**The Jesus Movement/Revolution Of The 1960’s and 1970’s**

\*\* What was this movement or spiritual revolution? The “For Real” Newspaper, in March 1971 put it this way. It noted, *“One girl summed it up well: "Why are so many thousands of people flocking to Calvary? They aren't getting religion and church; they're seeing Jesus and the Bible and love."*

**1) History:**

1. **There is some variation as to the actual beginning of the movement though a few key people were a part of the start. When we use the letters “JPM” in our discussion we are talking about the Jesus People Movement or Jesus People Revolution.**
* Some believe “Look Magazine” coined the phrase “Jesus Movement” in an article they wrote on what was taking place.
* It was a very eclectic movement. It had a broad diversity to it though certain things were foundational. There were varying views on social issues, politics, etc., and as we shall see, theology as well. Remember, this was a time of social unrest with America knee deep in the Vietnam War.
* Younger people were worried about the economic recession, pollution, civil rights, and that opened the door for a spiritual movement.
* The movement was born out of a counterculture view of sex, drugs, and rock and roll, Eastern religions, which ultimately, did not bring satisfaction to people. The youth and young adults, and even older folks were seeking answers to the questions of life.
* They were also countercultural to the church at the time. There were those in the movement whose experience was church was that it offered nothing to them. Now, if the Word was being taught, they would have had an opportunity to know it, but many churches simply were stale and legalistic.
* There were many runaways, aged 13-17, who were ill-prepared to face a world and became involved in all kinds of sin. The culture was a mess.
* This movement had no racial, social, or cultural bounds. Everyone of every culture and color was accepted. Long hair, people with crew cuts, or how you dressed, did not matter. In all honesty, that is the way God wants it and they desired to not get tied up in the cultural battles of that time though they had opinions on the issues that were prominent during that time period.
* It was more a demographic than a geographical revival. Though it began with young adults, disillusioned youth of the 60’s, it did spread to all generations.
* Most likely the JPM started in San Francisco. 1965-1966 was the early beginnings. I believe it can be traced to the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. It has been said that many diverse forces combined to create the Jesus Movement. Some of those we just talked about.
* To some, Ted Wise is the “founder” of the Jesus Movement though he denies it. He tired of the drug scene and Eastern religions he dabbled in and found the answer in Jesus Christ.
* Ted and his wife Elizabeth, along with some other hippie believers, began attending a small Baptist church in the area (where Liz was already going to), and worked with other churches to begin an outreach into San Francisco. They started the “House of Acts,” a Christian commune.
* In 1967 “The Evangelical Concerns” non-profit was established in the San Francisco Bay area to promote work among the Hippies. There were also coffee houses established, meeting places such as “Living Room” mission center in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district and as we just noted, the “House of Acts” commune in Novato, California, which by the way was the first recognized appearance of “hippie Christians.”
* The movement then extended to Southern California where it really took root and eventually to other places on the West Coast and across America. Jesus People, a ministry in Chicago, has its roots and beginnings in the Jesus Movement.
* As the movement neared the end in the late 70’s, partly because there was not near as much media coverage as there had been, and things were changing, and people involved were getting plugged into churches and parachurch groups. When this happened, the revolution shifted east and there were more who identified with the JPM living in Pennsylvania than had been in California.
* As we will note when speaking of some of the publications that started during that time, the movement had its “catchphrases” just like we do today in churches. Though the phrases may be different, Christians have their own lingo.
* Some of those phrases from the JPM included, “Jesus freaks,” “Jesus is coming soon,” “Jesus, the natural high,” “Things go better with Jesus,” “God’s Forever Family,” are just some of the slogans used.
* As noted, it began in the 60’s and by the end of the 70’s it had pretty much run its course. Out of it, though, new music styles, churches, and energetic leaders were seen as a product of what happened – Greg Laurie, for example.
1. **The reaction of churches to this work of Christ and some more thoughts:**
* Many churches could not bring themselves to accept these new converts or seekers into their fold. Their shoeless feet, long hair, clothing, went against what some thought church should be like. They were not looking at the heart of these individuals, but the outward appearance.
* Because of the way people looked, and the phrases and words they used that were “Christianized” (not foul language) but words like “groovy,” “I can dig it,” etc., took on new meanings but to the established church, this did not fit with their “Christianese,” so that caused tension.
* I will say that in reaching out to share the Gospel, for example, in the Hollywood Free Paper, there was blatant honesty about what people were looking for to bring them happiness. The point was to get them to see that how they were going about it was missing the point. I think some churches could not accept the honesty and openness, in your face challenges brought by those in the JPM.
* Others, such as Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, welcomed them because they believed God was at work and these individuals needed to be discipled, to help ground them in the Word. They looked past the externals.
* Churches that embraced these new believers saw God working in a generation and culture that was so anti-authority that they knew something was happening.
* On one occasion, Love Song, one of the prominent music groups in the JPM, were asked to go to a church to sing. This church pushed back against allowing them to sing because of their style of music, long hair, etc. But when they finally were allowed to sing, God broke through to this stuffy, legalistic church via the music of these new believers singing for the Lord with a different style of music.
* John Bisagno, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston, hosted a crusade for young people that saw over 4,000 young people saved and the church had to hire a pastor to minister to these new converts.
* In 1973, in the fall edition of the Hollywood Free Paper (HFP), Duane Pederson, editor of the HFP, gave his thoughts on the Jesus Movement and noted five phases to it at that time. Here is a thumbnail of what he said:

\*\* The Pre-Media Phase – People around the world were reaching out to the drug areas, opening houses to feed and shelter people who were caught up in the drug culture. They were publishing Jesus newspapers, before the national media got involved. God was at work.

\*\* The Media Phase – Many of the media came looking for the strange and bizarre and if they could not find it, they would stage it. Their only concern was their TV or reader ratings. They would try to connect with someone who had a decision for Christ to get some great tidbit for their video. They would hear something like, “I used to dope, but I don’t.”

\*\* The Post-Media Phase – This is the part the press has not told. What happened to those many who made “decisions” for Christ, whether on the street, in a coffee shop, commune, wherever. “Have they drifted along with the press media?” As Pederson points out, these are legitimate concerns to have as believers. What happened to many of these individuals?

Some ended up in churches where they began to grow in God’s Word and to progress in that, being encouraged to witness and win others for Christ. Some fell away. Pederson mentions Jesus’ parable in **Matthew 13, “The Seed and Sower,”** not directly by name but he discusses it. This phase leads to…

\*\* The International Phase – These Jesus people became the street missionaries for the local church, starting in their own area and then spreading, some going overseas. Pederson and others wanted to make sure that these individuals were grounded in the Word of God as they went out.

\*\* The Future Phase – There were things that God had for the JPM to do as Pederson points out, and they were moving ahead, directed by the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ our Lord. He did not mention anything specific, but I wanted to share this with you. I just came across it as I randomly looked at some of the copies of the Hollywood Free Paper. We will mention HFP later in our discussion.

\*\* John Bisagno, who was the pastor of the “First Baptist Church of Houston” at the time, knowing that no one knew how long the movement would last may have said it best, *“All I know is that kids are turning on to Jesus. My concern is that the staid, traditional churches will reject these kids and miss the most genuine revival in our lifetime.”*

\*\* Bisagno also told his church that he would rather see hippies sitting on the floor of the church worshipping Jesus than sitting on a park bench smoking pot.

**2) Theology and grace, social and life viewpoints**

* The inerrancy of Scripture, the Virgin Birth of Christ, views we hold to, were also held by most of those involved.
* They also held all members of the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in high regard, especially the Holy Spirit. This can lead to being theologically off-balance if we are not careful. All three Members of the Trinity are involved in our lives and the Holy Spirit points people to Jesus and glorifies Christ **(Jn. 16:14)**. This by no means downplays Spirit and Who He is. Balance is the key and at times some in the movement forgot that.
* Theologically the movement could not be roped in. Though charismatic leaning in its theology (some promoted signs and wonders and tongues speaking), there were those within the movement who were not in that theological camp.
* The movement varied in their view of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There were those who were convinced that the baptism of the Spirit was accompanied by speaking in tongues, while others did not hold that view but were willing to tolerate those who did but disagreed with that teaching.

\*\* The following quote from the Talbot School of Theology’s magazine gives us an insight into how some in the movement operated. Note,

*“Reflecting on his early days of street evangelism, Kent Philpott remembered, “I heard God telling me to go to the hippies in San Francisco ... the very next night about eight o’clock I drove into the city, found the Haight-Ashbury District, and started walking around.” These supernatural experiences were not only normative across the movement but often served to legitimize JPM ministries in contrast to established churches who, without similar events, were depicted as dead.”*

* A view of prophecy as a gift and God’s immanence (His presence in creation but His being separate from it) and His Sovereign control were a part of the theology of many.Some claimed to speak prophetically for God. This, of course, can be dangerous if what is being said is not compared to Scripture. God gives us no new revelation.
* A sizeable minority of the group, according to one individual who in 1971 did a nationwide tour of those involved in the Jesus Movement, had “Baptistic” leanings.
* In addition, again depending on who was teaching and where you were living and taking part in the Jesus Movement, there was a strong emphasis on what are known as “signs and wonders.” Lonnie Frisbee, who would help John Wimber in getting the Vineyard Movement off the ground, was an advocate of this viewpoint.
* There was a strong evangelistic message. Though at times emotions and feelings were overemphasized, there was a definite call for people to repent of their sins and to give their life to Christ.
* They were clear that the search for truth was found in Christ alone. There was a declaration of a call to ask God to forgive us of our sins, to ask Christ into our life, and to declare Him as Lord. They saw that only Jesus could deal with the heartache and emptiness of their lives and they shared that with others.
* They were bold in sharing their faith. Up and down Hollywood Boulevard, for example, they would talk to anyone about Jesus.
* They emphasized salvation by grace through faith alone, and the absolute authority of the Scriptures. Much of their viewpoint depended on where they went to church and who was teaching.
* As a whole, and this was important, there was the belief that we as humans are sinful, a result of Adam and Eve’s rebellion in the garden. Thus, the need for Christ to save us. There was an emphasis on Christ dying on the cross as our substitution and offering salvation to anyone who puts their faith in Him.
* I hold to the substitutionary death of Christ, where He took on the penalty of our sins so we could be forgiven. There seemed to me to be an emphasis also on the importance of not only believing in Christ for salvation, but also that there be a willingness to follow Him as Lord. At least that is my take on what I have read.

\*\* One of the problems (and it was a weakness) was at times the changing landscape of where someone landed theologically. One website noted,

“*Indeed, it’s important to note that for many Jesus People groups theological beliefs and views were often in a state of flux. The fluctuating influence of particular individuals, authors, and Bible teachers would cause groups to modify or change their views over time...the coming and going of particular individuals as well as personal and group experiences (positive and negative) would cause Jesus People groups to reconsider or modify various assumptions and beliefs.”*

* The movement as a whole was pro-life but not necessarily politically conservative. This of course would probably depend on what you were reading, listening to, or learning from, just as is true today. There were those who were conservative regarding other issues as well.
* In its early days it was somewhat influenced, according to one source I read who was involved in the movement, by the anti-Vietnam War and pro-Civil Rights

Movement. The anti-war side of the JPM was pretty evident. They were pro-peace and that is what they wanted.

* The Sermon on the Mount **(Matthew 5-7)** had a significant impact on how many in the movement chose to live. They felt that Jesus spoke in that message to many of the issues that they were facing and of course, that we face today. This sermon by Jesus led to many within the movement’s anti-war stand.

**2) Theology and grace – continued:**

* There also was a generally held view in the soon return of Christ. This view greatly influenced the movement and their passion to evangelize. Hal Lindsey’s “Late Great Planet Earth” was a book that the movement latched on to.
* Lindsey also opened, along with Bill Counts, the “J.C. Light and Power House” near the campus of UCLA. It was not a Jesus commune but was launched to *“give some biblical depth to the spiritual movement that is going on.”*
* This theme of the hopeful, soon return of Christ was seen in some of the music of the Jesus Movement
* Premillennialism was the main end time view. And the belief in the soon return of Christ, a major theological belief of the JPM, led many to see the urgency to evangelize because in their mind the time was short.
* The thought among many at that time was that the ten nations that originally made up what is now the European Common Market was a sign of the end.
* Discipleship was vital in the thinking of this movement. Depending on what church you attended at the time, some taught verse by verse through the Bible. Others, even when speaking on certain topics, focused on what Scripture had to say about whatever was being studied. Understanding God’s Word was absolutely the main focus, along with the application of the Scriptures to life.
* There at times was an overreach of grace and this was and could be a weakness. Many in the movement, even after coming to faith in Christ, or claiming too, had a tough time leaving the hippie lifestyle of drugs, etc. The movement was somewhat weak on understanding the transforming work of Christ and our part in growing in our faith **(Philippians 2:12-13)**.
* Apologetics Ministries were an important part of the movement. With all the false gurus and teachers around, Eastern mysticism and other cults, ministries such as the Spiritual Counterfeits Project, founded by Jack Sparks, brought the Word to bear on the culture and religion in general. Sparks was with Campus Crusade for Christ and then launched SCP.
* Sparks also helped found the Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF), a ministry to hippies, street people, and others, in Berkeley, California.
* Baptism was important. Thousands were baptized at Pirate’s Cove in Corona Del Mar. This is portrayed in the movie “The Jesus Revolution.” Also, this type of baptism was a problem for some because it was outside of the church building.
* The movement was to some “anti-church,” and much happened that the traditional church did not like, from music styles to how people dressed.

  **3) Jesus – Who was He and how was He depicted:**

* Remember that this was a during time of upheaval in our country. People were anti-authority, and they saw Jesus, not in a negative way, but as a life-changing revolutionary and a liberator.
* He was counter-cultural, which to a degree we can see in the Scriptures by the things He taught and did. A read of the Sermon on the Mount shows this.
* This view of Christ was connected to Jesus’ work in changing lives through the message of the Gospel. Jesus was the “radical alternative,” One Who offered *“authenticity and commitment in lifestyle.”* (Donald Heinz, a religious studies professor at University of California at Chico who spent two years with the CWLF). He offered what the counterculture did not.
* Jesus offered a stability that many had been looking for, which could not be found in drugs, music, and disdain for authority. Frustration and emptiness were seen in the culture of the 60’s and Jesus was Someone worth considering and/or following.

\*\* Jesus was the Deliverer, and this thought is somewhat explained in the following quote by Donald Heinz, about how Jesus could set the twentieth-century hippies and others free from modern forms of oppression. He writes,

*“The Jesus of the Holy Dependable Book is also counted on as a dependable Deliverer, one who with power and authority rescues from bondage, drug addiction, meaningless sexual quests, acute personal dilemmas…He promises and delivers new life, meaning, purpose, joy, and ultimately eternal life in heaven.”*

* Jesus as Deliverer also focused on His unconditional love. The following says it well, *“He loves us as though we have infinite worth—in spite of our bad habits, ignorance of God, or whatever.”*
* Jesus was a radical Liberator (as noted above) Who both challenged and undermined the established order. If there was a danger, I think, it was that at times the Jesus Movement tried to put Jesus into a box of their own making, and it was not always built around a proper view of Scripture.

**4) The Music of the Jesus Movement:**

* Larry Norman is seen as the “father” of the music that came out of this work of God. Other artists such as Nancy Honeytree, 2nd Chapter of Acts, Andre Crouch, Randy Stonehill, and of course, Love Song (probably the group that started it all along with Larry Norman), were a major influence musically during this time. The Archers were another group that made an impact as well. There are too many to name.
* The song “Little Country Church” by Love Song had to do with what was happening at Calvary Chapel with the growth of the church and so many Jesus People coming to the church from all walks of life.
* Within the movement, rock and roll was used for getting the Gospel out. This, of course, presented problems to some because it was considered by many in the church as “the devil’s music,” and in some cases, understandably so.
* “The Resurrection Band” was born out of Jesus People USA, who started as a part of the Milwaukee group noted below that was led by Jim and Sue Palosaari.
* The “All Saved Freak Band” was also one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the new genre of music affiliated with the Jesus Movement. Though Larry Norman is known, as mentioned, as the “beginning” of the movement, some think ASFB were ahead of Larry in the timeline.
* These artists gave birth to the Contemporary Christian Movement. Others at the time, especially into the 70’s, included “Dallas Holm and Praise”, Barry McGuire, to name just a couple of influential musicians in addition to the ones noted.
* Of course, Keith Green had an enormous impact at this time, from the mid 70’s to early 80’s. Though he would tragically die along with two of his children in a plane crash when he was only 28 years old, he left a music legacy of worship songs and lyrics that challenged stale Christianity.
* Maranatha Music was born out of Calvary Chapel. Albums of praise songs and groups and artists were part of Maranatha. Tommy Coomes of Love Song was the head of Maranatha Music at its beginning.
* Many churches struggled with the styles and some of the lyrics of these musicians. Remember that many of these had not been Christians long and they were developing their music and song writing as they grew in their faith.
* Explo ’72 drew at least 80,000 people to a music venue of Christian artists and speakers.
* Songs like “We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord” were sung at the gatherings. There was a changing style of worship going on.

**5) Publications/movies that discussed or were a part of the movement:**

* Time Magazine, in 1971, authored an article on what was happening in the Jesus Movement. The following is how the article begins:

WANTED

JESUS CHRIST

ALIAS: THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD, KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS, PRINCE OF PEACE, ETC.

> Notorious leader of an underground liberation movement

>Wanted for the following charges:

—Practicing medicine, winemaking and food distribution without a license.

—Interfering with businessmen in the temple.

—Associating with known criminals, radicals, subversives, prostitutes and street people.

—Claiming to have the authority to make people into God's children.

APPEARANCE: Typical hippie type—long hair, beard, robe, sandals.

> Hangs around slum areas, few rich friends, often sneaks out into the desert.

BEWARE: This man is extremely dangerous. His insidiously inflammatory message is particularly dangerous to young people who haven't been taught to ignore him yet. He changes men and claims to set them free.

WARNING: HE IS STILL AT LARGE!

* These words that begin the article in Time were quoted from a Christian underground newspaper “wanted” poster regarding Jesus. This shows how these Christian papers at the time used the language of the people of the JPM to reach out to others.
* The article in Time was not a putdown of the movement. Not all that was written in the magazine was positive, but it did note good things that were happening.
* Other publications that came out of the Movement included “The Hollywood Free Paper” and “Cornerstone.” The Hollywood Free Paper (HFP) published from 1970-1979, edited by Duane Pederson. “Cornerstone” was printed by Jesus People USA in Chicago.
* The HFP grew in distribution over the time it existed (1969-1980). They offered books you could buy by Francis Schaeffer, Ian Thomas (The Saving Life of Christ), Bibles, and other books. At one time the HFP was printing 400,000 copies and another paper, “Right On!” in Berkeley, California did 65,000 copies.
* “Keystone,” a magazine that began in 1976 by Don Gillespie. At its peak it had over 10,000 subscribers.
* These papers used the language of the day to communicate spiritual truths. They focused on Biblical theology but used their own vernacular to reach the audience.

They would use words like “groovy, “right on,” “only one way.” Not only were these statements used in print, but even at times in speaking. The goal was to use language that did not disrespect Christianity but connected to the culture.

* The “Thief in The Night Movies” had an impact on people’s lives, especially regarding the end times.

**6) Some Key Figures of the Jesus Revolution:**

**\*\* Chuck Smith**

* He was probably the most well-known and supportive individual of what was happening. His church became the landing place for many of the young people who were seeking answers through Christ. His wife Kay had a heart for the hippie movement and that impacted Chuck as well as he learned about them.
* He was open to them and was willing to embrace them when other churches refused to do so. Though not the only pastor to do so, his church became the place where many of the hippies and others went to seeking spiritual answers that they could not find in other religions and drugs.
* Chuck was not known for having a flamboyant personality. One observer said he resembled a “grocery clerk” but he taught the Word and let the Lord do the work.
* Smith, though, also was more conservative in his viewpoint of spiritual gifts and tried to keep a balanced approach to the Holy Spirit. In comparison, others, such as Lonnie Frisbee, made the gifts of the Holy Spirit including miracles, signs and wonders, etc., a major theme.
* Smith was concerned about discipleship and helping new Christians grow in their knowledge of the Word of God.

**\*\* Lonnie Frisbee**

* To some, Lonnie was the face of the movement. Saved coming off an LSD trip, he became a firebrand for God.
* When he came to Southern California from the San Francisco area, he became the “unofficial” youth pastor, we could say, of Chuck Smith’s “Calvary Chapel.”
* Lonnie had some deep-rooted personal struggles. Horribly abused by a neighbor when he was young, Lonnie had gotten into everything the hippie movement could offer.
* Lonnie, along with Chuck Smith, founded the “House Of Miracles,” A communal house. Eventually there were nineteen of these going.
* The “House” eventually moved to Oregon and formed “Shiloh Youth Revival Centers.” This became the largest “Jesus People” communal movement in the United States during the 1970’s.
* When he did become a follower of Christ, he was an enthusiastic soul winner. At times, though, he did see himself as bigger than what was happening. Eventually, he and Chuck Smith had a falling out.
* He also would focus heavily on having people be “slain in the Spirit” at some of his meetings. Lonnie was heavy into some of the ultra-charismatic things such when it came to meetings but when Chuck Smith was around, he was more reserved. Chuck had a more balanced view of spiritual gifts and things such as signs and wonders. This was part of the reason for the separation of the two.
* He ended up getting together with John Wimber, one of the founders of the Vineyard Church Movement, a group that emphasized signs and wonders and had split from the Calvary Chapel movement. Frisbee would end up, when confronted over a particular sin in his life, resigning from the Vineyard. Lonnie, though, was on the ground floor of this church group as well.
* Frisbee eventually moved to Florida and became connected to Derek Prince and Bob Mumford whose teachings became what was known as the “shepherding movement.”
* Lonnie struggled throughout his life, and there is still debate over some issue he faced and some of the things he fell back into, from drugs to immorality. He died of AIDS at the age of 43.

**\*\* Linda Meissner**

* Linda was a former Teen Challenge worker who in 1969 created the Jesus People Army (JPA) in the Seattle area. She began her serving Christ when she worked with David Wilkerson in reaching out to the gangs in New York City. She went to Europe and ministered there for many years, then moved back in 2012 to Washington. She has a coffee house ministry, “Jesus People Coffee House.”
* Back in the Jesus Revolution days, the Jesus People Army and Linda Meissner were demanding, with extensive training programs and communal houses. The goal was to raise up a last day’s army of disciplined young evangelists to spread the message of the Gospel.
* The frenzy that led many to JPA (which had 5,000 involved by some estimates) began to fade and Linda’s split from her husband, along with some other issues, put the movement in trouble.
* In an act of desperation, she attached JPA to David Berg and his “Children of God” (COG) movement, which became one of the most dangerous cults in America and grew out of the Jesus Movement (we discuss this later). Other leaders within the JPA opposed Linda’s push for joining COG.
* Linda Meissner has not been with COG for many years now, having left them long ago. She seems to be back on track when it comes to the historic doctrines of the Christian faith.

**\*\* Jim and Sue Palosaari**

* Jim and Sue were led to Christ by someone Meissner had discipled, and they moved to Wisconsin and started Jesus People Milwaukee (JPW).
* The Christian History Institute writes regarding this ministry, *“The Midwest Jesus People built close ties with local churches and invited pastors to teach young disciples, who lived in an old hospital building. The daily regimen centered on basic Bible teaching coupled with witnessing to Milwaukee’s Brady Street counterculture.”*
* By 1972 JPW had grown to around 200 people.
* Jesus People USA started from the Milwaukee group, originally as the “Jesus People USA Traveling Team.” Now in Chicago (Jesus People Chicago), this communal life group continues to minister to people within the city. They are now a part of the Evangelical Covenant Church. They also are more liberal socially in some regards.

**\*\* Arthur Blessitt**

* Blessitt grew up as a Christian, but during the JPM he became known for his bold on-street witnessing in Hollywood, even to the Hell’s Angels.
* He started “His Place,” a combination of a coffee house and counseling center, in which on some nights, 500 young people were in attendance, getting free food and listening to music and testimonies. In two years, over 10,000 people made decisions for Christ. This was located on the Sunset Strip.
* Blessitt was known for carrying a cross with him. Here is what he personally stated about his journeys, *“I’ve now carried the cross in every country on earth and every major island group in the world over 43,326 miles (69,726 km) in 324 countries, island groups & territories. 86 million steps and over 19 billion pounds carried in 324 nations and major islands groups. 2020, is my 53 years of carrying the cross and I am still going…at the age of 79.”*

**\*\* Kent Philpott**

* Kent Philpott was doing ministry in early 1967 in San Francisco. You could call him the “hippie preacher” and he was very active throughout the movement.
* Kent was a seminary student at what was then known as Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary but had a heart to reach this group.

**\*\* Other notables:** David Wilkerson, whose book “The Cross and Switchblade,” by 1972 had sold over 6 million copies. Others, like Nicky Cruz, former gang leader who became an evangelist (the book by Wilkerson was based on his life). Youth for Christ and Young Life continued steady growth on high school campuses.

**7) Ministry approach and communal living**

* The “House of Miracles” noted above, which Frisbee, Chuck Smith and John Higgins (who really was the lead in this), after it moved to Oregon and became “Shiloh Youth Revival Center” would eventually grow (so the claim was made) to over 100,000 people involved and the establishment of 175 communal houses during its lifespan. Eventually this movement disbanded in 1988.
* At the time of the 1971 Time article on the Jesus Movement, Edward Plowman estimated that there were over 600 communes across the country.
* These various communal houses were sort of a rescue mission for hippies and others who were looking for a new way of life.
* The “Living Room” (a storefront coffeehouse) was started in San Francisco with the goal of reaching the youth and young adults of the counterculture, who were trying everything they could to find answers to life.
* When it came to evangelism, the movement was characterized by their boldness. They had no problem sharing Christ anywhere and wherever the opportunity arose.
* Coffee houses such as the “The Gathering Place” in Riverside, CA (1969-1979), which was started by an ex-convict, Jim Cox, who had a heart for reaching hurting youth living on the streets as well as those who were hitchhiking across the country. Bible studies were held on Tuesday and Thursday nights, along with music by Christian artists such as Love Song and Debbie Rettino.

**8) Observations of the Movement (good and bad):**

* Many of the teachers and leaders were not necessarily theologically grounded, and it led to some strange teachings. Cults, such as David Berg’s “Children of God” and Victor Paul Wierwille’s “The Way International” grew during this time.
* Berg saw his group as the only ones holding the truth, but his teachings were steeped in immorality and the idea that they could save the world from the anti-Christ.
* People were put in leadership, in my thinking, before they were ready. As we shall see, Lonnie Frisbee was one of those. He was studying and learning the Word of God but was not ready to be in the positions of leadership in which he was placed. The same could be noted of others.
* Much like the Asbury Revival that we saw happen this year, the Jesus Revolution made no dent in church attendance. I am not sure of that. Though there were many saved and many of them became ingrained in churches and grew in their faith, statistics show that the 70’s did not experience an increase in church growth. These may have replaced those who left churches during that time.
* It was not a cohesive movement. It could be described as some said, as interconnected revivals and evangelistic campaigns, from street evangelism to the communes and coffee houses. They had similar DNA up to a point.
* Ministries such as Campus Crusade for Christ (now known as “Cru) and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship (IVF) grew during this time. In 1971 IVF held a missions’ conference at the University of Illinois that drew over 12,000.
* We do not want to downplay the place of the church. There were churches that accepted that searching generation. Calvary Chapel, pastored by Chuck Smith, is probably the classic example of churches who made these people feel welcomed and loved. It was a place where God’s Word was taught and there was structure, something that was lacking in many of the lives of these seekers.
* Over time, there were those, as the JPM came to an end as a movement around 1980, who gave up on their life as a Christian. Others, who had a relationship with Christ that was real, settled into churches they were attending.
* There were communes, made up of young adults, that lacked leadership. This was not the case in all situations. And often it was more about the individual themselves (self-centered) than caring for others. This was a weakness in the movement.
* That does not mean that what happened was not positive. I believe it was a movement of God that impacted many lives.
* The “Shepherding Movement” was mentioned and though its prominence grew in the 1980’s, but it started in the mid 70’s.

The **“Got Questions”** website gives a brief definition of the idea behind this false teaching that permeated many churches. They write,

*“The basic idea of the Shepherding Movement is one of submission to authority. The Shepherding Movement called for five leaders at the top of a global leadership pyramid. These men were responsible for one another’s spiritual health and keeping each other on track by “covenant relationships” and mutual accountability. Beneath each of those five “shepherds” were five other people, responsible for one another but submitted to the authority of their shepherd. And so on, down the line. Each of these groups of five was called a “submission,” and their devotion to their shepherds was absolute. No major decisions were made without first consulting with one’s shepherd—marriage and career choices included.”*

**9) What can we take from the positives of the movement and apply today:**

* We can learn from it the importance of both evangelism and discipleship. Some churches are strong in one area while weak in the other. We cannot be “us four and no more Christians.”
* There was a willingness to accept people where they were at and the desire to allow God to change them was important. Many came out of the 60’s culture but the point is, we can learn from this time period to be places of refuge while not compromising Scripture. This did not mean they compromised Scripture.
* Sin was not condoned. Think of what type of lifestyle these people were living before becoming Christ followers. The lifestyle of anyone who becomes a believer, change happens over time. The same was true back then. In saying that, we also learn that grace must be applied at times because some people grow slower spiritually than others. Many of the communes and coffee houses had strict rules for people to follow. This, of course, could lead to legalism.
* They emphasized the Lordship of Christ over their lives. Jesus was more than just their Savior. He was their Lord, the master of their lives. This was important to many in the movement, and it guided how they lived. This does not mean they did not struggle with sin, which we all do, but Jesus was Lord.
* Discernment is important. As we have noted, some cults grew out of the JPM. And other borderline religious groups “wanted in” though their theology did not necessarily change. An example would be the Roman Catholic Church in which those who got caught up in the movement and focused on the Pentecostal experience did not necessarily change their beliefs. Catholicism does not line up with historic Christianity.
* There were those in the movement such as the Spiritual Counterfeits Project, and others, who were concerned that Biblical Christianity stay on track. The same is true today. We need to be discerning.
* The movement was non-materialistic. Many lived on little, shared with others, and were not focusing their ministries on building a financial kingdom as some are today. We can learn a lot about what is important from the JPM. There is nothing wrong with having “stuff” but if that becomes a focal point, it is idolatry.
* New church groups began as a result of the JPM – Calvary Chapel and The Vineyard. Calvary Chapel is no longer the association of churches it once was. The original Calvary Chapel is independent. Out of the JPM itself, new churches sprung up and are continuing to this day. Other churches and denominations grew because of what was happening.
* The movement showed that we cannot limit who God reaches out to. Some churches are not open to those who do not look and talk like them, but God changes lives, and we cannot determine who those people are that He works in. It is His choice.
* We can learn to be flexible in ministry without compromising Biblical truth. People saw needs and reached out to meet those needs. Think about the things today that churches split over. Some of it breaks the Lord’s heart. Standing for Biblical truth is one thing, dividing our preferences is another.

**10) Should we expect a new revolution to happen in our time?**

* God can do anything He chooses to do. There are people, not hippies, but others, who are looking for answers to their questions. Churches must be prepared to answer those.
* Any movement of God must be grounded in the Scriptures as the centerpiece. The JPM had so many good things, but there was also enough aberrant theology that at times it caused problems. Serve God and study the Word.
* Revival is focused on believers, and when Christians are in tune with God, even a few, God can use that to reach out to others. We must not get caught up in numbers, but in seeing people grow and lives change. Those individuals will in turn reach out to others because they know how vital it is.
* We must be willing to accept people, weaknesses, and all, and help them to know Christ, and allow the Spirit to change them. We step alongside of them, but we love them where they are at. If we are willing to do that, God can do wonderful things.
* I believe as we see our culture fractured and confused (gender identity issues, CRT, Wokeness, increase in crime and drug use, cancel culture, the war on women’s sports). Though not exactly like the 60’s, the issues we face can open a door for another Jesus Movement.
* We must look for opportunities to speak the truth in love and tell others why Jesus is a better and complete answer for their search for meaning. We must also be available to people, loving them and caring enough about them, not to belittle them, but to share the message of God’s truth and life changing power with them.
* We who are believers need to live out what we claim. Part of the reason people were disillusioned with church in the 60’s and 70’s even up this day, is because we as Christians say one thing and do another. We do not have to be perfect, just real, honest, kind, and do our best to live Jesus before others.
* Prayer is crucial. The more you read about revival, and what happened in the 60’s, prayer played a huge part. We must ask God to intervene, to work in the lives of individuals. Allow God the freedom to deal with people in His time.