the not-so-best bits of one's background.

[2 : 36] And if you think about the family that you grew up in, I'm sure that you can find things that you appreciate profoundly. And you can point out the bits that were less than healthy.

And that's where I'm coming from when I talk about the signs and wonders movement and when I talk about the vineyard movement. Fundamentally, I come from a very positive perspective.

Fundamentally, when I look back on my upbringing within the signs and wonders movement and within the vineyard movement, it's primarily a very, very positive thing.

That's where I met Jesus. And I no-know Jesus other than the one I met there. And He's the same one that we worship at St. John's.

And He's our Lord and Savior. And I give great thanks for the heritage the Lord gave me in that background. And much of that background I carry with me today wholeheartedly and excitedly.

[3 : 41] And I pray and look for the Lord to do amazing things in every church. And then there's the other bits. Every movement has its less than healthy aspects.

And so growing up from that background is a process of sifting through and sifting out the things that can be tossed away.

And so what I would like to do tonight, or this morning, I'm going to be in the evening service. So now every time I get behind the podium, I want to say this evening.

But what I want to do this morning is do just three things, three objectives. One, I would like to review the historical and theological context of the movement.

So that you have, my assumption is that many of us here have little to no understanding of what the Vineyard Movement is or the Science and Learners Movement. So I want to talk a little bit about just historically and theologically what's going on.

[4 : 48] Then I would like to talk about my own experience growing up in that context. Lots of people can talk to us about the theology and the history of the Vineyard.

But a unique thing that I can provide is something of an insider's perspective. So I'll talk a little bit about that, and it will be our second objective.

And thirdly, I want to talk a little bit about strengths and weaknesses, and perhaps a few things that we can learn as good and solid and conservative evangelicals from our Vineyard friends.

So first of all, I want to review the historical and theological context of the movement. Now, the Science and Wonders Movement, as I said, started really in the late 70s, early 80s, and it grew and morphed, and it continued to morph all through the 80s and into the 90s.

And as I said, it continues to do so today. But it really centered upon a figure called John Wimber. Some of you may be somewhat familiar with that term.

[5 : 58] Others may have no association with that person. John Wimber was my pastor growing up. He was the pastor of the Anaheim Vineyard, and he was really the founder of the Vineyard Movement and a spiritual leader up until his death in, I believe, 1997.

The movement really is a confluence of three crucial movements that came together in the late 70s and the early 80s.

The first is this thing called the Jesus Movement. Some of you may be familiar with the Jesus People. The Jesus People Movement happened all over North America.

It happened in Vancouver very significantly. In Southern California, it was centered largely in a church called Calgary Chapel. In the late 60s, somewhere around 1967, Calgary Chapel was a small conservative church with some Pentecostal influences in Costa Mesa, California.

And it was a rather small church called a new pastor called Chuck Smith. Chuck Smith came to the church, and he was a middle-aged man who wore suits a lot of the time, and he would have been the last person you would expect to have any influence on the hippies who had recently nearly taken over Costa Mesa, California.

[7 : 35] When Chuck Smith recounts those days, he talks about how he really just wished they'd take a bath. That was his main concern when it came to the hippies in Costa Mesa, California.

But when his wife, the Lord moved upon his wife to begin praying for these hippies, she became profoundly compassionate with regard to their addiction to drugs and alcohol, their deception that they were under with regard to the whole free love philosophy.

And so she began to pray for them constantly. And Chuck Smith eventually met a man named Lonnie Frisbee, who was a, I believe, 18-year-old hippie, like a real, you know, die-in-the-wool, pedigree hippie, who had just recently been converted.

And Chuck Smith, the conservative middle-aged pastor, and Lonnie Frisbee, the young, extremely charismatic, charismatic, I mean that not in the theological sense, but in the sense of his personality, he was very charismatic.

Actually, I mean that in both senses, in his case. They began to team up with regard to ministry, and Lonnie Frisbee began speaking at Calvary Chapel, and all heaven broke loose.

[9 : 06] The hippies of Costa Mesa, California, began streaming into this little, tiny, conservative church with lots of wooden pews.

And when they came in with their bare feet, and they smelled, and the elders put up signs saying, you know, shirt and shoes require a church.

And Chuck Smith ripped it down fortunately right before a church, and it just exploded with conversions. People coming to know Jesus by hundreds, and eventually into the thousands.

So they burst their church buildings, and they set up a giant tent, and then the tent didn't fit properly, and so they built this giant church.

And it was just a profound time. They began planting churches all over Southern California, and eventually the world. And Lonnie Frisbee and Chuck Smith were at the epicenter of the Jesus Movement.

[10 : 14] At the same time, on the other side of town, in 1962, so this is before the Jesus People Movement really started going, there was a guy named John Wimber. John Wimber was part of the Righteous Brothers, band, and you can notice on a melody, and things like that.

He was a saxophone player. He'd been involved in jazz music performance since the time he was a little kid. and he was involved in the lifestyle.

He was a druggie. His marriage was falling apart. And through the course of a variety of events, him and his wife became Christians in 1962 in a little Quaker church in Yorba Linda, California. And John Wimber really had a gift of evangelism. Him and his wife began witnessing to everybody that they came in contact with. And his wife was very kind of intellectual and wanted to lay out all the core doctrine and really make sure that the converts understood what they were getting themselves into.

And John just wanted to seal the deal. He would come in and say, so do you want to sign up? Do you want to confess your sins and give your heart to Christ? And so they were kind of a dynamic duo. And all through the 60s, they were very effective in evangelism.

[11 : 35] And eventually, John became the pastor of the little Quaker church. Yorba Linda Friends Church in Southern California. And the church grew substantially and reaped some of the benefits of the Jesus People movement when that came rolling through town.

Now, John, though, was a good dispensationalist, which, I won't go into all of what that means, but one of the things that that means is that John had, he was firmly convinced that any kind of the miraculous or the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are spoken of in the New Testament ceased at the, in his case, he believed at the end of the time of the apostles.

He understood them to be purely and exclusively, their purpose would be purely and exclusively to validate the ministry of Jesus and to validate the ministry of the apostles.

And that once Scripture was written, there would be no need for signs and wonders or any kind of miraculous. So he ministered in that context all through the Jesus movement.

Then in the mid-70s, John Wimber was, he stepped down from being the pastor of the large Quaker congregation that had really grown substantially under his ministry. He continued to attend that church, but he was hired on staff at Fuller Seminary to begin teaching and working with, in a research capacity, with the missions component of that school.

[13 : 13] And he was tasked to research church growth. What is it that makes churches grow? And can that be studied from a sociological perspective?

Can we identify some of the characteristics of growing churches vis-a-vis not growing churches? And from that, can we gain certain lessons about how to run churches in a more effective manner so that evangelism goes forward effectively?

So that is the, if the first movement that's important is the Jesus movement, the second is church growth. Church growth, John began to study different churches around the world that we're growing in.

One of the things that he noticed is that in the area that we would now call the global south, the church was growing very rapidly, and one of the things that, one of the phenomena associated with that growth is the presence of miraculous phenomena.

Signs and wonders is what eventually became associated with it, taken from the biblical term. If you looked in Africa, if you looked in South America, you saw churches growing, and there was a positive, there seemed to be, according to John's estimate of the data, there seemed to be a positive correlation between the growth of the church and the presence of certain size of women's healings and delivering of demonic oppression in people.

[14 : 45] just an illustrating story, I had a friend who was a good, solid, or is, to this day, a good, solid, conservative Baptist and was trained to be a complete cessationist and went as a missionary down to Brazil.

And during a street preaching incident, he was preaching with a Brazilian friend and there was a woman in the crowd who, an old woman, very feeble woman, who, when she heard the gospel, she became, it was as if she became a different person.

She became very violent and grabbed the Brazilian preacher, threw him on the ground, and began choking him. And the only thing that he could squeak out to my friend is, brother, cast the devil out of her.

Which, which was in great conflict with his understanding and his ministry model. And it's interesting, when he told me this story, he said, you know, I had read the Bible and I know Jesus wins.

So he said, in the name of Jesus, come out of her. Did you stop? And, ministry was able to go on. Well, John started hearing all these stories from particularly the global south and began to wonder, is there something to this?

[16:14] Is there something to the fact that it seems in the New Testament you saw a lot of this phenomenon, church group. Seems in the global south similar things are happening. What's going on in our context?

But, theologically, he had no framework to explain it. So that brings us to the third crucial component of the Science and Wonders movement and that is the kingdom theology of George Eldon Ladd.

Now, George Eldon Ladd was a New Testament scholar at Fuller Theological Seminary in the, I believe, the 50s, 60s, and 70s.

I know, certainly the 60s. And he began writing a, he wrote a lot, a great deal, on the concept of the kingdom of God. And what he eventually came to is an understanding of the kingdom of God based on the teachings of Jesus that is in many circles, certainly abrogated and quite widely accepted throughout many conservative evangelicals.

It's not a dispensationalist view, again, I'm not going to go into that, but if that's helpful to you, it contrasts with the dispensationalist view. And what it did for John is he looked at the theology of George Eldon Ladd to him explain the Ministry of Science and Wonders for today.

[17:42] And John began to apply this theology in a way that George Eldon Ladd never did, but made a lot of sense for John. And so I want to go over that theology very quickly.

If you look on the back page, look over the page, and this is an extremely simplified version of George Eldon Ladd's theology.

But I hesitate even to go here, but I think it's important for us to understand. Excuse me. what you see there, first of all, starting on the left-hand side, is the fall.

And we can think of that in terms of the kingdom of God lost. The kingdom of God being the rule and reign of God. When you think of a kingdom, you can think of the kingdom in terms of a geographic area over which a king has authority.

Or you can think of it as the, in a sense, the extent or the duration of a king's authority. So we can say something like Henry, during the kingdom of Henry VIII, okay, that could refer to the kingdom of England, or it could refer to the duration of his reign, if that makes sense, the duration of his authority over that realm.

[19:04] So when we think in terms of the kingdom of God, George Eldon Ladd understood it to be that sphere of reality over which God's authority is being fully submitted to and expressed, so to speak.

So, in the fall, the kingdom of God is, in a sense, lost, in that there is a rebellion against God's authority and God's rulership. The story of the Bible, then, is the story of God re-establishing and breaking in, the kingdom of God breaking into this world.

Throughout the Old Testament, we have the beginnings of this verbiage talking about this age and then the age to come. You see that in a lot of the prophecies and whatnot, so you're always looking for the age to come.

Sometimes it talks about the day of the Lord. Sometimes it talks about various words that express the messianic age, the time of the Messiah. And the way it turned out in Latin is that with the coming of Jesus, so if you look at the cross there, the coming of Jesus, Jesus came as the king. He came and inaugurated the kingdom of God in his ministry, in his death, and in his resurrection. So you see Jesus coming and exerting his authority over nature, right?

[20:32] You see him calming the wind and waves, over the physical universe and disease. You see him healing. You see him exerting influence over the evil.

So you see him casting out demons. And so in the Gospels, George Ellen Land understood that there was this conflict going on between the invasion of the kingdom of God and the person of Jesus, and the powers of this age, so to speak, the demonic and the forces of evil, sin, death, the devil, the world resisting that inbreaking.

But Jesus proves victorious in his death and in his resurrection, and then he ascends to the Father. Now, the thing is, George Ellen Land looked through the Gospels, and he saw that at times Jesus talks about the kingdom of God being here.

The kingdom of God is among you, Jesus says in various thoughts. And other times Jesus comes and he says, the kingdom of God seems to be in the future, a long way away. And other times Jesus comes and he says certain things that sound like the kingdom of God is just around the corner.

You could lean forward and you'd enter it nearly. And so how do we reconcile all this data that seems to be in tension with one another with regard to the temporal inbreaking of the kingdom of God?

[22 : 08] Is it here? Is it not here? Is it sort of here? Is it about ready to be here? And what Ellen Land eventually came up with is this concept that the kingdom of God is already and not yet.

That when Jesus came he inaugurated the kingdom of God but the kingdom of God is not entirely consummated. The kingdom of God will be entirely consummated at his second coming. But between his death and resurrection and his second coming actually between probably his ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit and the second coming of Christ we live in this time of tension this already not yetness where we experience aspects of the kingdom of God already but we are nevertheless looking forward the believer in the church is a people of hope looking forward to what will be finally.

So if you look at the diagram that box that is after the cross but before the age to come the second coming you see that box saying the church experiences the kingdom of God is already and not yet. Now what that means John Wimber took that and applied that to signs and wonders saying that when Jesus came miracles demonic expulsions healings those sorts of things were signs that the kingdom of God was bringing in.

[23 : 40] They were signs of God's authority over the universe and that in the church age what we will experience is that those sorts of signs and wonders can happen today and would fulfill the same sort of purpose that they fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

So healings today would be signs to us that God has authority over our physicality and over our body.

And it's a foretaste a precursor to in the age to come after Jesus returns we will have completely restored bodies for instance. And so as the church prays today from time to time the aspects of the kingdom that are not yet can break into the all rank if that makes sense.

Now John began applying that to our current time and our experience of signs and wonders and what that did is it gave it created a movement that on the exterior looked like any other Pentecostal or charismatic movement but only at a very surface level and it had a completely different theological underpinning for why we pray for the sick why we were open to casting out demons and the miraculous and what not.

For instance in certain Pentecostal movements there is an idea that God should always heal that if you pray for someone who is sick there is a basic assumption that God will always heal them that God always wants to heal them and that if God doesn't heal them then there is something there is some problem and usually it is a problem with us either the prayer doesn't have enough faith or the one being prayed for doesn't have enough faith or there is some sin involved or whatever now not all Pentecostals believe that please hear that but in certain subgroupings that teaching was elongated in John Winifor's understanding that played no part we prayed for the sick and then we ultimately left it up to God to figure out whether or not that person would be healed so we understood that sometimes because the kingdom is not yet consummated not everybody is going to get healed but because the kingdom sometimes through the power of the

[26 : 26] Holy Spirit breaks in today sometimes people are going to get healed so we'll pray for them all and let God sort it out kind of thing and then that framework then was applied to healing deliverance from the demonic it was applied also to conversion and to how we approach evangelism so we would preach and we would be praying Lord let your kingdom come Lord let your kingdom come and we knew the kingdom would come when that person got converted and then we jump up and down and get excited and so it created a movement that was in many regards very similar to the charismatic movement and to the Pentecostal movement but there ended up being a greater emphasis upon the sovereignty of God and a lessened emphasis upon star performers so for instance when I was growing up when we would do healing ministry in my church which was just about every second

John would get up in front and he would you would kind of expect he was the famous guy you would expect that all the sick people would come down and line up and that he would pray for everybody that almost never happened growing up what he would do is he would call the high schoolers for instance youth group youth group come on down everybody come on down youth group pray for the sick people go and we would go and I go up and I was trained to walk up to somebody hi my name is Jim what's your name Sally Sally couldn't meet you Sally where does it

hurt you know okay let's pray and we begin praying Lord I invite you Holy Spirit to come will you please bring healing to Sally now and we would wait sometimes wait a long time and we would ask the Lord

Lord is there anything else you want to do in Sally's life right now as we pray sometimes you know we kind of get a certain intuition or a certain leaning and we were taught to be kind of be attentive to these things so from time to time we ask Sally do you have unforgiveness issues yeah let's deal with that right now and we continue praying and that would then inevitably lead to some sort of confession and some sort of forgiveness and restoration and sometimes Sally would walk away still physically ill but spiritually rejuvenated and sometimes you deal with the spiritual aspects and Sally would walk away physically healed and we would be really excited and I tell you as a high schooler and younger that was pretty fun and we had a great time and we had a great time seeing God show up and we prayed for people and they become

Christians sometimes although I that was one of the disappointments we always wanted to see more conversions but back to the movement as a whole what happened is that these three movements the Jesus people movement the church growth movement and the kingdom theology of Georgia and land came together and John Wimber came to the conviction theologically that these things are available for the church today and that we should begin to seek them now John came to that theological conviction before he came to that ministry experience so when there was a Bible study in 1977 that out of that Quaker church that then formed itself into a new congregation that developed then into the vineyard Christian fellowship of Anaheim which is the church in which I grew up and that at the vineyard they began to pray for healings and they didn't say anything happened for a long time but theologically

John was convinced that this should work so they kept on praying for stuff nothing happened and then one person got healed which was extremely surprising to John Wimber I think he prayed for this woman who I think had a fever or something like that and then got up and began to explain to her husband why God doesn't always heal all the while she had gotten up and was feeling great and began to wait on her and that was a very surprising experience for John Wimber but then in the early 80s things began to speed up quite a lot actually Bonnie Frisby whom I mentioned earlier that hippie that actual pedigree hippie showed up to preach at the vineyard at an evening service in 1981 or 82 and once again that became a historic moment that was the beginning of when the Vineyard

[31 : 43] Christian Fellowship of Mannerheim began to see phenomenon that had been previously associated with Pentecostal and charismatic churches and that came with a great intensity in those early 80s and there were an enormous amount of conversions the church mushroomed and grew into a 6,000 member congregation and John began traveling all over the world teaching this kingdom theology and inviting people particularly conservative evangelicals to begin participating in this ministry particularly he went to England and he had a lot of connections with the Anglican church in England so if you hear of Holy Trinity Brompton out of which Alpha the Alpha force came if you heard of Soul Survivor which is a youth movement in the Church of England and in the UK if you heard of St. Andrew's Chorleywood which is an Anglican church there all of those churches were profoundly impacted by John

Weber's theology and the signs and others movement and their unique style of charismatic evangelicalism is this brand now we should move on a little bit of a reflection about what it was like to grow up in that context and basically it was really great and at the most fundamental level it was wonderful my family came from a hyper Wesleyan perfectionism background so the church background that my parents grew up in believed in pursuing what they called a second blessing wherein the sin nature was eradicated within the Christian and from that point onward the Christian should expect no longer to sin you can make mistakes but you didn't sin from that point onward trouble that it didn't work very well for my parents and for my family and what it eventually led to oftentimes is you either have to cover up and deny the sin that's there or you're not a good Christian and you're always wondering whether or not you're actually converted and in the mid 80s my family experienced a significant breakdown we went through a very difficult period of time that there was enough brokenness in my family that we no longer fit in the good hyper Wesleyan model church model that had been formed in so my family came stumbling out of that church and broken and battered and beaten down and very weak came stumbling into this really really weird church that met in a warehouse and the pastors wore you know Hawaiian print shirts and everybody had

long hair and there were most people wore flip flops that was the footwear choice and it was very strange to my family but it was profoundly refreshing one of the real benefits of an emphasis upon healing in the congregations is it wasn't just physical healing that's what became famous that was an aspect of what

I grew up in it wasn't the star it was a profound awareness of our need for God to break into our lives and so we came in emotionally broken and we found mercy we found people who would be willing to pray with us for long periods of time and people who were committed to sitting with us praying and asking God's grace to come and flood our lives and that was really good stuff and as a kid I watched my parents be transformed in this context into people who were grace people people who rehearsed the Lord's favor and the Lord's mercy and goodness to them in profound ways and as a kid there's nothing better than to see your dad God's work unleashed in your dad's life and in your mother's life and so

I got to watch that and then as I grew up in that context I was blessed to take on that heritage of an emphasis upon God's work and what God does in our lives rather than always focusing upon ourselves and so as I was growing up these kind of the phenomena the charismatic phenomena the signs and wonders and all those sorts of things to me it was just as simple as well it was all very straightforward read it in the Bible and we'd ask God to do it today and you know it was pretty much that simple and sometimes he did and sometimes he didn't and sometimes he were disappointed when he didn't and really excited when he did you know it wasn't much more complicated than that when I was growing up and we you know a lot of us spoke in tongues for them and all those sorts of things then when I came into high school some wonderful things began to occur our high school group there's a group of us that the Lord just moved out of our hearts to begin meeting together and praying that God would move in our midst in greater ways and that God would bring more people to know him so we began meeting on Friday nights in a

[37 : 43] Bible study and that Bible study just this was the fall of 1993 that Bible study just exploded eventually we had 60 youth coming on a Friday night to sing together to worship together to read the Bible together and to pray for each other that's what we did we'd stay up until midnight praying for one another during that process John Weber was traveling all over the world and he decided he was taking a trip to Australia and New Zealand and he invited the youth group to come and be the primary people that prayed for people in these conferences that he was putting on and I was invited to come along so there's about 30 I think 30 of us high schoolers a college student which is a frightening thing frightening thought today but it all seemed very natural then we went down to New Zealand and Australia and we prayed for people that came forward they wanted to come to know Christ we lead them to

Christ and most of them were Christians and pastors went on we prayed for them and for their ministries and God's power began showing up in ways that were really quite amazing and quite surprising that was in the winter and spring of 1994 and that grew into what you may have heard of as the Toronto blessing while we were in Australia and New Zealand we heard of this church in Canada in Toronto where these things were beginning to happen people experiencing profound awareness of God's love and of the Father's affection for them and then often times that exhibiting itself in strange phenomena laughing shaking falling these sorts of things and that became a very essential aspect in my experience in my high school years life and that some have said all boasted that he speaks in tongues more than all of them sort of thing and I jokingly tell two of my conservative evangelical friends of which I can count myself one that I have experienced the strangest in charismatic phenomena and yet in the beginning what happened in our lives was profound we would pray for each other and this as I said this profound sense of

God's love I've known very little like it since God's love and God's wrath I remember being prayed for one time and it was the first time that I had ever it just looked and he dropped and I saw God's wrath towards me and the justice of his wrath and at the same time I saw his love and mercy towards me and how that can't there's no way to get away from that changing the unfortunate thing is that that movement the outward phenomena was so bizarre and so strange that those are the things that everybody knows about shaking laughing barking like dogs and all sorts of other very odd things that to be honest I don't really understand and I didn't understand at the time but I knew that in those months I came to love Christ in a way that hasn't worn off yet and I look back with profound thanksgiving for those days and that led to a real evangelistic zeal we just wanted to tell a little bit about

Jesus and one of the great disappointments of the Toronto blessing for us and it's one that can evoke great sadness in there is that there never seemed to be the outbreak of evangelism that we all pray to come to and I think there's a variety of reasons for that but to this day it's the thing I long and I pray for that we would see in Vancouver an outpouring of God's blessing that would express itself in many people coming to know Jesus like what happened to the Jesus people in the home world don't have much more time but a few thoughts on strengths and weaknesses and I think I'll start with weaknesses well actually I'll start just noting the controversy there was great controversy I guess I'll just say this there was great controversy over John

Winder's teaching particularly amongst conservative evangelists and which was interesting growing up you know I grew up thinking of myself as conservative evangelical if you would have characterized me as a Pentecostal growing up that's not the word I used to describe myself as a vineyard boy nor a charismatic I understood myself as a conservative evangelical that just wanted to do what I saw Jesus doing I mean it was as simple as that nothing more complicated the bizarre thing and this happened particularly when I was in high school I became aware that I met all these conservative evangelicals that really didn't like me many of them quite frankly were mean and one of the regrets that I have is that there couldn't have been more interaction with some of the really strong evangelical theology particularly some of the great in conservative circles

[43 : 58] I was aware in high school that I needed them I read some of their books and I thought wow these guys have some wisdom I need more of that but then I read all these other articles where they said all sorts of really nasty things against my church and some of them were patently not true and one thing I just wanted to mention is that that was very very unfortunate that there became this polemic amongst many conservative evangelicals being very polemical and I think part of the spirit towards the Sons and Wonders movement there were some good critiques one that you might want to read is in a book called Power Religion Dr.

Packer has a chapter in there but there's a chapter by D.A. Carson where he investigates some of Wimber's theology from a New Testament perspective and it's fantastic and many of the critiques that he would give of Wimber's theology I think I wouldn't be surprised at all if John Wimber were here if he wouldn't look at that and go oh good point and it's quite well done so further reading I recommend that a couple of the weaknesses that I see from this vantage point one the first one there would be two main ones one is a shallow theological tradition number two is a shallow pastoral application first of all shallow theological tradition one of the dangers in a movement like this is you can take what might be fundamentally a valid concern say an openness to God healing people or an openness to

God doing surprising and miraculous things in our day and age most of us would agree that that's not a terrible thing but there's a danger when that becomes to take so much of our attention that it grows out of biblical proportion so you begin to talk more about healing than the Bible talks about healing that's a problem and that I think happened from time to time while I was growing up so you take good things grow them out of proportion and then you have a distorted image of a Christian life and a theology that was one of the weaknesses that happened and secondarily within the shallow theological tradition you had doctrines that were somewhat out of proportion and that led you to kind of run down rabbit trails that you really shouldn't have run down and so when I was growing up there was this kind of pendulum swing in my church when I was young the emphasis was on physical and inner healing and you just spent a lot of time on that probably more time than was necessary in a real balance if you're shooting for balance in biblical proportion but then in the late 80s this concept of prophecy came rolling in with a bang and we all ran over and we tried to prophesy over everything and what happened there some good bits came out of that there were a lot of weeds associated with it you know strange bizarre things

I can tell you stories and we can go on forever there I won't but there came a time at which you began to listen to some of these people who called themselves prophets and it just wasn't helpful anymore they began saying just silly unwise things and so that pendulum swung over and then the Toronto thing came in the early mid 90s and we swung over there and we couldn't go to church service without people laughing and giggling and falling over and after a while you begin to look at that and you begin to think are they pursuing Christ or are they pursuing some sort of strange experience I think often times we were pursuing fleshly experience and there was a lack of theological depth that led to a lack of wisdom and that leads to a shallow pastoral application we I was raised to look for the inbreaking of God's kingdom and that meant that I was always looking for

I was always looking to flip a light switch I was always looking for what I call a crisis spirituality Lord I have a I'm struggling with a sin okay fix it I'm waiting I'm waiting now to be honest God did stuff like that there were people who used to be drug addicts and ten minutes later they weren't drug addicts anymore okay but that didn't always happen and what we what I didn't really learn until later on and make us all feel warm and fuzzy I don't think I really learned this until hanging out at the end of this is how to walk with Jesus when the fireworks are going I didn't know how to do that when the Toronto thing began to wax weird and then when it fell off and the bizarre was no longer normal [50 : 02] I thought God had left I didn't know how to be a Christian when you prayed for somebody and it didn't happen now I didn't know how to be a slow cooker Christian I only knew how to be a microwave Christian and that was a very perplexing experience and I would have appreciated a deeper pastoral awareness of how to be my leaders and how to get through this and there was unwind pastoral guidance that happened in all sorts of ways strengths and one quick note on those weaknesses I think you could a lot of the valid critique of the conservative evangelicals toward the vineyard movement and toward the science and vineyard movement I think come up can roll up into a shallow theological tradition John Lumber would say things that were not he would use terminology and phrases that now

I read it and I go oh John well I wish he hadn't used that phrase because that's going to stress out a lot of conservative evangelicals and given that he was my pastor growing up I'm pretty sure what he meant and I'm not sure what he meant all the time was what was eventually communicated to some of the adversaries so some of the opponents so anyways that's it valid strengths rich ministry and rich spiritual lives first of all rich ministry I was raised to pray like it mattered I was raised to pray like God might do something and that was wonderful we prayed expectantly and there was a there was an awareness that that God really could show up at any moment and when God did show up it didn't overly shock us we kind of learned how to do that

I remember when I was in grade 10 I think she was in grade 9 this little grade 9 youth group girl she's tiny little tiny girl praying for this woman the woman began showing forth I mean her personality completely changed her voice changed and it was pretty clear that there was something pretty evil going on in this woman and my friend there is a great 9 girl she didn't skip a beat she said come out it came out it took a little bit wrong in that but it wasn't all that and to be honest she didn't really want to talk too much about it she just went on she was raised those sorts of things okay we should expect from time to time that God might want to invade somebody's life and that might involve kicking out some of the earlier residents and that was just very normal she went on to be a missionary to

Tibet and I think she was black lifted by the Chinese government she's a pretty great girl we prayed expectantly and I remember the first time I went to Wheaton College in Illinois and I wanted to try to understand at least conservative adults who didn't like me so much and I remember the thing I loved being there the richness of scriptural teaching and what not boy I miss people praying for me felt like these conservative evangelicals like I just didn't know how to pray I'd say something was going on in my life and they'd go oh that's too bad and then they'd say I'll pray for you next time I think of you or something and I just didn't cut it you know I was like well come on let's pray and so there was one of the great strengths was a rich expected prayer we really wanted to be doers and not just hearers of the word if John

Bloomberg preached the sermon once he preached it a thousand times he would tell us guys the meat is in the street what he meant by that is that the meat of discipleship the meat of God's word is exhibited as we live it out not as we grow our heads big with information so he said if James 5 tells you to pray for people get praying if James 5 tells you to confess your sins get confessing if other passages tell you to feed the poor get to it don't sit around and theologize without getting the job done so for instance one of the things that is not well known is we prayed for healing because we understood we thought that that signified the coming of the kingdom we fed the poor for the same reason and the

[55 : 31] Anaheim Vineyard had the largest food bank in all Orange County when I was growing up which was a county in South and we saw no difference between the two really and so we were doers we tried to be doers and not doers only that's a strength and then strength rich spiritual lives we had a religion this goes along with doers but it's a little different I was raised that Christianity is an evangelical Christianity is a religion of the heart that we come to know the gospel but we must know and love Christ at the deepest part of who we are we need to know the height and depth and

breadth of God and love not merely proper theology we weren't satisfied with mere precision in our theology we wanted to know Jesus and there are times at which

I worry for those who approach some of us conservative evangelicals who rightly and properly hear me say this are concerned with orthodoxy we should be we should be viciously pursuant of proper theological orthodoxy but let us not forget to love deeply let's not forget to love Christ and to know he's love for us so we're we're a religion of the heart and not merely a dry orthodoxy and I think that's ultimately the true test D.A.

Carson in the very good chapter critiquing some aspects of Bloomberg's theology asked a question ask this question the question is whether the movement draws men and women to a renewed love for the Jesus of God's great redemptive historical act the Jesus of the cross and the resurrection now in context he's clearly asking the question well we'll have to see whether or not this happened this is happening in the vineyard I think D.A.

Carson in this passage is not entirely certain I read this passage and it warmed my heart because I look back and there's not a question in my mind I know no other Jesus than the one that I met in the weird crazy strange times during the Toronto years and my journey out of the vineyard into the Anglican world is I told David shortness I said I'm just a vineyard boy trying to grow up and I just want to grow up and know Jesus in a deeper way and in a more rigorous and comprehensive way and that leads then to the last point and I'll stop what way forward and then I had this funny phrase empowered evangelicals I think what we need to do is you know the signs and wonders movement kind of it launched in the 80s and it had a kind of heyday and in the 90s the Toronto thing happened and whatnot

I think the best bits of it are seen when it when it begins to kind of work its way in to the rest of conservative evangelicals I think you see that I think some of the best exemplars of that happen in England at the moment places I think Holy Trinity Brompton is doing a good job I think Samanity Charlie Wood and some of the new wine movements within the church in England but I think the way forward is that we need to be we need to pursue an evangelical catholicity by that I mean an evangelical comprehensiveness wherein we incorporate the best bits of this movement not wanting to sign up hook, line, and sinker for every funny thing that ever happened in the movement but to look at it and say Lord what is it that I need to learn here and to begin to incorporate that and precisely what some of those things are is a far longer conversation

[60 : 02] I think I'll stop is that time? okay so shall we open it up for questions for about 10 minutes if anybody has any questions yeah first of all tremendous historical play out very very excellent and so then it begs the question if you've come from that great experience which no doubt is very valid and now you're into the theological growing up mode so have you wrestled then how you can marry those two because both are valid aren't they?

yeah it does beg that question doesn't it? yes it does should I repeat the question? okay I'll repeat the question the question is given my background and given my current position of as I said trying to grow up theologically how do I marry the two?

the fundamentally as I said I met Jesus there I still know Jesus or could I even know him better he is the constant his character hasn't changed what he likes to do hasn't changed hopefully I've matured a bit to be able to discern the bits that are really him from the bits that were me in my own fleshliness my own running into errors so the process of marrying the two really is the same as getting to know Jesus better and seeking to live out the

Christian life better fundamentally I see no reason I know there's a lot of people that disagree with me and if you do I respect it but I see no reason to say that God does not work in miraculous ways today I see no reason not to pray for everybody and let God sort it out but I do that with trying to keep Jesus at the center of everything trying to keep the gospel at the center of everything and then these other things are kind of like tools in the tool belt you know Batman he's got that great utility belt he's always got the right tool for the right moment and so I want to be Batman Batman doesn't focus on this utility belt he's focused on getting the mission done so I think that's what we need to do and as we go forward you know if I pray for someone and there's that profound sense of evil pray that God invades and that his light shines and expels the darkness and if someone's hurt pray for him and if someone doesn't know

Jesus yet I'll introduce them I think I don't want to make it too much more complicated than that and I want to ask the Lord to keep on coming and pray expectantly right you know just some thoughts anyway more questions yeah I also come from charismatic or inter-gothical background and people

have common for kids back then who were speaking tongues yeah when I look back I think I want to say that I was faking it and I think many people from that school now feel the same way what would you say to those people the question is my brother here comes from a Pentecostal charismatic background and one of the emphases within those movements is the practice of speaking in tongues and kids that grow up in those contexts often speak in tongues or seem to and later feel that they were faking it that it was not a genuine work of the

[64 : 52] Holy Spirit and what would I say to them I say don't take it and don't worry about it to be honest one of the benefits one of the things I'm thankful for is that in my background most people to be honest spoke in tongues but fortunately at its best moments there are exceptions to this at the best moments speaking in tongues wasn't a litmus test for being filled with the Spirit and so there were people who never spoke in tongues and that wasn't necessarily a problem and I agree with that I don't I again this is we could have a big long debate about this and I don't really want to I see no reason to restrict speaking in tongues and but it's same token is a a a very big problem when speaking in tongues grows so out of proportion as to be viewed as some sort of litmus test for one spiritual that's just and that should be rejected and those of us who do speak in tongues and those of us who do not speak in tongues shouldn't spend too much time thinking about it spend more time praying than you spend worrying about whether they might not be speaking tongues does that help at all?

yeah I talked to a woman in South America once in a week spoke in tongues and but I wasn't the one that spoke with her friend and she said she said that's what you need like if you and therefore her speaking tongues because she had a need but lots of people don't speak in tongues because that God isn't feeling the need in their life that way and it seems to me that sounds more healthy the question is a friend a friend said that she spoke in tongues but her understanding of it was that God gives you what you need and in her case she for a variety of reasons speaking in tongues was a very hopeful aspect of her Christian life for others it's not and therefore God doesn't need to give it I think that's great one of the again one of the helpful this was at the best moments hear all of this these are at the best moments

I can tell you the dirty laundry as well but at the best moments again one of the things when we're taught that I find very helpful is when it came to spiritual gifts which all of the classic Pentecostal you know gifts you associate with Pentecostal charismatic movement were regularly practiced within the maker and the way he understood them though is that they were grace that God gives so that you can do a certain ministry task usually so for instance the gift of healing John would get up all the time and he would say guys he'd stick his hand in his pocket he was a good son of California just regularly yeah you know he was the dude in the sense of that word he's a good California guy you get there you say guys I don't have healing in my pocket I don't have any I don't heal you don't heal

Jesus heals so we're going to pray for people and if Jesus brings gifts of healing then Jesus brings gifts of healing and that's why he wasn't too concerned about who prayed for who as long as there's a Christian praying for somebody any Christian will do so to speak if God wants to get the work done and when it comes to things like speaking in tongues that would be applied similarly if in God's sovereignty he would want to bestow that gift perhaps for a certain time perhaps lifelong then he does if he doesn't then he doesn't he does have more questions yeah I was just going to make a statement more than a question Bill and I were involved in the beginning of movement too and it was a wonderful witness

I felt but there were weaknesses in the prophecy side prophecies were made unconfirmed whereas scripture says where there are two or three thereby things established and yet we found that they were acting upon just one word very helpful but I do your statement I know no other Jesus and the one I met is a wonderful expression of your faith and for many of us here too because going back to our rooms when we first came to know the Lord it is the most precious time in our lives really when we think about it we need to think about it more because it reestablishes that first our love of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives isn't that wonderful man if we could just paraphrase what we say because I think it's a hopeful comment particularly the first bit that within the

[70 : 49] Vineyard movement one of the weaknesses was a in the emphasis on prophecy sometimes or perhaps often big prophecies went unconfirmed as to their validity and that that caused problems I would completely agree with that and I saw that all the time now having said that I also saw there were times where it seemed like God was speaking and I don't have any other way

to explain some of those moments other than I mean I know it wasn't me and I know there were other things going on so David Watson of York do you think his church grew so quickly because of signs of London I mean his wife was giving prophecies many times here when they visited in Vancouver and he really felt that God was speaking through that passage it was very moving

I don't know David Watson's story a lot enough I know he was good friends with one time for I think this is the last one it's very short we just recently got here about a month and a bit from California and Canadian and Anglican originally so we come from Bethel Church which is at Bill Johnson which is very much touched by Toronto and women and very much in the forefront of what's going on today right now every service could pray for the sake some good some don't the point is if you pray some do if you don't none do or very very rarely sovereign I think the point is that even when it's being brought up yes there can be errors in prophecy as well but if you never prophesy what is better because we do prophesy in the heart so when you think about it it's better that you prophesy even if there's some of the flesh some that are perhaps out in left field because that would probably always be it's better to have that happening and then discerning what's what than not at all that would be my estimate and I think your comment there discerning what's what sure that's pretty important absolutely

I'm reading right now Jonathan Edwards Religious Affections and the whole purpose of this book is to get better at discerning what the spirit's doing I find it extremely helpful because he talks about things that I feel like he's speaking into my soul with regard to my background I mean he describes things I'm like grief was he there and the wisdom that he provides as ways of discerning would that we had some of them would that some of our pastors were trained in these things back in the day wow I can imagine wonderful things I couldn't ask for you to be allegedly oh Jim you're in trouble I don't intend to be hey you ask me brother you ask me you you you you you you you you you you you you you