



THE GENESIS AND THE GENIUS OF THE NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION

SO MUCH OF how you understand history depends on where you start telling the story. Many analysts of the January 6 riot have located its beginning in a gonzo, six-hour meeting held on December 18, 2020, at the White House, where then-president Donald Trump squabbled with lawyers and advisers including Rudy Giuliani, Sidney Powell, and Michael Flynn. That meeting reportedly involved screaming matches, airing of conspiracy theories about foreign governments interfering in the 2020 election, and heated arguments about whether Trump had any options left in contesting the election. Just hours after that meeting, in the early morning of December 19, Trump would send his inciting tweet: “Big protest in D. C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!”¹

The congressional January 6th Committee begins its narrative a month and a half earlier, on the morning of November 4, as the election count from the day before was beginning to point toward Joe Biden. That was when Trump, anticipating the voters’ verdict, spoke to the press, saying, “This is a fraud on the American public. . . . Frankly, we did win this election.”²

Or you could locate the genesis of January 6 even earlier—say, during the 2020 campaign, when Trump began floating ideas about voter fraud and questioning whether the election was rigged. Or what about starting with Trump’s inauguration in 2017, another cold January day that Trump declared, on the very steps of the US Capitol, was “the day the people became the rulers of this nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now”?

In truth, January 6 had many origin points. It represented a confluence of forces—populist sentiments, anti-Black and nativist racism, political grievances, conspiracy theories, pandemic exhaustion, MAGA belligerence, Christian nationalist rage. In this book, we look at the spiritual origins of January 6. Where did the assertive, optimistic, angry, shofar-blowing, worship-music-singing, dramatic prophesying Christian energy on display that day originate?

For that story, I'd suggest that we begin twenty-five years earlier, in 1996, at a meeting of pastors and a seminary professor in Los Angeles. Out of that meeting emerged a phrase and a movement that would leave an indelible mark on the religious disposition of the insurrection.

In the previous chapter, I proposed a model for locating this burgeoning Independent Charismatic subdivision of Christianity. C. Peter Wagner was the esteemed theorist of the growth of the fourth quadrant, arguing forcefully to his fellow evangelicals that they should embrace this unregulated and exciting new Independent Charismatic sector as the hotbed of God's work in the world.

Wagner's ideas, filtered through his closest followers or his prolific writings, have taken hold among a significant segment of these charismatic evangelicals today, and the people he mentored wield astounding influence over hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of followers. The remaining chapters introduce the cohort of Wagner's mentees, but in this chapter, we focus on Wagner himself. This diminutive, avuncular, and unpretentious professor with a signature goatee promoted and platformed a set of leaders and ideas from the margins of American Christianity—leaders and ideas that proved instrumental in mobilizing and inflaming Christians to be ready to rumble at the Capitol on January 6.

A Passion for Cows and Church Growth

Charles Peter Wagner—his friends all called him Peter—had an unusual profile for someone bound to become a seminary professor. Born in 1930, he grew up in New York City in the midst of the Great Depression, but he spent a lot of time with his grandmother, who lived in a small farming community upstate. There he developed a lifelong love of cows and farming equipment. His friends would later laugh at how he could identify any breed of cow by sight and offer an impromptu lecture on the finer points of cattle husbandry. Late in life, he would collect antique tractors, though he didn't own a farm. His family was irreligious, hardly ever attending church except for weddings and funerals. They didn't even own a Bible.

Peter enrolled in a college agriculture program and shortly thereafter met Doris Mueller, the daughter of local farmers and a recent convert to evangelical Christianity. Enamored with Doris, Peter began reading the Bible at her urging, and five months into their relationship, he decided to become a Christian. Doris, suspicious that his conversion might be prompted by a desire to marry her, cautioned him that she had promised God that she would become a missionary to Africa. Peter's response was, "Do they have cows over there in Africa?"

Later, in his memoir, he wrote, “When she assured me that they did, I told her that I would like to be a missionary too. So I accepted Christ and dedicated my life to be a missionary the same night.”³ This mixture of expeditious decision-making, utilitarianism, and willingness to radically rearrange his views and life plans would become a hallmark of his career.

The couple married ten months later, and Doris Wagner became Peter’s lifelong partner in ministry and academia. After he graduated from college, the couple moved to Southern California so that Peter could attend Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, a recently founded transdenominational school. Fuller was a big-tent evangelical institution and one of the main venues where the modern identity of being “an evangelical” emerged in the middle of the twentieth century.⁴ Fuller—my own alma mater, though I didn’t overlap with Peter Wagner there—remains one of the largest and most influential evangelical seminaries in the United States. Doris enrolled as an undergraduate at the nearby Biola College, now Biola University.

As a newcomer to evangelical Christianity and theology, the farm-minded Peter found many of his seminary courses too abstract and full of “irrelevant material.”⁵ But he managed to finish at Fuller, and then the couple pursued their vision of becoming missionaries. Instead of going to Africa as Doris had originally imagined, they spent sixteen years as missionaries in Bolivia. Their time there was devoted to raising their three daughters and attempting to start evangelical churches in the face of local Catholic opposition. In the process, Peter began teaching some classes at local Bible institutes, which led him to discover his love of instructing and mentoring younger people in ministry. During their years in the mission field, Peter Wagner also discovered a passion for writing. He would ultimately write hundreds of articles and dozens of books, many of them translated into multiple languages.

Peter returned to Fuller to do another master’s in missiology, the study of missionaries and missionary work. While there, he was introduced to a groundbreaking, buzzy field of study in the late 1960s called church growth. Church growth, which was pioneered by Wagner’s professor and mentor at Fuller, Donald McGavran, aimed to blend the hard-nosed data of sociology with evangelical theology. Church growth theorists were convinced that all the new learning coming out of the social sciences, if applied strategically, could accelerate the evangelizing work of the church. Instead of missionaries or churches merely aiming to convert individuals, they could target whole people groups, affinity clusters, and cultures.

This church growth concept spoke deeply to Wagner’s pragmatic streak and zeal for success and results, and in 1971, he and Doris chose to move back to Southern California for him to teach at Fuller, alongside McGavran. McGavran and Wagner were both faculty in Fuller’s newly created School for World Mission, a division of the seminary dedicated to training missionaries.

The Wagners' return to Fuller inaugurated the second major stage of Peter's career, and he would serve on the Fuller faculty from 1971 to 1999. Back in California, Peter also completed a PhD in social ethics from the University of Southern California. His dissertation offered a contrarian take on Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous lament that "11 am Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours in Christian America." Wagner asked what if that human instinct toward segregation into homogeneous groups could be "a dynamic tool for assuring Christian growth"?⁶ In other words, he claimed, it's natural for birds of a feather to flock together, so grouping people accordingly would be a more effective strategy for the church than focusing on integrating everything.

Renegade Seminary Professor

We have already seen how the theology and practice of being charismatic—building one's spirituality around supernatural experiences and extraordinary gifts given through the Holy Spirit—has created divisions in modern Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, evangelicalism, and Historically Black Protestantism. In formal theological terms, this is often talked about as the divide between "continuationists" and "cessationists." *Continuationist* is a synonym for *charismatic*: the belief that the extraordinary elements of early Christianity continue today. Cessationists are not anti-supernatural or anti-miracles per se, but they argue that those supernatural aspects of Christianity largely ceased to manifest after the founding of the early church—that they were a special dispensation for a special time.

Peter Wagner was not terribly invested in this argument early on in his career. The churches he joined after his conversion, Biola College (where Doris attended), and Fuller Seminary were all broadly cessationist in their orientation, so Wagner writes, "When I went to Bolivia as a missionary, I was a convinced cessationist."⁷ But the Wagners happened to be in Bolivia when a wave of Pentecostal revivalism was sweeping through South America. According to Wagner, in 1950, roughly 20 percent of the churches in Latin America were Pentecostal, but by 1970, they made up 70 percent of the churches.⁸

At first, the Wagners joined their fellow cessationist missionaries in dismissing these rival Christians as uncouth and irrational. Wagner would later marvel, "I felt I was serving God by denouncing Pentecostals!"⁹ But then Bolivians they knew and respected claimed they had experienced physical healing at Pentecostal revival services, and Wagner's interest was piqued.

By the time he started gravitating toward the church growth framework, Wagner's pragmatism outweighed his cessationism, and he became fascinated with the astounding growth of Pentecostalism. If growth signaled the blessing of God on a movement, as he believed it did, then clearly God was blessing the Pentecostals. The first book Wagner wrote after joining the Fuller faculty was provocatively titled

Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming, and, in it, he argued that Pentecostalism was the wave of the future. This, naturally, was very well received by the Pentecostals and other charismatics, who now felt that they had an ally among the predominantly cessationist faculty at Fuller. This was the context in which Peter Wagner met John Wimber.

A quarter century after his death, John Wimber still looms larger than life. He was a member of the band that became the Righteous Brothers, though he left before they took that name or became truly famous. Wimber left his literal rock-star life, converted to Christianity, and became a rock-star pastor. He came to Fuller as a doctoral student and took one of Peter Wagner's church growth classes in 1975. Wagner recognized that while he might have many theoretical ideas about church growth, John Wimber was "a bona fide practitioner."¹⁰ Every church or ministry Wimber touched seemed to grow exponentially. So Wagner hired Wimber to come and help lead the seminars and consulting side of his church growth work, training pastors and ministries in data-driven growth strategies.

In 1978, Wimber stopped working with Wagner at Fuller to start his own church. There Wimber began experimenting with charismatic expressions in the services. Wimber's motto was "doin' the stuff," as in we're just doing the stuff that Jesus did in his ministry, such as healing the sick and casting out demons. Wimber offered a more toned-down form of charismaticism that Wagner and other evangelicals found very appealing. In 1982, John Wimber became the leader of a blossoming movement of charismatic churches called the Vineyard, with already more than thirty churches in it, and Wimber's church, the Anaheim Vineyard, became the flagship of the movement. That same year, Peter Wagner invited Wimber back to Fuller for one of the boldest stunts of Wagner's academic career.

Wagner had spent the better part of a decade arguing to evangelicals that they needed to be open to charismatic and Pentecostal practices if they wanted their churches to grow, but now he seized the bull by the horns. Together, Wimber and Wagner created a Fuller course titled "MC510: Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth," which was explicitly about promoting these charismatic practices. It would become legendary, even notorious.

On paper, the Signs and Wonders course was being taught by Wagner, but John Wimber did most of the instructing. Every one of the eighty-five seats in the class filled, based on the course title and Wagner and Wimber's reputations. It was a three-hour class, and Wimber would teach for the first two hours. A gifted storyteller, he would often draw illustrations from miracles he had performed or witnessed. Then for the last part of the session, they would segue into "the clinic," where Wimber would invite the presence of the Holy Spirit and begin offering "words of knowledge"—personalized divine revelations—

to members of the class. After that, he'd invite students or others present who needed prayer to come forward, and he'd instruct the other students, using these live subjects, on how to pray for healing, how to cast out demons, and how to hear God's direction for that person.¹¹

The students were spellbound, many of them having never seen anything like this. When it was repeated in future terms, the course broke every enrollment record in Fuller's history. Wimber's clinic portion of the session began attracting overflow crowds, including many who were not even Fuller students.¹² According to reports, students were healed of physical and emotional maladies, and soon hundreds of students were trying to audit the course.

The course surfaced a profound hunger in wider evangelicalism for these types of experiential and miraculous stories. *Christian Life* magazine, a national evangelical publication, devoted an entire issue to the Signs and Wonders course, and it sold better than any issue they'd ever published. I have interviewed people who were Fuller students at the time, and so memorable and controversial was Wagner and Wimber's Signs and Wonders course that Fuller alumni still sometimes speak reverently of "MC510," a simple class code rendered into something momentous, revelatory.

Wagner and Wimber's course proved as suspect among the Fuller faculty as it was popular among their students. Most Fuller professors were cessationists, and on top of that, Fuller was trying to be a respectable, centrist evangelical seminary. Here Wagner was bringing in an avant-garde pastor to teach students how to heal people in a for-credit course. Evangelicals were talking, and Wagner even overheard whispers that "Fuller Seminary is going charismatic."¹³ The academic credibility of the seminary was on the line, other faculty worried, recognizing that, given the fervor around Wimber and his experiential teaching, the course's "goals and methods [are] not open to normal academic critique."¹⁴

After four years of this—as the course enrollment was hitting 250 students each quarter, and Fuller staff were being posted at the doors to keep out unregistered students—the rest of the Fuller faculty intervened. With the rationale of preserving Fuller's reputation among its constituents, they forced the cancellation of the course.

These experiences—teaching MC510 and having it canceled—led to two paradigm shifts for Wagner. The first corroborated his early instinct, as a seminary student, that most theological learning was uselessly abstract and irrelevant. By this point, he was a tenured professor and a missiologist with a solid reputation. But Wagner determined that he didn't care what his fellow professors thought or did. He was going to push the boundaries of evangelicalism, come what may.

I interviewed Kay Hiramine, an entrepreneurial Fuller student who became a teaching assistant and right-hand administrator for Wagner through most of the 1990s. One day, after receiving what he characterized as a “blistering letter” critiquing something Wagner had written, Kay asked him, “Pete, does it wear on you that you’re like a lightning rod?”

Wagner responded, “I really like to push the limits when it comes to what God is doing. I’m highlighting things that are pretty radical to really challenge the status quo.” He went on, “You know what? We’ll let the theologians and the historical writers and the biographers deal with it after I’m dead.”

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Wagner’s second paradigm shift was more global. Through his friendship with Wimber and four years of watching miracles unfold in class after class, Wagner had become a convinced charismatic. All the other major transitions and paradigm shifts of Wagner’s remaining career flowed out of this transformation.

Scouting the Fourth Quadrant

By the late 1980s, Wagner had become a top-tier leader in global evangelicalism. He was a respected, albeit controversial, professor at Fuller Seminary, one of the premier global evangelical seminaries. He was a preeminent expert in church growth, an exciting field for many evangelical pastors and leaders. Rick Warren, the soon-to-be-renowned Baptist pastor of Saddleback Church, did his doctorate in ministry degree in church growth under Wagner, and Warren’s 1993 dissertation would become part of the foundation for his mega-bestselling books, *The Purpose Driven Life* and *The Purpose Driven Church*.

¹⁶ Wagner was also serving on the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE), a major force in global evangelicalism. Originally conceived by the evangelist Billy Graham, LCWE linked together multiple mission movements and denominations.

Wagner, however, was always looking for a grander arena into which the evangelical church could increase. He had been a semi-successful missionary, but then he was drawn to church growth as a strategy for pushing forward missionary endeavors abroad and evangelism efforts at home. He was attracted to Pentecostalism’s growth potential, but then Wimber gave him up-close access to a supernatural register.

Now, however, he struggled to translate Wimber’s tactile, charismatic-gifting, Spirit-powered ethos into a broader framework. After all, not every church or group was going to join up with Wimber’s Vineyard movement. Where was the larger arena into which this could expand?

Wagner was also growing increasingly discontented with what he called “mainstream evangelicalism”: its denominational structures and its evident incapacity to expeditiously accomplish the goal of world evangelization.¹⁷ “I felt that things were becoming a bit routinized and that the earlier cutting-edge zeal had been diminishing,” he would later write. “I didn’t have the language for it then, but now I know that I was detecting that LCWE was becoming an old wineskin. I could not yet imagine what the new wineskin might be; nevertheless, I started pulling back from LCWE so that I would be as available as possible to move into the new when it did come.”¹⁸

In Wagner’s vocabulary—alluding to Jesus’s parable in Mark 2:21–22—“old wineskins” are ways of doing Christianity that might have had their time but are now outmoded and inflexible. New wineskins represent the new ways—often antagonistic and contentious—in which God is leading the church.

Wagner had spent his early career firmly planted in the first quadrant (denominational, noncharismatic), where most evangelicals were. Through his exposure to Pentecostalism, his church growth passions, and then his partnership with Wimber, Wagner became a leading voice within 1970s and 1980s first-quadrant evangelicalism, making the case for learning from third-quadrant Pentecostalism and other charismatic expressions.

In 1989, at nearly sixty years old, Wagner would meet another charismatic leader, a prophet who would precipitate another major shift in his life by welcoming him into the utterly un-“routinized” and unstructured environment of the fourth quadrant. Her name was Cindy Jacobs. We’ll look at this transformative encounter in more depth in the next chapter. If John Wimber and the Vineyard represented a mild-mannered, mainstream-evangelical-friendly form of charismaticism, Cindy Jacobs was at the other end of the spectrum.

In their first meeting, Jacobs cracked open an entirely different understanding of Christianity for Wagner. She talked to him about prophecy, about styles and strategies of prayer that could heal nations, and about grand-scale spiritual warfare—concepts that were both exciting and foreign to someone like Wagner. To Wagner’s eyes, these were the “new wineskins” he had been waiting for.

That first conversation with Cindy Jacobs gave Wagner a peek into an Independent Charismatic world that was still being born. At that time, the number of nondenominational megachurches were beginning to increase, and exponentially so, often built on Wagner and others’ church growth theories. The present-day Independent Charismatic leadership culture was in its infancy; recall that Paula White herself migrated from Pentecostalism into the Independent Charismatic space in the early 1990s. You could think of this nascent Independent Charismatic environment of the 1980s as similar to a first-generation Silicon Valley: tons of innovative new ideas floating around, experimentation with new practices, not a lot of clear boundaries or brands, and many startup organizations and startup careers.

Jacobs became Wagner's tour guide into this world brimming with possibilities. She showed him around the existing Latter Rain-descended networks of leaders, making relational connections between Wagner and other charismatic pastors, prophets, and apostles. These Latter Rain-influenced beliefs were a huge leap beyond what he had encountered before, and much of Wagner's energy in the early 1990s was devoted to exploring and translating ideas among the quadrants, taking the new "technologies" from this cutting-edge Independent Charismatic region and making them palatable for mainstream (first- and second-quadrant) evangelicals. Wagner would write a letter to Jacobs in 2000 saying that two people—Cindy herself and John Wimber—had most impacted the trajectory of his life.¹⁹

Through Jacobs and other leading-edge charismatic figures she introduced him to, Wagner became convinced that these nondenominational charismatics were the primary growth edge of global Christianity. And he wasn't wrong: in 1970, there were roughly 44 million of these Independent Charismatics in the world. By 2020, it was 312 million. This segment of Christianity has increased more than sevenfold in the space of fifty years, making this diffuse nondenominational charismatic trend one of the fastest-growing religious movements in history.²⁰

Strategic Spiritual Warfare and the 10/40 Window

Some of the major new "technologies" that Wagner would adopt and popularize were in the area of "spiritual warfare." Spiritual warfare is a common belief and practice among evangelicals across the four quadrants, premised on the theological idea that demons are bent on attacking Christians, who must resist these malign spiritual forces through prayer and other spiritual disciplines. This concept emerges out of passages in the New Testament, especially the book of Ephesians, where martial imagery describes Christians taking up their faith as armor because Christians "do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (6:12).

Most Christians who practice spiritual warfare think of it as an individual or a communal struggle: battling one's own personal demons or, perhaps, exorcising demons from someone else. This was John Wimber's understanding of spiritual warfare, and Wagner was mostly in sync with Wimber through the 1980s.

But in 1988, Wagner would speculate, "Could it be possible that Satan, frequently referred to in Scripture as 'the god of this age,' assigns certain demonic spirits under him to promote the kingdom of darkness in given nations, cities, regions, cultural groups, or other segments of the world's population? . . . I am very much interested in learning more about possible territorial hierarchies of demons."²¹ In

essence, Wagner was seeking a grander vision of spiritual warfare that could dovetail with his church growth ideas. What if the trick to expanding the church lay in decoding the demonic hierarchies and territorial boundaries of the spiritual realm? A year later, he would meet Cindy Jacobs, who had been speculating and thinking along the same lines.

Jacobs's theology, which Wagner adopted and adapted, held that behind the low-level, personally harassing demons that most believers battled through spiritual warfare were high-level demon commanders and generals—the mysterious “principalities” and “powers” mentioned in that Ephesians passage. As he had already hinted at in 1988, Wagner would ultimately label these overseer demonic entities “territorial spirits”: demons who controlled literal geographical territories or human institutions. And together Wagner and Jacobs would develop a framework called “strategic-level spiritual warfare” that was meant to overpower and displace these territorial spirits.

Jacobs and Wagner would bring these ideas to bear in the 1990s through a mission's prayer campaign dedicated to praying for something called the 10/40 Window: a geographical region between ten degrees and forty degrees north latitude, which encompasses most of North Africa, the Middle East, and a huge swath of Asia. The concept was coined by a colleague and friend of Wagner's, the evangelist Luis Bush. In Bush's formulation, accomplishing the evangelization of the entire world meant that the 10/40 Window needed to be the primary focus of Christian prayer and missionary activity.

Wagner leveraged his Fuller and Lausanne Committee connections to circulate these strategic-level spiritual warfare concepts into mainstream evangelicalism using the 10/40 Window campaign. If you were an evangelical in the United States in the 1990s, chances are that you at least heard about—and perhaps participated in—the annual prayer and fasting cycles for the 10/40 Window. There were 10/40 prayer guides, coordinated fasting sessions for the 10/40 Window, and whole curricula designed for Sunday school use. My family attended a noncharismatic, denominational evangelical church in the 1990s, and I remember constant appeals for prayer that the gospel would reach those living in the 10/40 Window. By 1997, at the height of the 10/40 Window campaign, Wagner and Jacobs estimated that fifty million evangelical Christians around the world were concertedly praying, using guides and frameworks that they helped create.²²

Along the way, Wagner, Jacobs, and their friend Dutch Sheets also built a massive, networked prayer and information-sharing infrastructure, called the Strategic Prayer Network, with thousands of prayer activists spread around the United States and the world. Though Wagner's strategic spiritual warfare ideas predated his NAR ideas, if we picture the ideology of the NAR as a three-legged stool, strategic-level spiritual warfare is the first of those legs.²³

John Wimber, who remained close to Wagner after their MC510 course was disbanded, grew quite concerned about these strategic-level spiritual warfare ideas. While certainly a practitioner of garden-variety spiritual warfare, Wimber spoke out against the strategic spiritual warfare frameworks, arguing that Wagner and his new charismatic colleagues were being too hubristic and even endangering people in their machinations about overthrowing demonic hierarchies. Wimber was one of several of Wagner's friends who threw up a red flag and warned that his theology was becoming extreme, all to no avail. This disagreement induced a falling out between Wagner and Wimber that would not be resolved before Wimber died in 1997.

The Postdenominational Church

Beliefs about modern apostles and prophets who would emerge to lead the church had been circulating in eddies around the small fourth-quadrant world since at least the 1950s, when the Latter Rain revival first proposed the apocalyptic return of apostles and prophets. By the 1980s, some Independent Charismatic leaders had begun calling themselves “apostles,” and there were already clusters of Independent Charismatic leaders, including Cindy Jacobs, who were identifying themselves as “prophets.”

Excited about these new ideas and the promise of a de-institutionalized, agile, modern church, Wagner developed a theory about what he was calling the postdenominational church. In 1996, he convened a National Symposium on the Postdenominational Church in Pasadena, sponsored by Fuller, gathering a group of approximately five hundred respected leaders from around the world to think about these incipient phenomena. Jacobs was tapped to lead seminars at the symposium. As Wagner wrote to the participants in his welcome letter, “In this symposium, you will get a penetrating insight into what many believe will be the cutting-edge of world Christianity as we move into the Twenty First Century.”²⁴

A few weeks prior to the symposium, Wagner devoted his column in *Ministries Today* magazine to laying out his working definition of what made a church cutting edge and postdenominational:

- They “often appear to be independent, yet they tend to network with each other in loose affiliations.”
- “They are wary of being encumbered by organizational structures commonly associated with denominationalism.”
- They are usually “Pentecostal or charismatic, yet the churches themselves eschew such labels.”
- “Their form of church governance typically is based more on relationships than on official documents or rigid structures.”

- “Many of them are megachurches,” but they often divide into “small groups or ‘cells’ in which practical ministry can occur.”
- They generally “speak openly of God restoring apostles and prophets to the church,” though not all leaders apply those titles to themselves.
- And while most of these are nondenominational already, “a denominational church can be postdenominational in the way it conducts its church life.”²⁵

This was, more or less, Wagner’s theory leading into the symposium. These churches and ministries, he believed, would shape the future growth of Christianity.

On the day that the symposium was supposed to begin, however—May 20, 1996—Wagner and a group of the planners drove to nearby Los Angeles to have lunch with Pastor Jack Hayford, one of the elder statesmen of Pentecostalism and a top leader in Aimee Semple McPherson’s Foursquare denomination. Kay Hiramine, who was running point on organizing the symposium, narrated the story to me.

Wagner and Hayford were friends, but as soon as he saw Wagner that day, Hayford said, “Oh, Peter, I am *grieved* to see you.”

Wagner was taken aback. Hayford proceeded to lay out his argument against this “postdenominational” language. He himself, as a pastor deeply committed to his denomination, was excited about the things Wagner was working on. “I love you, but you are hurting so many people with this term ‘postdenominational.’ You have made me into a dinosaur,” Hayford told Wagner.

Peter Wagner, ever ready to make an intellectual pivot, immediately proposed that they change the name. Over the course of their lunch, the group tossed out different titles and options until one of the people there threw out the phrase “New Apostolic Reformation.” Hiramine, who was present, does not recall whose idea it was, but he’s confident it wasn’t Wagner’s. The whole group seized on this, and, Hiramine quips, “we banged that name out—the New Apostolic Reformation—in less than a lunch.”²⁶

At the conclusion of the National Symposium on the Postdenominational Church a few days later, Wagner got up to announce that even the title of the symposium was now irrelevant because they had landed on a different title: the New Apostolic Reformation. The crowd of five hundred premier leaders in charismatic Christianity erupted in applause for, as Hiramine puts it, an “Amen-hallelujah time.” From that point forward, the NAR became the driving impulse of Wagner’s life.

In May 1996, at this lunch meeting, and in the entire Postdenominational Church symposium, the NAR was born. No one in attendance—including Wagner—could have fully known at the time what it would become. This is where, I believe, we can see the first glint of the religiosity that would fuel January 6.

That gathering was not wild-eyed or frenetic or even political, and it did not happen in some obscure, ultra-right-wing, white nationalist Christian gathering. No, it happened among some of the most influential and promising leaders of American evangelicalism, under the auspices of one of the foremost evangelical seminaries in America.

Building the New Apostolic Reformation

As Peter Wagner began hanging around with Jacobs and other prophets and proto-apostles, he began receiving personalized prophecies from them that he was one of God's new apostles, with a key role to play in advancing the new reformation. He deeply believed that God was calling him to organize and oversee leadership networks to further this transformation of the church.

One might assume that a professor with a PhD in the social sciences would be skeptical of such mystical proclamations. But Wagner had become a firm believer in the reality of these prophetic words, and from the mid-1990s until his death, he would make every effort to follow the guidance of these prophets. As had already occurred in his Signs and Wonders classes with Wimber, Wagner's own identity had gotten entwined with his research subjects.

Starting after the Postdenominational Church symposium, Wagner threw himself into creating a scaffolding for this NAR. By 1996, a cluster of these leaders and networks, including both Sheets and Jacobs, had relocated to Colorado Springs, and Peter and Doris Wagner decided that they should move there too—again, in response to prophecies. They moved in June 1996, just a month after the National Symposium on the Postdenominational Church concluded. Fuller Seminary had a satellite campus in Colorado Springs, so Wagner became a resident faculty member there.

Another key player in building out this NAR model was a prophet-apostle named Chuck Pierce. Pierce had been mentored by Cindy Jacobs in Texas in the 1980s, and through Jacobs, he encountered the Wagners. In 1998, Peter and Doris would persuade Pierce to come work for them and help orchestrate their institution-building. So from 1998 to 2000, Pierce lived in Colorado Springs to work closely alongside the Wagners, before returning to Texas.²⁷ Pierce would go on to become Peter Wagner's closest deputy and a virtual adopted son to the Wagners.

Peter also molded his Fuller courses around these new ideas, developing classes like Discerning Spiritual Strongholds, Confronting the Powers, and Churches in the New Apostolic Paradigm. For years, Wagner imparted the ideas and frameworks of the NAR to hundreds of Fuller students integrated into their seminary education. But as the twentieth century drew to a close, Wagner became convinced that Fuller was no longer an adequate platform for him. In 1999, he left Fuller earlier than he had originally planned to pursue the NAR project full time.

What Wagner managed to accomplish in this final stage of his life—between 1999 and 2010, when he retired—is nothing short of remarkable. Wagner was a prolific author but not, in my view, a gifted theologian. His primary training, after all, was as a missionary and a social scientist. Most of his theological ideas were borrowed, rebranded, or repackaged from the work of others.

But Peter Wagner was an organizational genius, and he excelled at gathering highly talented, like-minded leaders into shared projects. By this time, Wagner had spent thirty years researching what worked well for facilitating movement growth, so he brought a finely honed set of instincts to sketching out an infrastructure for what he called *the most radical change in the way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation!*²⁸

Charismatic believers, downstream from the Latter Rain movement, had been talking about these apostolic and prophetic governance concepts for decades, but Wagner was the first to build an architecture that could hold together networks and leaders while maintaining their independence. He brought coherence and superstructure to what had previously been fragmentary and disordered.

In this third career, Wagner would build and administer eight overlapping institutions that he believed could serve as a replicable model to advance the NAR. All of these NAR institutions were developed, centrally, around what we could call the second ideological leg of the NAR stool: the idea that churches and ministries should be governed primarily through apostles and prophets. We'll look at what that means practically in [chapter 4](#). Doris Wagner, Peter's steadfast partner, was directly involved in leading and directing most of these institutions, though Peter remained the public face. These linked institutions had a sort of hub-and-spoke design so that they all were tied to the Wagners but could each operate separately. These institutions, their acronyms, and their functions can get a little wonky, so let me just profile a few of the most important ones that will come up repeatedly in this book.

First, Wagner created the Wagner Leadership Institute (WLI), a sort of alternative seminary. In many ways, WLI was Wagner's anti-Fuller seminary, where he intentionally structured the curriculum and course topics for maximum practical impact. He sometimes joked to his colleagues that he had spent thirty years of his life teaching at Fuller *Cemetery*, where faith and godly ambition went to die.²⁹ Thousands of adept charismatic church leaders would take classes at WLI, taught by Wagner and his

mentees, on topics like what it means to be an apostle, how to build networks, how to conduct strategic-level spiritual warfare, and so on. Eventually, WLI would have dozens of extension campuses spread around the globe, all explicitly “designed . . . to meet the needs of leaders who have become a part of the New Apostolic Reformation.”³⁰

Second, Wagner helped establish the International Coalition of Apostles (ICA) in 1999, and he served as the convening apostle. Many people were experimenting with these Latter Rain-fivefold-apostolic-prophetic ideas at the time, and not all of them linked up with Wagner’s networks, but many did. Wagner determined who could join the ICA, what the criteria for membership should be, and what the content of their annual meetings would be. His hope was that the ICA could be a sort of professional society for apostles. Wagner designed the ICA as a horizontal networking space where apostles could prioritize “meeting and connecting with peer-level apostles.”³¹ He did not have any direct spiritual authority over the more than five hundred apostles who eventually joined the ICA, per se, but their choice to affiliate signaled their interest in and alignment with his emerging NAR paradigms. He hoped, through the ICA, “to introduce as many other leaders as possible to the New Apostolic Reformation and its implications for the Kingdom of God.”³²

Third, together with Cindy Jacobs, Wagner also created a roundtable of the most prominent charismatic prophets in the country that they titled the Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders (ACPE), made up of a group of about twenty-five personally invited prophets. The ACPE was a cohort of seasoned prophets, who would gather annually, compare notes on what they felt they were hearing from God, issue collective declarations, and hold each other accountable.

The final NAR institution that I’d like to highlight is the most mysterious and the most important. Starting around 2002, Wagner decided to formalize his large group of mentees and disciples into something called the Eagles’ Vision Apostolic Team (EVAT), which included twenty-five of his closest apostles and prophets. These EVAT members were, customarily, also members of the other NAR institutions and often helped Wagner lead them. The roster of EVAT members was never public, but Wagner did keep lists in his files, and the group membership stayed pretty consistent over the years.

EVAT was unique among the NAR structures because, in Wagner’s vocabulary, the EVAT members had a “Covenant Relationship” with him.³³ For the select group of EVAT members, Peter Wagner was their own apostle. In fact, even though some of them were his contemporaries in terms of age, the EVAT members called Wagner their “spiritual father,” and he called them “spiritual sons and daughters.” Also, unlike the members of any other NAR institution, EVAT members contributed directly to Peter Wagner’s modest salary, a tithe of sorts to their mentor, apostle, and spiritual father. EVAT was the true ideological and relational inner core of the NAR.

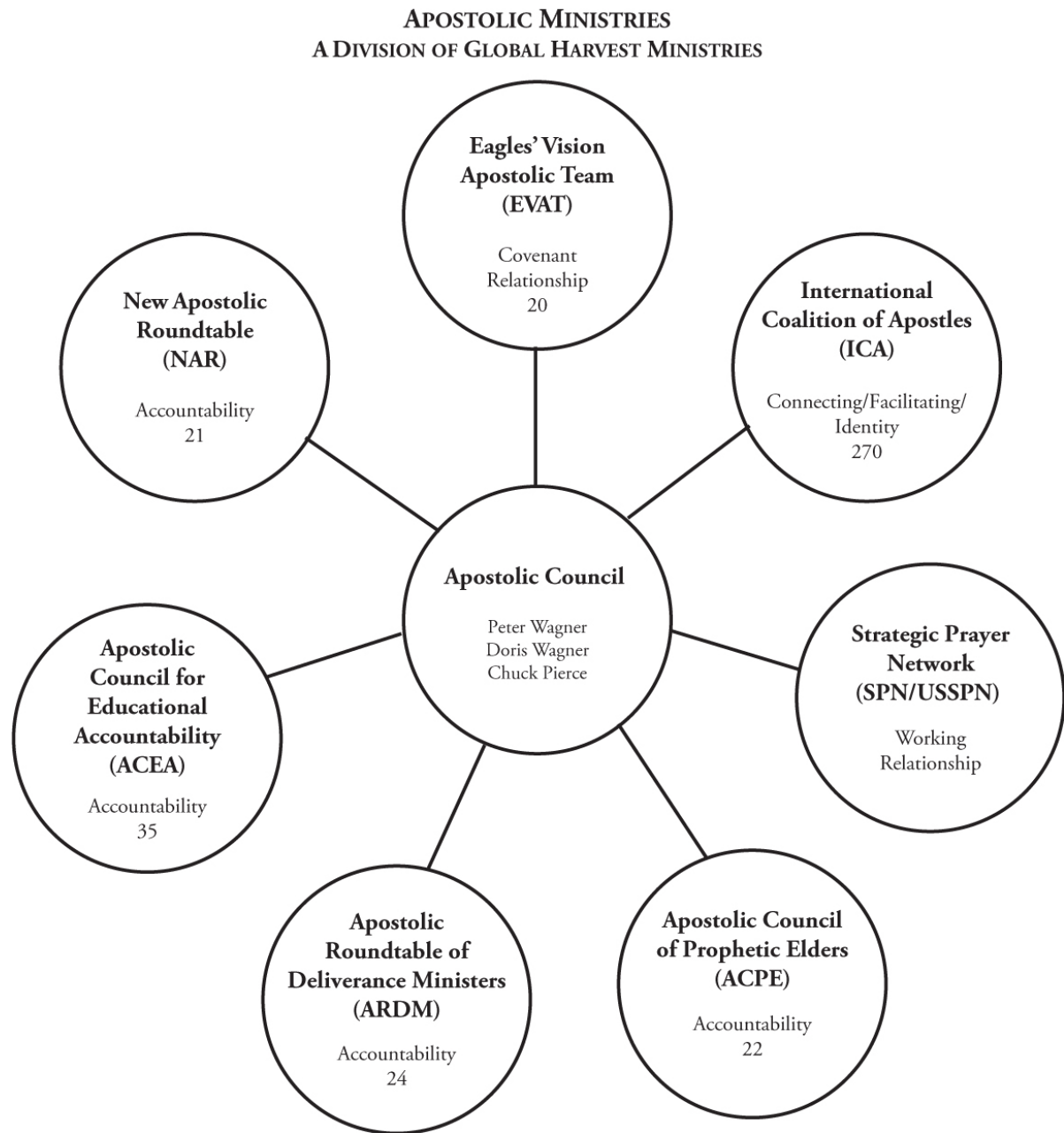


Fig. 2.1 Recreated from a 2002 diagram in Peter Wagner's files demonstrating the networked nature of the early NAR institutions. Courtesy of Fuller Theological Seminary archives.

Dominion! and Seven Mountains

You might sensibly wonder how a group of supernaturally fixated apostles and prophets, bent on restructuring the church, became a hyper-politicized movement. In truth, radical political theologies had been circulating in these nondenominational charismatic networks since at least the 1980s, though these networks were so scant and dispersed at the time that the practical impact of these ideas was fairly limited. These radical theologies were generally emanating from a group of Calvinist theologians called the Christian Reconstructionists, who, in the 1970s, became some of the theological leading lights of

right-wing Christianity.³⁴ There's a complicated backstory, to which I cannot do justice here, about cross-pollination occurring between the Reconstructionists and the charismatics in the 1980s and 1990s. And the key marker of this cross-pollination was a doctrine called *dominion theology*.

Dominion theology is rooted in a distinctive interpretation of the Bible that centers the relationship between God and humanity on authority. It holds that because God gave human beings “dominion” over creation (Gen. 1:28), God must intend for human beings today to be active partners in ruling over the earth. The Reconstructionists and many charismatics, including the televangelist Pat Robertson, came to understand this as a present-day mandate to take over human societies so as to govern them according to God's reign. Dominion theology aims to build the kingdom of God on earth right now. So in the 1980s, as these ideas migrated into the diffuse nondenominational networks, some charismatics began speaking about a Kingdom Now theology. If you hear the phrase “Kingdom Now” or find charismatics using language of dominion, they are probably downstream from this mingling of Reconstructionist ideas with charismatic ones.

Some of the people who came into Wagner's inner circle were already immersed in these Reconstructionist ideas, but others were not. One of the leading Kingdom Now proponents among Wagner's mentees was Dutch Sheets, who would serve as the Wagners' pastor in Colorado Springs. Wagner was not interested in running the NAR like a hierarchical, centralized structure where he set and dictated the theology. Instead, he learned from his mentees and helped amplify their ideas. So in the early NAR, you can see these dominion ideas seeping into Wagner's circles and becoming major topics of discussion and debate.

As a latecomer to charismatic identity, Wagner had not deeply bought into, nor was even well informed about, these dominion ideas, so they had a limited impact on the early NAR. But then in the mid-2000s, Wagner—always eager to find a grander scale—became fascinated with these dominion teachings, especially when he encountered a younger pastor-apostle named Lance Wallnau. In [chapter 5](#), I tell the story of how Wallnau's version of dominion theology—structured around what he calls the Seven Mountains of Culture—recast the NAR networks with a broader ambition to change whole societies. Throughout 2007 and 2008, Wagner and Wallnau used the infrastructure and relational connections of the NAR networks to systematically publicize these Seven Mountains / dominion theology ideas that had already been simmering inside NAR circles for years. In a December 2007 address to his ICA, Wagner said, “I am more certain than ever that God is calling his people to experience the most radical paradigm shift at least since I have been in Christian ministry which is well

over half a century.”³⁵ And that “paradigm shift” was the Seven Mountains concept and dominion theology. This aggressive political theology became the third and final leg—along with strategic spiritual warfare and the leadership of apostles and prophets—of the NAR stool.

In early 2008, Wagner published his most in-your-face book titled *Dominion! How Kingdom Action Can Change the World*, in which he braided together his own style of dominion theology, the Seven Mountains, and his strategic spiritual warfare concepts from the 1990s. Knowing the power of the written word, Wagner also encouraged all of his disciples to write books. So dozens of books pushing this paradigm for societal takeover were published in the charismatic devotional and media space in this era.

In *Dominion!*, we can see the fully developed Wagnerian vision: the church should be governed primarily by charismatic apostles and prophets, who will lead it into concerted and orchestrated campaigns of strategic-level spiritual warfare, through which the church can transform societies. In the book, he quoted one of his favorite verses: “Our battles are no longer physical [as they had been for the people of God in the Old Testament]; they are spiritual. Jesus said, ‘From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force’ (Matthew 11:12). We will not take dominion by remaining passive. We will only take dominion if the Body of Christ becomes violent and declares war on the enemy!”³⁶ Indeed, that verse, Matthew 11:12, was one of Wagner’s most potent biblical citations because he read it as a directive, straight from the mouth of Jesus, for Christians to engage in spiritual violence to advance the kingdom of God on the earth.

From this point on, a marked shift becomes visible in NAR identity, ambition, and method—toward focusing on politics and conquering positions of influence in society. NAR apostles and prophets began building ties with right-wing political campaigns and insinuating themselves into activist circles on the right. Wagner and the NAR started out with a vision to revolutionize the governance of the Christian church. During the 2000s, they began scheming for the full-scale re-formation of society.

The Lakeland Debacle

One more episode from this era of the NAR bears mentioning because it spotlights a temperamental divide within the NAR that is still present today. As we’ve seen, one of the core unifying and motivating passions of the Independent Charismatic world is the desire for revival. I cannot overstate how deep-seated this hope is for charismatics—the hope that God could suddenly break into the workaday world with an overwhelming outpouring of Holy Spirit power. By the time these dominion theology beliefs had

been layered into the NAR, Wagner and many others were rhetorically pairing “revival” and “reformation,” imagining that a mass charismatic revival would help to trigger a wholesale transformation of society.

In April 2008, an apostle named Stephen Strader, a member of Wagner’s ICA, invited an idiosyncratic young evangelist, Todd Bentley, to his church in Lakeland, Florida, to lead a short-term series of revival meetings. A major revival broke out, and the planned one-week series of nightly meetings became four months of seven-days-a-week healing and revival services. Tens of thousands of charismatic Christians began converging on Lakeland to see and experience the revival. The internet had evolved enough by that point that they could live stream services, so tens of thousands more could follow along remotely. Soon GOD TV, a charismatic televangelism channel with an international reach and an audience of millions, began preempting its own planned programming to air the nightly services, drawing the eyes of charismatics around the world to what they began calling the Lakeland Outpouring.

The Lakeland revival was marked by evident miracles of faith healing at the hands of Bentley, and charismatics with a deep knowledge of revival history even hoped that it might signal the rebirth of the healing revivals of the 1940s and 1950s. They saw many parallels between Bentley and William Branham, the similarly controversial revivalist who inaugurated that heyday of charismaticism.

Todd Bentley was a caustic character, tattooed and burly, thirty-two years old at the time, who had come from a hardscrabble background in British Columbia. By the age of seventeen, he had racked up a sexual assault conviction, committed at the age of thirteen against a younger boy, and four drug overdoses.³⁷ After Bentley, proverbially, found Jesus, his delinquent youth became part of his redemption story. Bentley had an exaggerated and even violent flare on stage in Lakeland, sometimes punching or kicking people in front of the frenzied crowds as a means of “healing” them. He was also preaching some ideas that were, even in the wild and woolly prophetic world, seen as aberrant and perhaps heretical.

Stephen Strader, the apostle who hosted Bentley, recognized that this revival—with a combustible revivalist, thousands in attendance daily, and hundreds of thousands watching on GOD TV or online—was more than he could handle. At the end of May, he appealed to Wagner and the leadership of the ICA, asking, “Where are the apostles? You have taught me that apostles need to rise up and take their place. For the past ten years, we’ve been talking about the restoration of apostles. This is day sixty of the Outpouring and I have not heard from the apostles.”³⁸

This request divided Wagner’s inner circle. Ché Ahn, a Fuller student who had studied under Wagner and become a top-flight apostle and EVAT member, had some previous relationship with Bentley and was all in with Lakeland. Ahn wrote to his followers, “THIS IS THAT for which we have all waited.”³⁹

Ahn even appeared on stage with Bentley at Lakeland and helped to facilitate some of the healings. Likewise, Chuck Pierce, one of Wagner's most trusted prophetic advisers, was excitedly endorsing the revival.

But others of Wagner's disciples were more skeptical. They worried that this Lakeland business was so high-profile and so volatile that, as one of them wrote to Wagner, "we will all be painted by the brush of what happens in Lakeland."⁴⁰

Eager for the possibility that this could be the early stages of a global revival and maybe trigger the anticipated transformation of American society, but also cognizant of Bentley's instability, Wagner decided to institute a two-step process. He would gather a group of leading apostles to do a public commissioning and alignment ceremony for Bentley, and then he would assign some apostles, led by Ché Ahn, to help Bentley, privately, clean up his act and be held accountable. "Alignment" was a very important word for Wagner, signaling that a person or ministry was connected and submissive to an apostle's authority.

So on June 23, 2008, more than a dozen NAR apostles descended on Lakeland for an internationally televised "apostolic alignment" ceremony.⁴¹ In his remarks during the ceremony, Wagner did not betray his own reservations, but instead, broadcasting live to hundreds of thousands, he effused, "Prophets have been telling us for years that God is about to launch an extraordinary spiritual awakening with signs and wonders, and for over two months Todd Bentley has been leading one of the obvious fulfillments of those prophecies."⁴²

By June 30, one week after the ceremony, more than 400,000 people from more than 100 countries had attended the Lakeland Outpouring in person, and millions more had live streamed or watched the revival online.⁴³ It appeared that Wagner and the NAR had threaded the needle and that they were now, behind the scenes, guiding a noteworthy, media-catapulted, global revival.

Then it all fell apart. On July 9, ABC's *Nightline* news magazine show aired an exposé on Bentley's criminal history and his questionable revival practices. ABC's reporters could not confirm a single case of healing, despite the dozens of healings that were being televised nightly and despite Bentley's promises that he could provide documentation. *Nightline* also cast suspicion on Bentley's finances. A few weeks later, it came out that Bentley had been drinking during the revival, and he was divorcing his wife because he'd fallen in love with their nanny.

Throughout these weeks, as news report after news report dropped about Bentley, Peter Wagner was trying to maintain equilibrium among his cohort of opinionated apostles who all now felt publicly bound up with the scandal. On the day that Bentley's separation from his wife became public, Wagner received 1,700 emails from apostles and other leaders, and Wagner would complain to his supporters, "I have

become a lightening [*sic*] rod for a number of severe criticisms.”⁴⁴ Bentley eventually left the scene, the revival sputtered out, and Peter Wagner was left holding the mess. Wagner tried for some weeks to keep the revival going on a more scaled-down level without Bentley, but all the public scandals had discredited everyone involved.

In the wake of this fiasco, a number of apostles resigned from the ICA. At one point, Doris Wagner, answering Peter’s email while he traveled, would write to a friend of his, “[Peter] is probably one of the most misunderstood men on planet earth, who is either loved or hated, with not much middle ground. He is truly a holy person whom many are either jealous or envious of. . . . We have lost friends over this.”⁴⁵

The Lakeland debacle cast a pall over Wagner’s impending retirement, and it also raised searching questions about his whole NAR paradigm. If Wagner and others had concerns about Bentley all along, why did they make their endorsement ceremony so public? If so many prophets were hearing straight from God, how come none of them heard from God about Bentley’s secret vices? If apostolic governance gave leaders more flexibility, did it also incentivize flashiness over depth?

Lakeland also revealed a subtle rift within Wagner’s mentoring circles and networks. Some NAR leaders were aspiring to slow and steady growth of a church movement, not wanting to get caught up in politics or controversy. Others wanted to see, at any cost, dramatic and even apocalyptic revival and reformation break out suddenly and miraculously. It was largely this second group who would put their shoulders into Donald Trump’s presidency and January 6.

A Wavemaker

Peter Wagner retired in 2010 at the age of eighty. He did not choose a single successor but instead divvied up the many NAR institutions among his closest EVAT members. Chuck Pierce took over Wagner’s more personal networks. Ché Ahn became the international chancellor for WLI. John Kelly, an EVAT member who helped create the ICA, assumed leadership of that professional body. Cindy Jacobs took the lead with the ACPE and also inherited much of Wagner’s prayer and spiritual warfare infrastructure.

Though many of these institutions still exist, this partitioning of leadership brought a pronounced and formal end to the founding era of the NAR. EVAT was the one structure that Wagner did not hand off to anyone because it was his own circle of mentees, which no one of them could reasonably assume. He continued gathering the EVAT members annually up until his death in 2016.

As Wagner anticipated years earlier, his career of courting controversy and pushing the envelope has generated continued debate about his legacy and impact. Among the Independent Charismatics, Wagner

is widely revered. Yet while some first- and second-quadrant evangelicals still celebrate Wagner's church growth concepts, many others have been extremely critical of his NAR ideas. In fact, in some noncharismatic evangelical circles, the NAR (they often pronounce it "the *nahr*") has become a byword, castigated as unbiblical, a form of heresy, and even a cult. This critique has very little to do with the NAR's politics or extremism, but instead these noncharismatic evangelicals have especially latched on to this idea of modern-day apostles and prophets—which was in no way original to Wagner—as the centerpiece of their theological censure.

Wagner briefly came out of retirement in 2011 to defend himself. Countering his critics, he wrote an article with the very acute title "The New Apostolic Reformation Is Not a Cult."⁴⁶ A couple of months later, he even went on the NPR interview program *Fresh Air* with Terry Gross to try to buttress the movement's reputation.⁴⁷ Neither of these attempts did much to quell the criticism.

As we've seen, Independent Charismatic culture is fast-paced, entrepreneurial, and faddish. This is the nature of nondenominational and deinstitutionalized spaces: parlance and terminology are ephemeral, with few abiding institutions to hold memory or create traditions. Leaders are constantly reinventing themselves, polishing their brands, and looking for a receptive audience.

While it had many dimensions, within the Independent Charismatic ecosystem, the NAR concept was primarily an organizational project and a branding exercise. Few of the core NAR ideas—indeed, even the NAR title itself—were original to Peter Wagner, but he bundled them together under the NAR heading. In the face of the Lakeland Outpouring scandal, mounting theological criticisms from first- and second-quadrant evangelicals, and Wagner's decision not to hand the empire over to one single heir, the NAR brand has not fared well. You won't find many people who positively identify with the NAR anymore, even among the people who populated Wagner's networks. The NAR brand was tarnished, so it was mostly abandoned.

The irony is that Peter Wagner's ideas have found incredible traction, and the leaders he mentored have flourished beyond anything he could have expected. But the label that Wagner preferred and promoted has died the death of a thousand cuts. Thinking back to his lunch with Jack Hayford and others in 1996, you can almost imagine Wagner embracing the irony and pivoting again, dropping the NAR title just as he did the postdenominational church. Because, after all, who cares about a title?

As the 2016 election cycle and primary campaigns began, Peter Wagner's health had begun to decline. He developed a heart arrhythmia, and he retreated from his endless speaking requests. But in February 2016, as the Republican primaries were beginning and conservative evangelicals were divided over whether to line up behind Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, or Donald Trump, Peter Wagner decided to publicly weigh in on a presidential race for the first time in his life.

Taking to his little-used Facebook page, Wagner wrote:

For public distribution

From C. Peter Wagner (This is a personal statement only—not representing any church or organization)

I like Donald Trump

Although I’ve never done this before, I am ready to come clean on this year’s politics. In my entire life I’ve never witnessed such an interesting presidential campaign. I favor Donald Trump for our next president. . . .

I have logged 85 years as a citizen of the USA, and I have never been so discouraged about our nation. We are in dire straights [*sic*]. I believe that much of America’s malady has been caused over the years by the establishment politics of both parties in Washington, DC . . .

I believe that Trump has the qualities necessary to “make America great once again,” as he would say. . . . Nothing will change if we vote for the status quo. Let’s step out. Let’s put someone different in the White House.⁴⁸

This was certainly not the most high-profile evangelical endorsement that Donald Trump would receive in 2016. But from the perspective of history, it was one of the most consequential. Wagner was not a frequent Facebook user, but his friends and followers were watching. From the point of Wagner’s endorsement up until the present, the NAR leaders became the trailblazing Christians championing the political career of Donald Trump.

On October 21, 2016, Peter Wagner died. He was eulogized by his many fans and followers as one of the most nonconformist and trailblazing charismatic leaders of his generation. To his critics, he died as one of the arch-heretics of the twenty-first century. One of Wagner’s final conscious acts, in hospice care, was to fill out his absentee ballot for Donald Trump, a choice his followers hailed as prophetic when, two weeks later, Trump won the election.

One of the frequent exhortations that Peter Wagner had for his EVAT sons and daughters was “I want you to go further and farther than I ever have.”⁴⁹ And they did. Five of the members of EVAT were present at the January 6 insurrection, with one of them joining the riot by speakerphone. Another seven or eight EVAT members contributed directly to the mobilization of Christian support for Trump’s “Stop the Steal” campaign.

This means that half of Wagner's closest spiritual sons and daughters, the inner core of the NAR, were directly involved in guiding the Christian side of the post-2020 election pro-Trump campaign. That is the story we'll explore in the remaining chapters of this book.

The most befitting description I've found of C. Peter Wagner's legacy and impact came during an interview I had with an NAR leader named James Nesbit. He was a loyal Peter Wagner supporter and a member of the ICA. Nesbit is a minor celebrity in Independent Charismatic circles because of his digital prophecy art. He's part of an entire market of artwork created by charismatic Christians based on their own or others' prophecies. Nesbit makes dramatic renderings of prophecies from major NAR figures, often mixed with biblical imagery, frequently depicting violence or spiritual warfare. James Nesbit's artwork was posted on numerous social media profiles of people who were either at the Capitol on January 6 or egging on the rioters.

On January 6, James Nesbit himself was with a group of about thirty NAR intercessors, apostles, and prophets who were stationed next to the US Capitol, leading worship and spiritual warfare against territorial spirits during the riot. I asked Nesbit about that day, and I asked him about the legacy of Peter Wagner in relation to American politics. How would Peter Wagner think about his legacy and what the people he mentored have done?

"What Peter Wagner saw way in the distance, what he lived for, is happening now and will happen," Nesbit replied. "It's waves that are coming. And every prayer that's been prayed, the waves are coming again and again and again. Peter Wagner was a wavemaker, and he started making waves, and the waves have not gotten any less since he passed away. They've grown more and more intense."⁵⁰