

Vineyard Movement

“Christian” Charismania

- The Vineyard movement is a hyper-charismatic organization that is also known by the names of “third wave,” “Signs and Wonders Movement,” and “power theology.” It was officially begun in 1982 with John Wimber’s affiliation with a small group of Southern California churches (then affiliated with the Chuck Smith-Calvary Chapel movement). The “mother” church was named the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Anaheim, California, as part of the Association of Vineyard Churches (AVC). From five churches in 1982, the AVC had grown at the time of Wimber’s death in November of 1997 to approximately 450 churches in the U.S. and another 250 abroad, with an estimated 200,000 members throughout the world. (Counting those churches “friendly” to the Vineyard without being officially affiliated with it, the Vineyard can boast that it influences the faith and practice of more than 1500 churches.) AVC’s goal is to have 2,000 churches in the Vineyard fold by the year 2000.
- The Vineyard movement draws the vast majority of its support from those who were originally non-charismatic “evangelicals.” In fact, the Vineyard has infiltrated, currently or in the recent past, such evangelical seminaries as Dallas Theological Seminary (three DTS “Vineyard-professors” were dismissed in 1987), Trinity International University (formerly Trinity Evangelical Divinity School—two “Vineyard-professors” employed), Fuller Seminary (three “Vineyard-professors” on the Missions Dept. faculty), and Biola Seminary (two “Vineyard-professors” on the faculty). The Vineyard has also infiltrated such organizations as the Promise Keepers (top PK leaders are Vineyard members), and has been instrumental in the unscriptural “Laughing Revival.” Todd Hunter is now the National Director of the Association of Vineyard Churches (USA). In an interview with *The Voice of The Vineyard*, Hunter said, “What was core to our original vision? Winning the lost and planting churches. How do we get there? We get there by trying to be an expression of the best of evangelical thinking and Pentecostal practices.”
- As an overview, the Vineyard movement’s teachings err dramatically in three main areas (each one of these is addressed in more detail in our report on John Wimber): (MS, p. 22)*
 - (1) Dependence on experience rather than Scripture, leading to both a pragmatic (if it works, it must be from God) and a subjective approach (all sources of truth are equally valid)—“experience first, then mold theology to fit the experience,” seems to be the Vineyard’s motto.
 - (2) Acceptance of occult/New Age practices in “Christian” forms, such as aura reading and manipulation, the teaching of “inner healing,” astral projection, contact with familiar spirits, and psychological and occult methodologies.
 - (3) A mystical view of spiritual warfare that comes dangerously close to spiritism, culminating in the belief that even Christians can be possessed by demons.

* All of the quotes and excerpts used in this report designated “MS,” are derived from two articles in the September 1990, *Media Spotlight* Special Report, entitled “Latter-Day Prophets: The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets and the Kansas City-Vineyard Connection” (the Kansas City Vineyard disaffiliated itself in 8/96); and “Testing the Fruit of the Vineyard.” See also *Media Spotlight*’s 1996, 32-page report, “The Vineyard: History, Teachings & Practices.”

Titus 1:9 — “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

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- The Vineyard’s approach to healing is not the mere laying on of hands accompanied by fervent prayer, but the incorporation of an unholy mixture of Jungian psychology and Agnes Sanford’s “inner healing” techniques, both of which have their roots in the occult, but have become popularized in our day through the New Age Movement (Albert James Dager, *Vengeance Is Ours*, p. 155). “There is every indication that the Vineyard movement, chasing after signs and wonders, has become caught up in a mystical [New Age] mindset that will lead inevitably to a greater religious deception to which the vast majority of the world’s populace will succumb” (Dager, p. 156).
- The Vineyard movement teaches that signs and wonders were the essential ingredient for success in first century church evangelism (a claim which is not supported anywhere in the Book of Acts), and that for today, the only way to get people to believe the Gospel is to startle them into believing through healing, prophecy, and the casting out of demons. (This is called “power evangelism,” and is officially defined as a presentation of the gospel that is rational, but also transcends the rational—a gospel presentation with a demonstration of God’s power through signs and wonders; i.e., a spontaneous, spirit-inspired, empowered presentation of the gospel that is preceded and undergirded by supernatural demonstrations of God’s presence.) The Vineyard teaches that only by startling the world by demonstrations of clairvoyance and powerful healings will the gospel message receive respectful attention, because (apparently) by itself, the Gospel is too weak and powerless to break the stubbornness and rebellion of the human heart (Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic*, pp.74-75).
- Although the Vineyard movement will not commit itself, it is inherently Dominionist/Kingdom Now/Reconstructionist in its theology; i.e., the application to the present age of features which are unique to the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth. They believe in the present victory of the church, which is the essence of post-millennialism, and their emphasis on certain gift operations are characteristics of the Millennial reign of Christ rather than this present age. As a result, third-wave teaching is adamantly opposed to any form of dispensational theology (Robert Dean, Jr., *Biblical Perspectives*, “Don’t Be Caught By The Undertow Of The Third Wave,” p. 5). (Although the speaking in tongues is not discouraged in the Vineyard movement, the “more desired gifts,” and thereby the most “practiced,” are those of healing, casting out of demons, and binding Satan.)
- The Vineyard’s teachings on the person and work of Christ (Christology) are heretical at best and blasphemous at worst. They teach that though Jesus was fully divine, He set aside His divinity while on earth, and thereby, His miraculous ministry was accomplished solely as a human, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Vineyard teaches that mortal man today can perform signs and wonders on the same basis Jesus did—through the Holy Spirit’s empowering alone, we can do the same miracles, works and knowledge as Jesus, and more! Peter Wagner, one of the central leaders of the Vineyard, states that, “Jesus exercised no power of and by Himself. We today can expect to do the same or greater things than Jesus did, because we have been given access to the same power source.” (Emphasis added.)

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