

Were the Jesus People Pentecostals?

A Review of the Evidence

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Almost forty years have passed since the movement known as the Jesus People¹ first made its presence felt on the streets of Los Angeles, San Francisco and other major West Coast cities in the USA and, then by diffusion, to impact some of the smaller cities and towns in North America.² This paper considers the nature of the short-lived movement and its historical contribution to Christian revivalism by over-viewing the rather fragmented documentation provided by extant surveys, along with further contextual information and evidence provided by more recent sources.

The emphasis of this paper will be upon the question: was the Jesus People movement Pentecostal? Such an endeavour will involve, firstly, considering the Pentecostal influences upon the movement at its inception. Secondly, an analysis is made of the major groupings within the movement as it developed, especially their organizational forms. Thirdly, a more detailed consideration of the theology and cultural orientation of a number of its larger constituencies is offered. Finally, the paper will examine the dissipation of the movement, asking: what happened to the Jesus People? In short, the paper will explore, where possible, the religious allegiances of the movement's adherents after its disintegration. This aspect plausibly throws further light on the nature of the Jesus People. The paper concludes with the appraisal that while there was a considerable impact on the Jesus People by way of 'classical' Pentecostal teachings and praxis, the movement proved to be a hybrid form of neo-Pentecostalism given its divergent expressions.

THE JESUS PEOPLE: FAMILY RESEMBLANCE OR THEMATIC VARIATION?

As a generic designation for a many-faceted and much fragmented expression of revivalistic Christianity, the different strands of the Jesus People (hereafter JP) constituted a 'movement' in the

true social movement sense for a short period of time. Largely emerging in the USA, the JP mobilized a sizeable number of young people into a variety of groupings with a distinct religious disposition to which a political agenda was often associated. The matter of its Pentecostal leanings was always compounded by the fact that the movement was extremely diverse in its expressions and, to some extent at least, was its paltry theology.³ In short, the ‘Spirit-led’ orientation was frequently at the expense of theological sophistication.⁴ The Gospel message was stripped to its bare essentials and advanced with an uncompromising vigour. Much was symbolized by the movement’s slogan ‘One Way!’ – the sign of the finger beside the cross pointing upwards – displayed on bumper stickers, posters, books and in the context of worship.

The JP movement also displayed discernible (counter) cultural attributes. Otherwise known as ‘Jesus freaks’⁵ – a term which Horton Davies defined as ‘those who were freaked out on marijuana or LSD and who are now freaked out on Jesus’ (Davies 1972, 15) – the movement, which gathered momentum in the early 1970s, was one of the most frequently discussed religious manifestations in the USA. This was not only with reference to it as possibly a branch of Pentecostalism, but the complex world of so-called New Religious Movements which arose during the same period and plausibly for some of the same reasons.

The JP attracted a measure of academic interest regarding its origins, roots, organizational orientation, internal dynamics and social composition.⁶ A general appraisal in the scholarly literature indicates that the roots of the JP were not only diverse, but reflected cultural changes in North American society observable throughout the 1960s. Precisely what the movement constituted by way of its religious temper proved to be a matter of some conjecture. The JP movement, because of its revivalistic nature, has been compared to the American First Great Awakening of the nineteenth century – one of the periodic shifts in religious thinking that has occurred throughout American history. There were identifiable similarities in Biblical interpretation and an emphasis on the Holy Spirit, spiritual experience, and post-millenarian eschatology (Bodling 1986). By way of a more contemporary contrast, the movement is frequently considered to have been part of what has come to be known as the Fourth and latest Great Awakening that began in the 1960s and 1970s and marked not just the resurgence of the evangelical/fundamentalist constituency in the USA, but the formation of numerous New Religious Movements.⁷

In broad terms, the designation ‘Jesus People’ was repeatedly used to describe young converts to a vibrant form of revivalism that also displayed attributes of fairly traditional forms of Pentecostalism (Stones 1978). Certainly, many strands of the JP adopted the core tenets of Pentecostalism, especially Baptism in the Spirit and embraced the charismata, although there was some evidence of some factions in the movement that eschewed such practices as glossolalia (Bodling 1986).⁸ However, the apparent hybrid nature of the JP movement raises questions regarding the real extent to which it fitted in the Pentecostal camp.

As suggest below, at least some of the evidence suggests that the movement was directly influenced by, or at least inspired by, elements drawn from ‘classical’ Pentecostalism. However, this conjecture is itself problematic. To be sure, certain religious attributes united Pentecostal believers in diverse places across the world. For the first two decades after its emergence ‘Pentecostal’ was a term describing someone who had experienced a particular type of spirituality marked by the baptism in the Spirit and possession of the gifts of the Spirit. Yet, Pentecostalism was not merely an expression of evangelicalism with the addition of tongues, nor a form of revivalistic extremism or ultra-fundamentalism. It was a fresh way of experiencing Christianity and, as Nichol (1966) points out, this meant that there was in reality no normative Pentecostalism given that it had always tended towards extreme factionalism. The rapid growth of the movement, with its stress on spiritual experience rather than codified dogma, always displayed a considerable variety of worship patterns, cultural attitudes, ecclesiastical structures and methods of evangelism.

Despite the diverse nature of classical Pentecostalism, even by the mid-twentieth century, at a time when the movement had settled down to form its own denominations, the JP found no initial endorsement. Although it displayed Pentecostal leanings, the movement was by no means accepted at the onset in the mainstream and established Pentecostal camp. Nor did it particularly endear itself to the wider evangelical community. The JP were only slowly recognized by the classical Pentecostals (Carr 1973) and were made palatable to the evangelical world at large with the acceptance by the renowned evangelist Billy Graham who saw the conversion of this young, culturally wayward contingency as a ‘true’ move of God.⁹

The JP clearly gained greater acceptance in the expanding world of ‘neo-Pentecostalism’ or what became known as the Charismatic Renewal movement that was chiefly associated with a revivalistic form of Pentecostalism within the mainstream denominations. Early accounts such as

that provided by Rex Davis (1978, 131), along with Richards and Reddy (1980), equated the JP with the wider Renewal movement because of the common attempt to bring a spiritual resurgence throughout the wider Christian Church. This claim is perhaps further justified by the observable influence on the JP by para-church organizations that were frequently derived from classical Pentecostal constituencies but had significantly departed from the ‘classical’ tradition, by way of their theology and praxis, as to warrant the designation ‘neo-Pentecostal’. This pointed to the fact that the charismatics were also represented by more than one ‘stream’. By the late 1960s, with the addition of the Californian JP movement, the neo-Pentecostal world had suddenly become much larger.

The JP movement, displaying at least some of the expressions and ethos of the counter-culture, joined the ranks of the renewalist charismatics but not their churches. Added to the latter came the followers of new itinerant ministries that discovered the virtues of the mass media, mostly from the USA, as well as independent ‘house churches’. What united these ‘streams’, as Adler (1974) suggests, was an experience of God as a ‘living, personal reality’ through aspects of the charismata such as healing and prophecy. Hence, in this appraisal the JP was merely part of the neo-Pentecostal movement despite its polymorphous nature.

If the classical Pentecostals were cautious in their approach, the news of what was happening among the JP in California enthralled North American and European charismatics with whom they shared more of a cultural overlap. The charismatics were inspired by the idea that God was working with the ‘down and outs’ and beginning revival in their midst. Most neo-Pentecostals in the USA were quick to affirm and support the movement because of their charismatic leanings, while news of the emerging movement caused great excitement in popular charismatic magazines which ran stories of how God was reaching out to the young generation and those lost to the excesses of the hippie culture.¹⁰ For at least some charismatics the news that God was touching the seemingly unreachable was indication of an even greater revival to come.

Like the earlier Pentecostals, the JP, or at least many of its factions, embraced the characteristic doctrine of the Baptism in the Spirit, and placed an emphasis on the charismata and the present powerful work of the Spirit. These were core doctrines that other neo-Pentecostals were to appropriate from their older kin, along with millenarian teachings and the belief in the reality of demonic powers. In addition, there were certain cultural aspects held in common which focused on

spontaneous and joyful forms of worship, alongside considerable congregational participation in church life. However, despite the clear overlaps between the classical Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals, they were at least to be differentiated on the historical time-line. In short, they were two distinct movements emerging in contrasting socio-cultural contexts of the early and mid twentieth century respectively.

From an early stage the identifying attributes of the charismata were open to interpretation and subject to a good measure of theological debate by those in the Charismatic Renewal movement. To be ‘charismatic’ could merely mean being open to the supernatural through an unmediated experience of the Holy Spirit. The understanding of spiritual baptism was also interpreted in a wide variety of ways. This ranged from an almost Pentecostal ‘second stage’ understanding, to a perspective that rejected any notion of a second work of grace. Moreover, across the denominations some charismatic renewalists regarded speaking in tongues as an essential ‘sign’ of spiritual baptism, while others did not view it as an imperative.

There were, furthermore, discernible cultural attributes of neo-Pentecostalism that followed the very modernist impulses that the classical Pentecostals rejected. They were also to be embraced by the JP. Many of such inclinations were initially counter-cultural but subsequently became mainstream. The worship style followed a contemporary pattern of expressive freedom with middle-of-the-road rock and ‘folk’ style and modern anthems. It thus soon became clear that the early charismatics, including the JP, were different from the classical Pentecostals. Unlike the older Pentecostals, the Charismatic movement flowed on the tides of rising social and economic mobility and found its home among the middle-classes.

Other cultural aspects of neo-Pentecostalism also marked an adaptation to the relentless wave of secularity that had been there from an early stage of the movement. Neitz (1978) suggests that there has occurred a post-war affluence and new leisure for the masses which has opened up the possibility of widespread participation in the search for meaning and personal fulfilment. Thus the middle-class healing techniques of the neo-Pentecostals also appeared to be a far cry from the cultural overtones that have long dominated classical Pentecostalism. In short, this was all, historically speaking, radically different from traditional Pentecostalism in the USA which was regarded as the ‘religion of the dispossessed’ and socially marginalized (Anderson 1980; Pope 1942).

The fact that several commentators regarded the JP as explicitly or implicitly ‘neo’ rather than classical Pentecostal in form suggests that the movement, by most definition, also departed in major respects from older (‘classical’) varieties of Pentecostalism. In terms of theology and praxis (as much as they were discernible), if not their more pronounced counter-cultural style, the majority of the strands of JP movement, with their fair contingent of middle-class young people, appeared to be positioned, to a large extent, in the neo-Pentecostal camp. This orientation was never systematically or comprehensively addressed in the scholarly literature of the period.

Given the debates that arose at the time of the emergence of the JP, there is scope, some four decades later, to consider the evidence again with hindsight. This is especially in the light of broad developments within the world of Pentecostalism since the late 1960s – early 1970s. The movement is an increasingly divergent one and has come to display certain dynamics. Perhaps above all, as David Martin has explored, given its ecstatic nature and lack of doctrinal sophistication, Pentecostalism displays the remarkable ability to enculturate itself to localized socio-cultural conditions across the globe (Martin 1990). Its theological flexibility, emphasis on the experiential, and its appeal to a sense of community in times of rapid social and economic change at least partly explains its wide-spread appeal. In that sense, as Corten and Marshall-Fratini succinctly put it, ‘each society, each group invests Pentecostalism with its own meaning’ (2001, 17) This has led to the movement’s increasing diversity which would seem to confirm Cecil Robeck’s asserted that on a global level there is now a diverse range of ‘Pentecostalisms’ (Robeck 1999).

This raises the conjecture that the JP was merely one variation, and a short-lived one at that, on a Pentecostal theme with some family resemblance to the Pentecostal movement of the first half of the twentieth century but more observably neo-Pentecostal in orientation. Recognising these developments, the JP can perhaps be put in clearer relief and justifies Lyra’s (1973) early appraisal of the movement: that it must be regarded as a distinct phenomenon in its own right not only because of its distinct cultural context, but because it constituted a mixture of theological fundamentalism and charismatic spirituality.

ORGANIZATION EXPRESSIONS OF THE JP MOVEMENT

The organizational structures of the JP movement often tended to be weak, although it was capable of taking more authoritarian and sectarian forms. There were certainly ‘streams’ within the JP movement that displayed aspects of Troeltsch’s (1931) well-known typology of the ‘sect’ and observable among the early Pentecostals.¹¹ This was certainly true of the community-based JP factions that proved to be well-integrated collectives, displayed clear boundaries drawn with mainstream society and a strong commitment to the collective and its belief system, and a claimed monopoly of religious ‘truth’.

Further grouping appeared more cultist in form by way of Stark and Bainbridge’s (1980) typology which, in essence, constitutes a definition and account of the New Religious Movements that arose from the 1960s. It is clear, however, that the JP did not fit all the sociological criteria of the ‘cult’. For Stark and Bainbridge, cults are ‘cultural innovators’ that bring completely new beliefs and practices. Alternatively, others may constitute cultural importations derived from an entirely different social and religious context. While many strands of the JP were not ‘innovators’ in such radical respects, they did bring together fairly conventional modes of Pentecostalism with counter-cultural forms at a particular time and place. Others, perhaps most notably the Children of God, displayed Pentecostal elements but so departed from historical Christianity as to approximate the cultist typology. That said, such cultural innovation, as explored below, was generally rather limited and possibly provided a means by which those disaffected with the ‘hippie’ way of life found their way back into mainstream North American life.

The tendency towards either sectarianism or cultist innovation was less observable among some JP factions indicating, in turn, that the movement was a multi-faceted one. Some elements took the expression of the ‘church’ and a number of them sprung out of more established forms of Pentecostalism or were led by Pentecostal-trained pastors. Many of such churches were nonetheless prepared to be culturally or at least strategically innovating if for no other reason than the conventional imperative of Pentecostal mission. Among the youth orientated JP churches were the simply named Church in Los Angeles, the Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, the Alamo Christian Centre, and the Maranatha Churches. Perhaps the two most significant by way of their impact and endurance, however, were Hope Chapel and Calvary Chapel.

There is little doubt that some of the established churches who undertook evangelizing outreaches to the hippie generation were of Pentecostal persuasion. Hope Chapel was established by Ralph Moore who founded a congregation at Hermosa Beach, California. On taking up his pastorship, Moore reconnoitred the local area and discerned that no neighbourhood church had instigated a mission for the young or single adults. He thus orientated the church to the needs of these social groupings to be found in the radical counter-cultural environment of its proximity. In his book *Let Go of the Ring*, Moore describes how he stood in his three-piece suit, on the third Sunday after the church's creation, giving a sermon to a group of 'bikers' and others drawn from the hippie counter-culture. It was such social groupings which initially formed the backbone of what was to become one of the largest Californian churches.

Moore was once a pastor of a Foursquare church in Oregon (Hope Chapel remains in the International Foursquare Church fold), before taking up a pastorate in Manhattan. Hope Chapel seems to have grown rapidly when Moore persuaded a Christian philanthropist to fund the purchase of 20,000 copies of David Wilkerson's renowned book *The Cross and the Switchblade* which Moore distributed with an advertisement for the church attached, reading 'In Need of Help: Call Hope Chapel'.

Of similar ilk was Calvary Chapel that was founded in 1965 in Redondo Beach, California, by Charles ('Chuck') Smith along with a group of a dozen people who initially met for Bible study. Smith was formerly the pastor of a small Foursquare church in Redondo Beach, California and later came to be regarded as an elder statesman of neo-Pentecostalism. For two years they hired a Lutheran church for services, before buying a school building. By 1971, under Smith's tutelage, hundreds, if not thousands, were attending meetings every night of the week. Most meetings were at that time held in a large circus tent on a vacant lot a block away from the church in order to accommodate some sixteen hundred attendees. On Saturday nights a 'Jesus rock' concert accompanied the evening service (Ellwood 1973, 73).

The Calvary congregation in Costa Mesa, California, reached national prominence as a primary place of outreach during the JP revival of the early 1970s. Calvary Chapel's subsequent growth could be attributed to its openness towards a variety of young people in the counter-culture of southern California and by ministering to hippies and drug addicts. The baptisms of hundreds of people held every two months on the shores of the ocean, instigated by the church, became

practically synonymous with the JP movement in the US national media. Many attended the mass baptisms with friends, deciding on the spur of the moment to enter ‘the waters’, although there was no systematic preparation or follow-up of those baptized. This symbolized Calvary Chapel’s refusal of formal requirements, lists or certificates. Nonetheless, the church claims to have made over two thousand converts as a result of its outreach at this time.¹²

There was also another notable Pentecostal-inspired presence among the JP in California that took the form of congregations which were known for their more sectarian leanings. In the 1930s and 1940s Watchman Nee established hundreds of churches in China based on what he believed to be the strictly authoritarian, patriarchal and hierarchical New Testament model.¹³ The theological influence of Nee went much further than his own circle in his native country China and touched many in other nations. Nee was himself influenced by Jessie Penn-Lewis – a leading figure in the Welsh revival (1904), as well as- Robert Govet, G. H. Pember, John Nelson Darby and many others who could not be described as ‘Pentecostal’. Although he believed in speaking in tongues, Nee laid less emphasis on the practice and in his book *God’s Works*, he claimed that speaking in tongues was a gift only for clergymen’s children.¹⁴

Embracing an international missionary endeavour, Nee’s church disciples established similar congregations in China and other countries. Many of those originally founded in North America were short-lived, although several survived on the West Coast for a number of years. The Los Angeles church was re-established in 1962 in a fresh location with a new membership. Its Chinese congregation was thus geographically well-placed to welcome the influx of young people of a seemingly lost generation of the hippie age. This particular church witnessed by means of impressive parades of more than a thousand people distinguished by their white garments and carrying of large banners. With a group of ‘elders’, rather than paid ministers, it could claim 600 members in the early 1970s.

Not all congregations with a heavy input of JP were to be found in California. For instance, the Belmont Church of Christ, which originated in Nashville, Tennessee, saw a tremendous resurgence of interest in Jesus among the hippies, the street people and the unchurched college students in the early 1970s. In 1971 a young pastor was ejected from a local college after ministering to some students implicated in a drug seizure on campus. This minister, Don Finto, moved to an ailing old inner city church on ‘Music Row’ between the public housing and several universities. By 1971, the

congregation had dropped to about 75 elderly members. The church had mainstream roots, but all that changed when hippies began to attend and a ministry was instigated for prostitutes and drug addicts. Within a year or two the fellowship grew to hundreds and the Koinonia Coffee House was opened by Bob and Peggy Hughey. As a non-denominational church, the Belmont congregation at the time of its involvement with the JP embraced the Charismatic Renewal movement that was underway from the mid 1960s rather than direct classical Pentecostal influences.

PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The great majority of JP groupings were loosely organized. Among those with a greater measure of organization, apart from the few congregational-based expressions, were a range of para-church ministries such as the Last Days Ministries, Christ is the Answer Ministries and the Holy Ghost Repair Shop.¹⁵ These ministries were deliberately established to reach out to the West Coast counter-culture generation in much the same way as Hope Chapel and Calvary Chapel. A good number of such ministries were Pentecostal in orientation, inspired by Pentecostal influences, or had direct or tenuous links with classical or neo-Pentecostal organizations. Not all of the early outreaches to the Californian counter-culture were, however, overtly Pentecostal. Perhaps the first locus of street Christianity which took a counter-culture tone was a small storefront ‘missionary crash pad’ in 1967, the Salt Company Coffee House, in Hollywood under the auspices of the mainstream Hollywood Presbyterian Church.

Others were more of a Pentecostal disposition. Last Days Ministry was established by Keith Green,¹⁶ a contemporary American gospel singer, songwriter and musician. Abandoning his involvement in drug use, Eastern religion, astrology, and mysticism he converted to Christianity. In 1975, the Greens began an evangelizing programme in the suburbs of Los Angeles, in the San Fernando Valley. In 1977, this outreach was officially named Last Days Ministries. With a mission to down and outs and hippies, the ministry relocated from the San Fernando Valley to a 40-acre plot of land in Garden City, Texas, in 1979 and formed a community near Lindale, Texas. Within a few years, the Last Days Ministries purchased additional acreage, bringing the total to one-hundred forty acres.

In 1978, Last Days Ministries began publishing the *Last Days Newsletter*. At the peak of its popularity, the publication was sent out to over 300,000 people worldwide. The magazine featured articles by Green and his wife Melody as well as reprinted works of classic Christian authors such as Charles Finney, John Wesley, and William Booth. To these were added the contributions of contemporary authors Christian Leonard Ravenhill, Winkey Pratney and the Pentecostal folklore figure, David Wilkerson. In 1979 the Greens increasingly became involved in the growing Vineyard movement that they initially encountered in 1973.

Also displaying Pentecostal influences was the Milwaukee Jesus People Discipleship School, under the directorship of Jim Palosaari, which could claim approximately 200 disciples. Along with his wife, Palosaari was originally connected with Linda Meisner's Jesus People Army (see below). At that time Palosaari was called to minister throughout Europe and the Milwaukee Jesus People Discipleship School was divided into four groups. Jim Palosaari's faction (The Jesus Family) settled in England. The second group became Jesus People USA, originally lead by J. W. Herrin who also had close connections with Linda Messiner. The third group was lead by Frank Bass, a Duluth Christian who kept a small number for JP Milwaukee's 'Home Base', which served as a coordinating center. The fourth group lead by Bill Lowery enlisted approximately one hundred of the youngest disciples into his tent ministry. From 1973 to 1975 the CITA Tent Ministry travelled from city to city all throughout the United States utilizing trucks, buses and cars and living in tents. It stills continues today as an international ministry, although in more of a traditional evangelical vein.

A final example of Pentecostal inspired para-church organization of the JP was the evangelistic activities of Christ is the Answer Crusades which grew from the grass roots of the JP movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s through the activities of evangelistic minister Bill Lowery and his wife Sara. In the late 1960s and early 1970s they were preaching the Gospel with a very small group of Christians utilizing a tent and travelling from city to city supported originally by the Pentecostal denomination, the Assembly of God.

JP COMMUNES

Outside of church orientated and para-church constituencies the mainstay of the JP's collective life focused on a range of community-based groups and it was this expression that displayed the more sectarian characteristics which could be found in the movement. Many of these 'intentional communities' shared the belief that true commitment required a life of perfection and disengagement from both the mainstream and counter-culture. This was perceived as best achieved through the creation of a new sub-society in which all members shared the same conviction. In many respects they paralleled not only more secular, counter-cultural attempts at experimental communalism, but the proliferation of the largely short-lived collectives in the Charismatic Renewal movement.

Of the JP community-based factions, one of the best known was Mansion Messiah, affiliated with Calvary Chapel, and located in a large old house on a mostly commercial street in Costa Mesa. Calvary Chapel had initially established three other communes, of which the best known was probably Philadelphia House on the Beach. Also typical was Bethnal Tabernacle, Redondo Beach, which constituted a network of tightly knit communities under the ministership of Lyle Steenis. Bethnal Tabernacle was originally founded shortly after World War II as an independent Pentecostal mission and had long witnessed to those who found themselves living on the streets.

Of a somewhat different ilk was the Living Word Fellowship (hereafter LWF) founded by Bobbi Morris which was located in a modest suburb of San Francisco. Morris had formally been a member of fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches. Her teachings advanced both an apocalyptic separation from the world and a search for an immediate religious ecstatic mysticism. This orientation was supplemented by an ecclesiology which drew much of its inspiration from Watchman Nee. In the commune males and females lived apart with even conversation between the sexes, except in groups, forbidden, as was drugs, drinking and social dancing. The LWF came to be one of the most controversial of the JP constituencies because of its cultist leanings, as did The Alamo Foundation and the Way International due to their authoritarian leadership and controversial lifestyles.

Tony and Sue Alamo established the communal life for some young people under close supervision in Los Angeles and espoused a harsh and polemical damnation message. Their

Christian Foundation, commencing with the financial help of the Pentecostal para-church organization the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (hereafter FGBMFI), worked chiefly among street people and specialized in problems of drug dependency. Tony Alamo became a well-known evangelist who, after a radical conversion to Christianity, founded what is now called Tony Alamo Christian Ministries, which later established its headquarters in Dyer (Crawford County).

According to Alamo, while he was in a meeting at a Beverly Hills investment firm, Jesus came to him and told him to preach the Second Coming of Christ. After both he and his wife converted to Christianity, they established the Music Square Church and began a Hollywood street ministry, passing out tracts and preaching especially to drug addicts, alcoholics, and prostitutes. Their ministry was part of the JP movement in their call for spiritual transformation and an uncompromising allegiance to Christ. Communal living was a staple of the Music Square Church. The church quickly expanded its holdings, buying several businesses and establishing a compound in nearby Sausalito. Members usually lived in a commune and worked at an Alamo-owned business, turning over much of their salaries to the church.

What is considered the first community of the fledgling JP movement was the House of Acts established by Ted Wise and his wife. Wise was a student at the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (associated with the Southern Baptist Convention) in nearby Mill Valley. Other early missions included the Living Room, a coffeehouse, which opened in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Though other evangelical groups made previous attempts within the region, the Living Room marked the first instance where indigenous hippies evangelized their own peers. These new converts regarded the Bible as a literal guide-book and penchant for experimental living. Inspired by the accounts that the early Christians had sold their possessions and lived together in community, the members of Living Room followed suit. They were to be joined by the JP evangelist Lonnie Frisbee who went on to begin his own hippie outreach. Along with the Living Room, his group's activities became a model for other JP communities. Frisbee and his wife, in 1968, also kept preaching engagements at the growing outreach of Calvary Chapel – once more indicating the inter-related networks among the JP that, to some extent at least, brought together Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal factions.

Beginning in 1971, Christ is the Answer took the concept of Christian community in a unique direction - that of the travelling ministry. Originally comprised of former hippies, musicians and artists, this mobile group featured Christian rock music, theatrical presentations, and discipleship preaching underneath a giant tent. Their traveling festivals, with more than a tinge of Pentecostal evangelism, were held in cities throughout the USA and Europe. CITA's *New Manna* national street paper was cutting-edge with its challenging editorial content, relevant cartoons, and critiques of mainstream society and traditional church life. Evangelistic outreach teams were sent to various nations throughout the world, many of which are still in operation today.

Perhaps the most controversial community-based group was the Children of God (hereafter COG), although in many ways it was of a different ilk to many other representations of the JP. The COG was founded in the late 1960s by David Berg, an ordained minister of a non-denominational church in Arizona. Berg moved to California to work as a public relations agent for a Pentecostal minister in 1944. Moving to Huntington Beach, he took over a Teen Challenge post (an organization established by David Wilkerson), renamed it the Light Club in the late 1967, and attracted a small group of followers. From this faction emerged the COG. A year later Berg claimed to receive, by supernatural means, a revelation that California was about to experience an earthquake and that he and his group should leave. Numbering about fifty, the group left for eight months of wandering through the Southwest of the USA. In 1970, they acquired a 400-acre ranch in Texas and a little later a ranch near Coachella, California. At these sites the COG settled down and grew, sending out members to establish new 'colonies'.

These communes were however short-lived and at the end of 1971 the membership moved to the North West where they were strengthened by the arrival of Linda Meissner with her Jesus People Army, another faction to be found among the JP. In that year the COG could claim some 2,500-3,000 members in around thirty colonies throughout North America and Europe. While not eschewing aspects of Pentecostalism such as the charismata (with particularly a strong emphasis on prophecy), the COG 'cult'-like leadership and unorthodox teaching on sexual permissiveness placed it not only firmly outside the Pentecostal camp, but mainstream Christianity.

INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS

Unlike many other historical Christian movements or New Religious Movements of the time, there was no single leader or figurehead of the JP. There were nonetheless a number of individuals who, while involved in their own ministries, cast a pervasive influence over the broad world of the movement. Many were inspired by Pentecostalism or were themselves classical Pentecostal or charismatics. Some began printing widely read newspapers. Others wrote influential books or headed-up significant ministries. Others still were enigmatic personalities and were largely itinerant speakers.

A number of such personalities who establish JP newspapers were totally new converts to the faith. This included Carl Parks who established the *Truth* newspaper, while in Vancouver Jacob Grin, after allegedly meeting Christ during an LSD trip in 1968, founded the paper *Maranatha*. The best known newspaper, however, was probably Duane Peterson's (formerly with a troubled student career at an Assemblies of God college) *Hollywood Free Paper*. Starting in 1969, the newspaper circulated in a number of cities and, financed by subscriptions and donations, ran up to millions of issues.

Of all the books that influenced the JP movement, one of the most significant was *The Cross and the Switchblade*. As an Assemblies of God minister, David Wilkerson's book outlines the early years of his ministry to young drug addicts and gang members in New York City in the 1950s and 1960s. It became a best-seller. The book has sold over 50 million copies in over thirty languages since it was published in 1963. Earlier, in 1958, Wilkerson founded Teen Challenge Ministries, which reached youth and adults through its centers. Some of these centres were based on student campuses and aided the further dissemination of the culture of the JP movement. Wilkerson's wider influence included his impact on early Charismatic Renewal in both Protestant and Roman Catholic quarters.

A former staff worker with Wilkerson's Teen Challenge programme, was Linda Meissner, who went on to found the Jesus People Army in Seattle in response to having a vision of 'thousands of youths marching for Jesus'. In Seattle she started the newspaper *Agape* shortly afterwards and established a coffeehouse for evangelizing outreach, the 'Catacombs', in Los Angeles which received some 2,000 young people per week. Her Jesus People Army marched in Seattle before she

set off to the Mid West searching for a location to start a Jesus ministry. Finding Milwaukee hospitable, Meissner launched a ministry with an initial ‘march’ through the city. From this early outreach, her followers gained twenty-five members and named themselves Jesus People Milwaukee. Meissner went on to join the Children of God in 1971. One of her disciples was Jim Palosarri, who, along with his wife, Sue, started a number of Christian communes and discipleship schools which sought to develop a theological depth for the Jesus People Army.

Also influential on the JP, or at least certain strands, of it was a figure of a very different disposition. In Seattle, an influential outreach to the hippies was that instigated by Dennis Bennett’s renewalist form of neo-Pentecostalism. If a single personal experience, at a particular time and place, is rendered in Charismatic Renewal folklore as marking its origin, this was Bennett’s public announcement among Episcopalians that he had experienced the Pentecostal phenomena of Baptism in the Spirit and accompanying tongue-speaking on Passion Sunday, 3rd April, 1960. This followed a fairly lengthy time under the influence of a number of leading classical Pentecostals.

Those such as Bennett were described by Richard Quebedeaux, in the context of early Renewal, as ‘denominational entrepreneurs’ (Quebedeaux 1983, 51-52). Early lay members of Charismatic Renewal came to identify themselves with these high profile innovators within their own ranks and renowned personalities in the established Pentecostal churches and itinerant ministries. Included among them were also Michael Harper, David du Plessis, Demos Shakarian (founder of the FGBMFI) and David Wilkerson. Many of such individuals likewise inspired the JP movement.

Not all the figures that had an impact on the JP were Pentecostal in persuasion. Arthur Blessitt also assumed a role with the establishment of ‘His Place’ - a Christian centre specializing in ministering to runaway youths on the Sunset Strip of Los Angeles. Blessitt won headlines by chaining himself to a large wooden cross on the Strip until he was able to overcome the opposition of local landlords and rented a building for a ‘Jesus centre’ in the middle of a nightclub and counter-culture area. Blessitt, a colourful and idiosyncratic character, was a Southern Baptist from the USA who had hitherto claimed 100,000 converts through his evangelizing mission. He preached the simple call for conversion and, at the same time, carried the Gospel message for a younger generation of the permissive 1960s. In essence, he called for the young to turn their back on drug abuse, return home and live the Christian life. In 1970, Blessitt moved his ministry to Time Square,

New York, but soon left to carry a large wooden cross and preach throughout several countries and was a welcome novelty for many in the mainstream Charismatic Renewal movement as well as the JP.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE JP

In terms of their eschatology, many groupings within the JP appeared to embrace the pre-millenarianism that was the mainstay teaching of numerous established Pentecostal bodies. This is not to over-exaggerate the point since a good deal of classical Pentecostal eschatology, in turn, was largely drawn from that of North American fundamentalism and evangelical conservatism. However, much of ‘Last Days’ doctrines of the JP were forged by a particular historical and cultural context, and articulated by influential writers and leaders of various groupings within the movement.

One popular volume for the movement was Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* which brought an apocalyptic tone and pre-millenarian worldview to a good number of the major groupings within the JP. For many adherents it was the next best read book to the Bible and often digested in conjunction with it. The ‘hip’ style in which *The Late Great Planet Earth* was written made it attractive to this generation especially with an interpretation of Biblical references to the time and with its theme of the Anti-Christ’s one-world government. Lindsey, originating in Texas, had attended a fundamentalist seminary in Dallas. From then on his writings were increasingly orientated to eschatological speculation. With a ministry called the J. C. Light and Power Company, Lindsey established His House in Los Angeles as a small commune for those young people disenchanted with the hippie experience, while his constant reference in *The Late Great Planet Earth* to the sin of drugs and occultism gained a particular resonance with the JP.

The keystone of Lindsey’s volume was the re-establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948. This event began, according to Lindsey, the last generation which would not experience death before Christ’s return (which he saw as being approximately forty years hence). This marked a period of the gathering storm between the period of restoration and the Tribulation with events accumulating with an attack on Israel by Russia (‘Magog’ of the Old Testament) and its Arab and

African allies. A response would be made, according Lindsey's Biblical exegesis, by a ten-nation Western alliance (then interpreted as the European Common Market) centred in Rome and led by the Anti-Christ. Nuclear war would follow and, after a brief respite, an army from China of 200 million was prophesized to move west and meet the Western alliance at Armageddon. The resultant atomic conflict was subsequently to be interrupted by the sudden appearance of Christ. In various ways, then, Lindsey's volume fed into the worldview of the JP - the arrival of the Age of Aquarius but not before apocalyptic catastrophe foretold in the Book of Revelation.

Several figures influential in JP eschatology took up such themes and developed them. As noted above, according to Tony Alamo, while he was in a meeting at a Beverly Hills investment firm, Jesus appeared and told him to preach the Second Coming of Christ. Alamo's Pentecostal theology, or at least its pre-millenarian aspects, included a virulent paranoia and extreme anti-Catholicism that placed the Vatican as the real power broker behind the White House, the United Nations, and the media. The various publications his ministry offers, such as *The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance*, detail his conspiracy theories.

In 1973, a date in which his influence on the JP movement had reached its height, David Wilkerson claimed to have received a prophetic vision regarding the future of the United States and subsequently gave a sermon on the visitation and published a book called *The Vision*. Wilkerson believed that God had revealed to him a great calamity which was going to befall America due to increase in sins such as homosexuality and greed. The prophecy also included devastating world events. The predictions included a worldwide recession, (there would be a move toward a global unified monetary system), major earthquakes, a major famine, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes would increase in frequency, a kind of cosmic storm, growing sexual immorality and occultist activity, youth rebellion, and a persecution of 'born again' Christians.

In much the same vein as Wilkerson, some JP groupings espoused a foreboding message of divine retribution for the American nation. The counter-culture of the 1960s had always condemned the perceived evils of mainstream culture. Through the JP this condemnation gained an eschatological dimension. The COG, one of the largest strands to come out of the JP movement, exemplified much of this overtly doom and gloom scenario. Fervently apocalyptic, their often fanatical devotees believed that theirs was the last generation and the COG a specially chosen witnesses called out for the Final Days. On occasion the members dressed in sackcloth, wore yokes

about their necks, bore large placards on their chests presenting words of scripture regarding the coming judgment, and stressed the urgency of the repentance of nations. Characteristically, the faithful carried great starves which beat a heavy, ominous rhythm as they marched. Alternatively, they stood in mournful silence, an ancient testimony to the modern nation of the USA which was in mortal danger of the coming divine wrath.

The COG believed (as they still do) that were living in the time period of the ‘Last Days’. They believe that before that event the world will be ruled for seven years by the Anti-Christ, who will create a one-world government. At the half-way point in his rule he will become completely possessed by Satan, precipitating a time of the Great Tribulation which will bring intense persecution of Christians as well as stupendous natural and unnatural disasters. At the end of this period, faithful Christians would be ‘raptured’ shortly before the battle between Jesus and the Anti-Christ at Armageddon.

Behind the prophetic public stance of the early COG was a communal life shared by several thousand young people dedicated only to the work of their variety of the Gospel. They embraced an extreme Biblical literalism, an authoritarian organization and intense apocalypticism. Critical of secular revolutionaries, the Establishment and materialism, the COG identified itself as a remnant in the midst of a fallen world and about to face the Tribulation. Adherents regarding themselves as the ‘true’ Church, and organized their missions and internal structures accordingly with each colony under the supervision of an elder. The COG were not alone in advancing an apocalyptic tenor since a number of groups such as Mansion Messiah drew up prophecy and eschatological timetables with great enthusiasm.

Although they did not proclaim millenarian ideas to outsiders, the Living Word Fellowship (hereafter LWF) members were convinced that God would destroy urban America by firestorm within the near future and that He had commissioned them to be ‘the chosen remnant among the last generation’ (Tipton 1982, 13). The self-assigned mission of the LWF’s membership was to engage in a process of ‘spiritual perfectionism’ that was expected to climax in their ecstatic union with Jesus at his Second Coming and their subsequent theocratic rule over the world during the millennium to follow. The LWF enjoyed informal ties with other revivalist churches, but it recognized no earthly authority above that of its founders and pastor, Bobbi Morris.

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE JESUS PEOPLE

While the JP in various ways were influenced by the broader world of Pentecostalism, they were also the product of time and place that gave a particular expression to the movement's doctrines and praxis. Many of the counter-culture trappings were also retained. It was this culture which ensured that the movement remained distant from the broader Pentecostal world that was increasingly becoming parts of North American mainstream life. In the late 1960s the spiritual future of USA seemed to lie almost wholly either with political activism in the established churches or with the many new religions offering one variety or another of consciousness expansion and human potential which reflected the increasing impact of the counter-culture. At the same time, especially among the young, there was a growing disenchantment with mainstream churches. The JP movement would seem, then, to have been a counter-cultural vehicle for the religious aspirations of young people. In this sense the JP movement appeared to carry the typical cultural innovation of the 'cult' that was characteristic of many of the New Religious Movements of the time.

Ellwood noted that many of the elements of the counter-culture were indeed to be found in the JP movement: subjectivity was the key to perceiving reality; the goal of life was 'high' - the joyous assurance of knowing Jesus; a spiritual way of life expressed through contemporary music and visual symbols, along with reference to an idealized past. There was the vision of a communalistic Eden; a separated culture that strove towards a New Age; references to a supernatural literature as distinct from worldly culture; an ethos of anti-historicism; political-social symbols expressed as lifestyle values; and the urban roots of the membership which sought an idealized rural milieu (Ellwood 1973 18-200.)

Typical of many observable tendencies of the JP, the COG, while rejecting the ravages the counter-culture, never entirely escaped from it. Thus Bainbridge suggests that except for the deep religiosity of its performers, the songs of COG might be purely interpreted as those of the counter-culture accompanied by the electronic musical accoutrements of the 1960s. Born in a dramatic exodus from 'the system', the COG was typical of the broader JP movement in that it was originally part of a larger cultural milieu (including a level of sexual permissiveness) which has also adapted itself to the present-day while retaining its eschatological longings. In Bainbridge's words: '....The

Family forces Christianity to confront the technological and sexual realities of modern society' (Bainbridge 1997, 239).

There is another way of viewing the various factions of the JP in their orientation to the world. They embraced the counter-culture of the time, but the spontaneity in worship, a distaste for established Christian churches, and its restorationist leanings borrowed heavily from those aspects of Pentecostalism that were compatible with the movement. Moreover, at the same time the JP forged sectarian enclaves opposed to the world, they found their way back into the cultural mainstream in much the same way as the classical Pentecostals had gradually done over a protracted period of time.

One academic approach was to see the movement as primarily a form of escapism for the young generation of the time from the alienating nature of modernity and adult responsibilities. Other accounts, by contrast, saw it not as a form of social retreat but more to do with re-integrating the wayward young, particularly those with a middle-class background, back into mainstream cultural, political, and even evangelical life. Indeed, Ellwood suggests that the transition from the psychedelic counter-culture to the JP movement was not as radical as it appeared to be on the surface. The movement strongly rejected the interest in Eastern or occultist traditions of the counter-culture and forged a means for reintegration and resocialization into American life from which its members were once disaffected. This brought the movement into line with mainstream evangelicalism in that it had an aura of protest against the sophisticated liberal elite of America. The movement thus had powerful support and cultural roots in American culture. In Ellwood's words '...the evangelical Christ makes the heritage of a culturally Christian nation once more accessible to its estranged children, and makes something of the new counter culture spirituality available to that nation' (Ellwood 1973, 23).

According to Ellwood, all the elements of American evangelism - conversion, Biblicism, and holiness, both within and without the older Pentecostal churches - came together in the JP movement. Within it evangelicalism played a familiar role: providing a set of experiences and a rhetoric which gave expression to a social constituency increasingly self-isolated from the cultural mainstream and legitimized their sense of having been subject to a separate experience from both cosmic and social points of view. However, there was a new flavour in the movement related to the youth culture out of which many of its participants came, a new kind of isolation not originating in

geography, defeat, racial prejudice or poverty but by the creation of a novel middle-class generational cultural cleavage (Ellwood 1973, 49-50).

By way of explaining the JP phenomenon, Tipton, in his suitably entitled volume, *Getting Saved from the Sixties*, developed the earlier writings of Robert Bellah. This was especially in relation to Bellah's account of American civil religion and its decline at a time of the profound moral hiatus that gave birth to the counter-culture (Bellah 1976). Tipton notes that the counter-culture began its conception of reality with the individual, not as an agent rationally pursuing his/her own interest, but as a personality knowing with certainty what is good by means of direct experience and intuition. Tipton suggests that the counter-culture challenged mainstream utilitarian culture at the most fundamental level: asking what in life are its intrinsic values and what ends should be acted upon. It also challenged not only technical reason but the asceticism of conventional American Christianity. The alternative religions, both old and new, offered mysticism, experience and the aesthetic, alongside psychological innovation. They also offered counter-cultural ideas through the relatively unstructured community over structured society, and social movements over established organizations. (Tipton 1982, 192-20, 23).

Tipton's generalized thesis, although hardly given justice here, is that after the period of the counter-culture, the alternative religions allowed young people a way forward. Disorientated by drugs, embittered by politics, disillusioned by the apparent worthlessness of work and the transience of relationships, 'they have found a way back through these movements, a way to get along with conventional American society and to cope with the demands of their own maturing lives' (Tipton 1982, 45). In Tipton's comparative study of New Religious Movements, different types of movements allowed this process to be fulfilled in contrasting ways. As youths turned towards adulthood, alternative religions answered questions and addressed predicaments that the counter-culture could not. In doing so, they sustained expressive ideals by recombining them with moralities of authority, rules and utility. Neo-Christian groups, typified by the JP, merged the expressive ethic of 'hip' culture with the authority of revealed Biblical religion, and which enjoyed a particular resonance for the lower middle-class. These movements drew from the old targets of Biblical religion, rational humanism and utilitarian culture itself, as well as non-Western traditions, in order to synthesize their ethics.

Through his impressive survey of the LWF, Tipton sees such movements as translating the disorientating ecstasies of ‘hip’ drop-outs into the devotional ritual ecstasy of Pentecostalism. They marked surrender to authority and acceptance of a moral truth as given by inner feelings of a higher divine authority. ‘Spiritual knowledge’ endowed the present with moral purpose and the future with millennial power. The LWF and the like integrated members into the work place (no matter how lowly the employment) with a work ethic, while providing them with the status of sectarian membership. Speculating more widely, Tipton saw a mirror of these functions in the resurgence of conservative Christian churches and sects across America - evangelical, fundamentalist, Pentecostal, alongside the growth of Charismatic Renewal in the established churches. They all carried a similar powerful ritual experience, affective communal ties and prophetic leadership that the authoritarian ethic required (Tipton 1982, 46).

WHERE DID THE JP GO?

If they were a product of time and place, their social function achieved, it was possible that the demise of the JP movement was inevitable. Where did the JP go? Very few of the community-based groups survived. One that did endure was the Jesus People USA (JPUSA) community in Uptown, on the North Side of Chicago. Originally founded in 1972, it came out of the JP movement, and is one of the remaining communes from that movement. Early on the JPUSA was influenced by such diverse works as that of C. S. Lewis, J. I. Packer and Francis Schaeffer as well as the wider Charismatic movement. In later years the grouping came to be inspired by more traditional evangelical influences including Billy Graham. These influences were mixed with the model of the Christian collective inspired by the Roman Catholic intentional communities. In 1989, JPUSA joined the Evangelical Covenant Church in 1989 as a member congregation, and currently has eight pastors credentialed with the ECC. The community organizes the well-known annual Cornerstone Festival.

The COG also proved to be one of the few surviving remnants of the JP movement, albeit a significant variant. It also came to be the most controversial. Under its late leader, David Berg, the COG enjoyed considerably growth for nearly twenty years, initially in the USA, and then Europe,

Latin America and elsewhere. Currently, by its own estimates, the movement claims to have representation in 106 countries worldwide and a membership in the region of 10,000 drawn from some 90 countries.

Although it was noted for its brevity, the JP, in some instances at least, lay down the direct or indirect roots from which some of the largest and best-known contemporary neo-Pentecostal ‘mega-churches’ of today were to eventually flourish. This seemed to reflect the institutionalization of the JP movement, in much the same way as that experienced by classical Pentecostalism but over a shorter period of time. These were a new generation of churches for middle-age baby-boomers who revisited their counter-cultural roots and spiritual journeying but whose social integration sought a new home.

A number of these churches have come to approximate the New Paradigm church model (Miller 1997). Hope Chapel, if inadvertently, helped give credence to the flexible and alternative services which characterize a good number of such churches. Much emphasis is also now placed on the ‘cell’ or the ‘mini-church’ which amounts to house groups under lay pastors (‘shepherds’). Some 1700 HC members are spread over 55 mini-churches in 18 designated areas of Los Angeles. HC occupies a theological middle ground, relegating the expression of charismatic gifts to the private realm of personal prayer, rather than encouraging them in congregational life (Miller 1997, 44).

Calvary Chapel is also a success story. A membership of around 35,000 means that its congregation in Costa Mesais is the eighteenth largest congregation in the world and one of the ten largest Protestant congregations in the USA where it has planted more than three hundred churches and claims a further two hundred affiliated congregations. Smaller groupings of the JP have come under the auspices of Calvary Chapel. In 1971, Steve Freeman and others opened the Kingdom Come Christian Coffee House in Greenville, South Carolina. Each Saturday night hippies and JP gathered for worship, songs and fellowship. In 1972, several people who were highly involved in the Kingdom Come graduated from high schools and dispersed in several colleges and universities throughout the Southeastern United States. Each one commenced a Fellowship House Church. Maynard Piiendrigh established one at Erskine, Jay Holmes established another at the University of South Carolina, while Steve Freeman founded a third at Furman University. Leadership moved from Steve Freeman to a charismatic preacher named Erskine Holt, a self-described apostle of the

JP movement. By 1973, nearly every campus throughout Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia had Fellowship House Churches. These generally died out by 1977, with a number of the members moving to more traditional campus ministries. Many, however, moved onto similar ministry in such organizations as Calvary Chapel.

A less direct influence of the JP was on the emergence of the Vineyard movement. Around 1983 a small group of CC congregations that had come under the influence of John Wimber, then pastor of Calvary Chapel Ministries, gathered with a half-dozen Vineyard churches started by Ken Gullikson. Wimber's 'Calvary Chapel' was renamed 'Vineyard'. Wimber was soon asked to head the new fellowship of congregations in 1983 and Gullikson was to eventually hand his movement over to him. While Chuck Smith and Wimber retained cordial relationship, Smith was concerned with an over-emphasis on the charismata in the Vineyard churches which spurred him to pen the book *Charisma vs Charismania* (1983). Wimber, however, took a fresh inspiration from Lonnie Frisbie and his emphasis on 'signs and wonders' and they toured the world together, heading up large-scale conferences.

Before these events, the Yorba Linda Quaker church to which Wimber gravitated after his own conversion, proved to be unsympathetic to his new interests in all things charismatic. Under pressure to leave, the prayer group that he organized became the nucleus of his new church. This was to grow rapidly and boasted no less than 5000 members who, by the early 1980s, held meetings in a large warehouse complex in Anaheim. Before long Wimber established Vineyard Ministries International as a renewal agency to organize and sponsor his growing worldwide ministry and conference programme.

By the early 1980s, with its stress on evangelism and church growth, the number of Vineyards grew rapidly to the extent that the Association of Vineyard Churches was formed in 1986 'for church planting and to provide oversight'. This network of churches subsequently flourished to become a fully-fledged international organization. Indeed, it soon came to constitute a 'movement' by its own merit. Vineyard had expanded from its initial five congregations in California to approximately 300 in the USA, although over half of them were located on the West Coast. This region has proved to be a vibrant area for church innovation. Vineyard itself estimates that there are some 10,000 churches, mostly of a charismatic persuasion, across the USA and Canada now directly affiliated with it.

Vineyard's attraction is truly international. According to its own sources the organization could boast a worldwide membership somewhere in the region of 50,000 spread across as many as 550 independent churches in the early 1990s. Since Vineyard at the present time does not keep records of individual churches, the overall membership cannot currently be estimated accurately, but it must undoubtedly run into several hundred thousand. Vineyard today has representation in 87 countries as widely spread as the Congo, Fiji, Japan and the Ukraine.

Although there was never a direct link with the JP movement of the early 1970s, there is sufficient evidence to suggest a certain cultural continuity that Vineyard, and similar churches display, particularly in the Californian context. In most Vineyard churches there has always been an emphasis on casual dress, contemporary music and spontaneity in worship. The informality is also reflected in the meetings which are often held in buildings such as school halls, warehouses or rented churches which do not actually belong to the Vineyard organization. Other churches, usually under the direct auspices of the Vineyard, are among the largest congregation in the USA with the most substantial being that led by Steve Sjogren in Cincinnati, Ohio, with 3,200 adult members. Vineyard over its duration, however, has become almost a denomination in its own right, a development that Wimber himself grudgingly admitted.

Some twenty-five years after the creation of Vineyard there are today more than 850 Vineyard churches worldwide, an international church-planting movement, a publishing house and a music production company. Vineyard continues to develop its universally applied two-fold strategy. First, to plant its own churches universally. Second, to serve and service other churches through ministry. This is a ministry based on the miraculous, alongside 'equipping the saints' for evangelism and by developing charismatic 'gifts'. Outside of the churches within the organization many tens of thousands of churches have come under Vineyard's spell, suitably endowed to continue Christ's ministry of signs and wonders - an essential ingredient of 'power evangelism': proclaiming the kingdom, healing the sick, casting out demons and training disciples albeit through a distinct cultural idiom. Vineyard's role in the so-called Toronto Blessing of the mid 1990s, which met with mixed reception in the classical Pentecostal churches, is well documented.

As we have seen, many members of the JP were to aspire to churches such as Calvary Chapel and Hope Chapel that were keen to cater for their needs as the original adherents settled down to more 'respectable' lifestyles. By contrast, in the late 1970s, with a novel turn, a number of house

church leaders who were linked to the JP movement were at the forefront of a sizeable migration of evangelicals into the Eastern Orthodox Church. Another alternative, as noted by Will Herberg, was the potential co-option of the JP into the New Christian Right (Herberg 1971). His speculations proved to be correct with the appearance of the ‘born-again’ movement in the 1970s and the establishment of the Moral Majority in the 1980s. This marked the ultimate retreat from the moral laxity and permissiveness that had epitomized middle-class culture over the two decades earlier. In proving such speculations, Alvin Reid saw a measure of an older JP remnant in their impact on the Southern Baptist Convention through changing musical styles and the increase in baptisms in the early 1970s (Reid 1995).

SUMMARY

The JP movement was truly many things. In organization terms it was alternatively diagnosed as a New Religious Movement, a ‘sect’ or even ‘a cult’. These designations, more precisely, were applicable to some strands of the movement. This, in turn, indicated its vast diversity. While there was a considerable impact on the JP by way of Pentecostal teachings and praxis, the movement proved to be a hybrid form of Pentecostalism given its divergent expressions. Certainly, it was not a united movement. The major JP factions frequently disagreed with each other’s teachings, often quoting scripture against each other in the streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco. It was equally evident that during its brief existence the JP epitomized the response to the cultural dilemmas of the 1960s and early 1970s. For this reason the rise of the movement took Pentecostals, charismatics and the wider evangelical world by surprise. Yet the JP went on to inspire numerous charismatic and neo-charismatic ‘streams’ alike.

The version of the Kingdom of God that the JP sought to establish was short-lived. The movement seemed to have operated in a historical vacuum and with negligible connections to the past other than the impact of several Pentecostal ministries at its inception. There was always more to be pictured however. Although disciplined for community living, the apocalyptic vision of the JP collectives tended to make them unstable. The most important factor was perhaps the eschatology which they embraced. Ellwood stated their orientation in this way: ‘The Jesus movement communes

are....like floating arks in a sea about to drown everything' (Ellwood 1973, 98). The way of life was impermanent, radically improvised. The collectives saw no need to build a long-term economic or social base since they viewed their venture as temporary for the few years before Christ's Second Coming. Their mission was also *to* the world and they thus were prepared to frequently change their basis and structure in order to win converts. As much could be said of the early Pentecostals before their movement settled down and became more institutionalized.

The JP constituted an innovating form of Christianity. While largely neo-Pentecostal in orientation, it was not exclusively so. To be sure, Pentecostal evangelising impulses were there at the inception of the movement, either through leading Pentecostal-inspired individuals or parachurch Pentecostal ministries which, in some cases at least, helped forge numerous inter-related networks of the JP. At the same time, the embrace of the counter-culture appeared to be at odds with classical Pentecostalism. The main Pentecostal bodies largely kept their distance. The latter-day charismatics were more endeared to the JP as a distinct 'stream' within their own midst.

At a time when the classical Pentecostals had become more 'mainstream', more 'respectable' and more institutionalized and routinized, the rather unsophisticated theology of the JP movement called for a return to simple Christian living and, in some cases, asceticism. The JP was restorationist in theology, seeking to return to the original life of the early Christians. Its adherents embraced a strong belief in the Baptism in the Spirit, miracles, signs and wonders, faith healing and deliverance. Like the early Pentecostals, the JP often viewed mainline denominations, especially those in the United States, as apostate, and took a decidedly hostile stance to mainstream culture and the nation's political institutions. Those Pentecostals who looked on at the JP from a distance may well have seen a reflection of their own past. Despite the JP's counter-cultural trappings, the two constituencies were distant cousins, not only because of dogma and praxis but because of their attractions to the socially marginalized of their respective historical periods. The earlier expressions of classical Pentecostalism, its radical and ecstatic form of Christianity, were perhaps only separated from the JP movement, by time and place.

NOTES

- ¹ The terms ‘Jesus movement’ and ‘Jesus people’ were probably first coined by Duane Pederson, a leading activist in the movement, in his writings for the Hollywood Free Newspaper.
- ² See Plowman (1971). For the impact of the JP elsewhere see Craig, M. (1973). Some factions, exemplified by the Children of God, came to have considerable international representation. There were also indigenous counterparts to the America ‘scene’. For example, the Bugbrook community, later known as the Jesus Fellowship Church was initially British neo-Pentecostalism’s version of the Californian Jesus People movement. The establishment of a commune led to a charismatic collective where individuals shared all property and income. Growing to a membership of over two thousand people dedicated to an austere lifestyle and a fervent evangelism, the Bugbrook community established, in 1979, the New Creation Community Fellowship to which a third of its membership subscribed. Shortly afterwards, its evangelical wing, the Jesus Army, was founded.
- ³ By way of example, that sizeable grouping that was originally known as the Messianic Communities diverged significantly from orthodox Christian beliefs. The origins of the Twelve Tribes movement can be traced to small meetings held in the home of Elbert Eugene Spriggs and his wife Marsha in the early 1970s in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 1972, the Spriggs began a ministry for teenagers called the ‘Light Brigade’. Claiming to follow the teachings of Jesus (whom they call by his Hebrew name Yashua), they believe there are three eternal destinies of man (the holy, disciples of Christ who are saved by Him and live entirely for Him; the righteous, good people who never heard the gospel and never became followers; and the wicked, evil people who destroy other people’s lives by their selfishness) as opposed to only two (heaven and hell) in traditional Christian teachings. The movement also partakes of numerous Judaic observances. The group estimates its current membership to be around 2,500. See Palmer (1998).
- ⁴ As much may be said of the early Pentecostal movement before it became more institutionalized and routinized.
- ⁵ The term ‘Jesus freak’ was originally a pejorative label imposed on the group by non-Christian hippies, but members of the Jesus movement reclaimed the phrase as a positive self-identifier.
- ⁶ See Ellwood (1973), Enroth (1973) and Plowman. (1971). A historically informative volume is Enroth et al (1972). Sympathetic accounts of the JP include Knight (1971). Personal experiences are accounted in Moody (1972) and Streiker (1971). A fine overview of the literature is to be found in Di Sabatino (1976).
- ⁷ See Fogel (2000).
- ⁸ An on-line survey, put together by Larry Eskridge and David Di Sabatino between November 1997 and the end of April 2004 found that, of 812 people who had at one time or another considered themselves part of the JP movement in the years between 1967 and 1977, over 72 percent had participated in speaking in tongues. Over 76 percent claimed to have experienced “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” during their JP involvement. See ‘Remembering the Jesus Movement’ Survey Highlights,’ www.one-way.org/jesusmovement/survey_summary.doc.
- ⁹ See, for example, Graham (1972).
- ¹⁰ See, for example, Day (1973).

¹¹ See, for example, Holt (1940).

¹² <http://www.calvarychapel.com/>

¹³ Nee, who had inspired the ministry of the Fort Lauderdale Five, also had an influence on the British neo-Pentecostal 'house church' movement in the 1960s and 1970s, impacting such leaders of the movement as Arthur Wallis.

¹⁴ Nee strongly believed that the basis of separating the churches, such as apostles and their ministries, spiritual gifts, racial or social status, or different doctrines and missions was condemned by the word of God as divisive and sinful, and as the works of the flesh.

¹⁵ There were also other extra-ecclesiastical organizations that focused more stringently on winning souls among the young student population across the United States. Many were already established for the purpose of soul-winning and displayed more of a conservative evangelical leaning than an overt Pentecostalism. However, a good number, such as the Campus Crusade for Christ and the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, adapted themselves accordingly. While the JP movement did not begin on the campus it caught on there almost immediately with these evangelical cadres that were increasingly prepared to embrace those trappings of the counter-culture which they deemed acceptable. In short, by attracting more than just young people from the more conservative churches, these groupings changed their orientation in order to embrace a new influx of students inspired by the JP and its more Pentecostal leanings.

¹⁶ Green died tragically in an air crash in 1982.

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