

After Asbury and ‘Jesus Revolution,’ I Now ‘Get It’

I’ve been a parent for a little more than 21 years, with a daughter and an 18-year-old son. In all that time, I was under the impression that my children, GenZers and many millennials simply didn’t get it.

As a Christian for more than 33 years and a man who has worked for a Christian media company for nearly 11 years, I always wondered why these youngsters were so dissatisfied with the church—and with God, for that matter. Why, as many continue to believe and to report, are the majority of the youth leaving the church and shunning the things their parents are trying to instill in them?

After all, as the Bible says in Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever.”

In other words, Jesus never changes. Ever. We, in our flawed human state, are the only ones that do.

And for that, I am grateful. It means that I don’t have to stay stuck in my sometimes error-filled beliefs. It means I can grow in Christ and leave behind my arrogant attitudes that I simply know better than some others—especially my children and the youth of today.

It has taken some pretty miraculous recent events—including a three-week outpouring at a Christian university in a small town in Kentucky—as well as a movie about a beautiful movement that happened 50 years ago—to teach this old dog some new kingdom tricks.

The Asbury University “revival” that took the nation by storm in February showed me that indeed the youth of today not only know what they are doing, it also showed me that they have a

hunger inside them for something different, something wonderful, something miraculous that many of us in an older generation have simply forgotten.

Watching these kids worship, repent and surrender to Jesus with all their heart and with a passion to share their experience with the rest of the nation, and the world for that matter, led me to repent of the fact that I had completely misjudged the younger generations and their thirst for God's Word.

Don't get me wrong. I have worked here at Charisma with some wonderful younger people who no doubt have a strong love for God inside of them. There are some here that I work with now whom I admire for their zeal for Jesus.

But for the longest time, it was me who just didn't get it. And I think many who are my age or maybe even older and also a bit younger than I am can learn a lesson from these beautiful youth who are, according to Outreach magazine, looking for sincerity, the avoidance of hypocrisy, authenticity, support, forgiveness, no judgment, unification and inspiration. Who could blame them for wanting such godly things?

And then, there is the Jesus Revolution movie. Unless you've been, pardon the cliché, hiding under a rock, you've heard about this film that is not only breaking box office records but is also smashing "cultural desperation," co-producer and director Jon Erwin says.

It is also changing lives, including mine.

At Charisma, we've extensively covered the impact this movie has had on our culture. Within the past week, I went to the theater to see exactly what I was missing.

As it turns out, I had been missing quite a bit. During the two hours I spent in my local theater, I came to discover that the people who started the Jesus Movement in the late 1960s

were not just “hippies” rebelling against the cultural, but they were genuine people like Lonnie Frisbee and Greg Laurie who came to love Jesus in a way that many of us could never previously understand.

At the beginning, Chuck Smith’s church was small and full of stodgy “Christians.” But when Smith met Frisbee, things changed. Frisbee’s “friends” soon filled the church, praising the Lord with an innocence that Jesus had to smile upon. Many of the original church folks became frustrated and upset, and then left the church. I can’t say that I wouldn’t have been one of them.

But as the movie progressed, it was the youth, including Laurie, that repented and found the truth they had been searching for. I wept a few times, including when Laurie was saved and at the end when Smith apologized to Laurie and handed him the keys to a church he had just bought.

 All the while, I continued to think about my children and the “at-times” contentious relationship I’ve had with them. I always believed they didn’t get it, yet I’ve come to realize that it is me that didn’t get the true love that God is trying to show us all.

All God wants from us is to surrender to Him, and because of Asbury and the Jesus Revolution movie, I now find myself doing that very thing. No matter what happens in my life, I trust Him completely now, and I know that I will have a better relationship with my wife and children. And, I know I will never misjudge the younger generation again.

If you haven’t seen the movie, I pray you will. Believe me, it will change you, and I think you will “get it” too. {eo}

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Shawn A. Akers is the online editor at *Charisma Media*.