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The Alternative Jesus: Psychedelic Christ

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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!**

HE is indeed. As the words of this Wanted poster from a Christian underground newspaper demonstrate, Jesus is alive and well and living in the radical spiritual fervor of a growing number of young Americans who have proclaimed an extraordinary religious revolution in his name. Their message: the Bible is true, miracles happen, God really did so love the world that he gave it his only begotten son. In 1966 Beatle John Lennon casually remarked that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ; now the Beatles are shattered, and George Harrison is singing My Sweet Lord. The new young followers of Jesus listen to Harrison, but they turn on only to the words of their Master: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is a startling development for a generation that has been constantly accused of tripping out or copping out with sex, drugs and violence. Now, embracing the most persistent symbol of purity, selflessness and brotherly love in the history of Western man, they are afire with a Pentecostal passion for sharing their new vision with others. Fresh-faced, wide-eyed young girls and earnest young men badger businessmen and shoppers on Hollywood Boulevard, near the Lincoln Memorial, in Dallas, in Detroit and in Wichita, "witnessing" for Christ with breathless exhortations.

Christian coffeehouses have opened in many cities, signaling their faith even in their names: The Way Word in Greenwich Village, the Catacombs in Seattle, I Am in Spokane. A strip joint has been converted to a "Christian nightclub" in San Antonio. Communal "Christian houses" are multiplying like loaves and fishes for youngsters hungry for homes, many reaching out to the troubled with round-the-clock telephone hot lines. Bibles abound: whether the cherished, fur-covered King James Version or scruffy, back-pocket paperbacks, they are invariably well-thumbed and often memorized. "It's like a glacier," says "Jesus-Rock" Singer Larry Norman, 24. "It's growing and there's no stopping it."

There is an uncommon morning freshness to this movement, a buoyant atmosphere of hope and love along with the usual rebel zeal. Some converts seem to enjoy translating their new faith into everyday life, like those who answer the phone with "Jesus loves you" instead of "hello." But their love seems more sincere than a slogan, deeper than the fast-fading sentiments of the flower children; what startles the outsider is the extraordinary sense of joy that they are able to communicate. Of course, as in any fresh religious movement, zealotry is never far away. Some in the movement even have divine timetables. Says Founder Bill Bright of the Campus Crusade for Christ: "Our target date for saturating the U.S. with the gospel of Jesus Christ is 1976—and the world by 1980. Of course, if the Lord wants to work a bit slower, that's O.K."

Some of the fascination for Jesus among the young may simply be belated hero worship of a fellow rebel, the first great martyr to the cause of peace and brotherhood. Not so, however, for the vast majority in the Jesus movement. If any one mark clearly identifies them it is their total belief in an awesome, supernatural Jesus Christ, not just a marvelous man who lived 2,000 years ago but a living God who is both Saviour and Judge, the ruler of their destinies. Their lives revolve around the necessity for an intense personal relationship with that Jesus, and the belief that such a relationship should condition every human life. They act as if divine intervention guides their every movement and can be counted on to solve every problem. Many of them have had serious personal difficulties before their conversions; a good portion of the movement is really a May-December marriage of conservative religion and the rebellious counterculture, and many of the converts have come to Christ from the fraudulent promises of drugs. Now they subscribe strictly to the Ten Commandments, rather than to the situation ethics of the "new morality"—although, like St. Paul, they are often tolerant of old failings among new converts.

The Jesus revolution rejects not only the material values of conventional America but the prevailing wisdom of American theology. Success often means an impersonal and despiritualized life that increasingly finds release in sexploration, status, alcohol and conspicuous consumption. Christianity — or at least the brand of it preached in prestige seminaries, pulpits and church offices over recent decades — has emphasized an immanent God of nature and social movement, not the new movement's transcendental, personal God who comes to earth in the person of Jesus, in the lives of individuals, in miracles (see box, page 60). The Jesus revolution, in short, is one that denies the virtues of the Secular City and heaps scorn on the message that God was ever dead. Why?

But why not? This is the generation that has burned out many of its lights and lives before it is old enough to vote. "The first thing I realized was how different it is to go to high school today," wrote Maureen Orth in a "Last Supplement" to the Whole Earth Catalog. "Acid trips in the seventh grade, sex in the eighth, the Viet Nam War a daily serial on TV since you were nine, parents and school worse than 'irrelevant'—meaningless. No wonder Jesus is making a great comeback." The death of authority brought the curse of uncertainty. As Thomas Farber writes in *Tales for the Son of My Unborn Child*: "The freedom from work, from restraint, from accountability, wondrous in its inception, became banal and counterfeit. Without rules there was no way to say no, and worse, no way to say yes."

The search for a "yes" led thousands to the Oriental and the mystical, the occult and even Satanism before they drew once again on familiar roots. One of the nation's successful young evangelists, Richard Hoag, 24, believes that many of his youthful converts see Jesus as a marvelous father figure. "The kids are searching for authority, love and understanding—ingredients missing at home. Jesus is what their fathers aren't." Adds Baptist Pastor John Bisagno: "I'm amazed at how many people I've counseled who have never heard their fathers say 'I love you.' "

Christ Couture

The enthusiasm is not universal. By no means a majority of the young, or their elders, are soldiers in the revolution—any more than they were flower children or acid trippers. Some call the Jesus movement a fad or just another bad trip. Is it? Is the growing fascination with Jesus a passing, adolescent infatuation? There are obvious fad aspects: Jesus shirts (JESUS is MY LORD) bumper stickers (SMILE, GOD LOVES YOU), posters, buttons (THE MESSIAH is THE MESSAGE) and, inevitably, a Jesus-People wristwatch. Some followers are affecting a Christ couture: white pants and tunics, Mexican-peasant style. There are de rigueur catch phrases: endless "Praise Gods" and "Bless Yous." There is even a "Jesus cheer"—"Give me a J, give me an E . . ." Rapidly catching on is the Jesus-People "sign," a raised arm with clenched fist, the index finger pointed heavenward, to indicate Jesus as the "one way" to salvation. "If it is a fad," says Evangelist Billy Graham, "I welcome it."

There are signs that the movement is something quite a bit larger than a theological Hula-Hoop, something more lasting than a religious Woodstock. It cuts across nearly all the social dividing lines, from crew cut to long hair, right to left, rich to poor. It shows considerable staying power: many who were in its faint beginnings in 1967 are still leading it. It has been powerful enough to divert many young people from serious drug addiction. Its appeal is ecumenical, attracting Roman Catholics and Jews, Protestants of every persuasion and many with no religion at all. Catholics visit Protestant churches with a new empathy, and Protestants find themselves chatting with nuns and openly enjoying Mass. "We are all brothers in the body of Christ," says a California Catholic lay leader, and he adds: "We are on the threshold of the greatest spiritual revival the U.S. has ever experienced."

Pentecostals and Millenarians

Spiritual revivals are, of course, a longstanding American tradition. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards led the first Great Awakening in the 1740s and there have been others since: the frontier camp meetings at the beginning of the 19th century, the great revival of the 1850s, and the Pentecostal explosion at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jesus revolution, like the others, has a flavor peculiarly American. Its strong Pentecostalism emphasizes such esoteric spiritual gifts as speaking in tongues and healing by faith. For many, there exists a firm conviction that Jesus' Second Coming is literally at hand. Proclaiming the imminent end of the world and Last Judgment like so many dread guards, some millenarians chart the signs of the Apocalypse with the aid of handbooks like *The Late Great Planet Earth*. They see smog and pollution prophesied in Isaiah; the taking of Old Jerusalem by the Jews, and the admission of ten nations into the Common Market are signs that the end is near.

The movement is apart from, rather than against, established religion; converts often speak disparagingly of the blandness or hypocrisy of their former churches, but others work comfortably as a supplementary, revitalizing force of change from within. The movement, in fact, is one of considerable flexibility and vitality, drawing from three vigorous spiritual streams that, despite differences in dress, manner and theology, effectively reinforce one another.

THE JESUS PEOPLE, also known as Street Christians or Jesus Freaks, are the most visible; it is they who have blended the counterculture and conservative religion. Many trace their beginnings to the 1967 flower era in San Francisco, but there were almost simultaneous stirrings in other areas. Some, but by no means all, affect the hippie style; others have forsworn it as part of their new lives.

THE STRAIGHT PEOPLE, by far the largest group, are mainly active in interdenominational, evangelical campus and youth movements. Once merely an arm of evangelical Protestantism, they are now more ecumenical—a force almost independent of the churches that spawned them. Most of them are Middle America, campus types: neatly coiffed hair and Sears, Roebuck clothes styles.

THE CATHOLIC PENTECOSTALS, like the Jesus People, emerged unexpectedly and dramatically in 1967. Publicly austere but privately ecstatic in their devotion to the Holy Spirit, they remain loyal to the church but unsettle some in the hierarchy. In a sense they are following the lead of mainstream Protestant Neo-Pentecostals, who have been leading charismatic renewal movements in their own churches for a decade.

Together, all three movements may number in the hundreds of thousands nationally, conceivably many more, but any figure is a guess. The Catholic Pentecostals, often meeting in the privacy of members' homes, may number 10,000, but some observers believe that they could easily be three times that. Those converted by the straight evangelicals generally wind up on established church rolls, but are likely to be in the hundreds of thousands; the evangelistic staffs alone account for more than 5,000 people. The Jesus People—surely many thousands—are the most difficult to count. They often cluster in communes or, as they prefer to call them, "Christian houses"; the Rev. Edward Plowman, historian of the movement, estimates that there are 600 across the U.S. There is no doubt about their growth: Evangelist David Hoyt moved from San Francisco to Atlanta only a year ago and now has three communes and a cadre of 70 evangelizing disciples there, and centers in three other Southeastern cities. Much of the movement's main strength, however, has been built where it started, along the West Coast.

Some of the manifestations there could command places in William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. R.D. Cronquist, for instance, was a carpenter until last July, dabbling on the side in ministerial work. Now the mustachioed, goateed Cronquist is the pastor of the Grace Fellowship Chapel, a windowless, corrugated shed on a hill in Imperial Beach, Calif. A drab shell, perhaps, but a pearl inside; as one 22-year-old girl put it, "the heaviest place I know to worship." Services include free-form "singing in the spirit," a mighty babble of moans, groans and cries against a background of organ music; "prophecies," in ersatz King James style; and long Cronquist sermons, complete with angels and demons.

Up the beach at Encinitas is a brand of Christianity that is pure California. Ed Wright, 26, owner of the Sunset Surf Shop and principal apostle of the Christian Surfers, tells how Jesus adds a special dimension to the sport. "It's so beautiful when you are with the Lord and catch a good ride. When you are piling out for the next one you just say 'Thank you Lord for being so good to us and for the good waves and the good vibes.'" Christ is the essential focus, though. Surfer Mike Wonder, a fellow convert, sought Christ after he found the perfect wave in Hawaii and it failed to bring him happiness.

Nothing except Christ makes waves at gatherings of Berkeley's Christian World Liberation Front, which was in the vanguard of the movement in the San Francisco Bay Area. CWLF Bible meetings are like an understanding embrace: the members sit naturally in a rough circle; a spaced-out speed freak crawls in, is casually accepted, kneels; a baby plays; the only black plucks a guitar, and the group swings easily into a dozen songs. The hat is passed with a new invitation: "If you have something to spare, give; if you need, take." Finally they rise, take one another's hands, and sing "We will walk with each other/ We will walk hand in hand/ And they'll know we are Christians by our love."

Spokane's Voice of Elijah spreads the spirit in large ways and small. When house members heard of a hungry old woman who had been cut from welfare, they took up a \$42 collection at the I Am coffee-house, left her groceries, cash and a message that read simply "from Jesus." The house reaches large groups through its hard-rock band, the Wilson McKinley, which recently helped draw 8,000 to a "Sweet Jesus Rock Concert" at Stanford University. The Jesus People almost lost the crowd when one evangelist told the collegians they should "abstain from sexual immorality, and that means abstain except in marriage. We're finding this is the last area people want to give up." There were no cheers but, astonishingly in the Age of Aquarius, no hoots either.

Music, the lingua franca of the young, has become the special medium of the Jesus movement. Godspell, a bright, moving musical written by students and based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, is a sell-out hit off-Broadway. The rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar, bound for Broadway next fall, is already a bestselling record album; at New York City's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church recently, a minister smilingly baptized a baby "In the name of the Father, the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ Superstar." Amazing Grace, Put Your Hand in the Hand and My Sweet Lord are top-40 hits, and Jesus-rock groups, most of them converts, roam the country under such names as Hope, Dove and The Joyful Noise.

Go Tell About Jesus

The sounds produced by the rock groups are not always good nor the lyrics always effective evangelism, but the best of the Jesus-rock music is both professionally and theologically solid. Larry Norman, probably the top solo artist in the field, attacks the occult in his album *Upon This Rock*: "Forget your hexagram/ You'll soon feel fine/ Stop looking at the stars/ You don't live under the signs." Many Jesus-rock

musicians commit their lives as well as their talent. Drummer Steve Hornyak, 30, of The Crimson Bridge, gave up a \$35,000 house, a Toronado, and a career as a school-band director when another Jesus musician challenged him to "go tell about Jesus." Scott Ross, 31, a former New York disk jockey, has become head of a Christian commune in Freeville, N.Y., the Love Inn. Ross still tapes a weekly show that he uses to promote Jesus music on standard stations.

A growing number of musical stars, including Johnny Cash and Eric Clapton, are among the Jesus movement converts. Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary has preached on the steps of Berkeley's Sproul Hall; Jeremy Spencer of Britain's Fleetwood Mac has joined the ultrarigid Children of God. Few are more zealous than Pat Boone; he has baptized more than 200 converts in his own swimming pool during the past year.

The revolutionary word is also spread by a growing, literally free Jesus press that now numbers some 50 newspapers across the country. Donations are apparently enough to print 65,000 copies of Right On! in Berkeley and 400,000 copies of the Hollywood Free Paper, the movement's largest. Now Berkeley's CWLF is hoping to start a Jesus news service. There is much to report, in all parts of the U.S. Items:

At First Baptist Church in Houston, youth-minded Pastor Bisagno, 37, brought in Evangelist Hoag to recruit the young in a week-long revival. Hoag traveled from school to school with his plea, and 11,000 young people stepped forward at Bisagno's church to declare themselves for Jesus. Now the first few pews at First Baptist are reserved for the youngsters. While the rest of the congregation mumble their amens, the kids punctuate Bisagno's sermons with yells of "Outta sight, man, bee-yoo-ti-ful."

In Chicago's Grant Park bandshell, Street Evangelist Arthur Blessitt last month warmed up a crowd of nearly 1,000 with a lusty Jesus cheer, then led them off on a parade through the Loop, gathering people as they went. "Chicago police, we love you!" they shouted to cops along the route. "Jesus loves you!" Blessitt also passed a box through the crowd, asking for a special contribution: drugs. The box came back filled with marijuana, pills and LSD; it was turned over to the flabbergasted cops. This month, Blessitt is really testing Jesus' power. He is in New York City for a three-month blitz among the pimps, prostitutes and porno shops of Times Square for which he hopes to recruit as many as 3,000 young helpers. So far he has had only one unnerving setback. A streetwalker told him that she had worn one of his bright red stickers (TURN ON TO JESUS) and "never had a better night."

On a cul-de-sac beach at Corona del Mar, Calif., the Rev. Chuck Smith recently held another of the mass baptisms that have made his Calvary Chapel at Santa Ana famous. Under a setting sun, several hundred converts waded into the cold Pacific, patiently waiting their turn for the rite. On the cliffs above, hundreds more watched. Most of the baptized were young, tanned and casual in cut-off blue jeans, pullovers and even an occasional bikini. A freshly dunked teenager, water streaming from her tie-dyed shirt, threw her arms around a woman and cried, "Mother, I love you!" A teen-age drug user who had been suffering from recurring unscheduled trips suddenly screamed, "My flashbacks are gone!" As the baptisms ended, the crowd slowly climbed a narrow stairway up the cliff, singing a moving Lord's Prayer in the twilight.

At Novato, Calif., the new Solid Rock house is perhaps typical of the communal Christian houses. Though none is quite the same as another, they all insist that premarital sex and drugs are out, and many have quite strict rules: up early, to bed by ten or eleven, assigned chores, a certain number of mandatory Bible readings or prayer gatherings. Yet they generally are happy places. "It is a gentle place, this Solid Rock," reports TIME Correspondent Karsten Prager. "The voices are quiet, the words that recur are 'love' and 'blessing' and 'the Lord' and 'sharing' and 'peace' and 'brothers and sisters.'" Twelve "brothers and sisters" live in Solid Rock, six men, four women, two babies, the children of unmarried mothers. The men of the commune work at house painting and construction to meet the bills, but the main business of the house is to order the lives within it around Christ. One of the mothers describes the success of that effort simply: "When I first came to the house, I didn't know Jesus. But it turned out that I grew. I guess I trust now."

TV and Grass

The path to the movement, in or out of communes, is often littered with drugs. The Way, an 18-year-old, offbeat and minor theological group now virtually taken over and greatly expanded by the Jesus People, has two staunch supporters in Wichita, Kans.: prominent Lawyer Dale Fair and his wife, who got involved when a Way evangelist helped their daughter off drugs. One of the San Francisco pioneers, Ted Wise, has been so successful with drug cures that he now has a new clinic in Menlo Park. Washington, D.C., movement leader Denny Flanders tells drug users: "You can use drugs after Jesus, but you won't need them. If you become Christians, this is what has to happen." Convert Connie Sue McCartney, 21, of Louisiana, describes how "the devil came to me" and tempted her to return to speed. She had kept some in hand just in case, but she was up to the temptation: "I took it, flushed it down the John in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." Former Houston Speed Freak Terry Vincent says: "Man, God turned me around from the darkness to the light. That's all I know. That is all I want to know."

Drug cures are not the only attraction for conversion. There are a disproportionate number of Roman Catholics among the Jesus People, attracted by the movement's direct approach to Christ. Many Jews have also joined, claiming that they are not quitting but fulfilling their Judaism. Few spiritual Odysseys, though, are as circuitous as that of Christopher Pike, 21, the younger son of the late Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike. In 1967 he began combining marijuana highs with nonstop television watching: "TV and grass, that was my god," he says. Then came acid,

Eastern religion and Bible reading —while stoned. Recalls Chris: "One day I saw Ted Wise speaking in Sproul Plaza at Berkeley. He was the first intelligent Christian I ever saw." Soon thereafter, he made a commitment: "I just said 'Jesus Christ. I'm going to give myself to you and nobody else.' Nothing happened, but I knew. I knew he had reached down, and I was saved." Now Chris lives in a trailer near Reno, studying religious books and working on a library of religious tapes. "The old Chris Pike died back there," says the Bishop's son. "I'm a new creature."

Many conversions seem to be like Pike's: slow, but finally confident turnarounds rather than lightning-bolt illuminations. Yet some do come suddenly. Marsha Daigle, Catholic and a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, was deeply distraught at the deaths of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy. One day she opened a Bible and suddenly "knew Christ was my personal Saviour. It was the last thing I expected."

Gospel Crusaders

Another major part of the Jesus movement is the highly organized, interdenominational youth movement of the established churches—a sort of person-to-person counterpart of mass-rally evangelism. Though they have been around for decades, supported by local congregations and generous private contributors, they are finding a huge new growth in the Jesus revolution.

The biggest of the straight groups is Campus Crusade for Christ, 20-year-old soul child of former Businessman Bill Bright. He still means business: this year's budget is \$12 million, and by next month he will have 3,000 full-time staffers on 450 campuses. Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship is a different breed of campus evangelism—more intellectual, more socially concerned—but it has no lack of gospel zeal. It conducted a missionary convention at the University of Illinois last December that drew 12,000, probably the largest college religious meeting in North American history. Young Life, founded in 1941, reaches its audience with 1,300 clubs, U.S. and foreign. Youth for Christ began business a few years later with a lanky young evangelist named Billy Graham; it is now in 2,700 high schools.

Extraordinary Love

Few groups have had more impact than has one man, Assemblies of God Minister David Wilkerson, whose growing movement began with a single incident: his dramatic conversion of Brooklyn Teen-Age Gang Lord Nicky Cruz in 1958. Cruz himself is now an evangelist. Wilkerson's evangelical and antidrug organization, Teen Challenge, has 53 centers. His book about Cruz's conversion, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, has sold 6,000,000 copies; a movie version, starring Pat Boone as Wilkerson, will be released nationwide July 1. The book had an unusual side effect: its Pentecostal flavor helped launch the

Roman Catholic Pentecostal movement.

Catholic Pentecostalism? The name is an apparent contradiction in terms: an austere and ritualized church coupled with a movement characterized in its early years by unleashed emotionalism—eye-rolling ecstasies, shouting, jumping, even rolling on the floor. Classic Pentecostalism has since toned down markedly, but it can still put even an unwary Catholic into theological shock. Jerry Harvey, who helped start the growing Catholic Pentecostal group in the San Diego area, once invited some Protestant Pentecostals "to show us how to do it their way. The poor nuns who were there actually turned white."

The Catholic establishment in the U.S. has not blanched, but it has not turned red with enthusiasm, even though Pope John XXIII himself called upon the Holy Spirit to "renew your wonders in this, our day, as by a new Pentecost." An inquiry conducted in the U.S. for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops did find, however, that Pentecostal experience often "leads to a better understanding of the role the Christian plays in the Church." The evidence supports that finding. One Los Angeles priest says that he has stayed in the priesthood because of the "tremendous peace" he found in the renewal movement. Dr. James McFadden, 40, dean of Michigan's pioneering School of Natural Resources, is a Catholic for whom religion "never had an experiential dimension. It was intellectual, the distant Christ of history." But he found "extraordinary" love among the 300 Pentecostals of the university's Word of God community. "Very few people live as though there really is a God who sent his only son to be a man."

The Pentecostalist fervor has been growing rapidly. From its beginnings at Duquesne University in 1967, where Wilkerson's book was one of the influences, the movement spread to Notre Dame and Ann Arbor, which have been major forces in it ever since. But there are sizable numbers elsewhere. On Trinity Sunday last week, 450 Catholic Pentecostals held a "Day of Renewal" at St. Theresa Catholic Church in San Diego; this weekend 3,000 Catholic Pentecostals from all over the country are expected to gather at Notre Dame for their annual national conference.

Despite the evidence of enriched religiosity, there is enough in the Catholic Pentecostalist movement to account for the hierarchy's reserve. It is casually ecumenical. Its speaking in tongues—glossolalia, a form of prayer that is usually a babbling non-language—is done quietly, but it is done. The Pentecostals have the unhappy faculty of offending both liberals and conservatives in Catholicism: liberals resent their insistent orthodox theology, conservatives their communal lifestyle.

Passive v. Ecstatic

The confident conviction of the Jesus revolution (we have the answer; the rest of the world is wrong) irritates many, whatever branch of the movement it radiates from. Dan Herr, publisher of the progressive Catholic bimonthly *The Critic*, calls Catholic Pentecostalism "spiritual chic." Some who turn off may be expressing the natural and inevitable resentment of the passive believer against the ecstatic believer. In his magisterial study *Enthusiasm*, the late Catholic scholar Msgr. Ronald Knox described the attitude of the religious enthusiast toward the world at large: "He will have no weaker brethren who plod and stumble, who (if the truth must be told) would like to have a foot in either world, whose ambition is to qualify, not to excel. He has before his eyes a picture of the early Church, visibly penetrated with supernatural influences; and nothing else will serve him for a model."

Others criticize the absolutism of the Jesus revolution and the complete dependency it creates in some of its adherents. Jean Houston, director of the

Foundation for Mind Research in New York City, finds that while "the Jesus trip gives them rich expectations and more rigid values, they also suffer a narrowing of conceptual vision. They become obsessed." She cites the case of one girl who turned to the Jesus movement after a severe family crisis. "She escaped her guilt and horror, but it had the effect of a psychological and social lobotomy. Where once she had been superbly inquisitive, she now could relate things only in terms of her religion—but she had a focal point for all her energy." Sociologist Andrew Greeley calls Catholic Pentecostalism the "most vital movement in Catholicism right now," but warns that it could become "just pure emotion, even a form of hysteria." The Rev. George Peters of the United Presbyterian Church says of the Jesus People: "I see dangers. This biblical literalism. The kids quote verses without understanding them to prove a point. I thought we'd outgrown that. I'd like to see some kind of form."

The established churches may not have the luxury of choosing the youngsters' style. Whatever the excesses or shortcomings of the Jesus revolution, organized religion cannot afford to lose the young in numbers or enthusiasm. In parts of the movement, of course, the churches are not losing them; indeed, they are gaining zealots. Catholic Pentecostals and straight evangelicals are already having an effect; if organized religion embraced the Jesus People as well, the greening effect on the churches could be considerable. Theologian Martin Marty of the University of Chicago Divinity School feels that the Jesus People, frustrated by a complex society that will not yield to their single-minded devotion, may well disband in disarray. But even Marty says: "Five years from now you may have some better Presbyterians because of their participation in the Jesus movement." And the Rev. Robert Terwilliger of New York City's Trinity Institute says longingly: "There is a revival of religion everywhere—except in the church."

Sometimes the church is not at fault. When young people began to come into the smoothly running, upper-middle-class congregation at La Jolla (Calif.) Lutheran Church, Pastor Charles Donhowe started evening meetings for them. Soon Donhowe had two congregations, the regular Sunday-at-11 variety and the new Christians in the evening. A minister for nine years, Donhowe was in effect converted by the youngsters to unstructured Christianity. He resigned and took his evening congregation with him. Some of his older parishioners joined the secession. Now known simply as "Bird Rock," they meet in Bird Rock Elementary School in La Jolla. If Bird Rock is an omen, it would be an ironic one: the dove, after all, is the ancient symbol of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus built his own church upon a rock.

The Fact of Faith

There are better omens in the actions of clergymen like Houston's John Bisagno, even when they are uncertain of the full meaning and the life span of the Jesus revolution. Says Bisagno: "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 of our lifetime." Canon Edward N. West of Manhattan's Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine has also made his church a haven for religious enthusiasts whom he sometimes does not fully comprehend. He says: "There is no place left where they can go and sort themselves out unless the churches are open. They do an enormous amount of praying, sometimes in the lotus position. One young man comes in and plays the bass recorder. He and God have some relationship over a bass recorder. I don't understand it, but that's his thing."

In a world filled with real and fancied demons for the young, the form their faith takes may be less important than the fact that they have it. Ronald Knox, who set out in *Enthusiasm* to expose the heresies of religious enthusiasts, concluded by praising their spirit. "How nearly we thought we could do without St. Francis, without St. Ignatius," he ended his work. "Men will not live without vision; that moral we would do well to carry away with us from contemplating, in so many strange forms, the record of the visionaries." *Enthusiasm* may not be the only virtue but, God knows, apathy is none at all.