



GENERALS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

CINDY JACOBS ALWAYS knew she was special. Born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1951, to a father who was a former Hell's Kitchen gang member turned Southern Baptist pastor, little Cindy presciently predicted the birth of her younger sister. As a four-year-old, alone with her mother in their ramshackle house, she said, "I'm going to have a baby sister." Her mother, who had had a miscarriage before having Cindy, responded, saying, "Actually, Cindy, you're our last child," not knowing at the time that she really was pregnant with another girl.¹ Most people would chalk this up to either a mystical premonition or a kids-say-the-darnedest-things coincidence. But for Cindy Jacobs, it's the first stepping stone in her spiritual biography.

As noncharismatic Baptists, her parents didn't have any grid for understanding her seemingly supernatural insights, and they wondered if little Cindy had extrasensory perception (ESP) or some other paranormal abilities. "I just knew things, but I didn't know anyone who knew how to help me. I didn't know why I knew things. I didn't know what to do with what I knew," Cindy reminisces.² At the age of nine, she recalls, she felt strongly that God was calling her to preach, but there were no female preachers in her provincial Baptist surroundings.

Describing her rough and tumble teenage years, Jacobs says, "I knew things about people. I mean, I could actually scare people . . . I was kind of a hothead . . . [if] people crossed me . . . I would use that gift to cut them down. I'd tell them, 'This is your weakness.' Oh, I'd just start naming their problems, and God had to redeem me of that."³

Heavy lies the prophetic calling on a young person's head, particularly if she has been raised among high-strung first-quadrant evangelicals. "We were told everything was the devil," Jacobs says of her Baptist roots. "The Assemblies [of God] or the Pentecostal churches: they were just heretics in our thinking."⁴

She started college at Grand Canyon University, a Baptist school in Phoenix. This was the late 1960s and early 1970s, the era of the Jesus People, and ideas about deliverance from demons and prophecy

were spreading outside of the Pentecostal denominations into other evangelical and Catholic circles. Music and singing proved an outlet for Jacobs, and she began experimenting with speaking in tongues while singing, privately exploring the boundaries of what her mysterious powers were: “I was so changed that people started coming up to me on campus at Grand Canyon to say, ‘You got Spirit-filled, didn’t you?’ And I’d be like, ‘Who told you? I haven’t told anybody.’ I thought I’d be excommunicated from the campus.”⁵

At one point during her time at Grand Canyon, a radical commune of Christians became aware of Cindy’s purported powers and spent five hours trying to cast the demons out of her because they thought her ability to know people’s secrets must be coming from some wicked supernatural source.⁶ Eventually, Jacobs would transfer to Pepperdine University in Los Angeles to pursue her passion for music, majoring in singing and classical piano and also earning a master’s degree. That separation from her Baptist roots would prove another major step in Jacob’s spiritual adventures.

Cindy Jacobs, like Aimee Semple McPherson and Paula White, has experienced a profound empowerment through Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. Built around interior experiences and exterior manifestations of Holy Spirit power, charismatic spirituality has often been an equalizing force, elevating the voices of women and people of color in ways that bypass traditional Christian hierarchies. Women have found ways to claim religious authority not through traditional learning, which has often been barred to them, but through the more difficult-to-refute personal accounts of experiences and insights direct from God.

I would contend that no Christian woman living today has capitalized more on this experiential point of access to authority or attained greater spiritual renown than Cindy Jacobs. Seventy years after her first sibling’s premonition of prophecy and fifty years since her awkward and unsuccessful exorcism experience in college, Cindy Jacobs today is one of the most respected charismatic prophets in the world. She is easily the most honored prophet in the United States. An energetic and emphatic septuagenarian with a penchant for red shoes, Jacobs still travels the globe leading prophecy conferences, mentoring younger prophets, meeting with world leaders, and adroitly utilizing the evidently supernatural fits of knowledge that made her an oddball teenager.

One of Cindy Jacobs’s sayings is “The controversy of today is the commonplace of tomorrow.”⁷ This maxim offers a sort of heuristic for understanding her life and journey. She has spent the past four decades ferrying ideas and practices from the realm of controversy on the charismatic margins into the mainstream of American Christianity and American politics.

Jacobs was also Peter Wagner’s first spiritual daughter, his sometimes-mentor and sometimes-mentee whose connections and prophecies spurred him along at several pivotal stages in the construction of his

NAR networks and frameworks. If Peter Wagner was the theorizer, scholarly popularizer, and network-builder of the NAR, Cindy Jacobs was the mystical goad, the spur who pushed Wagner along many stages of his own development, from spiritual warfare to envisioning Christian conquest of whole societies. Indeed, the set of ideas and theologies she developed with Peter Wagner steered her to within steps of the US Capitol on January 6.

No Prophet Is Accepted in Her Own Country

Cindy's father died in 1973, the same year that she married Mike Jacobs, an airline executive. She was reluctant to marry Mike when he proposed because she'd imagined that, given her sense of special calling, she would probably become a missionary or a pastor's wife—some supportive, secondary female ministry role. Instead, it is Mike who has wound up playing second fiddle to Cindy's globally famous ministry life. Cindy sometimes laughingly recounts how Mike says, "I knew Cindy before she was *Cindy Jacobs*." The young newlyweds, living in Los Angeles while Cindy finished her master's degree at Pepperdine, were searching for a church that fit them.

Mike's secretary told Mike and Cindy about her church, Crenshaw Christian Center, which is a major fixture of the Black community in Los Angeles today but at the time had just recently been founded. Unbeknownst to Jacobs, the pastor of that church, Fred Price, was a notable figure in the Independent Charismatic Word of Faith movement, which, as we saw in [chapter 1](#), is part of what is colloquially called the prosperity gospel. Mike and Cindy didn't even know what a *charismatic* was at the time, but the first time they visited, someone there spoke in tongues and then translated it for them as a message from God telling them to stay. So the next week they officially joined the church. Cindy recollects, "We didn't care. We were full of the Holy Spirit, and we were the token whites, pretty much, at the time in Fred's church. . . . We learned so much. He was a magnificent teacher!"⁸

It's not difficult to imagine someone with the self-confidence and seemingly preternatural insights of Cindy Jacobs finding a noncharismatic evangelical church that embraced women's equality in leadership—those do exist—and becoming a rip-roaring female preacher. Or she might have, conceivably, landed somewhere in the third quadrant, a charismatic denominational setting, that would have celebrated her gifting as prophecy but with some guardrails. Nearly all charismatics agree that prophecy is a spiritual gift endowed by the Holy Spirit to reveal the mind and the will of God. But that's about where the agreement ends.

The charismatic denominational spaces—what we're calling the third quadrant—value the supernatural spiritual gifts, but they also keep them relatively constrained within the horizons of the

congregation. This is particularly true in the case of a potent gift like prophecy, which, unbridled, can wreak all kinds of havoc. Just imagine a rogue prophet going community to community, telling people whom they're supposed to marry, making wild predictions, or demanding money in exchange for prophecies. These are the sorts of challenges that inevitably surface with charismatic leaders, so denominations have developed clear guidance on topics like prophecy to keep them within some bounds.

But Cindy Jacobs didn't land in some egalitarian evangelical church or some structured Pentecostal environment. Instead, she entered into an Independent Charismatic space where her intuitions and sense that God was speaking through her were fostered by very powerful existing theological frames.

Consider, for example, this passage from George Warnock's *Feast of Tabernacles*, one of the prime mystical Latter Rain texts from the 1950s, describing the advent of the fivefold leadership gifts: "Ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are being established in the church, established moreover by God Himself, and their Trumpet-call shall not go unheeded. Their word shall be with authority. . . . And their authority shall not be by self-appointment, nor by human-appointment, but rather by the appointment of the Holy Spirit, and the ordination of Christ. Soon there will be a 'language' uttered in the congregation of the saints which men shall understand; for it shall be the Trumpet-call of power and authority, even as the very oracles of God."⁹

This was the conceptual universe that Cindy Jacobs found herself in, and it's easy to see how she embraced an identity as one of "the very oracles of God." There was room in the Independent Charismatic environment, oxygenated as it was by these Latter Rain ideas, for people to really pull out the stops on prophecy.

Still, the first decade of Cindy's married life centered on being a mother to their two young children. She was involved at the churches their family attended, leading worship and teaching Bible studies, but nothing dramatic. Mike was laid off from his airline job in 1979, and the young family moved back to Cindy's native Texas, to the small town of Weatherford outside Dallas. It just so happened that Texas was a noteworthy hub of this Latter Rain thinking.

At the age of thirty, Cindy began feeling God inviting her to embrace the calling to preach that she'd sensed in her childhood. Once she began, she was a sensation, and invitations to preach or to prophesy or to pray for healings suddenly bowled her over. Navigating through leadership circles heavily influenced by the Latter Rain visions, Cindy came to believe that she was one of these latter-day prophets, a self-understanding that integrated all the strange insights and anti-charismatic experiences of her youth. As Jesus had said, "No prophet is accepted in his [or her!] own country" (Luke 4:24).

Likewise, Cindy's continued pursuit of her calling was not without opposition. When her five-year-old daughter was enrolled in a local Baptist Christian school with strong anti-charismatic and male-

leadership-only sensibilities, teachers and administrators at the school told her that her mother was surely a witch because she was traveling around praying for healing for the sick. Later they would even tell her younger son that his mother must not love him because she was traveling so often to preach.¹⁰ These slings and arrows from her fellow Christians only seemed to fuel Cindy's sense of unique destiny.

Generals of Intercession

Cindy Jacobs was by no means the only charismatic Christian claiming an identity as a prophet in the early 1980s. As she explored her own charismatic capacities and learned from the Independent Charismatic world, Jacobs met many other leaders who were hearkening back to the Latter Rain ideas and believing God was commissioning them as prophets or apostles.¹¹ A whole collective of these modern-day prophets had gathered in Kansas City—aptly called the Kansas City Prophets—and there were inklings of the start of an entire prophetic movement, complete with mentoring for young prophets and theorization of how prophets should operate.

It is worth highlighting a couple of these like-minded charismatic prophets. The respected Latter Rain-influenced prophets of the 1980s included people like Bill Hamon, a leading enthusiast and experimenter with the fivefold ministry concept. Cindy Jacobs tells the story of being with Mike at a charismatic conference in Phoenix in 1984 when Hamon approached them, introduced himself, and said, “God has a word for you.” That “word” described developing a prayer and intercession campaign with a group of five major Christian leaders, a prophecy that Jacobs claims later came to pass.¹² Cindy would also become famous for offering these types of out of the blue, “thus saith the Lord” proclamations, but it's clear that she first personally experienced these styles of direct revelation through people like Hamon.

Another ambitious leader in the Dallas charismatic world was a pastor and prophetic figure named Dutch Sheets. Sheets was, in the 1980s, an instructor at the Dallas-based charismatic school, Christ for the Nations Institute (CFNI), and a pastor at a local nondenominational church. Jacobs was a frequent speaker at and collaborator with CFNI and was clearly influenced by the people and ideas there.¹³ After they met in the 1980s, Sheets and Jacobs would become lifelong collaborators all the way to January 6 and beyond.

Cindy's seizing on these Independent Charismatic paradigms proceeded to the point that, in 1985, she and Mike founded a new organization called Generals of Intercession, “a missionary organization devoted to training in the area of prayer and spiritual warfare.”¹⁴ Cindy narrates the inspiration for the organization in a vision she had one day during a private prayer time. She asked God, “Father, since Satan is not omnipresent or omniscient, how is he so effective in his war over the nations?” and God's

reply came to her: *strategy*. God told her, she said, that “the enemy has a strategy for every nation and ministry.” She felt a strong sense that God was calling her to gather together Christian “generals” who could develop prayer battle plans and strategies to counter the devil’s strategies.¹⁵

Cindy’s idea of healing or prophesying to nations also embraced a radical reinterpretation of Jesus’s Great Commission, which he gave to his disciples in Matthew: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (28:19–20).

Prior to this point, Jacobs, like most Christian interpreters throughout history, had read these as instructions to bring the message of the gospel to the people of the nations—that is, to share the message of Jesus with individuals and communities. But in 1985, Jacobs was awakening to a different interpretation: “We are called to disciple whole nations and teach them to observe everything God commanded,” she would later write.¹⁶ She believed that just as individuals could be plagued by sin and possessed by demons, so, too, could whole nations be mired in sin and oppressed by hierarchies of demons and need prophetic divine intervention. Adapting the Latter Rain ideas, Jacobs began teaching that prophets and other Christian leaders could mobilize massive intercession campaigns to tactically defeat Satan and bring whole nations under the kingdom of God.

Mike and Cindy Jacobs’s Generals of Intercession ministry would have limited reach through the remainder of the 1980s. Only when Cindy happened to share a car ride with C. Peter Wagner would the organization really take off.

Spiritual Fathers and Daughters

In 1989, Peter and Doris Wagner were attending a gathering of prayer leaders in Washington, DC, for the US National Day of Prayer. During the lunch break, the Wagners rode in the same car as Mike and Cindy Jacobs. After hearing about their organization, Generals of Intercession, Wagner asked curiously, “What do Generals of Intercession do?”

Cindy Jacobs replied, “We pray for the healing of nations.” This answer provoked Wagner’s curiosity even further. This was, as far as I can tell, one of Wagner’s first exposures to the Latter Rain blueprint for global revival through fivefold leaders. As their conversation unfolded, Wagner recognized that Jacobs was describing a captivating vision of Christianity.

As I outlined in the previous chapter, many Christians believe that an active cosmic war—a battle between angels and demons—is going on all around us and that people are affected by these skirmishes. Spiritual warfare entails Christians getting involved in this spiritual combat through practices like

personal devotional prayer, worshipping God, fasting, and, on the more intense part of the spiritual-warfare spectrum, exorcisms of demons. It's tempting for outsiders to think that any use of spiritual warfare language signals extremism, but what I've just laid out is fairly widespread and even mainstream throughout the evangelical and Pentecostal confessions and even in parts of Roman Catholicism. The late 1980s was the heyday for a pair of Christian novels by Frank Peretti, *This Present Darkness* (1986) and *Piercing the Darkness* (1989), which together sold more than 3.5 million copies and that dramatically and violently depict an immediate interface between human actions and angelic and demonic combat.

Most of the people who believe in spiritual warfare practices consider them to be individually—or, at the widest aperture, communally—centered. In other words, spiritual warfare is about casting off one's own personal demons or protecting one's community from malign spiritual influences. The paradigm shift that Cindy Jacobs was initiating for Peter Wagner was, in many ways, the same one that she had undergone just a few years earlier: broadening the arena of spiritual warfare from delivering individuals from evil forces to mobilizing spiritual warfare campaigns to target whole nations for deliverance and salvation.

In Jacobs, Peter Wagner found a fellow traveler, another longtime first-quadrant evangelical turned charismatic. Jacobs ushered Wagner into a whole new theological universe, one populated by modern-day prophets and apostles, prophecies and expectations of global revival, and charismatic strategies for healing and discipling whole nations. Though she did not have a seminary education and was a full generation younger than him, Jacobs walked in a level of authority and gifting that amazed Wagner.

By 1989, Wagner had published nearly thirty books, and before the day of their car-ride meeting was over, Peter had already introduced Cindy to one of his favorite editors, who was at the same gathering. By the end of the day, negotiations had begun for what would be Jacobs's own first book, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy: A Training Manual for Militant Intercession*.¹⁷

Cindy became almost an adopted daughter in the Wagner household. She wrote in 1995, "I missed my dad so much after he died and then the Lord sent Peter to be my spiritual dad."¹⁸ Until his death in 2016, Peter Wagner would serve as a surrogate father for Cindy, supporting her and upholding her in ministry in a way that her deceased, noncharismatic Baptist father never could.

The Prayer and Spiritual Warfare Movement

Through the course of the 1990s, Cindy Jacobs and Peter Wagner would become pioneers of a burgeoning prayer and spiritual warfare movement that electrified not only the Independent Charismatic sector but huge swaths of the wider evangelical world. Wagner would later write, "I believe that the

decade of the 1990s is characterized, more than any other decade in recent Christian history, as the decade of launching large-scale, high-level spiritual warfare on behalf of world evangelization.”¹⁹ Starting in 1991, he had Cindy guest lecture in his Fuller courses, bringing her ideas into contact with more conventional evangelical cohorts. Through Fuller, the Lausanne Committee, and his publishing, Peter Wagner had credibility among and deep access to influential networks of evangelical leaders. By inviting Cindy into such gatherings and spaces, he helped to introduce her “high-level spiritual warfare” concepts into mainstream evangelical venues.

Cindy also used her credibility in her networks to begin introducing Peter to her colleagues, fellow up-and-coming Independent Charismatic leaders. She brought people like Dutch Sheets and Bill Hamon into Wagner’s orbit. Jacobs would later hire her prophetic mentee Chuck Pierce to help run Generals of Intercession, and after she introduced him to the Wagners, he would go to work for them, administering several of Wagner’s nascent NAR institutions. Like Jacobs, Pierce became a right-hand prophet to Peter Wagner and virtually an adopted son.

You can see a marked shift in Peter Wagner’s activity and in his writing after the initial meeting with Jacobs. The dozens of books he published prior to 1989 had mostly centered on church growth theories and strategies. After meeting Jacobs, he began publishing works with titles like *Engaging the Enemy* (sometimes published as *Territorial Spirits*, 1991), *Warfare Prayer* (1992), *Breaking Strongholds in Your City* (1993), and *Confronting the Powers* (1996).

Across these books and through his co-teaching with Jacobs, Peter Wagner developed elaborate theoretical systems for understanding how prayer and spiritual warfare could affect whole regions and nations. He would ultimately argue that there are three levels of spiritual warfare:

1. *Ground-level spiritual warfare*: Praying for and casting demons out of individual people. This level also may include praying for the “unsaved,” that God would win the battle for their souls.
2. *Occult-level spiritual warfare*: Discerning where demonic forces have found footholds in individuals and localities through occult objects and human collaborators, such as Ouija boards, witchcraft, and—in what became a near obsession with the prayer warriors—Masonic temples and communities.
3. *Strategic-level spiritual warfare*: Wagner, Jacobs, and their collaborators came to believe that the phrases from Ephesians about “powers,” “principalities,” “the rulers of the darkness of this age,” and “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” were actually descriptions of complicated hierarchies of demons with different tiers of influence. Wagner would call these commander demons, in his own phrasing, “territorial spirits.”

The first two levels of spiritual warfare would be cognizable and mostly unremarkable to many evangelicals. But this third type, strategic-level spiritual warfare, was something quite new, and, subsequently, it would serve as the first ideological leg of the NAR stool.

Central to Wagner's emerging theory of spiritual warfare was the belief that the supernatural realm ("the spiritual") interfaces with the physical ("the natural") realm in real time and space. As he put it, the target of strategic-level spiritual warfare was "higher ranking powers of darkness assigned to geographical territories or significant human social networks."²⁰ A central outworking of Wagner's theories was that *you could not cast out territorial spirits at a distance*. If territorial spirits are entrenched in real geographical regions and real-world communities, displacing them from those regions would require on-site ("boots on the ground") prayer and concentrated warfare. This simple shift in the theology of prayer—from something that can be done anywhere into a tactical, on-site battle for authority over territory—would become a critical factor shaping the Christian presence on January 6.

Jacobs invited Wagner and her prophet friend Dutch Sheets to serve on the board of Generals of Intercession, and together these three leaders formulated plans for wholesale spiritual warfare to take back spiritual territory from the territorial spirits. They developed strategies of "spiritual mapping": a practice in which prophetic intercessors walk around cities and neighborhoods to discern and name the territorial spirits and occult footholds that buttress those invisible demonic forces. Spiritual warfare, as a concept, already invokes violence, and this group of strategic-level spiritual warriors around Wagner and Jacobs vigorously leaned into that military jargon. They would talk about spiritual warfare battle plans, weapons of spiritual warfare—Wagner called his online bookshop The Arsenal—and methods of spiritual violence to "take it by force," as Matthew 11:12 means in their interpretation. Prayer teams who were physically present became "boots on the ground" to enact these strategies.

This strategic-level spiritual warfare framework proved to be very controversial, but neither Wagner nor Jacobs was a stranger to conflict. Wagner had started teaching about these ideas in his Fuller classes, training up mainstream evangelical pastors and missionaries in his elaborate cosmic warfare conceptions. Moreover, in 1990, Wagner and Jacobs convened a group in Pasadena composed of respected leaders from their networks of friends and colleagues to try to find ways of implementing these new strategies. Out of this group was born a structure called the Strategic Prayer Network. Wagner was the international coordinator of the group, but, for a time, it was institutionally housed under Jacobs's Generals of Intercession.

The 1990 gathering that birthed the Strategic Prayer Network was written about by the religion editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, who happened to be an acquaintance of Peter Wagner's. It triggered a heated internal dispute among the Fuller Seminary faculty, who, especially since the Signs, Wonders, and

Church Growth course crack-up a few years earlier, were primed to be concerned about Wagner's activities. Now they worried that Fuller's public reputation would be linked to Wagner's wild theories about demonic hierarchies. The ferment around these concerns became so great that Wagner was asked to attend a special faculty meeting to discuss his views. He would later jest that the only thing that prevented the meeting from "becoming an outright heresy trial was the comforting fact that the official Fuller statement of faith had nothing to say about the demonic," so they had no formal grounds to censure him.²¹ The faculty did write a letter of concern, which became part of Wagner's employee record.

The American branch of this global warfare network was called the United States Strategic Prayer Network (USSPN). While it predated Wagner's NAR organizations, the USSPN was a foundational layer for Wagner's leadership networks. It had strategic prayer warfare coordinators in all fifty states, many of them friends of Cindy's, and it was overseen successively by Peter Wagner, Cindy Jacobs, Dutch Sheets, and Chuck Pierce. These prayer coordinators became central hubs of contact for NAR networks in each of the fifty states, and they would organize strategic prayer warfare campaigns, including sending spiritual warfare "strike teams" to specific locations to confront territorial spirits.

Operation Ice Castle

By about this point in the book, you may be wondering why you are reading about people you've never heard of organizing 1990s prayer networks you've never heard of and what any of them have to do with the Capitol Riot. But stay with me for a moment.

The 10/40 Window effort had become the beating heart of the global evangelical missions focus of the 1990s. Tens of millions of Christians in the United States and around the world were praying for the 10/40 Window, donating to mission agencies to send missionaries there, and doing spiritual warfare against the demons in control of that territory. Peter Wagner was the central person coordinating prayer mobilization for this global campaign, and he used the opportunity to implant his newfound strategic-level spiritual warfare ideas into broader prayer organizations and networks.

This interweaving of prayer, prophecy, the 10/40 Window, and strategic-level spiritual warfare culminated in what has to be one of the strangest episodes of 1990s evangelical history. One of the prophets and coordinators in the Strategic Prayer Network, Ana Mendez, who served as the regional coordinator for Southern Mexico, became convinced while praying for the 10/40 Window that there was a territorial spirit named the Queen of Heaven who had established a spiritual stronghold on "the highest

of high places, Mt. Everest.”²² She consulted with Wagner, Jacobs, and other prayer coordinators, and they decided to initiate a strategic-level spiritual warfare expedition to dethrone the Queen of Heaven and dislodge her from her perch over the 10/40 Window. They called it Operation Ice Castle.

So in September 1997, Wagner helped organize a team of twenty-six prophetic intercessors and spiritual warriors from Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, the United States, and Vietnam to travel to Nepal to be boots on the ground confronting the Queen of Heaven. Doris Wagner, who is very respected in these spiritual warfare circles, even traveled with the group. Accompanying her was a promising young American spiritual warrior named Rebecca (Becca) Greenwood, who was only thirty years old at the time. Doris was suffering from severe arthritis, so she and Greenwood stayed at a hotel at thirteen thousand feet up the slopes, while the rest of the team ascended to twenty thousand feet to locate the spiritual castle of the Queen of Heaven.

They spent three weeks in Nepal, blowing shofars, prophesying, and interceding against the territorial spirits. Wagner, Mendez, Jacobs, and others would later claim that this secretive operation—a sort of special-forces adjunct to the 10/40 Window campaign—was one of the keys to unlocking the 10/40 Window to further evangelization. Peter Wagner published an entire booklet about it titled “Confronting the Queen of Heaven,” and Ana Mendez made a documentary with footage from the trip.

When I interviewed Becca Greenwood, she brought up this Operation Ice Castle experience not with a sense of embarrassment or chagrin about one’s youthful misadventures. No, she was proud of her participation, counting it among her greatest achievements in a career of skirmishing with Satan’s forces.

This bizarre episode illustrates just what a profound commitment Wagner’s circle had to these strategic-level spiritual warfare ideas. They were willing to be boots on the ground for three weeks on the side of Mt. Everest to do battle against one of these territorial spirits. And it also enables you to draw a straight line from what Wagner’s followers were doing with the 10/40 Window and Operation Ice Castle in 1997 to how they responded in the aftermath of the 2020 election.

“The Anointing of Apostle of Prayer”

The primary focus of the NAR early on, as the title implies, was with the new functions and gathering of apostles. But Cindy Jacobs would be instrumental in centering the role of latter-day *prophets* within the movement. As Wagner’s thinking developed, he came to imagine prophets and apostles working hand in hand to bring about global revival, with prophets receiving guidance directly from God and apostles

serving as the implementers, putting God's direction into action. Particularly early on, Jacobs was *the* prophetic voice, speaking direct words from God to Wagner and modeling the importance of prophets for apostles.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Cindy Jacobs for the remainder of Wagner's life. She was at times his co-builder of the NAR, at other times his right-hand prophetic adviser, and at times the networker giving Wagner entrée into Independent Charismatic circles he'd never encountered. At every stage in the development of Wagner's thinking about the NAR, there was Cindy Jacobs, advising her spiritual father and offering prophecies to nudge and bolster him.

In contrast with more megalomaniacal personalities, Wagner originally resisted the idea that he could be an apostle. A major hang-up for him was that he originally thought of apostles as a singular class of church-network-building entrepreneurial leaders. At that stage, Wagner personally wasn't interested in building such a network. He had never even pastored a single congregation. So he decided he would be the theorist and teacher of the burgeoning apostolic trend.

But in 1995, Cindy Jacobs approached Peter at a conference with this message: "The Lord would say today, 'My son, Peter, today I put the anointing of apostle of prayer upon you. I put the mantle upon you of an Abraham, a patriarch, and I'm calling you forth into the land of promise.'"²³ Wagner was very amenable to such personal prophecies, and from their first meeting with Cindy Jacobs until Peter's death in 2016, Peter and Doris Wagner kept a journal of every prophecy they received from the prophets. By Wagner's retirement in 2010, this prophecy journal was 159 single-spaced pages.²⁴

This 1995 prophecy of Jacobs's is the first time the term *apostle* shows up in the journal in reference to Wagner. He was also actively organizing and orchestrating global prayer campaigns, so the title "apostle of prayer" tied into a strong sense of existing identity and calling.

Jacobs's prophecy and ensuing conversations opened up the possibility to Wagner that there might be different kinds of apostles. He would ultimately distinguish between "vertical apostles" (those overseeing networks of churches and ministries) and "horizontal apostles" (those whose primary ministry was networking together with different apostles). Thinking of himself as a horizontal apostle, or an "apostle of prayer" as Jacobs had prophesied, allowed room for Wagner to embrace this new self-conception and envisage himself not merely as a theorist but also as an anointed leader within this reformation.

It was through this initial prophecy from Jacobs—and a couple of others that he would receive from other prophets in the 1990s—that he became convinced he actually was one of these new apostles. Wagner came to perceive himself as a networker of networks, gathering the leaders of the NAR for cross-pollination and mutual mentorship. Once Wagner acceded to the idea that he was an apostle, things began to move rapidly in the building of the real-world NAR.

One attribute of Peter Wagner's distinctive and migratory career was that he did not so much "move on" from old ideas as backfill them into his new frameworks. His 1970s church growth theories segued into his 1980s signs and wonders phase with John Wimber, and then both of those became central underlying frameworks for his 1990s spiritual warfare strategies. Likewise, as he absorbed and adopted the fivefold ministries frameworks about apostles and prophets and began building the NAR in the 2000s, following Jacobs's lead, those very apostles and prophets became the anointed "Generals of Intercession," commanders of coordinated spiritual warfare. Apostles and prophets, Wagner believed, carry a special divine commissioning and a special authority to cast out high-level demons. So an apostolic council, alongside more placid functions like church-building, could function as a "War Council" with strategies coming from "the Apostolic Generals."²⁵

How Peter Wagner Finally Left Fuller Seminary

Cindy and Mike Jacobs moved to Colorado Springs in 1993, where their friend Dutch Sheets had recently relocated. While in Colorado, they hired a young couple, Jonathan (Jon) and Jolene Hamill, to help run Generals of Intercession. The Hamills would eventually prove very significant in interfacing between the NAR and the Trump administration. In 1996, Peter and Doris Wagner decided to move to Colorado Springs, too, a first step toward Peter's planned retirement from Fuller in 2000 at the age of seventy.

Peter had long been dissatisfied at Fuller, bucking against his faculty colleagues' criticisms and the "mainstream" (noncharismatic) sensibilities of the seminary. In June 1998, Cindy prophesied over Peter Wagner, "For the Lord would say, 'I am going to build a seminary here in Colorado Springs. I am going to gather leaders from around the world. . . . It is going to happen quickly. The Wagner Institute is so big that you cannot imagine how big it is.'"²⁶ This prophecy was striking and appealing to Wagner at the time, but he couldn't see any feasible way to leave Fuller early. He had never truly monetized his spiritual warfare, publishing, or other ministry side projects, so the Wagners were still practically dependent on their Fuller income.

A month later, Wagner was having dinner with a dozen of his apostolic mentees, and one of them asked him, "Peter, why are you at Fuller?" Slightly flustered, Wagner responded, "Well, I need the money." The group of apostles in the room began to exhort Peter, "We're your biggest supporters. We need time with you. We need you to mentor us and father us." Kay Hiramine, who was running Wagner's non-Fuller projects, eventually turned to Peter and asked, "Well, Pete, how much are you making?"

Wagner detailed his academic salary for them. The assembled apostles—who were accustomed to frank conversations about money and managing big budgets—began discussing, and by the end of the dinner, all of the apostles in the room had agreed to each chip in ten thousand dollars a year to replace Wagner’s salary and free him up to pursue the NAR projects.²⁷ This was, in many respects, the inception of EVAT, Wagner’s inner circle of financially supportive mentees.

So it was Jacobs’s prophecy, paired with this blunt, brass-tacks conversation in 1998, that precipitated Wagner’s early retirement from Fuller. Within less than a year of Jacobs’s prophecy, he had already begun building a new seminary, Wagner Leadership Institute, to fulfill her foretelling.

One of the top students who came through WLI was Becca Greenwood, the young intercessor who had accompanied Doris to Mt. Everest. She moved to Colorado Springs when Peter hired her husband, Greg, to be the registrar at WLI, and Wagner later hired Becca to be his personal assistant. Along the way, she gained a bachelor’s degree and then a doctorate in practical ministry from WLI, with special mentorship from Jacobs. Though she was a generation younger than Jacobs and two generations younger than Wagner, Becca Greenwood grew into one of Wagner’s most adept spiritual warriors.

As all this institution-building was going on in the late 1990s, Cindy Jacobs approached Peter with a request: She and a group of her peers were creating a roundtable of respected and seasoned prophets to gather annually, compare notes on what they felt they were hearing from God, issue collective prophecies, and mentor each other. Jacobs felt that having a group of prophets meet without apostolic oversight was not fitting since apostles were the essential governors of the church. So she asked Peter to be the convening apostle of the group that they titled the Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders. Peter and Doris Wagner attended and convened every ACPE meeting until 2008.

The membership of the ACPE was by invitation only, making it a prestigious group for aspiring fivefold prophets to belong to. Jacobs’s sterling reputation combined with Wagner’s organizational genius has made the ACPE a crucial credentialing association for top-tier fourth-quadrant prophets in the United States, and many of the highest-profile charismatic prophets have been part of the group, if only for a season. It still exists, now led directly by Jacobs. They gather in November or December each year to discuss their prophetic insights and issue a declaration in January called “The Word of the Lord.” These “Word of the Lord” certified prophecies are published in charismatic media, and they are often seen as more reliable than idiosyncratic words from individual prophets.

So by the year 2005, when Wagner was seventy-five years old, he was presiding over a burgeoning network of networks that he called the NAR. The ICA had more than 430 members, influential charismatic leaders and pastors who were all trying their hands at being apostles. Wagner Leadership Institute, with courses taught by many of Wagner’s inner-circle mentees, was serving hundreds, maybe

even thousands, of students per year and expanding the WLI footprint through international franchises—Indonesia, Korea, and Canada—and five additional regional campuses in the United States. The ACPE, which he oversaw with Cindy Jacobs, was gaining increasing prominence and anchoring the American prophetic movement. And his EVAT mentees were becoming some of the leading luminaries of the Independent Charismatic world.

None of these institutions had existed a decade earlier, when Wagner first embraced the NAR concept. When you add them together with the USSPN's state-by-state coordinators, there were between five hundred and one thousand leaders in Wagner's networks at their high point. By the mid-2000s, the NAR was a known quantity and a real leadership force in the Independent Charismatic sector, with a battalion of leaders and networks all aiming to revolutionize the church. And through it all, by Wagner's side, was his prophetic counselor, mentee, charismatic tour guide, and spiritual daughter Cindy Jacobs.

Cindy Jacobs and 2016

Let's fast-forward through the next decade. Peter Wagner retired in 2010, handing off the reins of his many institutions and networks to various spiritual sons and daughters. Logically, he asked Cindy Jacobs to take over convening the ACPE, a role she has held since 2009. In 2008, Peter also handed off leadership of the fifty-state USSPN to Cindy. She rebranded this elite strategic-level spiritual warfare network as the Reformation Prayer Network, which remains to this day as the title.

Over that time span leading to 2015, Cindy Jacobs's prophetic celebrity star continued to rise. In 2015, on its fortieth anniversary, *Charisma Magazine*, the leading media organ of the Pentecostal-charismatic movements, published a list of "40 People Who Radically Changed Our World." All the people on the list were—predictably—Christian leaders, most of them Pentecostal or charismatic, and they were predominantly American. The list included many Christian leaders who would be familiar to most Americans: Billy Graham, Joel Osteen, Pat Robertson. It also included two members of Wagner's EVAT: Bill Hamon, an important old-guard prophet in the ACPE by then, and Cindy Jacobs. The magazine also featured Jacobs on their cover that year with the headline "A Prophetic Army Rising Up—Cindy Jacobs: God is raising up prophetic people worldwide to release an awakening marked by signs, wonders and miracles."²⁸

It is not a stretch to say that by 2015, and very much continuing today, Cindy Jacobs was perhaps the most recognizable and respected modern-day charismatic prophet in the world. She has been a bellwether of the growing popularization of modern-day prophecy. While charismatics have long cherished prophecy as a practice, through her own prophecies and her leadership of the ACPE, Cindy Jacobs has

mainstreamed the Latter Rain-inspired phenomena of individuals claiming the church-governing office of prophet—they *are* prophets; they don't just *practice* prophecy. Or as *Charisma* wrote in 2015, "Over the last 30 years, Cindy has come to exemplify the prophetic movement as it has grown in acceptance."²⁹ James Goll, another key member of the ACPE, said to me in an interview, "Cindy Jacobs walks in an authority, whether it's a man or a woman, unlike few people on the planet today."³⁰

When the ACPE released their "Word of the Lord" for the coming year in January 2016, given the atmospherics around the Republican primary and Donald Trump, Jacobs's summary was cautious: "We sought the Lord about the upcoming U.S. elections, and the Lord did not speak to us about who would be the next president. He did indicate that He was preparing a patriot, but we would have to pray earnestly."³¹ It wasn't until Peter Wagner endorsed Trump one month later that Jacobs really threw in with the Trump campaign.

In June 2016, as the presidential primary was wrapping up and Donald Trump had all but consolidated the nomination, there was a real reckoning among evangelical leaders across all the quadrants. Could they truly get in line to support a reprobate real-estate mogul and playboy? A noteworthy and underreported gathering that seemed to turn the tide toward Trump occurred that month in New York City, with a gathering of more than one thousand evangelical pastors and prominent leaders. This meeting, at which Trump spoke and reportedly won over a large segment of the evangelical leadership echelon, was convened by a star-studded list of more than thirty-five respected leaders of the religious right. These leaders included James Dobson, Ralph Reed, Tony Perkins, and, yes, Cindy Jacobs.³²

Even as these behind-the-scenes maneuvers to get evangelical leaders aboard the Trump train were occurring, Peter Wagner was dying. In his final months, Cindy took on the role of spokesperson for the Wagner family, conveying health updates and prayer requests to the watching charismatic world. When Peter died in October, she wrote in tribute, "Peter Wagner was one of God's great generals. Today, I have been on the phone with those he considered to be his sons and daughters. All of us have a story, whether it is . . . Lance Wallnau, Ché Ahn, Chuck Pierce, Rebecca Greenwood. . . . None of us would be where we are now without his wisdom, guidance and promotion."³³

Not to be deterred by grief from her prophetic political agenda, Cindy directed her energies into the Trump 2016 spiritual warfare campaign. Along with other NAR leaders, she mobilized the Reformation Prayer Network and all the other linked spiritual warfare networks to pray for the election and for Trump's victory. The vehicle for this mobilization was called the As One coalition, which brought together prayer and spiritual warfare organizations. Many of these were NAR-led—Dutch Sheets Ministries, Generals of Intercession, and Lou Engle's The Call—but others were more broadly evangelical.³⁴ This

unity prayer movement had a nonpartisan veneer. But scratch a little below the surface, and you can see that every leader and organization in the coalition was Trump-supporting.

Reflecting back on this campaign, Cindy Jacobs would comment that it was “an urgent Pentecostal type of prayer” that, in effect, got Trump into office: “There is no way he could have been elected if it weren’t supernatural.”³⁵ Whether or not that is true, what we see in the 2016 election cycle is a prodigious mobilization of prayer and spiritual warfare networks on behalf of Donald Trump, with NAR leaders, especially Jacobs, serving as generals of spiritual warfare at the heart of that mobilization, all built on the foundational spiritual warfare paradigms that Sheets, Jacobs, and Wagner had pioneered in the 1990s. These efforts at galvanizing strategic-level spiritual warfare on Trump’s behalf would continue unabated during the Trump presidency.

“A Spiritual Warfare Presidency”

Lance Wallnau, another EVAT member and main character of [chapter 5](#), once labeled the Trump administration “a spiritual warfare presidency.”³⁶ This is a good summary of how the NAR leaders regarded the period from 2017 to 2021. With the ever-growing legion of prophecies about Trump and a handful of influential NAR and Independent Charismatic leaders advising Trump, they believed that God had ordained and anointed Donald Trump for office and opened doors for their influence to spread.

Just as the 2016 Trump campaign brought about an unprecedented alignment of NAR networks and spiritual warfare campaigns, once he was elected, these same networks solicitously positioned themselves as some of the foremost Christian supporters of Trump. These ongoing spiritual warfare efforts kicked off publicly a week before Trump’s inauguration when a group of NAR prophets—including EVAT members Cindy Jacobs, Becca Greenwood, Dutch Sheets, and Lance Wallnau, as well as ACPE members Harry Jackson and Lou Engle—helped lead a spiritual war council in Washington, DC, entitled POTUS Shield; *POTUS* is shorthand for *president of the United States*. The NAR leaders and dozens of other charismatic celebrities and prayer warriors gathered at the National Press Club “to surround the new president and the government with prayer” and “to discern, declare and decree the strategies of God for America.”³⁷

It is difficult to capture just how much optimism and jubilation accompanied this crew of apostles and prophets during this period. They believed that, thanks to their spiritual warfare campaigns, God’s anointed leader had taken power, and they were going to push as far and as hard as they could to see their agenda enacted through Trump.

In fact, the night of the inauguration, as galas and celebrations occurred across Washington, DC, these same leaders and hundreds of other prominent Christians reveled at a dedicated Christian Inaugural Gala. Apropos of their newfound cache in broader right-wing Christian circles, the speakers roster at the Christian gala was dominated by NAR figures: Cindy Jacobs, Dutch Sheets, Lance Wallnau. Paula White spoke, and her husband performed a couple of Christian anthems. In the drama surrounding Trump's inauguration, few analysts noticed how the speakers list at the Christian Inaugural Gala elevated a new species of Independent Charismatic evangelicals, a trend that would very much continue in the ensuing years.

Perhaps even more striking than the NAR leaders eagerly positioning themselves in close proximity to the White House were the reciprocal efforts by the Trump administration to enlist and engage these groups. In June 2018, when Donald Trump was in Singapore leading a delicate set of negotiations with Kim Jong Un about North Korean nuclear weapons, Vice President Mike Pence helped to facilitate an intercession conference call convened by Dutch Sheets, Cindy Jacobs, Lance Wallnau, and Bill Hamon (all EVAT members) as well as Harry Jackson, Mario Bramnick, and Ramiro Peña (key Trump evangelical advisers with deep NAR ties).³⁸ These prayer calls were sponsored by Jacobs's Reformation Prayer Network and other networked spiritual warfare groups that Wagner and Jacobs yoked together in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Through POTUS Shield, Trump's Evangelical Advisory Board, and Paula White's advocacy, NAR leaders had multiple inroads to White House access and influence. But a crucial hinge around which much of the NAR-Trump administration activity turned was that same couple, Jon and Jolene Hamill, who had worked with Cindy Jacobs and Peter Wagner in Colorado Springs.

By 2016, the Hamills were running an organization called Lamplighter Ministries, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. Cindy had brought the Hamills and Becca Greenwood and several other younger generation leaders into the ACPE, and they became integral to this new alliance between NAR spiritual warfare networks and the Trump administration. The Hamills were part of the POTUS Shield gatherings. They attended the Christian Inaugural Gala. They were helping to convene the prayer calls with Mike Pence and the NAR prayer leaders.

"President Trump—in all of his complexity—has been uniquely commissioned by God to lead America in this time. And the results have been astounding!" the Hamills would write in their 2020 book, *White House Watchmen*. "Perhaps more than any time in recent American history, prayer has helped to fuel this governmental turnaround . . . prayer that has produced documented results that many times were spoken into existence beforehand through God's mysterious, sometimes unsettling, gift of prophecy."³⁹ Indeed, in the midst of the 2020 election cycle, hundreds of charismatic prophets (many of them attached

to the NAR, but also from other Independent Charismatic streams) were prophesying in chorus that it was God's will for Trump to win the 2020 election.

The One Voice Prayer Movement

In the summer of 2019, it was rumored among people in the know that Paula White was going to get an official office in the White House. That summer, White was visiting the church of Apostle Guillermo Maldonado. Maldonado, one of Trump's preeminent evangelical advisers, was a Honduran-American apostle and pastor of a bilingual megachurch called El Rey Jesús with more than twenty-five thousand members in Miami. Maldonado was also part of Wagner's ICA and served as an assistant dean at WLI's Florida extension.⁴⁰

There, at Maldonado's church, the longtime ACPE member James Goll approached White and Maldonado about a dream he'd had. Based on the dream, Goll prophesied to White that she was being called to start a new "governmental" prayer movement that would be a "network of networks."⁴¹ Planning began that summer in the background for this very thing, primarily driven by NAR leaders.

A few months later, in November 2019, when Paula White got the White House job, one of the first things she did was announce what she called the One Voice Prayer Movement. She asked Jon and Jolene Hamill to manage and launch this new prayer initiative, and so, in early November 2019, a whole contingent of NAR leaders—including Dutch Sheets, James Goll, Cindy Jacobs, Becca Greenwood, and Jon and Jolene Hamill—gathered in DC at the White House to plan. In the persistent chaos of the Trump administration, few news media outlets or political pundits took notice, but this new prayer initiative was historically significant for two reasons.

First of note was the very existence of a prayer campaign being launched from the White House by a White House staffer. Here a government employee—an ordained minister, in White's case, evidently as part of her official role—was coordinating an overtly religious and overtly charismatic Christian prayer movement. While the One Voice Prayer Movement maintained the facade of an apolitical "unified voice of prayer as we seek God's direction and calling for our nation," underneath the surface it was bristling with partisan proclivities.⁴² Moreover, all the gathered leaders were prominent Trump political and theological allies, turning this prayer campaign, functionally, into a spiritual accessory of the 2020 Trump presidential campaign, which was gearing up around the same time. To my knowledge, the constitutional permissibility of the One Voice Prayer Movement was never adjudicated in court, but a

White House employee spearheading a patently Christian prayer movement mocks the idea of a separation between church and state, and it would seem to potentially violate the Disestablishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Second, and perhaps even more historically consequential, was what the One Voice Prayer Movement would morph into after the 2020 election. Throughout the remainder of 2019 and the election season of 2020, these prayer leaders would gather several times to lead prayer conference calls or nationwide Zoom meetings. But after the voting, and after the election was called for Joe Biden in early November 2020, the One Voice Prayer Movement leaders would initiate a series of online mass prayer meetings they titled the Global Prayer for Election Integrity calls.

Almost all the Global Prayer for Election Integrity Zoom meetings were facilitated by NAR leaders, and they were a central organizing space for Christians who wanted to oppose the results of the 2020 election and see Donald Trump reinstated to another term. There were at least eighteen of these Zoom meetings between November 5, 2020, and January 6, 2021, and more than 1.1 million viewers either joined the calls live or viewed the video recordings of them during that same period.⁴³ The calls, some recordings of which were posted online, trafficked in conspiracy theories about faulty or corrupted voting machines. They were also full of strategic-level spiritual warfare language and inculcated the belief among Christians that the “stealing” of the election from Donald Trump was a demonically orchestrated plot against America.⁴⁴

On the Election Integrity calls, NAR apostles and prophets mingled with like-minded Trump evangelical advisers but also with right-wing leaders such as Pennsylvania state senator Doug Mastriano, provocateur and strategist Steve Bannon, Trump’s former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, and evangelical heavy hitters like James Dobson. The little-noticed prayer movement that Paula White started in 2019 transformed into one of the most important vectors for gathering Christians to oppose the legitimacy of the 2020 election. One of these prayer calls occurred at the exact time that the Capitol was being breached on January 6, 2021, with leaders from Paula White’s prayer movement sending video and text updates from onsite at the Capitol Riot to the 1,500 “prayer warriors” who were live on the call.⁴⁵

The One Voice Prayer Movement and the Global Prayer for Election Integrity calls were not solo NAR affairs, and people from other intercessory organizations and networks joined. But both of these initiatives were led by the highest levels of NAR leadership and bolstered by the prayer and spiritual warfare infrastructure that Peter Wagner, Dutch Sheets, and Cindy Jacobs built in the 1990s. Cindy Jacobs helped lead some of the Global Prayer for Election Integrity calls, as did Becca Greenwood and Jon and Jolene Hamill. This was what Wagner and Jacobs had always wanted: NAR apostles and prophets acting as generals of spiritual warfare and orchestrating massive networks of prayer activists.

Jericho Marches

When the 2020 election was called for Joe Biden in early November and Trump refused to accept those results, all of the prayer and spiritual warfare systems that the NAR had built around Trump—POTUS Shield, the One Voice Prayer Movement, and the myriad charismatic prophets and prophecies assuring Trump’s reelection—became the machinery of a spiritual warfare blitzkrieg. These NAR networks furiously and rapidly flexed, enlisting thousands and even millions of intercessors to join the unprecedented spiritual warfare campaign to see Trump reinstated.

In tandem with the national Global Prayer for Election Integrity calls, a series of spiritual warfare marches—frequently led by local NAR leaders, especially the state coordinators from the USSPN—began in the various swing-state capitals, the same cities and government buildings where legal challenges to voting and elector-certification processes were being brought by Trump’s legal team and local legislator allies. These marches were called Jericho Marches, after the famous biblical Battle of Jericho, where the people of Israel were instructed to lay siege to the Canaanite walled city of Jericho by marching around the city, blowing trumpets, and crying out to God until God miraculously intervened and the walls crumbled. In imitation, the pro-Trump Jericho Marches involved ecstatic prayers, words of prophecy, people blowing shofars, and marching around government buildings. The shofars, rams horns originally used in Jewish liturgy, puzzled many noncharismatic observers, but these had long been deemed a weapon of spiritual warfare in NAR and other Independent Charismatic circles. In some of the swing-state capitals, particularly Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, these Jericho Marches became an almost daily occurrence.

The main event Jericho March happened in Washington, DC, on December 12, 2020. It was purposefully timed to happen concurrently with several of Trump’s legal appeals landing before the Supreme Court, an arbitration many Trump supporters anticipated might be the means by which the election would swing back Trump’s way. That wintry December day, thousands of people gathered on the National Mall to pray, worship, and hear rousing speakers, including conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, former Trump National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, and Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes.

Two EVAT members also spoke that day: Lance Wallnau was there in person, and Cindy Jacobs delivered a video exhortation to the crowds. Cindy quoted Ephesians about spiritual warfare and said, “Let’s believe that we are anointed to deal with corruption, that we are anointed to bring change.”⁴⁶ At the end of the December 12 Jericho March, participants took up their shofars and marched around the US

Supreme Court building, petitioning God for a Trump victory. That evening, pro-Trump protesters violently clashed with pro-democracy counterprotesters in DC; four people were stabbed, and the Proud Boys vandalized two African American churches, setting fire to their Black Lives Matter banners.⁴⁷

“This Will Not Turn Violent!”

A lot of converging forces, campaigns, coalitions, and marketing efforts drew Trump supporters into the crowd on January 6. But to charismatic Christians, January 6 was pitched as another Jericho March—the ultimate Jericho March, in fact. Jacobs decided, just a few days before the January 6 riot, that she needed to be there, to be boots on the ground.⁴⁸ It was surely not lost on any of her attentive supporters that General Cindy Jacobs was going into battle.

Jacobs arrived in Washington, DC, early, and Jon and Jolene Hamill had finagled a White House tour on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 5. So the day before the Capitol Riot unfolded, the Hamills, Jacobs, and some other intercessors and leaders from the One Voice Prayer Movement meandered through the East Wing of the White House. Together they prayed, decreed, and did strategic spiritual warfare. Jon Hamill would later describe how, after the tour, Jacobs and the group stayed in the White House to pray with a “senior [Trump administration] official who had requested prayer.”⁴⁹

That senior official who requested a blessing from Cindy Jacobs on the eve of the Capitol Riot has never been identified. White House visitor log records released by the congressional January 6th Committee reveal that Jacobs was at the White House for nearly three hours that day.⁵⁰

On January 6 itself, the same NAR-aligned Christian group that had sponsored the 2017 Christian Inaugural Gala (Women for a Great America) requested a permit for a protest outside the Capitol. Six protest permits were requested and cleared by the Capitol Police for events on the Capitol Grounds on the day of January 6. Such requests take weeks to process, so they were not merely fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants petitions but required real forethought.

A striking fact lies buried in plain sight in the story of these permits. Of those six permits for protests outside the Capitol on January 6, two were granted to official Stop the Steal organizers and one to an anti-COVID-19 conspiracy group associated with the Oath Keepers. The other three permits went to Independent Charismatic groups. Of the permits requested for protests that day, half were awarded to Christian groups.

The particular permit pertaining to Cindy Jacobs’s group requested a small stage, a microphone, and a speaker system.⁵¹ So there on the southeast corner of the Capitol on a stage, during the riot, were Cindy Jacobs, Becca Greenwood, and about thirty other NAR apostles, prophets, and prayer warriors, including

James Nesbit, the prophetic artist who told me about Peter Wagner being “a wavemaker.” They posted videos on Facebook, so it’s very clear what was going on.⁵² Members of the group were kneeling, and some were wrapped in Appeal to Heaven flags. Others were blowing shofars. Using their speaker system, they were broadcasting prayers, offering apostolic declarations, speaking in tongues, and performing live worship music.

When I interviewed Becca Greenwood and asked her about that day, she told me that they were there to pray “for protection for our nation and our nation’s capital. . . . We were praying for peace.”⁵³ They were praying, yes, that there would not be violence—but also that the counting of the electoral votes would be deferred via “an audit” in Congress. That was the scheme Trump’s allies in Congress were pushing for, and it was a miracle the NAR leaders had come to do strategic-level spiritual warfare for on Trump’s behalf.

Cindy Jacobs prayed into the microphone,

Lord, send your angels, send your angels all around the Capitol, Father . . . not one person is going to get killed here today, not one person is going to get taken out. And we pray that the message will go into the Senate and the House that there are citizens outside saying that they want an audit.

I do pray calm. I do pray peace. We thank you for this in the name of Jesus. *This will not turn violent, in the name of Jesus.* We declare no violence. We take control of the atmosphere of this protest.

Becca Greenwood prayed, “Lord, we thank you voices can be heard without violence. . . . Release your angels. Release your peace into this situation. Lord, we thank you, Father God, every person will be protected.”

Another intercessor in the group took the microphone and prayed,

Lord Jesus, we pray right now against the territorial spirits right over this place. . . . And though we see this violence over these protests, I pray a prayer of peaceful protest going on right now. Lord, we will not be distracted from what the real issue is, and that is the territorial spirits that have been controlling the chambers of our Congress. . . . Lord, we ask you, God of the heavens, Lord of the armies of heaven, dispatch your warriors today in order to take care of those territorial spirits and in order to see your destiny for this nation released.

It is difficult to imagine that a more direct line could be drawn between the NAR and the theology of Peter Wagner and the Capitol Riot. Here two of Wagner's spiritual daughters are praying and doing strategic-level spiritual warfare against "territorial spirits," just steps away from the intensifying violence of the insurrection.

I have spent a lot of time researching Cindy Jacobs, reading her books, watching her videos, and tracing out her journey from gifted daughter of a poor Southern Baptist preacher to one of the most empowered female religious leaders in the world. But at the end of the day, the image of Cindy Jacobs that I cannot shake is this one: Cindy Jacobs—right-hand prophet and co-builder of the NAR with Peter Wagner—standing with her red boots on the ground at the Capitol Riot, praying and decreeing and declaring yards away from an assault on American democracy.

Spiritual Warfare Everywhere

Today, if you listen closely, you can hear the rhetoric of spiritual warfare insinuating itself into the jargon of American right-wing politics, even among people who are not charismatic.

Florida governor Ron DeSantis, a Roman Catholic, has taken to quoting that Ephesians 6 passage about the armor of God, but he'll swap out the phrase *the devil* for *the Left*: "Our state is worth fighting for. This country is worth fighting for. So put on the full armor of God, and take a stand against the Left's schemes."⁵⁴

Trump strategist Steve Bannon has called Democratic candidates "satanic," "pure evil," and "someone who hangs with Satanic Groomers."⁵⁵

And perhaps most chilling, just a few months before an attacker broke into Nancy Pelosi's house and brutally beat her husband with a hammer, Michael Flynn, Trump's former National Security Advisor, while campaigning for a Midwestern charismatic pastor running for Senate, said, "This is a war that we're in, this is a big-time spiritual war. I mean people like Nancy Pelosi, she's a demon."⁵⁶

You could multiply these examples by the hundreds. Right-wing activists, pundits, and politicians have adopted a robust good versus evil, angels versus demons, cosmic combat framing of American politics. And of course there is that indelible image of Paula White, a White House employee, petitioning for "angels from Africa" to come over and assist President Trump in overthrowing the 2020 election results.

How did we get here? How did the most banal of policy disputes and disagreements come to be depicted in terms of Manichaeism, militant vocabulary? Obviously, the polarization within American politics is not monocausal, and a multitude of forces is driving the wedge into this ever-widening

epistemic gap in how different Americans even know what they know. But this pugnacious application of spiritual warfare language and imagery to American politics came from somewhere.

At their fateful 1989 meeting in a car on the way to lunch, Peter Wagner and Cindy Jacobs hazily recognized that each of them was holding a piece of the future they both wanted. Wagner had evangelical credibility and respect and a curiosity about seeing prayer and spiritual warfare expand on a global scale. Jacobs held prophetic authority and charismatic ideas of mobilizing spiritual warfare on behalf of nations. Together they made the controversial, fringe ideas of the 1990s the commonplaces of today.

The Trump era pushed the accelerator pedal to the floor on this already escalating trend of spiritual warfare politics. By the 2016 presidential campaign, Wagner, Jacobs, and the NAR networks had created spiritual warfare strategies, practices, and a networked intercession infrastructure that they used to buoy the cause of Donald Trump. His four years in office were, to them, a “spiritual warfare presidency,” and these orchestrated spiritual warfare offensives became so interwoven with Trump’s cause that when he lost the 2020 election, Wagner and Jacobs’s strategic spiritual warfare networks kicked into high gear. Together, the NAR leaders executed one of the greatest prayer campaigns in human history, all to upend the 2020 election.

If one was immersed in charismatic media or social media in the period from November 2020 to January 2021, the markers and themes of this mustering of spiritual warfare to see Trump reinstated were inescapable. To everyone outside of that ecosystem, these efforts looked like quirky, one-off Jericho Marches and idiosyncratic conference calls led by self-proclaimed “prophets.” But on January 6, 2021, this massive spiritual warfare whisper campaign exploded into view around the US Capitol.

In the trajectory of Cindy Jacobs, we can see the direct line from charismatic evangelical prayer mobilization in the late twentieth century to the charismatic optimism and fury on display around the Capitol on January 6.

When I think of Wagner’s three types of spiritual warfare—ground-level spiritual warfare (personal prayer and exorcisms), occult-level spiritual warfare (discerning where malign spiritual forces were gaining power through arcane or occult practices), and strategic-level spiritual warfare—the first two, honestly, do not cause me to lose any sleep. As much as performing exorcisms or labeling Masonic temples as occult strongholds could possibly harm individuals or even lead to intercommunal conflict, both of these sets of spiritual practices and assumptions are widespread in evangelical and Pentecostal circles. Neither presents society-wide threats to American civic life.

But strategic-level spiritual warfare? Layered into already roiling partisan politics? Where conservative and right-wing Christians envisage their fellow citizens, and often their fellow Christians, as literally driven by demons? In a theological milieu where Christians believe they need to “disciple whole

nations” as though any society is a simple, monolithic whole? That is an escalating force in political polarization, one it is difficult to imagine ratcheting down.

If your political opponents are, literally, inspired by demons, then there’s no negotiating with them. Demons are not meant to be negotiated with; they are meant to be battled, exorcised, and expelled. As we saw on January 6, this rhetoric of spiritual violence stokes real-world violence. You can only proclaim that a group of people or a political party is filled with demons for so long before someone decides that those demonic vessels must actually be physically attacked.