

We Need Another Jesus Movement

In today's hip, sophisticated churches, we often forget to preach about Jesus. Let's get back to basics.

I became a serious Christian at the tail end of the Jesus movement. I was too young to remember the hippie beads, tie-dyed shirts and "Jesus Is Groovy" slogans, but the songs were still popular when I was in college (from musicians such as Andrae Crouch, Love Song and Barry McGuire), as were the movies (especially *The Cross and the Switchblade*.)

The Jesus movement was like a spiritual tsunami that washed over hundreds of thousands of young people in the late 1960s and early '70s and brought them into a personal relationship with Christ. Some of these kids had been drug addicts and social misfits; most were just average Joes and Janes who discovered that Jesus is a lot more exciting than traditional churches had led them to believe.

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Because the movement was pioneered by untrained leaders it sometimes resulted in abuse. But despite its flaws, it gave rise to a new musical genre (contemporary Christian) and new denominations (Calvary Chapel, Vineyard). It also fueled organizations such as Bill Bright's Campus Crusade for Christ and made it a powerhouse of evangelism for the next decade and beyond.

Lately I find myself waxing nostalgic for those days—not because I want to return to the awkward fashions and hairstyles of 1972, but because I miss the spiritual simplicity of that era. The Jesus movement was primarily focused on—*surprise!*—Jesus. Theology was not complicated, pastors weren't trying to be hip or sophisticated or tech-savvy; and we hadn't yet created a Christian subculture with its own celebrities and political power bases.

Today, we just don't preach enough about Jesus. This is certainly true in many charismatic churches, where we've become experts on everything but basic Christian theology 101. In my travels this past year I've been horrified to learn that many Spirit-filled believers have given up the discipline of reading their Bibles even semi-regularly. They prefer a steady diet of culturally relevant, fast-paced, techno-theology that is a poor substitute for discipleship.

Many charismatics have developed the attitude that a simple focus on Christ isn't enough. We'd

rather go to a
“prophetic encounter” to hear what Obama’s chances are in
2012, or experience
some exotic spiritual manifestation (gold dust, gems falling
out of the
ceiling), or ask Rev. Flash-in-the-Pan to pray for us for the
sixteenth time so
we can receive yet another “special anointing” that we will
probably never use.

In the midst of all this charismatic
gobbledygook, where is Jesus? Am I the only one out there who
is weary of this
distraction?

Call me
old-fashioned, but I’ve decided to get back to the basics of
the faith. That’s
why I am reading *What Jesus Is All
About?*, a classic book written more than 50 years ago by
Henrietta Mears, a
Bible teacher who helped mentor both Billy Graham and Bill
Bright in the 1940s.

Mears explains in her book how each of
the four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—give us a
unique,
four-dimensional portrait of the Savior. According to Mears:

- **Matthew** was written to Jews to tell of a *Promised Savior* who is also a King—and it uses the word “kingdom” 55 times.
- **Mark** was written to Gentiles to tell of a *Powerful Savior*—and it reports more miracles than any other gospel.
- **Luke** was written by a Gentile to tell of a *Perfect Savior*—and it has the most references to Jesus’

humanity.

- **John** was written by “the disciple whom Jesus loved” to tell of a *Personal Savior*—and it has the most references to Jesus’ divine nature.

The Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible knew we needed more than a one-, two- or three-dimensional look at Jesus. The Spirit gave us a four-dimensional view so that we could gaze at Him from all sides and become captivated by His magnificence—His supreme kingship, His compassionate mercy, His supernatural power, His perfect justice, His amazing humility and His love for sinners like you and me.

There’s so much more to Jesus than we realize. And there is so much more to say about Him than we are telling our generation. That’s why I’m spending most of my study time in the four gospels for the next few months. I want a fresh revelation of Jesus!

Perhaps another Jesus movement will be unleashed in our country when we discard our distractions and focus on Him again.

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