

What We Can Learn From The Jesus People

The Jesus People Movement was a wave of Christianity that began on the West Coast of the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s and spread primarily through North America and Europe, before subsiding by the early 1980s.

It was the major evangelical Christian element within the hippie counterculture, or, conversely, the major hippie element within some strands of Protestantism. Members of the grass roots movement were called *Jesus People*, or even at times *Jesus Freaks*.

Its predecessor, the *Charismatic Movement*, had already been in full swing for a few years. It involved mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics who testified to supernatural experiences similar to those recorded in the book of Acts, especially the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the release of spiritual gifts emphasizing the gift of speaking in tongues.

A third smaller movement emerged at the same time as young Jewish people placed their faith in Jesus as their Jewish Messiah. Thus the term and stream called the *Messianic Movement* came into being as well. All of these overlapping movements were calling the church back to forms of apostolic Christianity and including the restoration of the gifts of the Spirit. The finished work of the cross of Jesus was the central message of all three of these diverse movements. It was more about changed lives than it was about organizational structure. You could say it was more about the “new wine” than it was the “new wineskin.”

The Jesus People Movement left a lingering legacy within various new church denominations, networks and other vibrant Christian ministries, organizations and leaders that continue

to impact many to this very day. The Jesus People were characterized by a new contagious sound that greatly influenced and changed traditional gospel/church music. The new sound helped to create various musical sub-genres resulting in Christian Music Festivals, recording labels and contemporary music including folk, rock, indie and many different relevant worshipful musical genres.

The Jesus People Movement had great strengths and some glaring weaknesses in its DNA, which I will come back to in a moment. We must learn lessons from our recent past as well as from the long-term history of revival, renewal and restoration movements. With this in mind, the following is a quick glance at some of the key emphasis of revival movements over the many years of church history.

5 Historic Classic Characteristics of Revival

The following five characteristics listed below overlap and are not necessarily in sequential order. Yet when you study major moves of the Holy Spirit throughout church history you will find these and other emphases. If you want more on this subject, [click here](#) to order the MP3 audio message “Catching and Surviving Every Wave” by James Goll.

1. Deep Awareness of the Love and Mercy of God
2. Revelation of God’s Holiness
3. Experiential Conviction of Sin
4. Passionate Denunciation of Sin

3 Preliminary Stages

There are at least three simple preliminary stages of revival:

1. An Intense Hunger for Change
2. Prayer to God to Change Things

3. Networking Towards Unity

We can miss the major moves of God by not appreciating and participating in the little things in God. Do not overlook the days of small beginnings. Give yourself to the Lord and His purposes in your generation.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Jesus People DNA

Many key leaders are declaring that a new Jesus People Movement is beginning these 50 years later. If this is true, then in order to move forward with progressive motion we need to learn lessons from our past. We are to test all things, and hold on to that which is good. We are to build that which will last and learn to pass on a lineage and legacy so that the ceiling of our generation becomes the next generation's floor.

Some years ago, God gave me a vivid dream showing me the qualities and traits that He will bring to maturity in His church. I called the dream, "The House That's Built to Last."

[Click here to read the article.](#)

Let me turn the corner and bring you some basic summary points about the Jesus People Movement:

The Message

One Way to the Father

Centrality of Jesus and the Work of the Cross

2nd Coming of Jesus

Great Commission—Go!

There was little "waiting on the Lord." It was more about Going, Doing and Telling versus soaking in the presence.

The Method

- A New Sound in Music
- New Venues—Coffee houses, open-air concerts, street

evangelism

- Printed Page—Hollywood Free Paper and Tracts
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Operation

The culture of the supernatural was very present but the gifts of the Holy Spirit were never the primary focus.

The Messengers

- Lonnie Frisbie—The Hippie Preacher
- Chuck Smith—Pastor—Teacher of Calvary Chapel
- Musicians—Scores of Singer/Song Writers Emerged

The culture of the Jesus People DNA was its own form of a “nameless and faceless people” as the Holy Spirit used the available, not necessarily the greatest trained.

The Key Scriptures

- John 3:16—God so loved the world ...
- Matthew 28:19—Go therefore ...
- Joel 3:13—Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe

Of course, there were many other Scriptures highlighted. But it was an evangelical “salvation movement” more than an “equipping the saints movement” as other movements have emphasized.

Strengths That Need to Be Emphasized Again

We need the zeal, evangelism and a sold-out mindset that motivated this contagious generation. We need to recover an urgency of the hour and the message of living this life in light of eternity.

Weaknesses That Need to Be Avoided

It was a “terminal generation.” We were on the “Eve of Destruction.” Education toward good occupations and being prepared with training in life and healthy family relationships were hardly emphasized. It was a “fatherless”

generation without the culture of honor. It was a Jesus Movement that needed the strength of the “Father’s Heart” message.

The Convergence of the Ages

Today we are living in the “Convergence of the Ages.” The Holy Spirit is taking from the best of all the anointing from movements of the past and bringing these ingredients together again for such a time as this. Today we have the greatest Global Prayer Movement; Schools of the Supernatural abound; We have both Fathers and Mothers and Grandfathers and Grandmothers of the faith to help guide the coming generations. Today we have “new wine” and “new wineskins” prepared for the Harvest!

It is Harvest Time once again. Let’s believe that something greater than the Jesus People Movement is coming forth. It is the time for the Joining of the Generations. It is time!

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