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Creemos en el Espíritu Santo, Señor y dador de vida,
que procede del Padre y del Hijo,
y que junto con el Padre y el Hijo
recibe adoración y gloria.
El habló por medio de los profetas.

(From the Nicene Creed)

I. Introduction

After seven meetings of the synodical Committee to Study Third Wave Pentecostalism as a whole, we amicably separated to write majority and minority reports. The separation was long in coming, as we of the minority became more and more convinced that we could not in good conscience recommend that synod affirm the third wave movement, albeit with cautions.

We are calling on synod to warn churches to be very cautious about the third wave. We believe that the majority report gives a virtual *carte blanche* to the movement in asking synod to “gratefully accept all the ways in which this movement manifests the work of the Spirit” (VI, B, 1). If, of course, all the ways were in fact the work of the Spirit, the churches should obviously accept them, but such generalizations must be unraveled with care.

At stake are foundational elements of the CRCNA identity—biblical, theological, ecclesiastical, and church polity central beliefs and practices—which will be seriously affected if we accept and follow the recommendations of the majority report.

Our Reformed heritage is not founded on postapostolic revelations and visionary experiences. The words of an old hymn are ours:

Spirit of God, who dwells within my heart,
wean it from sin, through all its pulses move.
stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are,
and make me love you as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
no sudden rending of the veil of clay,
no angel visitant, no opening skies;
but take the dimness of my soul away.

(1987 *Psalter Hymnal*, 419)

II. A theology of power

The third wave lays claim to a theology of power. The term *power* (as used in the title of Charles H. Kraft's book, *Christianity with Power*) is perhaps the single most significant word associated with the third wave. Terms such as *Holy Spirit* and *spiritual warfare* and *spiritual gifts* are also very prominent but almost always connected with *power*.

C. Peter Wagner, John Wimber, Charles Kraft, and others have emphasized the need for a *theology of power*—a theology evident throughout third wave writings.

This theology, according to Paul Heibert, is misguided: "Here Wimber's teaching is particularly weak. . . . Many Christians testify to the fact that it was in times of sickness and suffering that they were drawn closest to Christ and learned important lessons of faith. Those are times when people realize their own vulnerability and their dependence on God" (Heibert, "Healing"; see also Appendix C below.)

The CRC has a rich history of bowing before the sovereign will of God. We humbly accept the pain and suffering we do not understand. We are not among those Christians who cry out with an expectation that God will cure the terminal illness of our loved ones because we have a special claim to *power*. As a committee, we together grieved the loss of Dr. David H. Engelhard, a man who was not just our committee chair but also a beloved and highly respected denominational leader. Was God unfaithful in not curing our friend David? The words of Job come to mind: "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised. . . . Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 1:21, 13:15).

Some members of the CRCNA are more open today to a Pentecostal-charismatic form of spirituality than they were in decades past. With this spirit of appreciation and inclusion, it might seem natural for the CRC to endorse the third wave. There are, however, many reasons why the CRC should be very cautious about moving in this direction.

III. Brothers and sisters in Christ

Before outlining some of these reasons, we wish to state that there are some positive aspects of a more charismatic and subjective spirituality, not the least of which are expressions of outward warmth and emotion that are sometimes lacking in more formal spiritual settings. We recognize our third wave sisters and brothers both outside and inside the CRC as ones who are sincerely seeking spiritual growth along with others who are not associated with the

third wave. We resonate with the words of Michael Horton (1992) in the introduction to his edited book, *Power Religion*:

Every issue we address in this volume is a matter for debate within the body of Christ. None of the authors suggest that those who support . . . the signs and wonders movement . . . are non-Christians or enemies of the faith masquerading as disciples of Christ.

So, the issues are of immense importance (it's not just a matter of different *emphases*), but are to be addressed in a spirit of humility, reconciliation, and love of both the truth and of our brothers and sisters. In fact, none of us suggest that there is nothing to learn from [this movement]. . . .

This book, therefore, is not meant to draw lines in the sand between true and false brethren. Rather, its goal is to point out what we believe to be serious distractions from the core mission and message of the Christian faith.

IV. Drawing lines in the sand

We likewise do not draw lines in the sand, but we do believe the third wave presents “serious distractions from the core mission and message of the Christian faith” in ways that seriously affect central practices and beliefs of the CRCNA. When we began our work on the committee, we regarded the topic of the third wave to be an important issue to study, but we did not comprehend the far-reaching potential that the third wave has to lead the CRCNA in a misguided direction.

Though we do not draw lines in the sand, others have done so. In the forward to Kraft’s book (2005, vii), Clark Pinnock writes that the third wave of power ministries “requires that we decide which camp (pro- or anti-Pentecostal) we belong to.” Kraft, a long-time professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, is a strong advocate of the third wave. He and others have drawn lines in the sand. Some pastors have drawn lines as well, suggesting that church officeholders should be only those who possess the so-called third wave gifts.

Whether lines are drawn or not, the matter is critical, and it falls on the CRC to decide. Other denominations have weighed in on this matter (see Appendix D). It now behooves the CRC to do the same.

V. Reasons for rejecting third wave

A. The 1973 report (*Acts of Synod 1973*, pp. 398-493) leads us to offer strong cautions against the third wave movement as being incompatible with our high view of Scripture and our Reformed theological tradition. If we are in “fundamental continuity with the 1973 report on neo-Pentecostalism” (majority report, introduction), a careful reading of that report will show that those areas in which the 1973 report expressed its strongest cautions and warnings, are those that today are at the forefront of the third wave movement. (See minority report Appendix A that demonstrates our claim overlooked in the majority report’s, introduction, and section II.)

B. We must be very careful with the unchecked generalizations, offered by the majority report, that present the third wave movement in a positive light. For example, the majority report overview (majority report, section III and elsewhere) presents the third wave as predominantly an evangelical phenome-

non that has not, by and large, fostered disruption in church communities but has served to rejuvenate the personal faith life of those touched by the movement (III, A). No sociological or statistical information is offered to warrant such claims.

On the contrary, there are significant statements from evangelical denominations and scholars (as the ones we present below) that show the rejection and strong warnings against the third wave. Even the survey ordered by the committee shows no significant growth due to third wave influence (majority report, Appendix B). The claim made in the majority report (section IV, C) that the openness of our CRCNA members to the third wave emphases is due to theological compatibility, ongoing renewal, and cultural context is supported by no solid evidence.

C. An arbitrary selection and classification of people and representatives of the third wave is given (majority report, section III, B) to make such movement acceptable for the CRCNA. For example, Peter Wagner (a founding leader of the third wave) is placed as “beyond the third wave.” Yet, he remains a pioneer and innovator for the movement (he is used several times by the majority report to make important points). His writings are highly influential among third wave circles. Influential people, such as Benny Hinn, John Hage, and others, are classified as charismatics, while others, such as Robert Tilton, are not mentioned at all.

D. While the majority report distances itself from Peter Wagner’s New Apostolic Reformation, it affirms the prophetic office (a key Wagner emphasis) and commends it in positive terms. It also maintains that this foundational doctrine “contributes to the way in which prayer is understood and healing and deliverance ministry is engaged” (III, D, 1).

E. Reference to CRC Publications that affirm the third wave does not add weight to the majority report. A CRC publication does not carry the *imprimatur* of synod.

F. The main practices and beliefs of the third wave weaken the CRC’s high view of Scripture and its authority as the Word of God for faith and life. Third wave practices—revelatory prophecy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and dialogical prayer (in which revelations from God are received to guide life)—serve to contradict that essential belief. These subjective claims of revelation easily become a norm and guide for life. Historically and today, such revelations easily take priority and become a canon within the canon in church life.

G. The implicit practices of the third wave are in direct contradiction to the ecclesiology and church polity of the CRCNA. Deliberations, study committees, consensual agreements, majority votes, friendly, and not so friendly disagreements are not part of the ecclesiastical ethos of third wave circles. Charismatic leaders guide churches due to their elite status.

H. The New Apostolic Reformation, led by Peter Wagner, is not just a movement beyond the third wave. It is a logical result and outcome of it and remains an integral and leading part of the third wave. When leaders with special knowledge (such as the ancient Gnostics) are acknowledged as privileged recipients of prophecies and revelations, the church is on a dangerous course.

I. The whole issue of spiritual warfare is another example of poor exegesis (see minority report Appendix B). The issue has been reduced to a key word for the third wave: *power*. Such power is understood in terms of great signs and wonders. However, in Ephesians, spiritual warfare has to do with ethical qualities in the church (righteousness and truth), with proper relations among the members (unity and peace), and with prayer and the power of a life of service and love (see minority report Appendix B).

In the section on evaluating the third wave (V, B, 5, a, 2), the majority report affirms that Christians can be “inhabited by demons.” Just before that affirmation, however, the majority report says, “Christians cannot be demon-possessed because they belong to God.” Such subtle distinction must be clarified. It seems to us that even the idea of being inhabited by demons has no biblical support and must be rejected (see minority report Appendix B).

J. The criteria (four questions) that the majority report adopts from PRMI (section V, B, 1, b, 3) to discern between genuine practices and counterfeits are subjective. It is similar to the WWJD phenomenon (What would Jesus do?). Those questions do not direct or appeal to objective, biblical criteria but are left to be answered subjectively and arbitrarily.

K. Recommendation B, 1 in the majority report, endorses uncritically and dangerously third wave practices. Who is going to determine and discern “*all the ways* in which the movement manifests the work of the Holy Spirit”? Are all the practices in third wave manifestations of the Holy Spirit? The recommendation posits that those ways are *notable* in “demonstrating the present reality of the spiritual gifts (charismata) recorded in Scripture and of being filled with the Holy Spirit in different ways and on multiple occasions.” To give just one example: This goes against the argument Paul develops in 1 Corinthians 13, where the fruit is emphasized over the use of gifts. The majority report suggests that the claimed manifestations of charismata in the third wave are the work of the Holy Spirit, and we must receive them “gratefully.” Synod must be wary of such a blanket reception.

L. Recommendation B, 3 calls us to “acknowledge the gift of prophecy today.” Yet, the interpretation of the gift of prophecy by the majority report is highly reductionistic because it seems that it only refers to “special insights” for specific situations (III, D, 1). A quick look at the prophetic literature of the Old Testament and New Testament shows that prophecy was much broader: It included an interpretation of God’s law (Calvin) and history. It was a critical conscience for the present (announcement and denouncement) to guide God’s people into God’s ways. It also provided hope and predicted judgments and salvation in the future (see the 1973 report’s definition, minority report Appendix A, I, B, 1). Thus, to adopt recommendation B, 3 of the majority report would be contrary to the biblical teaching on prophecy (Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). We already have the prophetic message as something completely reliable.

M. We are instructed in recommendation B, 5 to “think of prayer as a dialogue, not a monologue, and be attentive to what God is saying as you pray.” A quick look at the book of Psalms, the prayer book of Israel and the church, will show immediately how reductionistic is this recommended concept of prayer that stresses the revelational aspect of it. How can I discern that the

voices I hear in prayer are God's, my own, or even the Devil's? Where in the Old Testament or New Testament are we encouraged or recommended to hear new revelations from God in prayer?

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod give the privilege of the floor to Drs. Ruth Tucker and Mariano Avila as writers of the minority report.

B. That synod reject the counsel given by the majority report in Recommendations B, 1, 2, and 5 and require a clarification of section B, 7 in light of their previous affirmations (see our reason I).

C. That synod issue a strong warning against third wave as a movement that seriously affects foundational elements (biblical, theological, and ecclesiastical) of the CRCNA's identity.

D. That synod recommend the minority report to the churches.

Committee to Study Third Wave Pentecostalism
Minority Report
Mariano Avila
Ruth Tucker

Appendix A

Another Reading and Interpretation of the 1973 Report

I. Biblical/theological significance

The 1973 report is comprehensive in the way it covers the Old and New Testament teachings with regard to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We encourage a careful reading and study of such sections (*Acts of Synod 1973*, pp. 413-29). It also provides a careful selection of teachings from our creeds and confessions that contributes to a better understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit (430-35).

One of the largest sections is devoted to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it includes a detailed study of individual gifts (443-63), some of which we again need to pay special attention to because they are prominent in the third wave movement (prophecy, healing, signs and wonders, and gifts of understanding such as words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and discernment of spirits as well as gifts of guidance and exorcism).

The 1973 report aims to respond directly to major concerns—the experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the emphasis in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the spectacular ones. It responds clearly to them and offers wise advice that *must be studied carefully* because such practices and teachings are an integral part of the new third wave movement.

We do not need to repeat the extensive and comprehensive study on the Holy Spirit that the 1973 report provides. Rather, using it as a background, we address here some of the most significant aspects of the third wave movement.

A. *Developments, new emphases, and practices related to scriptural teachings*

Special attention must be paid to the advice offered in the 1973 report with regard to the gifts of speech and those of understanding. Relevant among them are the gifts of prophecy (450-53); interpretation of tongues (450); and other so-called words of wisdom, knowledge, discernment, and guidance (457-62). These latter gifts, in contrast, for example, to the gift of tongues, are more significantly used in the third wave and have become more central in the development of the theology of the movement.

While the 1973 report is quite open and sympathetic toward neo-Pentecostalism and recognizes the validity, permanence, and use of spiritual gifts today in the churches in dealing with all the previously mentioned gifts, the 1973 report had clear disagreements with the way the neo-Pentecostal movement defined and understood them.

The 1973 report parted ways with neo-Pentecostalism in the understanding of those gifts. While it never closed the door to acknowledging the supernatural manifestations of such gifts (“supernatural revelation of facts past, present, or future, which were not learned through the efforts of the human mind” [458]), it challenged their reduction to that area, which is exactly what the third wave does. The 1973 report also suggested definitions more in line with the ministry of gifted teachers, theologians, and biblical scholars. We must follow their balanced advice.

There is a tendency in neo/Pentecostalism [prominent in third wave, we add] to seek...“guidance” as the only sure way to know the Spirit’s leading. Moral decision-making is suspect as giving too much room for the reassertion of the “mind of the flesh,” as though the Spirit were incapable of illuminating and sanctifying the mind.

(*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 425)

B. *Considerations and cautions of the 1973 report with regard to specific gifts*

1. Prophecy

The 1973 report provided a definition of this gift that is more in accordance with the Bible and is not reduced to foretelling or revelations. Prophets are seen as interpreters of the law, as inspired men who expose evil conditions, and as those who also predicted judgments and blessings. Prophecy is clearly identified with preaching (451).

Today in the third wave movement not only is the gift of prophecy claimed as operative in the churches (and frequently reduced to its predictive function), but also the *office of prophet* is considered essential for the ministry of the churches (thus, with the New Apostolic Reformation and with the practice of third wave circles). As a direct revelation from God, such prophecies go regularly unchallenged, and, in the minds of many believers, the words of the prophet(s) are as normative as the word of God. As a matter of fact, the prophets become in many cases authoritative interpreters of Scripture and of social reality. They regularly offer their insights and interpretations of social, economic, and political events.

This is the way prophecy is defined by the majority report in the affirmations about prophecy: “The spiritual gift of prophecy operates in receiving a word from the Lord as a special insight for a specific situation” (V, B, 2, a, 1).

This is what 1973 report says about such kind of prophecy:

The frequently stated or implied definition of prophecy as “supernatural speech in an unknown language from the Spirit and not from the intellect” contradicts everything we know about the prophets from the Bible, and does not honor the biblical teaching that our minds are subject to (not cancelled out by) Christ. If the aforementioned definition of prophecy were correct, the result would be at least equal to the authority of Scripture, and therefore not in need of testing.

(Acts of Synod 1973, p. 452)

2. Gifts of understanding—utterances of wisdom and knowledge

The 1973 report defines the word of wisdom as “to give the mind of Christ, especially in defense of the gospel” (457). That is directly related to the revelation of Scripture.

The word of knowledge is defined as “a heightened insight and understanding of the Scriptures and the ability to communicate this to others in teaching” (458). The report challenges the “easy claims which are made relative to this gift” as divine guidance, as it is common in third wave circles.

3. Discernment of spirits

The 1973 report considered carefully the biblical teaching on this gift and understood that it had to do with detecting false prophecy (1 John 4:1-3, 6) and thus distinguishing between truth and error. In light of this, the 1973 committee pointed out that this was a task not only of the theologian and faithful biblical scholar but also of the insightful Christian layperson.

When the 1973 committee analyzed the interpretation of neo-Pentecostalism, it concluded that this movement was putting experience above the Bible. “The excesses of the neo-Pentecostal movement alone should teach us to be wary of elevating experience above scriptural discernment . . . we would warn the church to be on its guard” (459-60). This was their advice: “The church must maintain . . . that experiences must always be subject to and tested by the total witness of the Scriptures as none other than the words of the Holy Spirit himself (Heb. 3:7a)” (459).

In the third wave movement, this gift is now understood almost exclusively in terms of spiritual warfare. Where is the serious exegesis by key representatives of the movement? It has been developed in such a way that there are now specialists in not only discerning the spirits but also in mapping and exorcising them.

4. Spiritual warfare

The 1973 report recognizes the reality and existence of Satan and of spiritual beings hostile to God and human beings. It acknowledges the biblical truth that Satan and his hosts suffered a significant defeat when Christ and his kingdom came to this world. Nevertheless, it also assents to the strong activity of demonic forces in this world that will surely increase as the end of history approaches.

The study even offers some hints to diagnose demonic possession and how to expel the demon from a person (463).

At the same time, the report expresses great reservation about some of “these reports and the indecent eagerness with which some gospel practitioners ‘diagnose’ cases of demonic possession, when the difficulties are cases of hardened sinfulness, character weakness, natural resistance to the gospel, self-induced fears, mental illness or diseases . . .” (463). The report

concludes saying: “We caution against a too hasty assumption that most cases of moral lapse and resistance to the gospel are instances of demon possession” (463).

In the third wave movement, spiritual warfare is one of the prominent strategies for ministry. Actually, all kinds of problems—personal, social, and national—can be and must be resolved with prayer (see minority report Appendix B).

C. *Extra-biblical practices*

While some of the practices just described exhibit a biblical basis, the following list of practices have no parallel with or origin in the clear teachings of the Bible. Usually it is the experience people have had and the authority of the leaders of the movement that establish such practices in the liturgical life of congregations. They are prominent in the third wave.

1. Anointings

This has been a major and distinctive part of religious services. A person who has been endowed with special powers ministers to people by praying for them, and, as a result, worshippers receive a special blessing in the form of being stricken by the Spirit (falling backward and staying unconscious for some time), holy laughter (uncontrolled laughter as a sign of the Spirit’s anointing), holy drunkenness (mindless behavior as a drunk person that is attributed to the Holy Spirit), and many other manifestations (dancing, jumping, swirling in the Spirit). Another example of recent modalities, is that some people claim to see streams of gold falling from heaven as they are praying and interpret that as another sign of the prosperity God is bringing to their lives. There is no end to the novelties that are practiced in third wave circles.

2. Mapping and expelling of the territorial evil spirit

An extrabiblical practice that arose out of the allusion in the book of Daniel to the princes of Persia and Greece (Dan. 10:12-14, 20) has become a central ministerial practice. It is a strategy and methodology to map spirits that rule over places, regions, cities, and countries in order to detect and expel them. In this way, major moral perversions and sinful practices are dealt with.

For example, pastors and leaders in a small town in Argentina (training ground of Peter Wagner) paid a huge amount for the services of an apostle with this gift. He mapped the spirit (located the precise place where it dwelt), and then the apostle proceeded to anoint the city with oil by air (using a helicopter), sea (with a yacht), and land (with prayer walkers also pouring oil everywhere) to exorcise the evil spirit that ruled over the city. Yet, nothing has changed since then.

D. *Genealogical links with previous waves*

The 1973 report established a connection, a genealogical link, between Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism. We believe also that the third wave is a part of that genealogy and that new developments such as the New Apostolic Reformation are the logical result of the third wave. The churches must be aware of this.

1. There is a genealogical link between neo-Pentecostalism and the third wave movement. The link between the first two waves, Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism, was described saying that neo-Pentecostals “for the most part do not come from the Holiness communions but from those communions which have long standing confessional and theological traditions to which they generally remain true. Its participants also come from the middle and upper economic classes and from the better to highly educated people” (402). We must add that the third wave is also reaching people from the lower classes, but the kind of fidelity to traditional churches is not necessarily present and in some of its modalities is actually questioned in light of “what the Lord is doing now to renew the church.”
2. The third wave movement puts a great stress on individual and intense religious experiences (granted by the Spirit, according to the third wave) as well as a critique of traditional churches’ emphases on doctrine, liturgy, and institutional structures and orders. Some of the new and most influential modalities of the movement are proclaiming a New Apostolic Reformation in which God is renewing his church. The day of denominationalism is gone, and a new leadership with new forms of being the church is slowly and persistently being developed. It is true that the majority report distances itself from the New Apostolic Reformation, but we believe that they fail to see that it is a logical and historical result of third wave.
3. There is a profound interest in the power, baptism, gifts, and fruit of the Holy Spirit. While some of the old language of Pentecostalism is still used (i.e., baptism of /with/ in the Spirit), new experiences (anointments, blessings, liberations from evil spirits, and so forth) are also introduced in addition to the gifts of the Spirit. A major claim is made, not absent before, and it is this: People receive power for service. *Power*, interpreted in a peculiar way, is a major feature in the third wave, as we already indicated. Such understanding, however, is not necessarily in line with biblical teaching (see minority report Appendix B).
4. There is a heightened awareness of the demonic and a corresponding interest in spiritual warfare. This has become a major component of the third wave movement under the name of *spiritual warfare* (see minority report Appendix B).

II. Cultural relevance

The cultural context of the early 1970s was an important key for the committee that created the 1973 report as it attempted to make sense of the movement. We also believe that a cultural assessment is necessary to understand the third wave in our contemporary North American culture. The following elements are offered as marks of the North American culture that also have impacted the third wave movement. Of course, in some of the third wave modalities those elements are more evident than in others.

North America is a therapeutic culture. A predominantly narcissistic culture can easily adopt for its lifestyle or worship those elements that fit well with its own values. That is why fitness, health at all costs, pain-free practices, comfort, and so forth, are central for most people. When they are contextualized and integrated into religious practices, people will adopt them easily. In

such a context, promises of complete physical, emotional, mental, economic, and spiritual healing are highly appreciated, sought, and valued. The prosperity gospel (salvation, health, and wealth) has been effective in reaching many people, and it is a central component to many who subscribe to the third wave.

The Americanization of the CRCNA is another important factor. In its openness to North American cultures and its assimilation to evangelical models, the CRC has been losing in a significant way the norm that was once revered and highly valued in its doctrinal tradition and has become more eager to adopt many of the practices and implicit doctrines of the evangelical and neo-Charismatic world.

While there are positive things in such an attitude and while some negative traits are being slowly rejected (the canonization of *Dutch* CRC culture, ethnocentrism, and racism, among others), there are other central marks of our church that must be kept. Among them are the centrality of Scripture as the norm for faith and doctrine (as well as a responsible hermeneutics of them), the guidance of Reformed theology, and a world and life view to articulate our thoughts and practices. Reformed creeds and confessions may not speak directly and explicitly to concerns raised by the third wave movement, but they provide a theological framework within which a response can and must be articulated.

Pragmatism is another central value of North American culture. If it works in other churches, why not adopt it and practice it in our own congregations? The obsession with numbers and the reality that every year the CRCNA is losing membership also plays a major role. Megachurches have become the norm for what we would like to become, and the praxis of such churches has become a significant part of the training ground for our church planters and evangelists. Concerns for theology and biblical teaching are reduced to a minimum. Managerial and marketing gifts are more appreciated.

In an instantaneous culture, the search for instantaneous results is another mark that is reflected in the third wave movement. So-called blessings that bring immediate growth and change are central in the movement. Lifelong processes of sanctification and growth are neglected and exchanged for practices that supposedly bring immediate results and transformation; for example, the many forms of blessings and anointments. The long-term obedience of Christian discipleship is not common in many modalities of the third wave movement.

The manipulation of the divine, common in pagan magical practice, is something that needs to be constantly discerned and avoided. In many instances, we find gifted charismatic leaders who claim to control the circumstances, times, and places for receiving special blessings and anointments that bring to worshippers powerful experiences of God's presence (for example, healings, words of knowledge, and liberations from evil spirits). We must be aware that some of the experiences and blessings touted in the third wave movement are not exclusively Christian. They are common in Afro-Caribbean religions such as Santeria, Macumba, Umbanda, and other similar animistic and religious practices in African and Asian countries.

Of course, our main concern is that some of those practices and rituals are being baptized as Christian practices. In countries in the Two-Thirds World, where those practices are part of the pagan religious rituals, evangelical Christians are more sensitive to them and reject them easily. The problem for

North Americans is their lack of reference and experience with such practices and rituals.

This is one of the conclusions of the fourth Latin American Congress of Evangelization (CLADE IV), celebrated in Quito, Ecuador:

We consider that [it] is not right to draw from animist cosmovisions in order to better understand the biblical cosmovision and, thus, to affirm the existence of territorial spirits. . . . In their effort to delimit an excessively rationalist form of Christianity, [third wave leaders] have inaugurated an animist form of Christianity. . . .

The “battle” must be fought in terms of an integral and ethical testimony, of a fight for justice, for peace, for human rights and reconciliation. That “battle” must have as a priority to make accessible and to extend God’s Kingdom here on earth, showing thus to the visible and invisible worlds that the cosmic battle was decided once and for always in the cross at Calvary.

(Voth 2002)

Appendix B

Spiritual Warfare in Ephesians: The Lordship of Christ and the Power of the Spirit in the Church in the Context of the Powers of This World

The lessons from Ephesians, that we will highlight in the following paragraphs, provide perspectives and correctives that we need today to understand, face, and fight the spiritual warfare described at the end of the letter (6:10-20). In other words, the teaching on spiritual warfare is given in the framework and context of the extraordinary power of God. If there is a letter where a theology of power is articulated, that letter is Ephesians.

Having said that, however, we need to read Ephesians carefully so that we do not interject into the letter our own meaning and understanding of power. That is especially true of the third wave understanding of power as truth- and power-encounters in which the authority over demonic forces is expressed in loud exorcism rituals, physical strength, and even technical abilities of the specialists performing and producing deliverance and healing.

While we do not deny the importance of exorcism rituals (when warranted and only after extensive research and investigation of other medical, psychological, familiar, social, and spiritual causes of a person’s problem), we do affirm that to reduce spiritual warfare to that aspect is to lose sight of the comprehensiveness of the biblical teaching with regard to our battles and victories over demonic forces.

These are the main teachings from Ephesians with a direct significance to spiritual warfare:

1. God the Father appointed Jesus Christ as the supreme Lord of the universe, the head of all of creation, and he has authority over all things in heaven and on earth (Eph. 1:10 cf. Matt. 28:16-20). Do not make Satan and his armies absolute powers.
2. In his exaltation to the heavenly realms, Jesus overcame the most powerful enemies in creation: Death and the spiritual powers. Jesus was seated at the right hand of God “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that can be named, not only in the present age but also in

the one to come” (Eph. 1:20-22). Jesus, not the spiritual evil forces, is the Lord.

3. God has manifested his extraordinary power in the church, giving life to those he has resurrected from death (Eph. 2:1, 4-5), and delivering them from the extraordinary powers that have dominion over creation: the world, the Devil, and our fallen sinful nature (2:1-3). Yes, the church participates in Christ’s victory now (*already*), although in a preliminary way, and has received the Spirit as first fruits and guarantee (1:13-14) of its final and complete redemption (*not-yet*). There is an *already, not-yet* tension in which believers live.
4. As a matter of fact, the head and Lord of all creation, Jesus Christ, is now the head of the church and fills it with his incomparable great power, through his Spirit (Eph. 1:18-19, 23; 2:21-22).
5. The church is God’s poem (Eph. 2:10) and the first fruits of God’s new creation; it is indeed God’s new humanity (2:15) that has been elected, called, and sanctified to live for the glory of God (1:6, 12, 14).
6. Shalom (Eph. 2:14, 15, 16, 17) and unity (1:10; 2:14-17) are the main manifestations of this new society. By God’s grace and power (2:4-7), the church is now composed of peoples from all the nations. Jews and Gentiles are now members of God’s family (2:19-22). We must underline the biblical emphasis on the church as a community. The spiritual warfare is fought by the church as a community in being an inclusive, multiethnic people; thus, expressing the shalom and harmony that God creates in this world.
7. The church is called to live a life worthy of her calling, in unity, with an ethical behavior characterized by truth, justice, and love: virtues that make it possible in everyday communal life to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3). Such virtues are summarized in love (5:1-2) that expresses itself in constant mutual submission and service in the church (4:1-16) and family life (5:18-6:9). Thus, the church is called to live in this world as a testimony and manifestation of God’s gracious love and shalom to all peoples (2:11-22), including the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (3:10).

The following are exegetical notes on Ephesians 6:10-20:

1. The passage that describes what today is called spiritual warfare, Ephesians 6:10-20, serves as the climax of the letter as a whole. In this final section of the letter, the five imperatives reiterate the thirty-one imperatives of 4:1-6:9. That has a highly significant meaning: The spiritual warfare is fought properly when we live a life pleasing to the Lord as required in chapters 4 to 6.
2. Paul uses the prophecy of Isaiah on the armor of Yahweh and his Messiah (Isa. 11:4-5; 59:17; 49:2; 52:7) to describe the armor for the people of God. Those attributes of God that constitute his armor against his enemies (justice and salvation, Isa. 59:17), in an unjust and oppressive society (see the context of Isaiah 58 and 59), are used by his Messiah (justice and truth, Isa. 11:4-5) to establish a kingdom of shalom and justice in the world (Isa.

11:6-9). They are also fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 5:9), an integral part of the armor of God's people (truth and justice or righteousness, Eph. 4:24; 6:14), a people called to be agents of God's unity and shalom on earth.

3. The introductory eulogy and thanksgiving of the letter is connected to our pericope forming with it an inclusio. The blessings received in heavenly places are to be used now in our warfare against evil forces in the heavenly places. Christ is reigning, seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:20). The church, seated with Christ in the heavenly places (2:6), participates in his life and power. This is so because God's "intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" (3:10). Before them, the church is called to stand its ground (6:11,13,14) as it engages in the spiritual warfare.
4. Thus, our new identity in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14) is essential to dress ourselves (4:22-24) for the battle. Who we are in Christ, thanks to God's grace, and by the powerful presence of the Spirit is a reality we need to appropriate constantly. The first step in winning the war is falling on our knees in grateful and deep adoration to the triune God, as Paul does in the first half of the letter. Instead of looking at the enemy, we contemplate the gracious and merciful God who freely loved us, making us partakers of his great salvation.
5. We must consider the previous teaching that Paul gave with regard to spiritual forces of evil (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:2; 6-7; 3:10; 4:27; 5:16; 6:10-20). For Paul, there is an integral, intimate connection between the Devil, the world, and our sinful nature (2:1-3). They all work together as a system of evil that battles against God's eternal purpose: to establish his shalom and kingdom in this world.
6. Consider some of the key expressions in this key passage:
 - a. An urgent call (Eph. 6:10-11a)

Be strong: be able because the power is there. Notice the emphasis in the full armor of God (vv. 11 and 13) described in verses 14-20—not just a part, but all the panoply. To reduce spiritual warfare to prayer is to deny the clear emphasis on all the armor of God.
 - b. A clear purpose (Eph. 6:11b, 13)

Stand firm (4:14, 27): This is not a conquest; it is resistance. Hold your ground against the devil's schemes (4:14) and clever military strategies.
 - c. A powerful reason (Eph. 6:12)

The nature of our enemies: "For our struggle is not against . . . but against rulers, against authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."
 - d. A sufficient armor (Eph. 6:14-20)

The idea of putting on the armor is a reminder of 4:22-24. Here, the parts of the armor are mentioned in the order in which they are put on.

 - The belt of truth – integrity, loyalty, reliability (Eph. 4:24, 5:9; Isa. 59:17; Eph. 1:13; 4:15, 21, 24, 25; 5:9).

- The breastplate of righteousness – A person of one piece, just and blameless (4:25; 5:9). Of special significance are ethical qualities such as truth and justice or righteousness (v. 14) that previously were identified as key qualities of the fruit of the Spirit (5:9).
- Your feet fitted . . . readiness . . . gospel of peace – always ready to make peace (Isa. 52:7; Eph. 1:2; esp. 2:14-18; 4:3; Eph. 1:13; 3:6; cf. 2:17; 3:8). The preaching of the gospel of peace and reconciliation (v. 15) is carried on by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit, according to Paul’s own experience (chap. 3). The Spirit illumines and opens the eyes of the preacher (3:3) and of the messenger (3:5), and gives him or her the power to communicate it (3:7), even to the heavenly evil forces (3:10).
- The shield of faith – trust in God, security of salvation (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 5:13; 18:3, 31; 28:7; 33:20; 1 Pet. 5:9; Eph. 1:1, 13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13). The spirit works in human beings giving them the faith to believe in the Word (1:13-14; 2:8) and continue believing (1:17-18), in such a way that it is used as a shield against the Devil (6:16).
- The helmet of salvation – security in the love of God (Rom. 8:28-39; Isa. 59:17; 1 Thess. 5:8; Eph. 1:13; 2:5, 8; 5:23).
- The sword of Spirit, the Word of God – the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16; 2 Thess. 4:8; Rev. 19:15; Isa. 11:4; Eph. 1:13; 5:26). The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (6:17). That is why for Paul it is so important to be able to speak it with full confidence (6:19-20).

The final admonition is to pray in the Spirit, always, for all saints, and for preachers (Mic. 13:33-37; Col. 4:2-4). What better model do we need? (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21). We need to be aware in our battles that we depend on the Spirit’s support in prayer (6:18), especially when we are under severe suffering (Rom. 8:26-28).

In summary, we affirm, with Ephesians, that the spiritual warfare is fought by putting on the whole armor of God, which means to be:

1. A shalom community that lives united and harmoniously in this world and thus becomes a living demonstration of the good news in this world and to the rulers and powers in the spiritual realms. Then, God’s good news of grace and peace are a powerful sword that no forces of evil can resist.
2. A holy and just community that is clothed with the righteousness and integrity with which Jesus equips it through the Holy Spirit and is always ready for everyday battles. The fruit of the Spirit manifested in ethical qualities keeps the church healthy, united, and serving. Such virtues are the best protection against the enemies’ attacks.
3. A worshiping community that believes, lives, celebrates, and proclaims daily God’s grace manifested in the free salvation in Christ and that has put on the armor that empowers believers—the best helmet, shield, and sword for spiritual warfare.

4. A praying community that ceaselessly prays for its missionaries, pastors, and leaders is the most feared, horrifying, and majestic army (Song 8:3) against which the gates of hell will never prevail (Matt. 16:18).
5. A serving community that follows its Savior's example of self-sacrificing love (Eph. 5:1-2) in this world, and whose leaders use their gifts continually to equip God's people for works of service (Eph. 4:12), possesses the most powerful weapon with which our Lord Jesus, on the cross, defeated the rulers of this age (1 Cor. 2:8).

Appendix C

Selected Critiques of Third Wave

I. Other denominations and third wave

A. *Wesleyan*

It is significant that the CRC is not the first denomination to address issues relating to the third wave. For example, the matter has recently been addressed by Wesleyans. In an article entitled, "Third Wave of the Spirit and the Pentecostalization of American Christianity: A Wesleyan Critique," Laurence W. Wood writes:

The greatest challenge to a self-understanding of the Wesleyan tradition today is the trend toward the "pentecostalization" of many Christian denominations throughout the world. By pentecostalization I mean placing the categories of spiritual gifts, physical manifestations, and spiritual warfare (demon possession) in the forefront of Christian meaning and ministry.

The choice to emphasize these things is a choice not to focus on the essentials of the gospel. . . . To emphasize *gifts, phenomena, and demon possession* is to de-emphasize the *gift* of the Spirit in justification and sanctification; it is to overdo issues which are secondary in the Scriptures. A choice to emphasize these pentecostal themes is a choice against a Wesleyan-evangelical-catholic interpretation of the Christian life. . . . My purpose here is to show that these pentecostal distinctives may at times be legitimate aspects of ministry, but they are not the focal point of the gospel. . . .

The Wesleyan theological tradition has discouraged the tendency to redefine life in the Spirit in sub-Christian terms such as acquisition of personal power to perform miracles. . . . The drawing power of pentecostalism is undoubtedly related to the epidemic need for the masses of people in the world today to feel good about themselves. However, this anthropocentric focus may become a narcissistic substitute for the source of true spiritual identity, which is being renewed in the image of Christ.

(Wesley Center Online)

B. *Assemblies of God*

Even Pentecostals themselves have been concerned about third wave manifestations, and this concern dates back more than a half century. The Assemblies of God dealt with the Latter Rain—a movement of the 1940s that has many similarities to, and connections with, the third wave of today. In 1949, the General Council of the Assemblies of God held in Seattle, overwhelmingly approved a resolution disapproving of the following practices:

- The overemphasis relative to imparting, identifying, bestowing, or confirming of gifts by the laying on of hands and prophecy.
- The erroneous teaching that the church is built on the foundation of present-day apostles and prophets.
- The extreme teaching as advocated by the “new order,” regarding the confession of sin to man and deliverance as practiced, which claims prerogatives to human agency that belongs only to Christ.
- The erroneous teaching concerning the impartation of the gift of languages as special equipment for missionary service.
- The extreme and unscriptural practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by the means of the gifts of utterance.
- Such other wrestlings and distortions of Scripture interpretations that are in opposition to teachings and practices generally accepted among us.

C. *Mennonite*

Other denominations have also encountered and critiqued the third wave. In “The Third Wave Worldview: A Biblical Critique,” Gilbert (a professor of Old Testament), addresses the issue from a Mennonite perspective (“Third Wave Worldview”).

Likewise, Paul Heibert (“Healing”), a well-known Mennonite missiologist and scholar has written extensively on matters relating to the third wave:

Contradictory as it may seem, by overemphasizing miracles, in the long run we reinforce secularism. To the extent that we focus our attention on the “miraculous” nature of some events and differentiate them from other events viewed as “natural,” we reinforce our old Western dualism that consigns God to otherworldly matters and explains natural phenomena purely in scientific terms. If we take this approach, claims of miracles do initially remind us of God’s work in this world. As these miracles become routine, however, they lose their impact. They are no longer seen as extraordinary—as real miracles. Consequently, we must look for new and ever more spectacular miracles to reassure us that God is with us. In the long run, the net effect of this escalation is the secularization of our thought. We do not see God at work in ordinary, natural processes. As miracles become commonplace, they no longer remind us of God. In the end, the quest for ever new demonstrations of God’s presence breaks down, and we are left in a totally secularized world in which there are few ways for God to speak to us.

II. Reformed voices on the third wave

The third wave has drawn the attention of Reformed theologians and biblical scholars both inside and outside the CRC.

A. *Herman Bavinck*

Decades ago, Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck (2003, 1:512-27) cautioned Christians about placing too much emphasis on subjective claims of divine revelations.

When two voices are given to speak to the church, one will always speak with the loudest voice, and human nature and church history conspire to teach us that it will always be the human voice not the divine voice speaking in the Bible. . . . Indeed, the voice that carries the day is the voice of so-called individual revelations and communications from heaven that a particular Christian or minister has received. . . . The traditions of men . . . have supplanted the pure Word of God.

B. *J.I. Packer*

J.I. Packer (1981, 39) writes:

While it is not for us to forbid God to reveal things apart from Scripture, or to do anything else (he is God, after all!), we may properly insist that the New Testament discourages Christians from expecting to receive God's words to them by any other channel than that of attentive application to themselves of what is given to us twentieth-century Christians in holy scripture.

C. *Philip Yancey*

Throughout church history there has been the temptation to affirm a form of Gnosticism through claims of higher and special knowledge that is only given to a few. The terms spiritual power and words of knowledge should be used with care (Yancey 2000).

The same evangelical tradition that spurs us on to greater intimacy also invites abuse. "I asked the Lord what to speak on and he said, Don't speak on pride, speak on stewardship." "The Lord told me he wanted a new medical center in this city." . . . The wording implies a kind of voice-to-voice conversation that did not take place, and the fudged report has the effect of creating a spiritual caste that down-grades others' experiences.

D. *Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*

The debate over third wave is not dealing with the matter of whether healing and other miracles are valid today. All evangelicals affirm such, including Richard B. Gaffin, who writes from a cessationist position: "I certainly do not hold that all gifts of the Spirit have ceased or that the church is devoid of such gifts today. . . . Nor do I argue that miracles have ceased" (Gaffin 1996, 41).

His central concern is summed up in a question: "Would not such continuation [of the prophetic gifts] take us back to the open canon situation of the early church, and do so without the control of a living apostolate?"

His concern must be taken seriously. Should the CRC, like some in the third wave, affirm the presence of a living apostolate?

III. Non-Western voice on the third wave

Some writings give the impression that the critiques of the third wave come from the Western world only. That is not true.

Dr. Vishal Mangalwadi

Vishal Mangalwadi (1949-) is an international lecturer, social reformer, political columnist, and author of thirteen books. Born and raised in India, he studied philosophy at universities, in Hindu *ashrams*, and at L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland. He, with his wife, founded a community in 1976 that serves the rural poor in India and continues his involvement in community development serving at the headquarters of two national political parties. His first book, *The World of Gurus*, was published in 1977 by India's Vikas Publishing House, and serialized in India's then-largest weekly, *Sunday*. It was his book, *In Search of Self and India: The Grand Experiment* that first brought his works to the attention of the American public (<http://www.vishalmangalwadi.com/biography.php>).

It is necessary to articulate afresh a Christian vision for India because the language of the "spiritual warfare" movement has become the main justification for the present persecution. (If a tiny section of the American church has declared India to be an "enemy territory" that has to be "conquered," surely the target

group has a right to defend itself.) Is our mission driven “by the love of God that constrains us”? Is God seeking to bless India or to conquer it? The Indian church needs to have theological maturity to stand up to the teams of naive young missionaries from America who today assume they are the ones to define what “spiritual warfare” is all about. Their naiveté derives from a theology of spiritual warfare that is neither from the Bible nor from Church history, but from Frank Perretti’s excellent fiction. Understandably, it does confuse the focus of some Indian Christians.

(Mangalwadi, “Can *Hindutva* Survive?”)

IV. CONELA

We must add also that CONELA, the Evangelical Confraternity in Latin America, had their continental meeting in Panama in the year 2004 and issued strong warnings against the third wave. The majority of the members come from historical Pentecostal churches and many charismatic groups.

Likewise, CLADE IV, The Latin American Evangelization Congress, published in 2002 a strong criticism of spiritual warfare. Below is a quote from Esteban Voth:

Consideramos que no es aconsejable recurrir a cosmovisiones animistas para comprender mejor la cosmovisión bíblica y, de esa manera, afirmar la existencia de espíritus territoriales...

En su afán de contrarrestar un cristianismo excesivamente racionalista, ha inaugurado un cristianismo animista...

La “guerra” se debe dar en términos de un testimonio ético íntegro, de lucha por la justicia, la paz, los derechos humanos y la reconciliación. Esa “guerra” debe tener como prioridad acercar y extender el Reino de Jesús aquí en la tierra, demostrando así al mundo visible e invisible que la batalla cósmica fue decidida una vez y para siempre en la cruz del Calvario.

(Voth 2002)

The translation follows:

We consider that is not right to draw from animist cosmovisions to better understand the biblical cosmovision and, thus, to affirm the existence of territorial spirits. . . .

In their effort to delimit an excessively rationalist form of Christianity, they have inaugurated an animist form of Christianity. . . .

The “battle” must be fought in terms of an integral and ethical testimony, of a fight for justice, for peace, for human rights and reconciliation. That “battle” must have as a priority to make close and to extend God’s Kingdom here on earth, showing thus to the visible and invisible worlds that the cosmic battle was decided once and for always in the cross at Calvary.

(Voth 2002)

Appendix D

Notes on Third Wave Leaders

Most third wave leaders subscribe to historic orthodoxy. To reiterate such positions is not necessary, but synod should be aware of biblical and theological positions that are significantly outside mainstream historic orthodoxy. A

few such examples are cited below. These names are ones that are most often associated with third wave.

A. C. Peter Wagner

The third wave, like the first wave of Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century and the second wave, the charismatic movement of the 1970s and beyond, makes unusual claims of supernatural experiences and gifts that are not referenced in Scripture—for example, having the gift of being able to smell the presence of both God and the Devil. Some such claims have been widely published in books on spiritual warfare.

Through his writing and teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary, C. Peter Wagner has been the theoretician behind the movement. In his book, *Warfare Prayer* (1992), he tells how his awareness of strategic-level spiritual warfare was sparked by Pastor Omar Cabrera of Argentina who had “personal experiences of identifying and binding the territorial spirits controlling cities in which he was pioneering new works.”

The widespread interest in spiritual warfare, however, came through fiction. Wagner continues: “Undoubtedly, the single-most influential event that has stimulated interest in strategic-level spiritual warfare among American Christians was the publication of Frank Peretti’s two novels, *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness*” (Wagner 1992, 13, 19).

Through warfare prayer, Wagner claims that demonic powers were *evicted* from Adrogué, a suburb of Buenos Aires. “At 11:45 that evening, they . . . felt something break in the spiritual realm. . . . The year of the victory was 1987!” (Ibid., 22).

In a chapter section entitled, *Calling the Generals*, Wagner features the work of his wife Doris and their friend Cindy Jacobs, a so-called expert in warfare prayer from the organization, *Generals of Intercession*. They traveled to Argentina to train teams of people to “engage in frontline warfare.” Dozens of the trainees congregated at a crowded plaza and “engaged the spirits in five hours of spiritual battle. Only then did God give them an assurance in their spirits that they had broken through.”

Wagner does not believe that all Christians are equipped for this ministry. “I myself feel that God may be calling, equipping and enabling a relatively small number of Christian leaders to move out in frontline, strategic-level spiritual warfare,” he writes. “God, I think, is in the process of choosing an expanding corps of spiritual Green Berets . . . who will engage in the crucial high-level battles against the rulers of darkness.”

What have these spiritual Green Berets accomplished? Among other things, they have been able “to bring down the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain” and “to depose Manuel Noriega.” They were able “to lower the crime rate in Los Angeles during the 1984 Olympics.” Wagner also writes, “I believe God used my wife, Doris, and Cindy Jacobs to turn around the economy in Argentina.” Additionally, Wagner writes, “I feel sure the territorial spirits over Japan received a significant setback” (Ibid., 139, 163-64).

B. John Wimber

John Wimber, as the founder of the Vineyard movement, has been equally prominent in the third wave. He and Wagner taught a popular course on signs and wonders at Fuller Seminary that demonstrated healing powers during

class sessions. Due to its controversial nature, the course was cancelled and later revived under a somewhat different format.

In *Power Evangelism*, Wimber refers to signs and wonders as “the calling cards of the kingdom”—experiences that are as important as words in the proclamation of the gospel. “God uses our experiences,” he writes “to show us more fully what he teaches in Scripture, many times toppling or altering elements of our theology and worldview” (Wimber and Springer 1988, 109, 89).

“So, shortly after I saw my first healing, I asked myself, ‘Is it possible to develop a model for healing from which large numbers of Christians may be trained to heal the sick?’ I thought the answer was yes and became committed to developing that model” (Wimber and Springer 1987, 169).

C. Jack Deere

Another high-profile personality in the third wave movement is Jack Deere (1996), a former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary. In *Surprised by the Voice of God: How God Speaks Today Through Prophecies, Dreams, and Visions*, he illustrates his word of knowledge ministry. His student, Robert, stopped by his office. “That’s when it happened:”

As I was listening to Robert, he faded away and in his place I *saw* the word “PORNOGRAPHY” in large, capital block letters. . . . For months, I had been praying for God to speak to me like this. . . . I decided to obey God.

When Robert denied that he had been struggling with anything that would offend God, Deere decided not to pursue the matter. But, he says, “As soon as I made the decision not to say any more to Robert, the vision came back. This time the word “pornography” started blinking on and off.” After a time, Robert confessed his sin of pornography (15-16).

D. Paul Cain

One of the so-called prophets strongly endorsed by Jack Deere was Paul Cain. Below is a statement published by Deere and others regarding Cain. Deere and his fellow ministers are to be commended for not launching a cover-up of Cain, but the situation points to the problem of giving individuals a forum as modern-day prophets:

Paul Cain has been used mightily by the Lord to touch many lives in our times. He is esteemed by many around the world as a major prophetic voice and as a spiritual father. It would be hard to estimate the number who have been healed, delivered, or saved through his ministry. We have especially benefited from his friendship and ministry in too many ways to count. It is therefore with great sorrow that we publish the following.

In February 2004, we were made aware that Paul had become an alcoholic. In April 2004, we confronted Paul with evidence that he had been recently involved in homosexual activity. Paul admitted to these sinful practices and was placed under discipline, agreeing to a process of restoration which the three of us would oversee.

However, Paul has resisted this process and has continued in his sin. Therefore, after having exhausted the first two steps of Matthew 18:15-17, we now have a responsibility to bring this before the church. Our sincere hope remains to see Paul restored. . . . If restored, we believe that Paul can once again have an extraordinary ministry and be a significant blessing to the body of Christ.

We apologize to the body of Christ for our lack of discernment in promoting Paul’s ministry while he had these significant strongholds in his life. . . . We also do not feel that this should in any way negate or reduce the great benefit that Paul’s ministry has been to so many in the past. We hope that Paul can yet be

restored and used again for the glory of God in the wonderful way that so many of us have been blessed to see in the past.

With our deepest regrets and sincerity,

Rick Joyner, Jack Deere, Mike Bickle

Appendix E Reflections on Contemporary Evangelicalism

Recent trends

The third wave cannot be properly understood apart from the broad realm of historical and contemporary evangelicalism. The Pentecostal movement that arose in the first decade of the twentieth century and the subsequent charismatic and third wave movements have profoundly influenced and infiltrated mainline evangelicalism. Today, we see significant evangelical trends related to third wave of which synod ought to be aware. Below are selected quotes and reflections:

TIME magazine

Most unnerving for [many concerned evangelicals] . . . is the suspicion that they are fighting . . . something more daunting: [that being] . . . Protestantism's ongoing descent into full-blown American materialism. After the eclipse of Calvinist Puritanism, whose respect for money was counterbalanced by a horror of worldliness, much of Protestantism quietly adopted the idea that "you don't have to give up the American Dream. You just see it as a sign of God's blessing," says Edith Blumhofer, director of Wheaton College's Center for the Study of American Evangelicals. . . . "The tragedy is that Christianity has become a yes-man for the culture," says Boston University's Prothero.

(Van Biema and Chu 2006, 55-56)

Eugene Peterson

Peterson offers a very straightforward down-to-earth—and biblical—approach to spirituality, part of a multivolume series being released by Eerdmans. Here, he offers practical advice:

I've been a pastor most of my life, for some 45 years. I love doing this. But to tell you the truth, the people who give me the most distress are those who come asking, 'Pastor, how can I be spiritual?' Forget about being spiritual. How about loving your husband? Now that's the place to start. But that's not what they're interested in. . . . We've all met a certain type of spiritual person. She's a wonderful person. She loves the Lord. She prays and reads the Bible all the time. But all she thinks about is herself. She's not a selfish person. But she's always at the center of everything she's doing. "How can I witness better? How can I do this better? How can I take care of this person's problem better?" It's me, me, me disguised in a way that is difficult to see because her spiritual talk disarms us.

(Peterson 2005, 42)

Richard Foster

From an entirely different perspective, Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*, illustrates how some unusual theological views have entered the mainstream.

He argues: "Real prayer is something we learn." Indeed, one of the main reasons our prayers are not answered in the affirmative is because we have not properly learned how to pray.

“One of the most critical aspects in learning to pray for others is to get in contact with God so that his life and power can flow through us into others,” he writes. “Often people pray and pray with all the faith in the world, but nothing happens. Naturally, they were not tuned in to God.”

Like many other writers on prayer, Foster emphasizes the necessity of *listening*. “Listening to the Lord is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing necessary for successful intercession.”

Such advice is not an obvious conclusion one could draw from Scripture, nor is Foster’s counsel that prayer for major concerns demand more proficiency than prayer for little things.

“In physical matters,” he writes, “we always tend to pray for the most difficult situations first: terminal cancer or multiple sclerosis. But when we listen [to God], we will learn the importance of beginning with smaller things like colds or earaches. Success in small corners of life gives us authority in the larger matters. If we are still, we will learn not only who God is, but how his power operates” (Foster 1988, 38-39).

That a beginner in prayer should start with colds and work up to cancer is simply not a biblical concept. It is much more reminiscent of a shamanistic religion. In such religious cultures, a seasoned witch doctor is equipped to take on big cases—ones that a novice would avoid. This is not the way of the Christian faith, nor is his conclusion that when “nothing happens,” it is obvious that the person who prayed was “not tuned in to God.” How does one *tune into God*? Is such a term even valid? Is it determined by results alone? (See Tucker 2006, 125.)

Bruce Wilkinson

The most recent best-selling treatise on prayer—less than one hundred pages—is *The Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson. Its popularity is based in part on a nearly universal tendency toward self-absorption. This tendency is a common element in prayer—what Bill Hybels refers to as “the ‘Please God’ syndrome. ‘Please God, give me . . . help me . . . comfort me . . . strengthen me . . .’” (Hybels 1990, 20).

This please-God syndrome, of course, is not blatantly selfish. Indeed, it is marked by a concern for others: “Please God, bless me so that I can bless others. In *The Prayer of Jabez*, based on one verse in the Hebrew Bible, Wilkinson develops a philosophy of prayer:

If Jabez had worked on Wall Street, he might have prayed, “Lord, increase the value of my investment portfolios.” When I talk to presidents of companies, I often talk to them about this particular mind-set. When Christian executives ask me, “Is it right for me to ask God for more business?” my response is, “Absolutely!” If you’re doing your business God’s way, it’s not only right to ask for more, but He is waiting for you to ask. Your business is the territory God has entrusted to you.

(Wilkinson 2000, 30-31)

Wilkinson states the purpose of the book in the preface—*teaching* people how to pray: “I want to teach you how to pray a daring prayer that God always answers. It is brief—only one sentence with four parts—and tucked away in the Bible, but I believe it contains the key to a life of extraordinary favor with God.”

Is this single verse an illumination on communication with God? Does it provide the key to unlocking the secret of prayer?

God Talk

The book *God Talk: Cautions for Those Who Hear the Voice of God* by Ruth Tucker (2005), places the third wave within the broader realm of contemporary evangelicalism and shows how traditional evangelicals have gradually moved into the expansive sea of charismatic religion.

It is politically incorrect to suggest that God might have told President Bush not to bomb Baghdad (or the reverse), but why not? God spoke to military leaders in the Old Testament.

Today, God speaks on mundane matters. The voice sounds eerily like our own. Rebeccas' story is an example. She tells how she had forgotten the tatting her grandmother taught her. "She spent an entire morning trying to tat" but "ended up with nothing more than a tangled mess of knots," ready to give up: "Lord, I prayed: *Grandma is gone now. Please don't let me lose what she taught me too.* Just then a small voice seemed to whisper, 'You've got to flip it, Becky.' It all came back in a rush. I flipped the piece around and started looping a knot, then another. They formed a ring. Once again I was making lace" (Tucker, 2005, 20).

Rebecca's story, many would argue, is harmless. It is an example of a message from God routinely claimed by evangelicals who would not imagine themselves part of the third wave movement. God speaks on tatting, but God is not permitted to speak on war and other weighty matters.

"Have we fashioned for ourselves a domesticated talking god of tatting? Such is not the God of Scripture. God either intervenes and speaks today or God does not. But to argue that God intervenes in tatting but not bombing simply will not do" (Tucker 2005, 21).

Prayer as a Dialog

The majority report calls on the CRC to "Think of prayer as a dialogue, not a monologue, and be attentive to what God is saying as you pray" (VII, B, 5) Such a definition of prayer is common in broader evangelical circles.

The story of Marilyn in *God Talk* is an example. She speaks of routine experiences of two-way prayer. One case related to a little girl she had seen on the school playground without a winter coat.

[Marilyn] decided that she would go to Sears and buy a coat for the girl, but on her way out of the house, God said to her, "Go back to your prayer closet." There, God told her to go not to Sears but to a high-end specialty shop. . . . The clerk informed her that a coat in the size she needed had been selected by a local charity and set aside in the back room for that very purpose. Marilyn graciously accepted the coat and brought it to the little girl.

Marilyn . . . does not represent some extreme charismatic wing of the church, and she came across as sounding very sincere and credible. . . . Was she just making these stories up? I would not make such an accusation, though I am reminded of an observation C. S. Lewis made about his own spiritual shortcomings: "Those like myself whose imagination far exceeds their obedience . . . easily imagine conditions far higher than we have really reached. If we describe what we have imagined we may make others, and make ourselves, believe that we have really been there—and so deceive both them and ourselves."

But is it possible that stories like Marilyn's do not serve the cause of Christ? If we think that giving coats to poor children involves supernatural intervention from God, are we less likely to respond to the root causes of such social issues? The underlying problem was not the lack of a coat. There were surely other issues involved—whether parental neglect or alcoholism or racism or unemployment

or just plain poverty. . . . Even if the root problem were lack of a coat, are we less likely to dig into our own pockets if we are waiting to hear the voice of God on the matter?

I do not know how to explain Marilyn's extraordinary claim to routinely hearing God's voice. I find no comparable instances of God carrying on daily conversations with ordinary individuals in Scripture. In Acts 9, we read of Dorcas who gave clothing to the needy, but there is no mention that such good works were prompted by a voice from God or that the clothing was supplied miraculously. Rather, Dorcas was remembered in life and in death for her charitable deeds. The miracle associated with Dorcas was the astounding account of the Apostle Peter's raising her from the dead. (Tucker, 2005, 116-18)

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