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The Jesus People Movement and the Awakening of the Late 1960s

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THE JESUS PEOPLE MOVEMENT AND THE AWAKENING OF THE LATE 1960s

A Thesis

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The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts

by

Christina Barnes Williams

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ABSTRACT

The Jesus People or Jesus Freaks were groups of hippies in the late 1960s and early 1970s who converted to Christianity and lauded Jesus Christ as the first hippie. The goal of this thesis was to determine whether or not the Jesus People Movement was a genuine historical revival similar to movements during the First and Second Great Awakenings. Using William G. McLoughlin’s work, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reforms, as a model, this project not only explains how the Jesus People were a revival, but also a reflection of a larger cultural and spiritual awakening occurring during the 1960s and 1970s. This thesis discusses the significant impact of religion on the various political, sexual, and civil upheavals of the time, and it explains the beliefs of the Jesus People in the context of these major changes in American history. The work concludes with specific results of the Jesus People Movement which reflect some of its characteristics, namely having an impact on society, developing a body of fellow believers, and evangelism.
THE JESUS PEOPLE MOVEMENT AND THE AWAKENING OF THE LATE 1960s
PROLOGUE

Berkeley, California holds the distinction of having one of the first organized campus protests of the 1960s. During the late sixties and early seventies it was at the forefront of the changes taking place in the United States and became the icon for a burgeoning youth culture of eclectic and radical movements. In 1969, in the midst of the hippies on the streets of Haight Asbury and Free Speech and antiwar activists on the campus of the University of California, a new group of young people began to pass out a newspaper titled "Right On!," its editors and writers promoting a "New Berkeley Liberation Program." Using the language of the time and area, "Right On!" articulated a "new spirit of concern and cooperation among people," authors of the articles sought an answer to many Berkeley young people's desires for "full liberation of men and women," "concern for the poor and oppressed peoples of the world," and "an alternative to the present world system."1 The group distributing and publishing the paper was the Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF). They were Christians, 2 believers in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and they contended that belief in Christ would bring the solutions for the troubling issues of this world.

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2 For purposes of this thesis, Christians are those who believe in Jesus Christ as the son of God, who came to earth as a man and died on the cross to be the sacrifice for humans' sins. He lay dead in a grave for three days and then became alive again. His conquering of death gives Christians hope through their belief that Christ conquered the power of death by sacrificing himself on the cross to pay the punishment for man's sin. Because Christ lives, Christians who believe in his sacrificial atonement will go to heaven when they die (instead of hell - punishment for sin) and live with Christ forever.
Although the CWLF was espousing a faith that had major ties to established society, their means of promoting and practicing the Christian worldview were not only dramatically different from those available through the Christian churches of their parents, but also embodied a rejection of those churches. The CWLF and similar groups around the country were part of a growing social movement among young people known to themselves, and as named by the media as the Jesus People or Jesus Freaks.¹ This movement attracted national attention in the early seventies, but press coverage and the movement itself began to wane by the mid-seventies.

In order to place the Jesus People movement in an historical context, one must first define the terms used when discussing this religious movement. The Jesus People arose out of the 1960s counterculture that developed during the early sixties and reached its heyday toward the later years of the decade. For the purposes of this thesis, I am defining counterculture as a culture with morals and values, which are rules or habits of conduct, and beliefs that run in opposition to those of mainstream society. Counterculture has been defined by some historians as those youth who rebelled against any forms of the societal status quo.²

Two major groups within the counterculture were the New Left and the hippies, although they were not mutually exclusive. The New Left was comprised of those persons interested in changing the world through political and social activism, challenging the status quo and the establishment.³ Countercultural youth of the 1960s considered the "establishment" to be those governments, businesses, universities,

¹ Jesus People leader Duane Pederson actually held the legal rights to the name "Jesus People."
³ Miller, 10-11.
churches, and other similar institutions run by elite white males, and they often considered their parents part of the establishment. They also viewed the establishment world as shallow, driven by greed, and hypocritical in its moral and spiritual beliefs. Hippies were youth that were turned off by the establishment, as Terry Anderson explains in his The Movement and the Sixties, but were tired of what appeared to be ineffectual activism against the establishment. Some of these youth may have been active in movements, but their basic beliefs involved “dropping out” of society and experimenting with what felt good to them. Most social movements and protest activities of the 1960s were countercultural, but many scholars and contemporary commentators associate the term “counterculture” with hippies specifically.

After rejecting the white collar, "keeping up with the Joneses" lifestyles and culture of their parents, counterculture youth looked to various causes, drugs, sex, and/or religion in their search for life’s meaning. One such countercultural group was the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), whose founding document stated that “Our work is guided by the sense that we may be the last generation in the experiment with living.” Meanwhile, Timothy Leary, the “prophet” of the drug culture, promoted drug use saying that truth in life was only to be found through the use of hallucinogenic drugs – “tune in, turn on, drop out.” In terms of alternative religious movements, sociologist Gregory Johnson, in his study of Hare Krishnas in San Francisco, found that for some young people, converting to Krishna was a rejection of the lifestyle in which many

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affluent white youth had grown up. Said one convert, "Our parents thought that material possessions meant spiritual satisfaction. But we knew it was false. Even then, we knew that true spiritual happiness was in an energy of a higher form." Exploration of different beliefs, lifestyles, and pursuit of social and political causes was the way for many young people to find a higher level of consciousness or spirituality. The search for spirituality was the pursuit of having some type of connection with the divine, the experience and knowledge that life had meaning and importance beyond the limits of the physical and temporal world. Many young people hoped to use their revelations of higher consciousness to address the problems of society and make it better.

By 1969 and the early years of the 1970s, counterculture youth began to take a second look at Christianity. For some young adults, the messages of radical change and national upheaval that some groups promoted were compelling, but they grew tired of the growing violence, instability, and drug use that increasingly characterized the late sixties and early seventies counterculture. Oden Fong, an early member of Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel, a non-denominational church begun in the mid-sixties that flourished due to its ministry to the hippies, noted that a lot of people had become highly disillusioned with counterculture. "But it was still a time of searching," Fong said. "The sixties was a time of looking inward and outward. We were trying to figure out who we were, what we were, where we were going as a human race." Many young people began to believe that Jesus Christ provided the answers to their quest for meaning. Said one Christian convert, "I went through the political route, and then through the drug trip.

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8 Both hippies and the New Left. (O’Neill, 255.)
Others get into meditation or Hare Krishna. We’re all looking for life’s reality. Jesus said, ‘I am the truth’ – and that’s where reality is at.”\(^{10}\)

According to a June 21, 1971 article in *Time* magazine, Jesus Christ was "turning on" young people all over the United States, because he was their radical. Christianity as a counterculture flourished. Pastors performed mass baptisms on the coasts of California while hundreds of young people watched. In Houston, eleven thousand teens chose to accept Christ as their savior after an evangelist visited their schools. Even popular musicians converted, as Johnny Cash, Eric Clapton, and Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary embraced the Jesus People Movement.\(^{11}\)

Despite the conversion to Christianity of so many hippies all over the country, some scholars of this period, contemporaries of the Jesus People, questioned whether the Jesus People Movement was a revivalist movement following the traditions of the first and second Great Awakenings. Ronald Enroth, C. Breckinridge Peters, and Edward E. Erickson, Jr. raised this question in their book *The Jesus People: Old Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius* (1972). These sociologists noted that the Jesus People Movement had many similarities to earlier historical revivals, such as its piestic nature and anti-establishment tone, but concluded that the movement was too recent to adequately assess whether or not the movement would have the long-range effects of earlier historical revivals.\(^{12}\) Martin Marty, Robert Handy, and Winthrop Hudson all briefly mentioned the Jesus People in their contemporaneous works on the history of the Christian faith in the

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\(^{10}\) O’Neill, 317.

\(^{11}\) "The New Rebel Cry: Jesus is Coming!" *Time* magazine, 21 July 1971, 61.

United States, but these scholars generally do not pursue the topic further nor did they foresee the large impact this movement would have on Protestant churches. Instead they characterized the Jesus People Movement as being relatively unimportant to the religious history of the United States.13

These scholars also did not address the JPM’s significance in the midst of the larger context of religious change in the 1960s. The purpose of this thesis is to consider the Jesus People and their actions as a revivalist social movement within a larger 1960s awakening. In this thesis I will use William G. McLoughlin's definitions of "revival" and "awakening." According to McLoughlin, revivals are Protestant rites where evangelists "convey 'the Word' of God to large masses of people who, under this influence, experience what Protestants call conversion, salvation, regeneration, or spiritual rebirth."14 Revivals often, but not always, change the lives of individuals as spiritual movements within larger awakenings. Awakenings last at least a generation and revitalize and reorient the views of a whole people or culture. For the purpose of this thesis, I will take McLoughlin’s model out of its specific Protestant context. The revivals of the sixties occurred in a variety of movements, not all of which were Protestant Christian or explicitly religious. Each movement used some sort of ideology with which people chose to identify, and a conversion style, a process, or an experience in which people chose to participate.

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McLoughlin argues that there are five stages to awakenings or revival movements, an explanation he derives from anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace. The first of McLoughlin’s five stages is a loss of societal cohesion and a sense of chaos by the individual. The second involves the search for a new world view or belief system. Those persons searching find their new world view in the third stage through spiritual leaders who themselves have experienced a spiritual transformation they believe they must share with the world. The leaders explored in this paper were often explicitly spiritual; however, some underwent a dramatic change in their world view rather than a spiritual transformation. During McLoughlin's fourth stage, converts also experience a spiritual regeneration where they reject the beliefs of their past. Finally, the fifth stage involves the continuation of the revival movement into a lasting organization which has a body of believers who wish to share their world view with others and help reform society.

The movements of the 1960s together constitute an awakening. Sociologists Robert Bellah and Charles Glock in their *The New Religious Consciousness* (1976) describe the sixties as a decade where youth, disgusted with the American way of life, sought physical and moral survival in a world they felt focused on self-righteous drives for success and self-gratification. The Christian movements on which this thesis focuses are just one part of that larger 1960s awakening. Religious historian Robert S. Ellwood argues that major religious changes and a search for a new American ideology characterized the 1960s. Ellwood contends in *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening* that

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contemporary historians have focused too much on the New Left's influences in contemporary society, and in turn have missed the importance of the hippie movement. He argues that religious changes concerned journalists and academics of the 1960s and early 1970s more than political changes. In fact, religion figured predominantly in many 1960s movements. Its influence varied in Sixties movements from staunch activism motivated by a particular faith, such as Christianity and nonviolence in the Civil Rights movement, to those searching for a new spiritual satisfaction, such as those countercultural youth who sought to explore different types of spirituality through drugs, like LSD, or exploring Eastern mysticism.\footnote{Robert S. Ellwood, The Sixties Spiritual Awakening: American Religion Moving from Modernism to Postmodernism (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994), chp. 1.} Even the New Left and antiwar protest groups contained activists who were motivated by their moral concerns with US involvement in Vietnam.

The Jesus People were members of a religious movement that occurred at the end of nearly a decade of religious change in the country. Religious and moral beliefs provided the basis for most of the social activism of the 1960s, and the active faith of these movements was a reaction to the Americanized “civil religion” of the 1950s, which was based on a transcendent God that was pro-U.S. and anti-Communist. Noting the addition of “In God We Trust” to U.S. currency and the “one nation under God” phrase to the Declaration of Independence, historian James T. Patterson observes that “God, many people believed, had endowed the United States with a mission to spread the sacred truths of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution throughout the world and to destroy the diabolical dogmas of Communism.”\footnote{James T. Patterson, Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 329-330.} Fifties faith was of God and country,
and church was a place to show that one was connected with the United States. Churches swelled with new members during the period.19 Theologian Will Herberg, who wrote a study of American religion titled Protestant Catholic Jew, concluded that most Americans did not join churches for theological reasons, but instead found them places to find belonging and social status.20 Church historian Martin Marty described this period of American church history as a time when Americans were concerned with identifying themselves with a religion, “which denoted self-advantage and mere curiosity rather than concern with God and others.”21

As the 1960s began, circumstances in the United States caused some theologians to realize the times demanded a theological perspective that was deeper than “The Power of Positive Thinking.”22 The Civil Rights movement and the expanding conflict in Vietnam forced many people to reassess their beliefs. The writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer helped provide inspiration.23 Bonhoeffer’s emphasis was on “Christianity without religion.”24 He argued that a “Christian” should be the opposite of complacency and prideful piety, and focus on civic duty and loving the people of the world as Christ did.25 Many American clergy embraced Bonhoeffer’s ideas of Christian action and initiated a swell of social activism that became the focus of their theology. One of the

19 O’Neill, 312.
20 Patterson, 331-332.
21 Michael Brooks Friedland, “‘To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord’: Social activism and ecumenical cooperation among white clergy in the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1950s and 1960s” (Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 1993), 106.
22 A book by Norman Vincent Peale, a Methodist minister from New York City, which merged religious ideas and “psychological theory.” This book “tout[ing] self-help through vague religious beliefs, prayer, and constant self-affirmation” became a best seller. (reminds me of Oprah.) The purpose of prayer was to help one “receive their desires.” (Friedland, 106-107.)
23 Bonhoeffer was a German, Protestant theologian who stood against Hitler’s National Socialism and died at the hands of the S.S. Black Guards at the concentration camp of Flossenberg. (“Memoir” by G. Liebholz in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship (New York: Collier Books, 1949), 11-35.)
24 O’Neill, 314.
25 Liebholz, 11-35.
most popular books of the period, for instance, was Harvey Cox’s *The Secular City*. The theme of Cox’s work was that God was to be found in works of service to the multitudes in the city. He writes, “secularization is the liberation of man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and toward this one.” Protestant and Catholic “Christian atheists,” a small group, but one that garnered much media attention, took Bonhoeffer’s ideas of “Christianity without religion” far beyond what the theologian would have intended, to espouse a “Death of God” ideology. The “Death of God” proponents argued that the benefits of the modern life had made dependence on a transcendent God unnecessary, but instead focused on the example of Jesus Christ’s life on earth as providing an appropriate and responsible way to live as a “man for others.” For example, Death of God theologian William Hamilton wrote in his article, “The New Optimism: From Prufrock to Ringo,” that as T.S. Eliot died on January 4, 1965 and President Johnson delivered his State of the Union address, “we were as of that date no longer Eliot’s ‘hollow men,’ but a generation ready to accept the secular challenge and start building the Great Society without any more fussy, neurotic introspection.” These ideas, commonly known as secular theology, influenced change in some local white middle-class churches. Congregations began to focus more on service projects and righting societal ills than connecting people with the supernatural divine. Many white clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, led the way in encouraging

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27 Dr. Thomas Altizer of Emory University termed these theological beliefs “Death of God.” Other popular “Death of God” writers were William Hamilton of the *Christian Century* and Paul van Buren or the Episcopal Seminary in Austin, Texas. (O’Neill, 314-315 and Ellwood 136-137.)
29 Ellwood, 139.
members of their congregations to be active in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements.  

Although secular theology was the motivation to activism in some white middle-class churches, spirituality was a part of the Civil Rights movement from the beginning; religious belief was a key element and a motivating factor for activists. In the early years, African-Americans based their strategies on nonviolent opposition. On the first day of the Montgomery bus boycott African-American city leaders and ministers chose Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be their spokesperson. Dr. King’s wife, Coretta Scott King, recalled that her husband made the main speech that night at the mass meeting, “He made a speech that really did determine which direction the movement would go, as well as the tone. It was to be a nonviolent movement. He called for Christian love, and not to retaliate with violence.” After the boycott, many African American ministers from the deep South created the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Martin Luther King, Jr. was the president.

Other black leaders became proponents of the philosophy of nonviolent resistance. At the national meeting of college students at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina that led to the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Jim Lawson, a Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) field secretary, rallied the students to fight for their liberties with nonviolent resistance. Julian Bond, a junior at Morehouse College, attended the meeting in Raleigh, “I remember his as being a thunderous, militant speech with a much more ambitious idea of what nonviolence could do that I had ever heard before… You didn’t have to wait for the evil to come to you, you

30 Ellwood, 148-150.
could go to the evil." Lawson’s stimulating message led to the adoption of a statement of purpose for SNCC, which clearly laid out its religious foundation:

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love...Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility...

This was inspiration, as Paul Tillich would note, their *kairos* “the moment of God’s activity in history.” African Americans and their white allies would use nonviolent acts, sit-ins, marches, and boycotts to protest against segregation and other Jim Crow laws of the South. Black activists saw nonviolence as a way to open white Southerners’ and Northerners’ eyes to the sins of racism that pervaded the land, and hopefully gain understanding for their cause. Wyatt Tee Walker, executive director of SCLC, explained his theory in this way, “if we mounted a strong nonviolent movement, the opposition would surely do something to attract the media, and in turn induce national sympathy and attention to the everyday segregated circumstance of a black person living in the Deep South.” As Mississippi activist Fannie Lou Hamer proclaimed, “Jesus died to make me holy. Let us fight to see me free.”

Some African Americans rejected Christianity and instead became Black Muslims who practiced a form of Islam that required adherence to strict rules and advocated a

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32 Hampton and Farber, 64.
34 Paul Tillich was a Harvard theologian and the subject of Martin Luther King’s dissertation. (See Ellwood, 77).
35 Hampton and Farber, 125.
36 Ellwood, 114.
separate black state as a means for redemption. The Islam adopted by some of the activists during this period was also anti-white and against nonviolent resistance. The most famous member of this group was Malcolm X, who called Martin Luther King “just a twentieth century Uncle Tom.” Malcolm X changed his anti-white message towards the end of his life, but was assassinated in 1965.

Establishment Protestant and Catholic churches and Jewish synagogues also played a part in some segments of 1960s youth activism, especially the anti-war movement. Many ministers and priests were often more active than members of their congregations. In the fall of 1964, a small group of white clergy, Catholic and Protestant, met for a retreat to discuss the spiritual roots of protest. These men, pacifists and semi-pacifists, decided that their consciences could not allow them to remain silent about the war. They found their vision in the words of Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, “there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.” (Jeremiah 20:9) A number of the men who attended the retreat would become leaders in the Catholic Left, and later lead anti-war protests. Some predominantly Catholic congregations were sympathetic to men evading the draft and reintroduced the idea of the church as a sanctuary. In October 1969, 250,000 people flocked to Washington to protest the Vietnam War, and to show their support, churches of many faiths participated in the demonstration by holding special services and reading the names of those killed in the war. A year earlier in October 1968, churches in the

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37 Hampton and Farber, 243.
38 Anderson, 153.
40 The Catholic Left were those, often priests, who had strong feelings against the Vietnam conflict.
41 Ellwood, 293.
Chicago area were most conspicuous for their participation in what is known as the Days of Rage. Four Methodist ministers in the upscale suburb of Evanston, Illinois allowed Weathermen to sleep in their churches. When later questioned on this decision by wary parishioners, the ministers responded that the church must be open to all persons' political views and that they had hoped to change the young people into revolutionaries who acted through peaceful means rather than violence and protest. Despite these examples, some churches did not involve themselves in activism or protests. Many ministers and their congregations believed that civil rights and the Vietnam conflict were political and secular issues not religious matters and that it was not the role of the minister to impose his views on the congregation.

Clearly, religion did not disappear during the Sixties. People sought new ways of invigorating it, integrating it, or using it towards political means. Those youth who disagreed with the “establishment-run” society especially struggled with religion after rejecting the churches of their parents.

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42 During October of 1969, 300 student protesters known as Weathermen and Weatherwomen (see footnote 45) gathered in Chicago to march against the establishment. (O’Neill, 296-297 and Anderson, 328-329.)
43 According to Todd Gitlin, former SDS leader, Weathermen evolved from the activist group Students for a Democratic Society and endorsed violence as the means for social change. They tended to be from wealthy families. (Todd Gitlin, The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage [New York: Bantam, 1987], 384-395)
44 Ellwood, 294.
45 Friedland, 6.
The Jesus Freak, or Jesus People movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s emerged as a countercultural movement in a tumultuous decade of protest and challenge to the societal status quo. A key aspect of this period of history was a youth culture unsure of what the future of the United States should look like. During the 1960s many people chose to defy the establishment, question social constructs, and reevaluate dominant American ideologies. The anxiety produced by this uncertainty and resulting defiance caused some young people to seek answers to their concerns in new lifestyles, beliefs, and experiences.

Hippies were primarily white men and women from economically comfortable families.\(^\text{46}\) African-Americans and other racial groups were rarely represented in the hippies. Many hippies rejected the economic prosperity of their families, criticized wealthy society for its lack of concern for the less fortunate, and romanticized poverty. As a whole, the "leadership" of the counterculture was mostly male. "Leadership" is in quotes because the counterculture did not have elected superiors or certain individuals who set the mandate for what counterculture was about. Those who found themselves in positions where other youth followed their philosophies and direction tended to be male religious gurus, musicians, writers, or dynamic speakers.\(^\text{47}\) The underground press was

\(^{46}\) Ellwood, 196.
\(^{47}\) Anderson, 242.
almost all male, and women's concerns about equal rights did not gain widespread attention until the late 1960s when the women's movement began to flourish.

To understand why the Jesus Freaks developed within the 1960s counterculture demands an understanding of the decade prior to the 1960s. During the 1960s, young people, students, and others rebelled against an American status quo that materialized during the 1950s as a reaction to postwar fears of Soviet aggression. As the decade progressed, many young people felt choked by social "rules" and angry with a nation that betrayed its fundamental principles of liberty and justice. White southerners prohibiting African-Americans from voting and a government fighting a war against nationalism in another country seemed to mock tenets of the Constitution. The assassinations of John F. Kennedy (1963), Malcolm X (1965), Robert Kennedy (1968), and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1968) also severely disillusioned young people. These men had been heroes to many, epitomizing the ethics of social responsibility and change. With their deaths, many people felt despair for the United States. For some, rebellion against the establishment, often in the form of protests on campuses and at government institutions, became the only solution for social change. Some Americans rejected their faith, and mainstream Protestant and Catholic churches suffered heavy declines in membership. People did not abandon religion altogether; instead many youths and older citizens reassessed its value, seeking new answers and a new spiritual approach for their turbulent decade.

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48 Ten of the largest Protestant churches lost members in 1969. This trend continued into the 1970s. For example, the United Methodist Church reported that between 1968 and 1972 the church had a net loss of 518,000 members. Tithes and offerings also declined, and church schools saw a dramatic decrease in enrollments. (Hudson, 413 and Robert Bellah, "New Religious Consciousness and the Crisis in Modernity," ed. Charles Y. Glock and Robert N. Bellah, *The New Religious Consciousness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 339.)
Despite some organized church involvement in 1960s movements, countercultural young people criticized mainstream Protestant and Catholic churches and Jewish synagogues. According to the hippies, these institutions only furthered postwar ideology and status quo thought. Students saw the churches of their parents, for instance, favor racial segregation and church leaders become annoyed when students did not come to church dressed neatly.49 One disgusted hippie berated churches as self-righteous, hypocritical havens:

Rather than insist Christians...refrain from supporting the golden calves our government spawns, its campaigns, its waste, its wars, the church instead functions as a Sunday salve...assuaging the blunted senses of each cowardly congregation.50

Countercultural youth, however, did accept some spokesmen of dominant religions who advocated social change. A few radical leaders existed within churches and synagogues, such as Catholic priests Dan and Phil Berrigan, whom some in the counterculture revered for their advocacy of burning draft cards, while their congregations often ostracized them.51 Some hippies recognized that radicalism, as in the Bible's anti-society message, was the foundation for the establishment faiths, but the churches had fallen into espousing the status quo.52 Some hippies also hoped the counterculture, with its ideals of love, might revitalize the church.53

As the 1960s drew to a close, a society run by the establishment and the status quo filled students with gloom. "We do not feel like a cool, swinging generation,"

49 Anderson, 249.
50 “Headitorials,” Spectator, 7 January 1969, quoted in Miller 18.
51 The Berrigan brothers also robbed draft boards of their records. Catholic church leaders exiled Dan Berrigan to a South American ministry. (Anderson, 203, 381)
52 For examples of this, see these biblical references: John 15:19; 2Corinthians 10:3; or 1John 2:15. (Kenneth Barker, ed., The NIV Study Bible: New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985))
53 Miller, 18-19.
declared a Radcliffe graduate, "we are eaten up inside by an intensity that we cannot name." Some young people in the counterculture did not support what they saw as the radical activism in the New Left. Their perception of the New Left was that some of its fanatical members wanted to revolutionize the U.S., but they would kick whoever got in the way of their tactics and ideas. As one student deplored:

The radicals always regard the people . . . as something to be manipulated, exploited, or ignored. 'Get out of the way, people,' they say, 'so we can have our revolution! . . . Power trips are what we are trying to get away from.'

Other young people joined communes and said that they preferred their new lifestyle, because they were tired of being pushed around by the establishment and by members of activist groups. Communes were close-knit groups of people who lived and worked together, often sharing their possessions, in an attempt to separate themselves from society.

This counterculture was open to anyone who was also interested in doing something unconventional. It was a movement characterized by individual expression where people could experiment as they wished in their search for spiritual fulfillment. The "revolution" transformed into a celebration of liberation from convention. "Do Your Own Thing" and "If It Feels Good, Do It" were catch phrases, expressing some young people's desire to reject both Cold War values plus 1960s militancy and do something different. Members did not have to try drugs or sex; there were no minimum requirements. Hippies stated that being a hippie was a frame of mind, a different philosophy of life. They rejected what they saw as the values of the postwar world, the

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56 Anderson, 253.
ideal family, material success and the establishment, and created and embraced different moral systems and lifestyles.\textsuperscript{58}

Theodore Roszak was one of the original scholars to use the term counterculture, explain its tenets and describe those young people involved. In his \textit{The Making of a Counter Culture} (1969), written in the midst of the countercultural rebellion, Roszak analyzed the political and cultural implications of the counterculture movement.\textsuperscript{59} He contended that countercultural youth saw society as willing to sacrifice human beings for materialistic success and power. According to Roszak, young people involved in counterculture movements felt that those who left the “technocracy” unchallenged missed living a fulfilling life. “Technocracy” is Roszak’s description of an American society in which government is run by an elite group of persons who surround themselves with technical experts. In this type of society, the government’s main concern is to keep industrial production moving swiftly and without interruption. Consequently, non-technical men or women no longer can control their own lives, for all human activities have become technically detailed; therefore, non-technical men and women must submit to government experts who assume authority over even the most personal aspects of life, such as sexual behavior and mental health. According to Roszak’s explanation of this “technocracy,” those in power would see any challenge of the experts’ authority as a possible delay in the industrial process which could lead to disastrous results, such as famine or economic depression. Countercultural youth rebelled against this perceived government control of life, and challenged the notion that scientific experts had the

\textsuperscript{57} Anderson, 254-257.
\textsuperscript{58} Anderson 244.
answers to life wrapped in neat technological packaging. These men and women felt that
the establishment and those who subscribed to American ideology missed life's
possibilities. In their search for higher levels of consciousness, hippies yearned to:

make visible the submerged magic of the earth and bring closer that culture in
which power, knowledge, achievement recede before the great purpose of life ...
to approach with song every object we meet.\(^{60}\)

Thus, counterculture's dogma became experimental living and soul searching with the
goal of creating a positive community through this individual search for a better world.
Hippies relished the shock of the older generation at their long hair and language, and
they experimented with things their parents told them were "no nos": drugs and sex.

The countercultural desire to try anything was its own religious tenet. In 1970,
Carl F. H. Henry argued that countercultural youth, after contemporary society
undermined their childhood belief systems, were searching for a new reality or ideology
that would explain the reason for their existence.\(^{61}\) Similar to the initial rejection of
Calvinism and the growth of rationalism and deism during the Second Great Awakening,
some 1960s youth's apprehension about adulthood and established adult society caused
them to seek answers to their concerns in new religious leaders and beliefs. In their
search for higher levels of consciousness, youth sought conversion experiences through a
variety of means hoping to find answers for what they saw as a broken world. A
counterculture truism, "Do anything you want as long as nobody gets hurt," stated by

\(^{60}\) Roszak, 268.
\(^{61}\) Henry presented his paper at a conference titled "Christian Perspective on THE SEARCH FOR REALITY in
Modern Life" by the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (IFACS) in 1970. IFACS was a group of
academic scholars who found Christian theism more germane for their lives than the current trends of
humanism to existential atheism. In 1973, Henry published his and other conference presenters' papers in
Hog Farm band member Hugh Romney, sums up the countercultural canon: live for the moment and just have fun.\textsuperscript{62}

Some countercultural youth argued that dope gave them new states of consciousness and got them in touch with their spiritual selves. LSD champion Timothy Leary declared that drugs and sex heightened the senses and made life a more magical, mystical experience.\textsuperscript{63} Timothy Miller explains that hip thinkers discussed three reasons for drug use: 1) drugs were entertaining; 2) taking drugs was radical; 3) drugs created a healthier physical, emotional, and mental self. Hippies delineated between dope and drugs. Alcohol and nicotine were drugs that dulled the senses. Marijuana, acid and other hallucinogens hippies considered "dope" which they argued made their senses more acute, and gave them clear mental visions.\textsuperscript{64} Hippies looked to Native American religions, especially those that used peyote to help worshippers "get in touch" with ancient traditions.\textsuperscript{65} Other countercultural youth sought out Eastern faiths because they found the practices of karma and meditation in seeking a mystical experience extremely appealing, as well as supporting the general rejection of Western capitalist religion and society.\textsuperscript{66}

Exploration of sex also epitomized some hippies’ new, liberated life and they often compared sex to a religious experience. Sexual interaction in the sixties, especially at colleges, was more commonplace due to the introduction of new contraceptive technology, namely the “birth control pill”. Although the pill was only available to married women, single women would borrow their friends’ wedding bands and head to

\textsuperscript{62} Anderson, 258, 241-293.
\textsuperscript{63} Miller, 64.
\textsuperscript{64} Miller, 26 and Miller, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{65} Guinness, 245.
\textsuperscript{66} Johnson, 39-40.
family clinics to get a prescription. The hippies justified this experimentation by characterizing sex as for fun and love, and as a beautiful celebration of life. Religious groups, such as the Shiva Fellowship and the later Psychedelic Venus Church, constructed sex as a ritual act in the search for higher consciousness. Among Shiva Fellowship members, oral sex was a "genital sacrifice." Young people used drugs as aphrodisiacs to create a heightened experience of sexual relations.

Lowell Streiker, a Jewish Christian and theology student at Princeton, believed that the reason for the emergence of counterculture was that youth were expected to have fun and experiment, but only within proper societal models. Teenage drinking, parties, and kissing in the backseat were accepted, but sex, drugs, and alternative religions were not. Young men and women grappled with what the status quo told them to do, and the challenges of conformity to status quo ideals. These teens found no sympathy in their parents or with the adult world. Streiker argued that many young people felt powerless to change their status in society, and therefore they rebelled against their parents and the establishment in anger, rejecting the traditional ideology with which society, their parents, and the establishment had indoctrinated them. Streiker found five similarities in those young people zealous about their faith, Christian or not: 1) they were profoundly discouraged about their own lives; 2) the solutions with which they tried to regain their happiness failed; 3) the solutions offered by their peers, in complete rejection of society's morals, failed as well; 4) Their despair became overwhelming; 5) Their religious conversion happened suddenly and they found answers to their problems within their new

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67 Anderson, 91.
68 Miller, 62, 53.
69 Lowell Streiker lived among the Jesus Freaks in California for two weeks in 1970 and wrote of his experiences in The Jesus Trip: the Advent of the Jesus Freaks (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).
faith. The dissatisfaction with American culture and ideology felt by many young people led some to reject society and try new things, including seeking out new religious leaders and beliefs, in a search for the answers of what would provide meaning for their lives and direction for their country.

The Jesus Movement had three different factions. *Time* magazine, in its 1971 cover article on the movement, defined the three main groups as the Straight People, the Catholic Pentecostals, and the Jesus People. *Time* characterized the Straight People as middle to upper-middle class high school and college kids with "neatly coifed hair and Sears Roebuck clothes styles." Their domain was the interdenominational, evangelical campus and youth movements, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, InterVarsity, and Young Life. These young believers generally joined established churches.

Also within the establishment were the Catholic Pentecostals, who appeared in 1967 to the shock of some of the Catholic Church's hierarchy. These worshippers rejoiced during their services in the outpourings of the Holy Spirit, yet made no public displays of their spiritual gifts in public. Thus, according to *Time*, their numbers were hard to count. Estimates ranged from 10,000 to 30,000.

The final group, the Jesus People, was also known as Street Christians or Jesus Freaks. "Jesus Freaks" comes from the hippie term "freak," which according to Jesus Movement leader Duane Pederson, means "someone who has gone to an extreme on

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70 Streiker, 82-84.
71 *Time*, 59.
72 According to religious historian Richard Quebedeaux, evangelical Christians assert three major theological tenets:
1) Scripture represents God's commands for life and faith;
2) people must have a personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord;
3) sinful men and women must be ministered to about Christ and converted. (Richard Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 7.)
73 *Time*, 59.
anything." Society labeled hippies "freaks" because lots of hippies had "freaked out" on drugs, such as acid or speed. Many Jesus Freaks had previously freaked out on drugs, but after their conversion to Christianity considered themselves "freaked out" on Jesus. In some Jesus People groups, such as the Tony and Sue Alamo Christian Foundation, the majority of the young people had been heavy drug users. The name "Street Christians" derived from those living homeless on the streets, many of whom were runaways and dropouts. Jesus People member Arthur Blessitt, who established a church on Hollywood's Sunset Strip, had a congregation of mostly "street people," or in contemporary terms "homeless people". He described his church audience as "...topless dancers, hippies, male and female prostitutes, pimps, homosexuals..." Not all Jesus Freaks were hippies prior to their conversion, some young people adopted aspects of the countercultural lifestyle as a part of their new faith.

The Jesus People defied general description. Since some members came from other countercultural movements, a number of them had the same characteristics of those youth, mostly white kids from comfortable suburban families. Michael McFadden found during his study of the movement; however, that the Jesus People came "from all walks of life and all races...sons and daughters of America's upper middle class and the children of the ghetto." During journalist Hiley Ward's journeys to the Jesus People communes, he noticed many young people of color. Although most of the smaller communes (seven or eight men and women) were predominantly white, Ward determined that the larger homes tended to have more African-Americans with many serving in leadership roles.

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74 Duane Pederson, Jesus People (Pasadena, Calif.: Compass Press, 1971), 35.
75 Streiker, 31, 106.
77 Time, 59.
Youth for Truth Outreach, Inc. for instance, was run by an all African-American staff with mostly African-American and Latin American participants. At Agape House coffeehouse in northwest Washington, D.C., Ward noted college age African Americans, Asian Americans, and whites sitting together. According to a co-leader, a twenty-two year old Wheaton College alumna, the goal of Agape House Ministry originated from Colossians 1:28-29, "that we may present every man mature in Christ." Scholar Robert Ellwood also described an inter-racial, inter-generational movement when he attended a Bible study where blacks and whites, grandmothers and young singles worshipped together.

The Jesus People is the group to which this research directs its attention although the historiography often has not made distinctions between the Jesus People and the Straight People. Sources also vary on whether or not the title "Jesus Freak" was positive. Lowell Streiker, in his *The Jesus Trip: Advent of the Jesus Freaks* (1971), stated that Jesus Freaks "in no way consider the expression derogatory." Photographs of Jesus People often contain teens wearing shirts on which is printed, "I'm another Jesus Freak." Despite this, three Jesus People in the book *Jesus People Speak Out!* (1971), a book of quotes from Jesus People on a variety of subjects, argued against those who embraced the title. One characterized a Jesus Freak as a "Christian that isn't intelligent," while another said "they aren't really Christians at all." Yet, Sierra Madre Congregational Church and Bethel Tabernacle saw great diversity in their congregations. Due to the popularity of hippie

81 Enroth, Ericson and Peters described Sierra Madre Congregational as traditional denominational church which ministered to hippies, other young people, and straight adults. (Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 99) Betty Price and Everett Hullum, Jr. described the scene at Bethel Tabernacle 'rosy-cheeked girls and clean-shaven,
dress in the early seventies, cultural commentator Lowell Streiker noted that appearances could be deceiving between those who truly dropped out and those who had joined the youth culture because of its popularity. Streiker commented that many of the Jesus Freaks in his research were former heavy drug users, some were dabblers, and many also were "clean-scrubbed, rosy cheeked, nonalienated 'kid next door' types. Articles in Right On! often contained testimonies of former heavy drug users, cult members, and political activists who changed their lives when they became Christians.

In Streiker's study of California's large and small Jesus People groups, by a ratio of five to three, men were more involved than women in the movement. The young men and women he documented tended to be white, although there were a number of Latinos and African-Americans involved as well. The Christian World Liberation Front was multiracial. Interestingly, Robert Ellwood found that up to 30 percent of the Jesus Movement was Jewish and Right On! published a number of articles relating to Jews.

Anecdotal evidence of conversion suggests that members tended to be from "unhappy" families or were children of divorced parents. One CWLFer, Randy, gave his testimony in the November 19, 1970 issue of Right On! "It's hard to remember when life wasn't a hassle. Before I started eighth grade my father and I learned to hate each other. We couldn't agree on anything." Randy did not like high school and found the policies of college, with its grades and attendance records, a "turn off", so he "dropped out".

short-haired boys; long-haired hippy types of both sexes." (Jesus People Come Alive, compiled by Walker L. Knight [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971.])

82 Streiker, 106-107.
83 Streiker, 12.
84 Ellwood, One Way, 58.
85 For example, "Candlelight Walk For Soviet Jews in Orange County," Right On, no. 24 (1 May 1971) and "Letter from a Christian Son to His Jewish Father," Right On, no. 2 (1 Dec. 1970).
86 Randy Berdahl, "Randy Turns On" Right On, no. 18 (19 Nov. 1970).
were many dropouts of high school or college in the movement and these young people tended to outnumber the college students in the groups.\textsuperscript{87}

Counterculture had sprung from a dissatisfaction with the older generation; however, as young adults began to seek new forms of reality and truth, some rediscovered and converted to Christianity through the direction of “hip” adults who learned to minister to the needs of the youth culture. During the third stage of William McLoughlin’s model of revivalism, leaders (or prophets) emerge who believe they have undergone a spiritual transformation. McLoughlin argues that “such persons have never repudiated the older world views entirely; instead, they have claimed merely to shed new light on them, that is, to look upon old truths from a new perspective.”\textsuperscript{88}

Those leaders who emerged to minister to the countercultural youth filled a need that established church leaders struggled to understand. These “prophets” provided adult leadership and an updated version of Christian biblical faith to meet the desires of some countercultural youth for spiritual truth and security. Unfortunately, many established churches symbolized the middle-class, WASP America that countercultural youth rejected. Traditional worship services with hymns and formal language sermons held no appeal for the hippie youth. Many established churches found themselves in a Catch-22 of serving the needs of their older generations or changing their format to bring in the baby-boomers.\textsuperscript{89} Merging the two groups seemed impossible. Thus, some evangelical leaders emerged to minister to the hippies.

\textsuperscript{87} Streiker, 96.
\textsuperscript{88} McLoughlin, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{89} A 1969 article in \textit{United Church Herald} quoted the problems some ministers grappled with in pastoring their congregations:

\textit{Because worshippers (our customers) are older, we please them with the traditional. But this repels the younger.}
One prominent segment of the Jesus Freaks originated in the midst of the “hippest” place for countercultural youth, the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. There various men and women felt called to minister to the hippies in the area. In 1966, Ted Wise, a heavy drug user (whose later testimony of his conversion appealed to countercultural youth), had a conversion experience where he felt he had found spiritual answers in a higher level of consciousness. Late in 1967, Wise, along with his wife and other friends, opened a coffeehouse in Haight-Ashbury to provide a place to discuss Christianity with young people. Countercultural men and women found Wise and his friends, with their testimonies about previous heavy drug use, people with whom they could relate. The coffeehouse lasted for two years. From there, many regular attendees or patrons of the coffeehouse went out across the nation establishing similar meeting places or communes. At the same time in Berkeley an Episcopalian pastor named Richard York established the Free Church, whose main congregation consisted of nonstudent hippies. York's goal was to use what he believed were the positive aspects of counterculture (love, community, religion), and combine them with Christian worship. He used some youth's love of parties and created a holy day festival which included rock bands and food, but also clerics washing hippies' feet. Arthur Blessitt’s ministry on Hollywood’s Sunset Strip was one of the first in the Jesus People movement. Blessitt

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A vociferous minority are offended by sameness. What can I do with the conservative/avant garde tension in my church? Help!
Hand clapping, jazz, alleluias can turn them off as quickly as solemn anthems, dull sermons, stiff necks.

90 McFadden, 22.
92 Ellwood, The Sixties Spiritual Awakening, 315.
touted Christianity as anti-society and believed the “establishment” - police, business owners, and church ministers - was always persecuting him. His message was to turn kids on to Christ instead of drugs, and scholars credit him with originating the sayings "Jesus trip" and "Jesus the everlasting high." After leaving his ministry on the Sunset Strip, Blessitt walked across the country carrying a wooden cross on his back and preaching in cities.  

The Jesus People Movement blossomed in California and soon spread to other areas of the country. Men and women, usually older than the teens and college aged hippie youth, began communes, Bible studies, and other ministries to preach Christianity to the counterculture. Both Chuck Smith and Jack Sparks, founders of prominent Jesus People organizations, rejected mainstream church organizations (the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and Campus Crusade for Christ, respectively) after initially beginning their ministries within these mainstream Christian groups.

Chuck Smith began his now international Calvary Chapel movement after noticing that for many people the traditional church service had become dry and lifeless. His vision for a contemporary church formed in his mind even prior to his involvement with the countercultural youth. One Sunday night in 1965, Chuck Smith, who had been preaching for seventeen years, said he felt compelled to change the format of his Sunday night service from a formal service with hymns and a homily, to one of praise songs and casual Bible discussion. Smith noted that he believes the Holy Spirit powerfully worked in his congregation through that night’s change in format, as many people spoke and

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93 Enroth, The Story of the Jesus People: A Factual Survey, 73. Arthur Blessitt is still walking carrying his cross. He has expanded his journey to be worldwide. His website may be found at http://www.arthurblessitt.com
94 www.calvarychapel.com The original Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa has 35,000 members.
prayed aloud who had previously not done so. This new service so disturbed the board of his church that they called a meeting immediately following that evening’s worship. As Smith sat before the board of his church, he knew that his calling was no longer in that congregation. “I am not your hireling,” Smith thought to himself, “God has called me to be a shepherd of His Church.” With this conviction, Smith left that church and began a new ministry with the small twenty-five member Calvary Chapel. He and his wife soon developed a love for the countercultural youth on California’s southern coast. Smith felt drawn to share Jesus Christ with these hippies, but he was unsure of where his ministry might lead him:

Their colorful outfits belied the deeper problem that they represented. God was trying to tell us something, as we looked out on that field. We faced the problem of a gap of culture and thought that stood between our generations. I was brought up in an old-world piety compared to the fast-track rebellion of the hippies. How could my wife and I cross this gulf?

Smith and his wife formed friendships with several countercultural youth and set up homes for them throughout the Newport Beach area. Hippies found both shelter and spiritual food through Smith’s exposition on the Bible, and Smith’s ministry and church burgeoned. By 1971, images of Chuck Smith baptizing thousands of young people on the Pacific Coast filled the pages of major publications, such as Look, Time, and Newsweek.

Jack Sparks, founder of the Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF) and former Penn State University statistics professor, also began his ministry under an established

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96 Chuck Smith.
97 Balmer, 19.
church organization prior to joining the counterculture. In 1968, Jack Sparks, Pat Matrisciana, Fred Dyson, and their wives, under the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, felt that God was leading them to move to Berkeley to foster Christian spiritual growth within the especially left wing and radical young people of the University of California. Sparks came to realize that the traditional means that the ministry Campus Crusade employed were not effective at Berkeley—He believed that the campus needed a less structured format than the Campus Crusade model of gaining converts through sharing a tract with them and then hopefully working them through various levels of Bible Studies. Sparks then dramatically changed his appearance and his language style in order to immerse himself into the counterculture:

We have sought to drop into the lifestyle of the changing youth culture - insofar as we see that culture not violating biblical standards - to adopt that culture and thereby have an increased opportunity to build a body of believers.  

Sparks' example of hip Christianity soon gained a following, and under Sparks' guidance, a group of young people formed the Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF). Robert Ellwood, Jr., in his study of the Jesus People One Way: The Jesus Movement and Its Meaning (1973), states that Sparks' embracing of counterculture “was to show the counter culture that Christianity was not a ‘straight’ culture, but a message beyond any culture and therefore adaptable to the style of any person.”  

Fashion and terminology have to do with “translating” the Bible into a foreign language, explains Ellwood of Sparks' style of evangelism. Sparks felt if he could communicate Christianity within

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100 Ellwood, One Way, 118.
101 Ellwood, One Way, 118.
their cultural terms, he would have greater numbers of conversions. CWLF members
opened community homes for students and non-students to live in, helped strung-out drug
users, and held Bible studies and seminars throughout the week.

As Calvary Chapel and the CWLF grew in California, other Jesus People groups
emerged as disciples of hip Christian leaders and spread the Gospel message throughout
the country. Shiloh Ranches (Christian communes) spread from Oregon to North
Carolina, while a Christian radio program began in New York and soon grew into the
commune Love Inn.102 The Jesus Movement even spread into Europe, as John and Sue
Palossari (the original members of Chicago’s Jesus People USA) united the Jesus Family
in Britain.103

Despite a general unifying belief in Jesus Christ as the answer for those searching
for higher consciousness, what the Jesus People believed specifically about certain
church issues or global and societal issues varied from group to group.104 For example,
both Lowell Streiker and Hiley Ward noticed the conflict between Jesus People groups
who espoused “once-saved-always-saved” assurances of salvation versus those who
embraced a more Pentecostal view that people can lose their salvation if they stray from
the faith.105 On the other hand, Hal Lindsey, who helped found the J.C. Light and Power
House in the Westwood section of Los Angeles, believed in the “once-saved-always-
saved” assurance. He argues that “God’s not an Indian giver. He knew what kind of
stinker you were before he accepted you. When Jesus dies on the cross, all my sins were

103 Enroth, *The Story of the Jesus People*.
104 For a brief overview of a variety of Jesus People groups, see Dave DiSabatino, “History of the Jesus
Movement” (M.Div, McMaster Divinity College, 1995), Chapter III.
105 Streiker, 109 and Ward, 123. The “once-saved-always-saved” view is that once a person makes a
profession of faith, that person will always be a Christian and be saved for eternity even if they stop
practicing the tenets of Christianity.
in the future – all my sins, not only those I committed before I was saved.”

On the other hand, the Pentecostal Alamos of Tony and Sue Alamo’s Christian Foundation would have disagreed with Lindsey. They believed that God only loves those who do his will and hates those who do not obey him even after conversion. Although the Jesus People Movement tended to be charismatic, young people varied in their opinions on speaking in tongues. Some charismatic believers feel that speaking in tongues, a babbling in generally incomprehensible speech, is a sign that a Christian has received the Holy Spirit, whereas other Christians do not believe that this sign is needed. For instance, Gary, from Menlo Park, California, noted that, “In my opinion, you are not filled with the Spirit unless you speak in tongues.” Another young California woman said that her church frowned on it, “Lots of my friends have [spoken in tongues], and they have had very negative things about it so I just have never tried it.” Jesus People also differed on their desires and opinions on going to college or getting some form of higher education. Maoch, from the Hayward, California, Children of God, said, “All you need to know is the Bible. Why learn anything else but the Bible?,” and a number of those interviewed questioned the value of going to college with some even feeling that learning “man’s philosophies” was useless from an eternal perspective. At the same time

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106 Streiker, 109.
107 Streiker, 109.
108 Charismatic movements are characterized by a belief that the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in I Corinthians 12:28 are still manifested in believers today. These movements also tend to have more emotional and less structured worship services than their liturgical counterparts.
110 Kristal, San Mateo, California, The Jesus People Speak Out!, 50.
111 Comments in the book, Jesus People Speak Out!, a compilation of quotes from interviews done in the early 1970s, varied from strongly in favor of education to strongly against it.
112 Maoch, from the Hayward, California, Children of God, The Jesus People Speak Out!, 94.
other youth highly valued education, as Bob of El Cajon, California noted, “Becoming a Christian doesn’t mean you have to throw away your brain.”

Once young converts joined the Jesus People Movement they dove into the spiritual experience of Christianity and participated in community living or group activities, such as active Bible studies, worship services, and street evangelism. Revival movements traditionally recruit new members, usually younger members of society, who break with their past lifestyles and enthusiastically embrace the new worldview and promote how it has changed their life. Lowell D. Streiker described the “frenzied” worshipers in the Tony and Sue Alamo Christian Foundation as "on the edge of hysteria the entire time...[they] moaned and groaned, shuddered, and had fits."

Some Jesus Freaks moved into communes with some members living only within their commune boundaries. Other groups participated in outside work and evangelism. Young men and women lived together in order to pray and worship as a group, and carry out their dedication to Christ's teachings. Jesus Freaks prominently displayed their zeal for God by wearing "I'm one of those Jesus Freaks" T-shirts, shouting the chant "J-E-S-U-S", and pointing "one way!" to heaven. Some greeted each other with "holy kisses" and from their cars, shouted "Jesus Loves You!" to other motorists stopped at traffic lights.

The doctrine of the Jesus Freaks was simple, although various groups had different interpretations of how God wanted them to live their lives. Generally, the Jesus

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113 Bob, El Cajon, California, The Jesus People Speak Out!, 92.
114 Streiker, 23.
115 The Children of God and the Christian Foundation of Tony and Sue Alamo both emphasized communal living in order to separate Christians from worldly sin and temptation. (Enroth, The Story of the Jesus People: A Factual Survey, 21-65)
116 Ward.
117 Ward, 95.
People had four steps to salvation. The CWLF published their version in the June 1970 issue of *Right On*: “1) God loves you and can make you happier than you ever thought possible... 2) Most men don’t know God because they have gone their own way and refused to submit to Him. As a result, they can’t know God’s love or experience a relationship with Him... 3) The only way we can know God is through Jesus Christ... When Jesus died on the cross, he forgave all the sins of any man, who would believe in him, past, present, and future... 4) You can become a Christian and possess eternal life now. All you’ve got to do is ask Jesus to enter your life...”

The Jesus Freaks considered sin any action not in accordance with biblical instruction. Once a youth accepted Christ, earlier converts instructed him or her in Bible reading, prayer, evangelism, and encouraged the new Christian to stop sinning. This was the basic message, although some movements were stricter in their rules and their criteria for forgiving sin. To young people who became Jesus Freaks, Christianity gave them two purposes for their existence on this earth: the glorification of God and a spiritual mission of converting others.

Young men and women flocked to become Jesus Freaks because of the movements’ relationship to counterculture, a relationship on which most previously discussed historians have not focused. The Jesus People gained such a wide following

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118 McFadden, 15.
119 “Whattya Mean ‘Become a Christian?’” *Right On*, no. 1 (June 1970). These four steps are very similar to Campus Crusade for Christ’s “Four Spiritual Laws.” This is also a very Arminian movement, in contrast to the Orthodox Presbyterianism that was prominent prior to the Second Great Awakening.
120 The Jesus People appeared to advocate a simple reading of the Bible, which was whatever the leaders or group of Jesus Freaks said the interpretation was. The Jesus People believed they read God’s actual textual meaning and they did not believe they were interpreting Scripture, even though Enroth points out that all Christian groups did. (Enroth 163-164)
121 Streiker, 37-38.
among young people because of the groups' espousal of love, religious fulfillment, and rejection of mainstream society; all principles of the counterculture as well.

Love was a central theme for counterculture and the Jesus Freaks. Countercultural men and women sang "all you need is love,"\textsuperscript{123} and believed that through love people could form an amicable, considerate society with no discrimination. The members of the Jesus Movement agreed that love was to be given to all people. For in their belief, Jesus Christ gave the ultimate sacrifice of love when, as a man who had committed no wrong, he died on the cross as a sacrifice for the evils, problems, and moral depravity of humanity. He did this in order that mankind would be able to have a relationship with a perfect God. Jesus People believed that they were not deserving of the love of God that they had been given through Christ’s death, and this made them able to more freely love others. In some countercultural groups, love also often meant sex. Jesus Freak theologians did not agree with hippie sexual experimentation, but did share with counterculture the idea of love being the answer to all of society’s problems.\textsuperscript{124} Sex, wrote one Jesus People writer, is incomplete until your soul is satisfied, “God created sex to be the most beautiful experience on earth. But before we can really dig it we have to be turned on to Him and his love. If you aren’t turned on to him, there’s always something missing…”\textsuperscript{125} Jesus was the answer to finding love and loving in this world, “We are talking about allowing Him to replace your limited ability to love with His

\textsuperscript{123} Lennon/McCartney, “All You Need is Love,” 1967.
\textsuperscript{124} Timothy Miller, \textit{The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond} (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 202-205.

Moses David’s Children of God cult is an exception to the statement that most Jesus People theologians did not agree with hippie sexual experimentation. David advocated that women dress and behave in ways to emphasize their spirituality and encouraged them to be “hookers for Jesus,” using sex as a way to seduce new members into the group. (Flowers, 94.)

infinite love." The American love of material wealth young men and women saw in their homes sickened both countercultural youth and Jesus Freaks. Both groups demanded loving people rather than worshipping things. And Jesus People reminded audiences that Jesus commanded "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The central core of the Jesus People's beliefs was the love of Christ. It shaped their world view and how they lived their lives. The Jesus People were not alone in this perspective as devotion to spiritual belief was a common element in other countercultural groups as many young people sought out spiritual purpose and satisfaction. Some hippies employed LSD trips which they considered encounters with the supernatural to achieve a heightened level of consciousness, others tried many of the Asian faiths. These faiths became especially popular in the country after the lifting of the Asian Exclusion Act of 1965 when many teachers of Asian religions came to evangelize the United States. These Eastern religions offered to Westerners different ways of reaching God or seeking perfection, and the Jesus Movement arose in the midst of this boom-time in spiritual quests.

A common idea in the counterculture was that one should do his or her own thing; but for the Jesus People, following Christ was the only thing and other beliefs were wrong. The Jesus People believed that their spiritual answers were different than other popular faiths of the period. Buddhism, Hare Krishna, and others required certain rites to be performed and certain tasks which must be accomplished on the road to God. For the Jesus People, acknowledgment and acceptance of one's need for Christ's saving work on

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the cross was the only requirement for one to be a Christian and have a relationship with God. This was “the gospel.”\(^{130}\) Robert Ellwood notes that the Jesus Movement also rejected the idea of a societal hierarchy, with importance on social status, or spiritual hierarchy, as seen in the gurus of the Eastern religions, “Everybody from the lowliest teeny-bopper on up is, in his simple moment of trust in Christ, equal before God.”\(^{131}\)

Another similarity between the Jesus Movement and the counterculture was the idea of “dropping out” of society or a lack of interest in the status quo, which one hipster described as “the only goal of which is getting a good return on one’s investment.”\(^{132}\) Rejecting what they found as unfair and unfulfilling in American culture, countercultural youth wanted to create their own society and their own lives. In their own way, Jesus People also rejected mainstream culture for the same reasons, but their belief system also gave it a spiritual rationalism. Many factions of the Jesus Movement put a strong emphasis on the Rapture and their belief that Christ could return at any time and it would probably be very soon. The idea of the Rapture, a doctrine taken from I Thessalonians 4:15-18 in the Bible, says that at the return of Christ, when the world is coming to an end, Christians who are still living on the earth will be “caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”\(^{133}\) Many members of the Jesus Movement believed that thinking about how to handle the types of responsibilities that their parents had to deal with, such as money, homes, and jobs was unnecessary. John Fischer, a Christian

\(^{129}\) Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond*, 102.

\(^{130}\) See Footnote #2 from the Introduction.

\(^{131}\) Robert Ellwood, *One Way*, 140.

\(^{132}\) Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values*, 7.

\(^{133}\) I Thessalonians 4:17, *The NIV Study Bible: New International Version*, 1824. Not all Christians believe in the idea of the Rapture, it is an eschatological view that those who are premillennial dispensationalists believe in.
folk musician in the early 70s, explained his view of what he was feeling at the height of the Jesus Movement,

One thing that's important I think in grabbing the mood of these early days was that there was really absolutely no thinking of careers. That was not on our minds...You're thinking about now, and the only thing we knew about tomorrow was the Lord's coming back. And sing it now, and get the word out now, and change the world now, and we don't have much time.134

Many Jesus People believed that Christ had made them revolutionaries seeking to change the world through the message of the gospel. Once men and women accepted the higher understanding Christianity gave them of life, Jesus People believed that lives would be transformed and through this continuous transformation of people, society would change.

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CHAPTER TWO: RIGHT ON – THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE CWLF

The Christian World Liberation Front (Berkeley, California) used the common themes of the counterculture movement to promote its gospel. In the early 1970s, the CWLF was based out of a rundown building in the African-American section of Berkeley. A number of young people lived in the building, while other members lived together in other apartments around the city. Many of the youth did not work, while others held part-time jobs or did irregular work, depending on the generosity of older, working Christians to support them through donations. Instead, they spent their days sleeping late, reading their Bibles and praying, evangelizing – distributing tracts and engaging “nonbelievers” on the streets of Berkeley in conversation, or starting public debates with other organized groups who were trying to recruit believers, such as the Krishna Consciousness Society. The week was full of opportunities to study the Bible as the CWLF had “Bible Raps” four times at week in the evening and three times a week during the day. These meetings included singing hymns, a time for announcements, and discussion of Bible passages.

One of the main forms of evangelism for the CWLF was the publication and distribution of its paper Right On, the underground newspaper “from the catacombs of

135 Streiker, 96-97.
136 Right On, no. 2 (April 1, 1970).
137 Streiker, 95.
in Berkeley,” which was full of funky fonts, hip jargon, and countercultural imagery. *Right On* has been highlighted by several Jesus People investigators for its intellectual content discussing issues of the day as compared to other underground papers which did not, such as the *Hollywood Free Paper* published by Duane Pederson. Right On provided a forum for Berkeley Christians to discuss their views on current affairs as well as a means for evangelism to non-Christians. The paper was published from 1969 to June 1976 when the paper’s name was changed to *Radix*. In the midst of a campus teeming with turmoil over social and cultural issues, *Right On* claimed to have “one line for the people: God’s unique Son, Jesus, holds the key to the solution of any basic human problem you can suggest.” The CWLF’s *Right On* is a good example of a “countercultural Christian” ministry. Through articles addressing social issues of importance to UC Berkeley college students, *Right On* presented Christianity as a rational, real, and meaningful approach to life.

*Right On* addressed important issues such as politics, the validity of the Bible, and other contemporary focuses through a variety of articles. In the first few years of its existence (1969-1972) the paper had personal testimonies, Bible stories written as if they were contemporary situations, discussions of God, Jesus, and creation, and editorialized articles on a variety of issues, including sex, women’s liberation, revolution, and the establishment. These early articles were often unorganized and full of 1970s language, such as “Sex is a groovy thing,” “Dig It!,” and "...a pretty heavy trip." These initial pieces were not deep and quickly shifted to a presentation of the gospel. But by 1972 and

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138 Enroth, et. al note this, as well as McFadden, Streiker, and Ward.
through 1976, *Right On* matured presenting book reviews and longer, more intelligent and in depth articles on topics. For example, Os Guinness, a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Oxford and now director of the Trinity Forum in Northern Virginia, wrote one article on “The Fall of Optimistic Humanism”\(^{141}\) and Clark Pinnock, a professor of Theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, was featured in a discussion on “Humanism: Secular or Christian?”\(^{142}\)

Throughout its existence, the CWLF addressed the issues that concerned the young people of Berkeley and used these articles from *Right On* as a segue for discussion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In their efforts to reach women, *Right On* staffers wrote articles with catchy titles of interest to different groups of women, such as “A Salute to Women’s Liberation – And a Call to Arms” and “What a Man Wants in a Woman.” One poem titled “A Chick needs a Man/Man,” argued that there were so few real men in Berkeley,

> ...‘so c’mon baby, let’s you and me do a wild thing together

> wild sensitive

> no strings explore!

> far out hang loose.’

hang it.

Where is a man of purpose, of positive action?

face it sisters, your basic frustration is that

men are inadequate

relationships are inadequate

you are inadequate.


the power of Jesus Christ is the only thing big enough to get it all together…
Jesus Christ is the only liberator and leveler of man.
He knew, and knows.
He’s alive and so are his men.\footnote{143}

In this poem, the writer tries to encourage those women who were frustrated with their inability to find men who wanted deeper, committed relationships. He or she argues that without a relationship with Jesus relationships cannot work. The writer also states that Jesus Christ offers true freedom to women and that both sexes are equal before him. Unfortunately, that last phrase “and so are his men” could be taken to direct young women to be interested in the young men of CWLF, assuming that these Christian men would not be sexist and would not fail at relationships.

*Right On* articles differ in their discussion of the women’s liberation movement. It is likely that due to the newness of the movement, some Christians in the CWLF, similar to others people in left or countercultural groups, were not taking the movement seriously or understanding the issues involved. In one issue, a leaflet from a women’s conference, “Breaking the Shackles” was reproduced on one page and then redone with different wording from a *Right On* writer’s perspective on another page. The original leaflet said, “Are Women students taken seriously?” while the *Right On* version said, “Is your value as a Woman taken seriously?” Another change was from “It’s time for us to give ourselves the break that can lead to better paying jobs, childcare centers on campus, more faculty positions, and above all no more sex discrimination!” to the *Right On* version “It’s time for women to get together with a man and to break the shackles which stifle love and get you hung up on phony ‘liberation’ which is really only bondage to an

\footnote{143} “A Chick Needs a Man/Man,” *Right On*, (1969), Issue #5.
Using the words "phony" and "ego trip" in this article was not a good choice if *Right On* was trying to make CWLF Christianity attractive to women's liberation activists. On the other hand, some CWLF articles were more sympathetic, as one member of the *Right On* staff wrote in support of women's liberation, "Women's liberation has faced a long, bitter, thankless struggle against overwhelming odds, and it is far from over. We stand with the courageous women who lead their sisters in the struggle for freedom and justice." This article went on to express the writer's dismay and outrage over businesses that degrade women as sex objects, noting local topless-bottomless bars and newspapers. Donald Heinz in his sociological study of the CWLF argues that by 1975 the view of women in the movement had become more progressive. He notes, "the women's issue has been fought through and won (by the women), a kind of participatory democracy has replaced a more hierarchical system of elders, and a theological style has emerged that is somehow true to evangelicalism and true to Berkeley."  

*Right On* articles also addressed Vietnam and subsequent controversial issues the war raised. CWLF and *Right On* claimed to be "a-political" in that they did not associate themselves with any particular political faction. Nevertheless, the journalists in *Right On* often expressed opinions or goals that were similar to those of social activists, but their perspective and desired outcome were different. For example, writers for *Right On*

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were often against the war and supportive of protesters. "The war is ending too slowly," wrote CWLFer Frank Hermann, "and at too high a cost in human life and the pressure must be sustained to keep the warlords aware of the will of the people...To each and every instance of racism, oppression, war, and exploitation a vigorous protest should be launched." However, these Right On writers felt that violence and political revolution were not the solutions for the country’s problems. While some civil rights and counter culture leaders contended that violence was the only way to achieve rights or effect social change, an article in Right On responded that violence only leads to a vicious cycle of violence, "All attempts to solve the problem of war and violence on a merely political level are vain and useless dabblings, because all finally arrive at this same point of absolute self-contradiction, where one attempts to stop the process by continuing it." Many of the Jesus People publishing in Right On believed that the struggles that man created were due to their lack of a relationship with Jesus Christ. Change in the country would start on an individual basis. In an article “Stop Work! Stop War!,” the writer argued that stopping people from going to work on a large scale would not stop the war in Vietnam, instead it would only cause the poor to suffer. The writer stated that instead the world needs people to really care about each other:

Only God is perfect. He is the only one who treats everybody absolutely right. He has said that He will put His Spirit into those who receive His Son, Jesus...Having experienced this relationship, I have to say that I see no way for us to get it together and stop preferential treatment and oppression and war until and unless the vast majority of the human race ask Jesus into their lives and listen to His Spirit. It starts with you.

149 "Peace?," Right On, December 1970. For example Huey Newton, a founder of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, stated that violence was the way that blacks would gain their civil liberties and respect, “We have respect for human life – that’s why we have picked up the gun...in order to get rid of the gun, it is necessary to pick up the gun.” 
In many of these issues, the CWLF espoused the beliefs of the counterculture, such as a dislike of materialism, a love of peace, and a view that the establishment was hypocritical. A common theme running through many of the Right On articles was a dissatisfaction and disagreement with the establishment: “In the face of these broken dreams and ugly realities, there is no returning to the old ways of building a ‘better America’ through crew-cuts, college, and capitalism: those days are long gone and the racism and bread-and-circuses life-style unacceptable.” 151 Another Right On article noted that “establishment types are down on us because we have exposed their materialism, exploitation, and lack of love.” 152 Right On writers also appeared to encourage the sentiment some youth had against the establishment. In fact one article Dec. 1, 1970 titled “Do What?” pointed out that “America was founded on anti-establishment sentiments by people who were willing to go to prison for what they believed.” 153

The CWLF used the counterculture’s anti-establishment sentiment to promote Jesus Christ as a radical leader who would love those who follow him and not abandon them for the establishment. Jesus Christ changed society when he lived 2000 years ago, and he would still be an instrument for change today. As one February 3, 1971 article stated “This Christ was not a member of the establishment...He dared to call one group of establishment hypocrites `a generation of vipers’...I’m not so sure that Jesus Christ is interested in preserving a corrupt heritage. I’m not so sure Jesus Christ is interested in preserving something that does not offer freedom and justice and liberty to all men

151 “Questions from Chairman Jesus or Why Our World-View is Based on the Bible” Right On, no. 7 (January 1972), Issue 32
Right On articles promoted Jesus Christ as the Savior who would provide inner stability, solve relationship problems, give peace, teach one how to love others, and give one’s life purpose. CWLF advocated that if Christians united under Jesus Christ they could change the world.

Jesus Christ came to break the system, and make it work for all men. He came to put in a new system called the kingdom of God. He is truly a radical, a revolutionary who is concerned about the needs of men. And any person who receives Christ and His power into his life will also become radical. He can go out into a system in the name of God, directed by godly principles and the Word of God, to change the system!

A number of conversion articles in Right On testify to the change these young people found in Christ. The members of the CWLF believed that God through Jesus Christ had made them radicals and that he had dramatically changed their lives, leaving behind their old ways. Many members of the CWLF had used drugs and/or been a part of Eastern mysticism religious groups prior to their joining the CWLF, but the higher consciousness that they had learned through these other attempts had been ultimately unsatisfying. Howard Rose had joined the Hindu Rhada-Krishna temple because, “I became fascinated with the possibilities of developing my psychic powers and raising my consciousness through meditation and various occult teachings of astrology, alchemy, palmistry, tarot cards, yoga, and macrobiotic fasting.” Randy Berdahl dropped out of college in the Northeast and moved to Minneapolis, “There I did my first dope. Wow! Insight. Revelation. I got to know myself.” Susan had been involved in various causes

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154 “Jesus or Barabbas,” Right On, no. 21 (3 February 1971): 1.
155 Interestingly, unlike many evangelical movements of today that promote the Gospel of Jesus as a way to be saved from certain doom (for example, the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye, and the evangelical play Heaven Gates and Hell’s Flames) there is very little direct mention of hell or salvation from sins in the Right On articles.
156 “Jesus or Barabbas,” 2.
such as a youth arm of the Communist Party, and had moved to Washington, DC to support education for African American children and opposition to the war in Vietnam. Her marriage failed when her African American husband became active in the Black Nationalist movement, but she continued in pursuit of reform of the government and society, “Over the years there were small victories, but defeat and discouragement were by far more frequent. It’s very hard to pour oneself in to such a constantly losing battle. In time it messes up your mind…”159

One by one Right On testimonies shared how these young people wanted to change their lives and the society in which they lived. They were looking for answers. One day, Susan fell apart inside,

I was in a graduate psychology seminar. We were doing some exercises when I started to scream. I guess all the frustration, anxiety, anger, and hate of the past eight years just exploded inside me...I became aware of my emptiness, meaninglessness. People seemed the same everywhere — living for dope and sex.160

Mary, married to Whale, a drug dealer, was addicted to heroin and said that “my life became hell. Whale was busted twice in one month so there was no more dealing and all our money went for smack. I was very weak and overdosed two times. Whale saved my life…”161 Randy found himself also overdosed on drugs and in despair, “...I took too much acid and lost my mind for several hours. Fear, paranoia, and depression crept back into my life only worse than ever. I kept on dropping until one day I was just swarmed over with suicidal tendencies and went to a mental hospital in Minneapolis.”162 For these young people who had tried to find higher consciousness and change society through

159 Susan, “Like Banging your head against a Wall,” Right On, no. 7 (January 1972): 3.
160 Susan, 3.
162 Randy, 1.
other means, becoming a Jesus Freak was a much safer, more comfortable, and encouraging way to feel a part of something than drugs or government protests offered.

The testimonies in Right On describe how some young people had reached such a point of despair that a different conversion experience with Jesus completely changed their lives. Randy left the mental hospital when they told him that it would possibly take him years to be normal again. He went home to his apartment and ran into a friend who had left behind his life of drugs. At first Randy did not believe a relationship with Jesus would change his life, until later on that night he had his own experience with Jesus:

Well, that night I stoned and fizzled out. I asked Jesus where He was and told Him I needed Him. It was wild when right away I felt complete peace of mind and sensed spiritual strength inside. I was just totally relieved of guilt and emotional pressure. Since then I’ve come to understand the new relationship better and better. The Father has changed my life...163

Mary, who had been washed out on drugs, said that she started to observe all the Christians that she met. She said that she came to the conclusion that she was rotten, “If Jesus could change me I wanted him to. Then one day on the Berkeley campus as I listened to a speaker, I was overcome with sorrow for the way I had lived. I loved Jesus and I knew he was the Savior. I offered him my life and I was baptized that day.”164 For drug users, the connection with the supernatural that Jesus Christ offered, could help replace the high that the drugs gave them, without the nasty withdrawal effects. Also, the worship services that Jesus People held, with rock music or guitar-led praise songs, provided an emotional high. Oftentimes, praise songs had lines that are repeated over and over, which can be similar in style to mantras offered by Eastern religions.

163 Randy, 1.
164 Mary, 3.
In its portrayal of the CWLF and the Jesus experience, *Right On* staffers made sure that they were careful to explain that this Jesus “turn-on” was different than the establishment church experience that many people had experienced when they were younger. Coni Conrad explained her feelings when she heard the word “Christian” prior to her conversion, “When I heard the word Christian I thought of church, rules, confinement, authority, which turned me off...I’d been to church and had tried it, and it might be fine for them, but it wasn’t for me.” But Coni, who had tried to commit suicide three times prior to her conversion, found that Christ became real to her, “not just as something Margaret talked about but in my own life.” Arnie Bernstein, a young Jewish man, from New York, began to investigate Jesus Christ on his own, and in his *Right On* testimony he writes, “Gradually the distinction between the hypocritical nature of Christendom and the pure nature of Jesus Christ became clear in my mind.” In the midst of the late 1960s and early 1970s awakening, Jesus Christ was being revived as embodying the goals of the countercultural search for spiritual enlightenment.

CWLF members did not associate themselves with establishment religion and wanted young people to view the organization as a new way to experience Jesus Christ. Susan, a post-college member of the CWLF, found the group through an article she read in *Time* magazine. She left her then home of San Francisco and went to Berkeley to see what the CWLF had to offer, “I was really amazed at the true joy they seemed to have, and at their warmth toward me as a person. But best of all, they really seemed content

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166 Ibid.
with their purpose in life. Within a week, I accepted the Lord.”168 Some young converts in the CWLF had establishment church upbringings, but did not become Christians during their time in those churches. One girl explained with dismay, “If they knew all this that I have come to know, why didn’t they tell me? If they didn’t know if, what is their excuse?”169 Taking a traditional faith and reintroducing it in a different format, the CWLF was able to share Jesus Christ with folks who would have never entered a church; however, when these young people left Berkeley, the question arises as to whether or not these new converts sustained their faith by finding fellow Jesus People Christians to have fellowship with or did they fall away from the faith due to their apprehension of attending a regular Sunday morning church.

The members of the CWLF believed that God had made them radicals and that he had dramatically changed their lives, causing them to leave behind their old ways. A number of conversion articles in Right On testify to the change these young people found in Christ. Vern Williams, who drew cartoons for Right On, wrote his testimony in the April 1970 issue, “I’ve only gotten stoned once since I’ve been in Berkeley, and I’ll never come down. I’ve found the HIGH of Jesus Christ in the fellowship of true turned on Christians.”170 Jim Fox was a member of the Weathermen, but left that movement to find that he believed Jesus Christ to be the real revolutionary,

At one time I wanted to help people but I couldn’t help other people because I didn’t have peace myself. Jesus Christ is the real revolutionary. By changing people’s hearts and minds on the inside He directs the people’s outward manifestations and produces social change.171

168 Susan, 3.
169 Heinz, 148.
Randy said that his conversion led him to lose a lot of the depression and worries that he used to have, “And even though the same kinds of things go down all the time, I can face them peacefully, with love for the people around me. I put in a lot of time around Sproul Plaza and Telegraph Ave talking about Jesus to the people there. Stop and rap when you see me!”172

Evangelism was the objective of publishing these testimonies and the *Right On* staffers wanted to make sure that those people who read their magazine and were moved by the conversion stories would know how to find help or how to accept Jesus for themselves if they felt interested. *Right On* sometimes published lists of youth ministries where people could go just to talk or find a place to stay, “As people acknowledge God’s love and trust Him for life, they need a place to crash and grow.”173 Also listed in most, if not all, issues, was the list of “Bible Raps,” meetings where CWLFers gathered to worship and discuss the Bible. *Right On* also published a mini-article in almost every issue titled “Let’s Get One Thing Straight.” In this article, CWLF said that Jesus Christ in Christianity was the only solution to every basic human problem, but not the “organized church, the ethic that Christ taught, a religious code or rule of heart and life, self righteous hypocrites, the atrocities and injustices committed over the last several hundred years in the name of Christianity, or even your hopelessly establishment oriented ‘Christian’ grandma.”174 To CWLF and *Right On*, Christianity was “exhibited by those 1st century ‘love revolutionists’ recorded in history, about an encounter of one’s natural

172 Randy, p.1.
life by an outside new quality of life altogether...”  

To initiate this experience with Jesus, *Right On* suggested this prayer,

God, if you’re really there and can hear me right now... and although I’m skeptical: if Jesus was right, and has something uniquely special to do with experiencing you, I invite you, through Christ, to make yourself real to me. I make no promises to you, but as best I know my own mind, I do want to experience your Spirit – I simply need you!

The *Right On* staffers knew that many people would be skeptical about saying the prayer, but they were firm in their convictions and said “All we can do is tell you we’ve experienced it. It has transformed the very core of our lives.”

At the end of the “Let’s Get One Thing Straight” article, a mailing address was listed, so that interested people would be able to write the *Right On* staff.

The CWLF demonstrates how a revival movement recruits new members to embrace the beliefs of the religious group and to evangelize, explaining how it has changed their lives. Through the pages of *Right On* young people’s concerns about issues such as war, poverty, discrimination, and rejection of the establishment are discussed and debated while promoting a Christian worldview.

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175 “Let’s Get One Thing Straight.”
176 “Let’s Get One Thing Straight.”
177 “Let’s Get One Things Straight.”
As set forth in the Prologue, William McLoughlin's interpretation of a revival movement serves as the foundation for this essay's examination of the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and specific focus of the Jesus People. McLoughlin argues that an awakening or revival movement has five stages. The first is a loss of societal cohesion and a sense of chaos by the individual. The second involves the search for a new worldview or belief system. Young people of the 1960s, reflecting on what they had been taught in school about the American ideals of liberty, freedom of speech, and equal protection under the law, rose up to challenge inconsistencies they saw in American society’s handling of issues such as civil rights, the plight of poor citizens, and the conflict in Vietnam. Tired of what they saw as the American establishment and its domination of culture, many young people became interested in exploring new types of politics, lifestyles, and belief systems. This explosion of ideas took place in the late 1960s as baby boomers reached their teens and early twenties. Many young people hoped they could change the world and find higher consciousness through a connection with the divine or a new moral authority. The Jesus People Movement emerged as one of many groups to meet this need at a unique time in American history where this general “awakening” took place within society.

In McLoughlin’s third stage, those persons searching and exploring find their new worldview through leaders who themselves have experienced a transformation they
they must share with the world. The 1960s awakening movements were full of vanguard men and women. For example, the Berrigan brothers, Catholic priests themselves, were leaders of antiwar activists and provided inspiration to young people incensed by the military action in Vietnam. Harvard researcher Timothy Leary taught that hallucinogenic drugs provided true freedom, wisdom, and unity with the universe. After he was fired from Harvard, he traveled around the country preaching his message of enlightenment. The Jesus People Movement had its own share of leaders, Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Jack Sparks of the CWLF, and Richard York of the Free Church, shared their belief in Jesus Christ with the countercultural youth.

During McLoughlin's fourth stage, converts also experience a spiritual regeneration where they reject the beliefs of their past. During the late 1960s, college campuses turned chaotic as student protestors invaded classrooms and held sit-ins in administration buildings to push for more student freedom of expression. Some young people became interested in socialist and communist ideas; some joined communes to participate in non-traditional lifestyles and family settings; and many turned to spirituality, sometimes through exploration of Eastern mysticism. Many young people came to the Jesus People Movement, some after finding that other movements, especially those involved with the drug culture, were not meeting their needs for higher knowledge and a deeper life.

Finally, in his fifth stage McLoughlin argues that revivals impact history by taking the initial enthusiasm of the converts and channeling that energy into an organization or body of believers that has a formalized purpose and goals with which they want to change some aspect of society. The lasting effect of this awakening can be
seen in a variety of ways. Formal organizations that either began in the 1960s and 1970s or grew dramatically at that time continue to influence American society. Also, the wide variety of experiences and experiments the young people of that period tried led to a dramatic shift of ideas that helped change the United States into a more postmodern culture. As an example, the civil rights movements and the women’s movement helped bring about changes in society. Today the NAACP still strives to correct racial injustice and is working to make the people of South Carolina remove the Confederate flag from their capitol. The National Organization of Women endeavors to help women who still find glass ceilings in their workplace. For many of the baby boomers, although they may have kept some of the new beliefs that they had discovered during the heyday of the 1960s/1970s counterculture, the responsibilities of being an adult caused them to set up lifestyles of security for themselves where they returned to the working, often establishment, world. They may have returned to lifestyles that looked similar to their parents, but they often took elements of the movement with them, for example, the trend to more casual dress in the business world and more women working outside the home in professional careers.

The awakening of the 1960s also has affected the classroom. Due to the rise of cultural sensitivity, largely begun in the 1960s, students have a less western focused and more multicultural curriculum. In history courses, students are no longer being taught consensus history where great figures and movements of Americans are lauded. Instead, students and historians look at American history with a more critical eye, part of this influence coming from baby boomers’ disappointment with US government involvement in Vietnam and the fall of Richard Nixon in Watergate. The awakening of the 60s
clearly shaped religious culture in the US as well. A number of the countercultural youth did not return to the churches of their parents. Instead they consider themselves as having a personal set of beliefs and choose to not to be involved with a formal organization, or many do not practice a religious faith at all. Eastern religions are still in vogue, as seen in the popularity of Buddhism as portrayed in Hollywood films and the rise in advocates of yoga.

As a revival movement within McLoughlin’s model, the Jesus Movement has had a lasting mark on the United States. George Ritzer in his *The McDonaldization of Society* provides a very simple definition between postmodernism and modernism. Modern society, in existence since the Enlightenment, may be described as “highly rational and rigid,” while postmodernism, which took great root in American society during the 1960s, is “more irrational and flexible.”178 Ritzer’s definition works well when describing the changes seen in the American church since the 1960s. The mainline churches of the 1960s had modern, ceremonial services, characterized by “church dress” (coat and tie for men, dresses and hose for women), liturgy, and hymns. In their efforts to keep and attract young people to the church, many congregations moved towards a more postmodern approach to the worship service which can be partially attributed to the Jesus People’s influence. This trend is marked by a growth in nondenominationalism, less formal services, non-standardized dress (ranging from traditional church attire to shorts or jeans, and T-shirts), little or no liturgy, little teaching of church history, theology and doctrine, and praise songs rather than hymns.179 More specific results of

179 Praise songs differ from hymns in that they were mostly all written after 1965; they have simple choruses and verses; they are highly individualistic and rarely address the church as a whole body of
the Jesus People Movement which reflect some of its characteristics, namely having an impact on society, developing a body of fellow believers, and evangelizing may be seen through the discussion of three specific outcomes of the movement. These three groups all continue to influence the communities with which they are involved.

Not all of the Jesus People returned to lifestyles like their parents had. Jesus People USA, a communal group in Chicago, Illinois is the most prominent and lasting example of one Jesus People organization that is working to improve its community. Modeling themselves after Acts 2: 44-47 and 4:32-35, Jesus People USA, or JPUSA (je-poo-za), is a community of 500 believers who live communally, sharing their property and belongings with one another, living in one building on the North Side of Chicago. JPUSA began in 1972 by Glenn Kaiser, J.W. and Dawn Herrin, Richard Murphy and number of others who traveled around as a band before settling together as in Chicago. A JPUSA handout states:

Jesus People USA never started out to be a Christian community; our roots were in the early Jesus movement of the late sixties and the early seventies. When Jesus called, many of us were social rejects in search of something worth living for. You might say community living simply evolved as the practical expression of Christianity in our everyday lives, the working out of agape love.182

believers; and they are usually written first for an acoustic guitar rather than the organ or piano. Theologian David Wells addresses this in his book Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision (Eerdmans Press, 1998).

180 "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." The TOPICAL Study Bible New International Version, Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Bible Publishing, 1989, edited by Dirk R. Buursma, 1200.

181 "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need." The TOPICAL NIV, 1203.

The community runs a roofing supply house, a recording studio, and a custom cabinet-making shop. These and other small businesses help to provide about 90 percent of the group’s income. JPUSA sees its mission field as the area of Chicago where it is located and it has a number of programs for the people in its community. JPUSA runs Cornerstone Community Outreach, a women’s and children’s shelter; Friendly Towers, a senior citizens’ home, and “Brothas and Sistas United,” a neighborhood outreach to school kids. JPUSA remains close its musical roots through its widely known summer musical festival, “Cornerstone” and the touring musicians in its ranks, notably Glen Kaiser, as a solo artist, and the band, Seeds, who perform throughout the Midwest. JPUSA’s says that it has changed a lot in the last 25 years of its existence, but “we also strive to keep alive that simple ‘first love’ and the daring vision and openness to new things that launched us on such an adventure.”

Despite its community service and outreach, JPUSA is not without its critics. Sociologist Ronald Enroth, who has studied the Jesus People Movement since its beginning, has concerns that the group’s teaching and emphasis on communal style living reflect cult-like qualities. There have also been concerns that the groups’ dedication to communal living at times may override biblical teaching.

JPUSA has chosen to focus its ministry on the city of Chicago, while Chuck Smith’s Calvary Chapel ministry continues to expand from California throughout the country. Calvary Chapel is a specific outcome of the Jesus People Movement that follows McLoughlin’s model most closely in its development into a lasting organization, and the church shows well the negotiation the hippies took between their parents’ world
and the new lives they had put on. In keeping with the Jesus People’s view that the “establishment church” did not focus enough on the person of Christ and love within the community of believers, Calvary Chapel’s statement of faith states, “We are not a denominational church, nor are we opposed to denominations as such, only their overemphasis of the doctrinal differences that have led to the division of the Body of Christ.”

Chuck Smith founded this church after he became disillusioned with the Four Square Gospel Church in which he was a pastor. He left that church and was drawn to minister to the hordes of hippies that had flooded into California. He began operating a church in his home, they then moved to a small building, then a large second-hand circus tent. The church now has three services on Sunday mornings, seating its congregation in a 2300 seat auditorium and an overflow fellowship hall which seats 700 that is usually full in the 2nd and 3rd morning services. Calvary Chapel is clearly a lasting example of the Jesus Movement. Those who attend its services get a combination of both hymns and praise songs, as well as various styles of preaching from Chuck Smith, ranging from sermons at the pulpit to extemporaneous preaching while sitting on the edge of the podium platform. Liturgy is absent from the service. There are one or two prayers, announcements, a long period of singing, and the sermon. The church has now over 30,000 members. Calvary Chapel has also grown into a “denomination,” although Chuck Smith would likely not appreciate that title. There are now over 1,000 Calvary Chapel churches all over the world. These churches are not planted, per se, instead,
usually a person who has attended a Calvary Chapel will happen to move to a new area, start a Bible study which then evolves into a church. That new body will then contact Chuck Smith in Costa Mesa and he will encourage one of his staff members to go and pastor that new church. In this way, the Calvary Chapel churches somewhat keep their “doctrine” similar.188

Along with JPUSA and Calvary Chapel, one of the most continuing and most prominent effects of the Jesus People Movement was the development of “Christian rock,” known as Contemporary Christian Music or “CCM.”189 CCM, now a $500-million-a-year industry, was originally known as “Jesus music.” Jesus People formed rock bands dedicated to music as a form of evangelism and worship. Music was a popular way to express countercultural beliefs, and so playing music was a way to participate in the counterculture and an easy way to tell others about Jesus. Commentator Ken Myers of the Mars Hill Audio, reflected that these Jesus People “were adamant in their eagerness to construct their fellowship and worship according to the sensibility of the counterculture.”190 The Jesus People played this “Jesus music” at colleges, in bars, and at rock festivals. Keith Green and Larry Norman, for example, were former hippie drug users who converted to Christianity and performed at bars and nightclubs singing about the gospel in the hopes of converting others.

At the same time that “Jesus music” was growing, some “straight people,” members of the Recreation Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, saw music as a way to keep Baptist youth connected to the Baptist church. Men such as Billy Ray

188 Balmer, 26.
189 CCM Communications owns the trademark to the acronym CCM.
Hearn, Ralph Carmichael, and Elwyn Raymer started creating Christian rock musicals in the late 1960s as a way to give Baptist kids expression through their own music and keep them in the church. The first of these musicals, *Good News*, sold 300,000 copies.\(^{191}\)

As the 1970s progressed, Billy Ray Hearn and other “straight people” formed record labels that signed and promoted Jesus People musicians (mostly non-Baptists) in the already existing gospel music network. These labels functioning and marketing within the church communities created CCM, but helped the demise of the influence of “Jesus Music” in the counterculture. Charlie Peacock, discusses in his book, *At the Crossroads: An insider’s look at the past, present, and future of Contemporary Christian Music*, the loss of the Jesus People Movement’s initial vision of sharing the gospel through music to nonbelievers in their world.

Unfortunately, the Baptist influence set the tone for CCM’s cultural disengagement from a world infatuated with Mick Jagger and Janis Joplin… CCM became music for ‘the kids’ instead of God’s musical people everywhere and in everything. It emphasized retreating from the cultural sphere by creating a Christian version of popular music just for Christians.

Charlie Peacock continues in his book to argue the spiritual and social issues that combat CCM today. An institution that once was created as a means of evangelism is now an industry. Although CCM might still hold evangelism and changing society as its goal, the hurdle of perpetuating itself, often, if not always, preempts its concerns with actually engaging the secular world. As Peacock argues, “more often than not, the contemporary Christian music industry shapes its lyric content to follow the lead of those in the Christian music audience (the church) with the least inclination to think Christianly about

broader life issues." True to its Baptist musical roots, a large portion of the CCM industry does cater itself to church youth. Unfortunately, the music of the Jesus People, with its goals of evangelizing and being a part of secular culture, has largely been remade into a vehicle of the mainstream church, a group with which most Jesus People did not want to be associated.

The Jesus People Movement arose during a general period of awakening in this country, where uncertainty and a crisis of worldviews caused many young people to search for new arenas of understanding the world and themselves. Young people’s search for a higher consciousness led them to try a variety of different paths, from socialism, to the drug culture, to Eastern mysticism. During this time, some men and women found that they believed that belief in Jesus Christ would serve to answer the questions that they had about life, and these men and women, confident of their revelation, desired to bring others into Christianity. Jack Sparks, Sue Palossari, Sue Alamo, Glen Kaiser, and others became the mothers and fathers of faith for many young people who converted to Christianity and desired to spread the message to others. The Jesus Movement reached its heyday in the early seventies, and while it did not survive in its original form of hippies, coffeehouses, and communes, its impact was lasting. Although the Jesus People Movement’s purposeful engagement of secular culture seems to be in a large part gone, many of these young people joined or started churches or ministries which are still influencing American Protestantism and local communities. Clearly, the Jesus People Movement was an historical revival.

191 Peacock, 60-61.
192 Peacock, 124.
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