The Jesus Movement: Revival in the Seventies

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by

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THE JESUS MOVEMENT: REVIVAL IN THE SEVENTIES

A new movement is upon us; a movement that "shows every sign of becoming a national pre-occupation"[1], a movement that rates as the top religious news story of 1971,[2] and a movement that has received tremendous television, radio, and newspaper coverage. However one wishes to label it and its followers, the Jesus Movement is here, and making its presence known. A concise statement concerning the impact and scope of the Jesus Movement appears in a book by David Wilkerson entitled, Jesus Person-Maturity Manual:

> The Jesus revolution is the biggest news of this decade. It goes deeper than anything we have ever known. Millions know that something unusual and spiritual is happening, but few can explain exactly what. It now invades every avenue of our lives. It touches lives from New York to San Francisco and reaches into the isolated farming towns of Kansas and Illinois. It touches young people in churches, in grade and high schools, in colleges, on the streets and includes those once considered hopeless by straight society. ...Peace symbols are being replaced with Jesus signs. Big Bibles are appearing on campuses nationwide. Christian underground newspapers are outselling the radical

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[1]Billy Graham, The Jesus Generation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), p. 14.

[2]Billy Graham, "The Marks of the Jesus Movement," Christianity Today, XVI (November 5, 1971), p. 4.

> papers. An estimated 300,000 hippie types now profess to be Jesus People, the majority graduates from psychedelia.[3]

Although some 300,000 "Jesus Freaks" make up much of the Jesus Movement, two other groups, the Catholic Pentecostals and the "straight Jesus People",[4] can also be identified as a part of the movement. The former is comprised of those Roman Catholics who have given up many orthodox beliefs and practices and have incorporated into their groups certain practices of Pentecostalism. The latter group is comprised of young people who were never part of the "dropped out generation", but who have recently become interested in Christianity. Although the Catholic Pentecostals and the straight Jesus people will be mentioned briefly, the main focus of this paper will be on "Jesus Freaks", the hippie-types who have received nearly all of the publicity and have engendered most of the controversy.

The fact that the Jesus Movement is large and has recently filled much space in major newspapers and magazines is apparent and does not need further elaboration here.

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[3]David Wilkerson, Jesus Person-Maturity Manual (Glendale, California: G/L Publications. Regal Books, 1971), "Introduction: The Jesus Revolution!" p. i.

[4]"The New Rebel Cry: Jesus is Coming," Time, vol. no. XCVII (June 21, 1971), p. 56.

Another aspect of the movement may be less descernable, however, and therefore more open to question. In the November, 1971, issue of New Guard, Will Herberg makes the following statement: "The Jesus People have placed themselves squarely in the line of 200 years of American revivalism".[5] Although Herberg makes this statement concerning the Jesus Movement, he does not pursue the matter further. It is the purpose of this study to investigate Herberg's statement and to attempt to place the current Jesus movement within the context of the history of revivalism in America. Although, we do not have the full advantage of hindsight, enough is known about the movement to legitimately suggest some of its ties with the past.

There are three basic ways that past revivals can be reviewed. One way is the sociological perspective, another is the religious perspective, and a third is the historical perspective. Each of these points of view emphasizes a specific facet of the revival phenomenon. It is the purpose of this paper to examine briefly the history of revivals in America and then to locate the Jesus movement in this context of revivalism of appraising its historical, sociological, and religious significance.

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[5]As quoted in Ronald M. Enroth, Edward E. Ericson, Jr., and C. Breckinridge Peters, The Jesus Generation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1971), p. 239.

I. Definition of "Revival"

Before any discussion of revival can proceed it is necessary to reach an understanding of the term "revival" as used in this study. The word itself is derived from the Latin "revire", which means "to live again". When put in a religious context then, "revival" refers to a period in time when religion "lives again". This idea of "renewal" or "awakening" is inherent in any definition of "revival". In general terms, revival is defined in Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature: "Revival is used to indicate renewed interest in religious subjects, or a period of renewed awakening."[6] A simpler definition is offered by W. W. Sweet in his Revivalism in America. He says that "revivalism has been primarily the individualizing of religion".[7] A more specific definition of "revival" is given by Frank G. Beardsley who identifies a revival as a "special religious service protracted for a term of days or weeks, when unusual efforts are put forth to reach the uncoverted".[8] These varying definitions of "revival" all illuminate a particular facet of revivalism,

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[6] Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. Vol. VIII. p. 1074.

[7] William W. Sweet, Revivalism in America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1944), p. 182.

[8] Frank G. Beardsley, A History of American Revivals (Boston: American Tract Society, 1904), p. 1.

and they demonstrate the fact that the phenomenon of revivalism is broad enough that no one definition fully encompasses its true nature. This paper does not intend to pursue in depth the definition of revivalism and then try to fit the Jesus Movement into it. Rather, it intends to appraise the Jesus Movement from the perspective of American revivalism.

II. The Major Types of Revivalism

As revivalism has run its course in America, two primary types have emerged. One of these is often termed an "awakening", and the other is commonly referred to as a "modern" revival. The major difference between these two types is the manner in which they are propagated. The awakening has a spontaneous beginning. It is begun by no one in particular and is carried on by no single person or group. An awakening is something that just seems to happen and has no preconceived plan or direction. If there is an evangelist associated with an awakening, his existence is only incidental to the revival. The first such religious awakening in America occurred in 1734 and is referred to as "The First Great Awakening".

In contrast to this is the "modern revival". Modern revivalism may be defined as "professional mass evangelism."[9]

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[9] William G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1959), p. 11.

In this form, a professional evangelist is generally the instigator and propagator of the revival. The entire revival is centered around him, and without him the revival would probably not have begun. In America, this type of revivalism is generally considered to have begun with Charles G. Finney in 1825. In this tradition are such great evangelists as Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday and Billy Graham.

Most historians of revivalism in America recognize the difference between these two types and distinguish carefully between them. W. W. Sweet, for example, considers only the "awakening" in his Revivalism in America. The professional evangelist and his preaching are outside the realm of true revivalism, in Sweet's mind, because true revivals are instigated by God not by man. On the other hand, William G. McLoughlin, Jr., deals only with more man-made "modern" revivals. McLoughlin like Sweet, recognizes the distinction between the "awakening" and the "modern revival" observing that the former were "prayed down" while the latter were "worked up".[10]

In light of this distinction, the Jesus Movement can only be considered a religious awakening. It had a spontaneous beginning and was not contrived by a professional evangelist. In fact Billy Graham, the most prominent contemporary revivalist, confesses that he was caught

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[10]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 11.

unaware at the movement's beginning, "Having invested a generation of my life in America's spiritual welfare," he observes, "I was watching the horizon for a cloud of impending revival to restore its spirtual greatness. And suddenly we were made dramatically aware that a brand-new spirtual awakening was on the way."[11] Thus Graham, who has been recognized as the prime instigator of revivals in America for the past twenty years, was unaware of this impending revival. Subsequently, however, Graham has intently studied this movement and has noted "several commendable features" concerning it, including the fact that "it is spontaneous" with no single leader emerging.[12] In most studies of the Jesus Movement, this spontaneity and lack of leadership receive strong emphasis, and this fact furthur substantiates the close similarity between the Jesus Movement and past "awakenings" in America.

Although the Jesus Movement is primarily a revival of the "awakening" type, there are certain aspects of it that obviously parallel past "modern" revivals. When such parallels occur, they too will be mentioned.

III. Past Religious Awakenings

Those revivals which will serve as historical precedents

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[11] Graham, Jesus Generation, p. 13-14.

[12] Graham, Jesus Generation, p. 16.

for the Jesus Movement are 1.) The First Great Awakening, (1734-1750), 2.) The Second Great Awakening, (1798-1830), 3.) The Great Revival, (1857-1858). These three revivals were all "awakenings", in the sense that none was contrived by individuals and all were spontaneous. Since 1857, revivals in America have been primarily the result of professional evangelistic endeavors and as such cannot be classified as awakenings.

The First Great Awakening commenced in 1734, in Northampton, Massachusetts, and continued for at least a period of eight years. Although 1734 is generally accepted as the date for the beginning of the colonial revivals, their roots may go back sixty years prior to that date.[13] Jonathan Edwards is considered to have begun this tremendous wave of religious enthusiasm that swept over the colonies. Along with such other colonial clergymen as Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, William Tennent, Jonathan Dickinson, and George Whitefield, helped to carry on the revival that eventually involved most of the colonies.

Benjamin Trumbell, an historian who knew many of those converted by the revivals, judged that "it was the most glorious and extensive revival of religion and reformation of manners which the country had ever experienced."[14]

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[13]Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 20.

[14]Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 32.

For example, it was estimated that from 25,000 to 50,000 persons were added to the churches of New England as a result of this "awakening." The estimated population of New England at the time was 340,000; therefore it is estimated that seven per cent of the population of these colonies was converted as a direct result of the revival. A contemporary awakening of similar magnitude in the United States would result in the conversion of fourteen million people! In addition to the converts the religious enthusiasm of the regular church members also appeared to be strengthened. The total impact of the Great Awakening can never be completely ascertained, but the First Great Awakening clearly had a significant effect upon religous life in colonial America.

The Second Great Awakening began in an infant United States in about 1798. America was much changed from the collection of colonies Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield knew. No longer was the country's population centered on the eastern seaboard. Americans and European immigrants were moving westward across the mountains in incredible numbers. In 1798 the revival moved west with them. The Second Great Awakening had its beginning on America's frontier and quickly spread to other parts of the nation. From 1795 to 1835, the western camp meetings played a significant part in the life-style of frontier America and became one of the characteristic institutions of the era.

No one meeting typifies this frontier spirit better than the Cane Ridge meeting of 1801. At this one meeting an estimated 25,000 people were on hand, a fantastic total in view of the fact that in 1800 there were not more than a quarter of a million people in the entire state of Kentucky.[15] Although The Second Great Awakening had no sudden demise, by 1840 increased affluence and the preoccupation with political issues that were soon to divide the nation in war had helped quench the religious ferver.

The Great Revival of 1857 had an unpretentious beginning in New York City. On September 23, 1857, Jeremiah C. Lanphier opened a small church for noon prayer meetings. At first response was poor, but by the middle of January 1858, attendance had increased until the building was overflowing. The interest increased and soon there were twenty different prayer meetings in New York City alone. The revival spirit spread to the various cities throughout the Northern States, and soon "daily union prayer meetings" were established to promote the interests of religion. In fact the Great Revival was characterized as the "mass meeting method of Evangelism". With the help of such freelance evangelists as Charles Finney, most major American cities were brought under the influence

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[15]Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact upon Religion in America (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1958), p.31.

of the Great Revival, and for a period of six to eight weeks, when the revival was at its height, it was estimated that 50,000 persons were converted weekly throughout the country.[16] In the Great Revival, organized movements such as the "Young Men's Christian Association" began to exert powerful influence in the conversion of non-believers. The Great Revival ended as unpretentiously as it begun. By 1859 the two years of spiritual fervor quietly subsided.

After the Civil War, the modern revivalist emerged as a central figure in religious life. In 1875 and 1876, Dwight Moody carried on mass evangelism in major American cities. A generation later in 1912 Billy Sunday again focused the attention of Americans on mass evangelism in the cities. It was not until 1949 and Billy Graham that mass evangelism again appeared on the American scene. Since that time, Graham and his organization have been holding periodic "crusades" throughout the country and the world. To this day, Graham continues to hold a wide audience through his "crusades", television appearances, and books.

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[16]Beardsley, History of American Revivalism, p. 236.

III. Elements of Revivalism

Most past revivals, and especially past awakenings, follow a common tradition. Certain common strands run through these revivals, to a greater or lesser extent, and help describe the distinctive character of the American revival. These common elements are:

1. A perceived spiritual declension
2. Emphasis on pietism
3. Universal appeal
4. Occurence outside traditional denominations
5. Emphasis on need for salvation

These five characteristics have certainly been valid for the three great awakenings mentioned and to a lesser extent for the evangelistic endeavors of Finney, Moody, Sunday and Graham. The purpose of this paper is to examine the Jesus Movement in light of these five characteristics and thereby place it within the history of American revivalism.

IV. Spiritual Declension

It is difficult to establish exactly what constitutes "spiritual declension", since throughout history circumstances and people change, but it seems evident that awakenings were preceded by some perception of spiritual declension. The word "revival", in fact, implies this as is indicated by Beardsley's statement that revival "means to re-animate, to awaken new life and hence it pre-supposes a state of declension."[17]

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[17]Beardsley, History of American Revivalism, p.2.

The growth of Christianity, from the day of Pentecost until today, has not been steady. There have been discernible periods of religious activity and enthusiasm and there have been equally obvious periods of spiritual stagnation. In American religious history, the term "revival" has generally been used to indicate a growth of religious interest that is sudden and dramatic. This sudden increase of interest in religion is generally perceived in contrast to the period of relative disinterest that immediately preceded it. The First Great Awakening, The Awakening of 1800, the Great revival of 1857, and the Jesus Movement were all preceded by periods of relative spiritual declension or stagnation.

For example, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded by a group of religious dissenters early in the seventeenth century. The founding Puritans were devoutly religious and excessively rigid in their life-style. By 1740, however, much had happened in New England to pull it away from strict religious regimen. In 1662, in an attempt to combat shriveling church rolls, the leading ministers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony adopted what was called the "Halfway Convenant". By this provision, persons seeking membership into the Puritan church did not have to go through rigorous catechetical instruction nor did they have to publicly profess an experience of

regeneration. All a person had to do to become a church member was assent to a general statement of faith and not lead a scandalous life.[18] The only privilege that was denied half-way members, was the right to partake of the Lord's Supper. Soon such halfway members outstripped the members in full communion. The Halfway Convenanters filtered into the ministry and half membership was soon socially acceptable. Strict adherence to Calvinistic doctrine declined as the number and influence of halfway members increased. The sermons preached in the early eighteenth century give testimony to the sad state of religion at that time. Sweet says of this period: "Times were ripe indeed for a new emphasis and a new method in religion, as well as for a new type of religious leadership, to meet the particular needs presented by the American colonial religious situation."[19]

As the eighteenth century progressed the "enlightened" rationalism of both European and American intellectuals greatly influenced the rise of skepticism and a noticeable decline in religious enthusiasm. Such French philosophers as Voltaire and Rousseau were held in high esteem by many American college students and clergymen alike. In much

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[18] America's Great Revivals, (Minneapolis: Demension Books, 1971), p.6.

[19] Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 21.

of America Christianity had given way to the "Religion of Reason". The more secularly oriented ideas of many "fathers of the Revolution" were openly espoused. Benjamin Franklin, Ethan Allen, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson held views that were more deistic in nature than Christian. Bernard A. Weisberger, the historian of American revivals, states: "A Virginia senator once complained that in Jefferson's home he found himself defending the character of Christ, and could get no support from any of the company except the first cashier of the Bank of the United States, David Franks, a Jew."[20] Weisberger goes on to say that this "rational religion was marked as one of the first targets of revival effort".[21]

Another force contributing to the decline of religious interest was the Westward migration. Weisberger again notes that "those who had gone West were abandoning old churches and showing no enthusiasm for building new ones. The frontier was destitute of religion."[22] The frontiersman was cut off from the restraints and the refining influences of the old home community and its church and school.

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[20]Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, p. 7.

[21]Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, p. 7.

[22]Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, pp. 5-6.

The state of spirituality prior to the Great Revival of 1857 is harder to establish than that prior to the previous awakenings. Political questions such as slavery and nullification occupied the minds of many. The faith of many Americans was further confused and shakened by false predictions of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The Great Revival was also preceded by a period of financial and commercial prosperity unprecedented in the history of our country. Gold had been discovered in California; much new territory had been acquired through the Mexican War; and multitudes of immigrants had been flocking to American shores causing the cities to grow with amazing speed. All of these factors tended to remove religion from the mind of Americans in the Jacksonian Era. Frank Beardsley states "from 1843 to 1857, there were several years during which the accessions to churches scarcely equalled the losses sustained by death and discipline."[23]

Over a century later, as Americans raced into the 1970's, religion faced some of its age-old problems which were now dressed in the more modern garb of the twentieth century. Gross apathy had replaced most of America's religious concern. The "God is Dead" theory, so widely

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[23]Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 215.

espoused during the 1960's, had itself degenerated in to a kind of apathy. Religion generated little public attention or interest. Billy Graham states concerning this period: "As I savored the grandeur of this great nation, I also sensed its sickness . . . America and the world were in deep trouble."[24] Contemporary writers from Jack Kerouac to Jerry Reuben reflected the emptiness and religious contempt felt by the "under thirty generation". Allen Ginsberg told the youth of America: "You belong to a struck-by lightning fraternity. You are living on the edge of non-being and are being pushed into nothingness."[25]

The Jesus Movement answered Ginsberg's assertion. The Jesus Movement occured at a time when disenchantment with the establishment was at a high. The Viet Nam war was in its seventh year; Kent State had occured; Woodstock, the pinacle of the rock generation, had passed. American youth were ripe for another great "awakening."

V. Pietism

Pietism may be defined as "a type of religion which places the principal emphasis upon what is often termed the religion of the heart, rather than religion of the head:

> It is a religion which appeals primarily

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[24] Graham, Jesus Generation, ;. 1.

[25] Wilkerson, Jesus Person-Maturity Manual, "Introduction," i.

> to the emotions. Its principal theme is redemption for individuals. Its object is to awaken men and women to a personal repentance.[26]

William McLoughlin states that "pietism emphasizes the priesthood of all believers. . . .it stresses the emotional devotional, and ascetic qualities of religion in preference to the intellectual, the ritualistic, and the ethical."[27] The need for a personal religious experience is something that the established churches seldom seem to give, while the revival in America has recognized and attempted to fullfill this need.

The religious atmosphere prior to the First Great Awakening, was dominated by a Calvinistic orthodoxy that was gradually slipping into a rather sterile legalism and rationalism. When the First Great Awakening occured, pietism played a great part in it.

Jonathan Edwards, the great preacher of the awakening is said to have "made religious emotion theologically and intellectually respectable."[28] Edwards injected into the church the emotionalism that had long been absent. He believed "that the sense of God is an emotional experience, not an intellectual one."[29] Theodore

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[27]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 8.

[28]Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 85.

[29]Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 84.

Frelinghuysen, another preacher of the First Great Awakening, also stressed the necessity of a personal religious experience, by insisting that a change of heart is essential for Christian living. George Whitefield also stressed the need for a change of heart. In fact nearly all of the great revivalists of the Great Awakening stressed the need for some degree of emotional experience.

The Second Great Awakening is the revival that more than any other stressed emotionalism. The frontier camp meetings were, in fact, often characterized by emotional excess. At the western encampments "exercises" took place where the participants either laughed, cried, leaped, or barked uncontrollably. This general hysteria, which was so much a part of the frontier camp meeting, is sufficient to indicate the extreme emotional enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening.

During the Great Revival of 1857, emotionalism, as it appeared in the first two awakenings, was nearly non-existant. Religion, however, was still individualized. The means of individualization in this awakening was the "union prayer meeting". Large groups of men, sometimes numbering in the thousands, would pray and exchange testimonies. Religion was carried from the church to the meeting hall and from the head to the heart.[30]

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[39]Beardsley, History of American Revivals, pp. 222-227.

The Jesus Movement began in a sub-culture already disenchanted with the scientism of the 1970's. Since the Second World War and especially since the launching of the Russian Sputnik, America has placed tremendous emphasis on science and technology. The computer number has replaced the name, and television has replaced the book. Starting in the mid-1960's, huge numbers of young people began to reject the society of their parents. They began to "drop-out" of that society seeking to forge their own sense of personal identity, and they began to flout their non-conformity.

In a sense the Jesus People were pietistic even before their religious conversions. They began as pietistic non-conformists, and they became pietistic Christians. Billy Graham observed in this connection that one of the major characteristics of the Jesus Movement was its "demand for an experience" with Jesus Christ. They emphasize that you have to have an encounter with Jesus Christ to be a Christian".[31] Time magazine likewise notes that the lives of the Jesus people "revolve around the necessity for an intense personal relationship with that Jesus and the belief that such a relationship should condition every human life."[32]

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[31]Graham, The Jesus Generation, p. 17.

[32]Time, June 21, 1972, p. 56.

VI. Universal Appeal

Revivals have always strived for a universal appeal within their community. Since 1740, Baptists, Episcipalians, Congregationalists, and Methodists have all shared the fruits of revivalism. In the First Great Awakening, the revivalists preached to anyone who would listen. W. W. Sweet says of George Whitefield that his work in America "was in the interest of no single religious body. He did not have a denominational hair on his head and could and did co-operate with all churches and ministers whose desire was to save souls."[33] Benjamin Franklin said of Whitefield; "The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermon were enormous.... It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless and indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious".[34] The preachers of the Great Awakening sought to reach all classes of men. They recognized no social distinctions; all were sinners and in need of salvation. They stressed the doctrine of brotherhood and equality in God's sight. In attempting to reach all people, the revivalists often relaxed their own convictions. Jonathan Dickinson, a leader in the

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[33]Sweet, Revivalism in America, pp. 32-33.

[34]As quoted in Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 37.

Presbyterian revivals in New Jersey, opposed creeds and confessions of faith. He held that "strict subscription to a creed, instead of being a bond of unity, would be a major cause of disunion."[35] Many of the revivalists felt like Dickinson, and in hopes of acheiving a wider appeal, many preachers of the Great Awakening kept only to the business of soul-saving and did not attempt to impose their denominational beliefs on the audience.

During the second Great Awakening of 1800, the major means of getting the gospel to the people was the camp meeting. These encampments welcomed all and were attended by many religious sects and denominations. When speaking of the gigantic Cane Ridge meeting, Weisberger comments that "technically the meeting was Presbyterian, but Baptist and Methodist preachers had come to join in, and there was room for them."[36] Church membership in all denominations had grown as a direct result of the revival. The appeal of the Second Great Awakening was genuinely universal.

During the Great Revival of 1857, the primary method of disseminating the gospel was through the noon prayer meeting. At these meetings, men of all religious persuasions came together to pray and "wait before the Lord."

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[35] Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 73.

[36] Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, p. 31.

Speaking of the Great Revival of 1857 a Bishop said in his diocesan address, "We have read of none of such extent; reaching at the same time so many people; scattered over such a length and breadth of territory; appearing in so many denominations of Christians, widely separated ecclesiastical institutions..."[37]

The fact that the Jesus Movement is striving for universal appeal is readily apparent in most investigations of this phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, the Jesus Movement recruited most of its membership from an already mixed religious group. The sub-culture from which the Jesus Movement was forged already contained Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews who had abandoned conventional society.

For most of these hippie-types, past religious ties were meaningless. When these youths gave up their old ways and became Christians, it was only incidental that they once were of a specific denomination.

It is interesting to note that the Jesus Movement has gone a step further than any of the past revivals, for its appeal is wide enough to include previously excluded groups. For instance, an underground movement is taking place in the Catholic Church; its members have been termed "Catholic Pentecostals" and have caused much

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[37] Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 235-36.

[38] Time. June 21, 1971, p. 56.

consternation on the part of orthodox Jews. In fact, in a recent issue of Newsweek there appears an article relating how the rabbis in New York City have banded together to squelch this "perversion of Judiasm."[39] In Time magazine, the following comment appears concerning the inclusiveness of the Jesus Movement: "Its appeal is ecumenical, attracting Roman Catholics and Jews, Protestants of every persuasion and many with no religion at all."[40]

VII. Interdenominationalism

The next element of the American Revival goes hand in hand with this striving for universal appeal. To appeal to all denominations, the revivalist has to belong to none; and for this reason—the major institutional churches in America have seldom played a major role in religious awakenings. W.W. Sweet contends that "revivalism is the individualizing of religion".[41] If this is true, then the purposes of the institutional church would appear contrary to those of revivalism because the church as an institution has always placed more emphasis on dogma and tradition than on evangelism. The various denominations in America, ranging from Roman Catholics and

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[39] Newsweek, April 17, 1972, vol. LXXIX, Number 16, p. 60.

[40] Time, June 21, 1971, p. 56.

[41] Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 27628.

Lutherans to Calvanists and Baptists, all subscribe implicitily at least, to the maxim that "to be contrary is to be wrong." They often give the impression that an attempt to individualize religion or to let a worshipper practice personal religion is a step away from orthodoxy and therefore heretical. The institutional church cannot play a major part in revivals because it is often caught up in specific points of doctrine, and instead of preaching the basic beliefs of Christianity they end up preaching the particularistic tenets of Calvanism, Anglicanism or Catholicism. The denominations have historically devoted most of their time and effort pursuing and perpetuating those beliefs and practices that make each distinctive from the others.

The revivalists must overlook many of these particularistic emphases in his denomination in order to save the souls of the many. For the most part, revivalists through out history have labored outside of the institutional churches. Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church for his sixteenth-century revival; John Wesley was asked to leave the Anglican Church for his revivalistic endeavors in the eighteenth century; and Theodore Frelinghuysen unwitingly formed his own church after a majority of the Dutch Reformed clergyman accused him of being a heretic.[42]

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[42]Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 27-28.

In America, the revivalist has also worked outside of the church, and few major American evangelists have ever voiced strict allegeance to a particular denomination. The revival has been a "people's movement" not a church movement.

The revivalistic preachers of the First Great Awakening met much opposition from both the established churches and the colonial governments. All revivalists came under attack at one time or another and many were barred from preaching in certain churches. The colony of Connecticut, for example, passed legislation in 1742 forbidding any minister to preach in any church not his own.[43]

There were many opponents of Jonathon Edwards. Among them was Charles Chauncy, a Boston minister who published a rejoinder in which he had gathered evidence testifying to the "extravagances practiced in connection with the Awakening."[44] In 1743, at a General Convention of Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts, Edwards was formally charged with "errors in doctrine". Although the charges were dismissed, a great controversy was stirred; and this controversy helped bring the Awakening to a quick end.

Theodore J. Frelinghysen was under constant attack

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[43]Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 56.

[44]Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 58.

by the well-to-do, members of the Dutch Reformed Church, the kind who generally gain control of institutionalized religion and seek to keep control of it.[45] The preaching of Frelinghuysen was pronounced heretical and his removal from his pulpit through the courts was attempted. An appeal was even made to the Governor to remove the "heretic". Although none of the attempts to censure Frelinghuysen were successful, his actions divided practically every Dutch Congregation in America.

The results of the preaching of George Whitefild were self-evident. He began as a member of the Church of England, but the established church was so intolerant of his views, that he was forced to join John Wesley in a new denomination, Methodism.

In the Second Great Awakening, the controversy was not whether or not to have a revival; the question was now over the kind of revival to have. To the Presbyterians and Congregationalists a genuine revival was one in which there was "no wildness and extravagance" and "very little commotion of the animal feelings".[46] Other members of these groups, however, went against the views of their traditional denominations and founded new sects such as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Stonites, both of whom insisted on incorporating emotionalism

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[45] Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 26.

[46] Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 125.

into their revivals. Contemporary to the later phases of the Second Great Awakening was Charles Finney. When he first appeared on the scene, other evangelical religious leaders such as Lyman Beecher and Nathaniel Taylor, disassociated themselves from him. The institutional church stood aghast at his "radical" measures and religious liberals condemned his "fanaticism". In 1836, at Oberlin College, Finney was accused of "using what was termed 'undignified means' of advertising his meetings...."He brought with him a great tent in which to hold meetings, and at the top center pole supporting the tent was a large streamer upon was written in large letters 'Holiness to the Lord'!."[47] His innovations such as daily meetings, and women praying in public, were highly suspect with many in the established churches. The revival effort of the Second Great Awakening was championed at the camp meetings by the evangelists; it was not a product of churches.

Finney's career lasted into the Great Revival of 1857; therefore, many of the stone feelings against the traditional denominations that had become associated with him were carried into that revival as well. The great success of the "Young Men's Christian Association" in this revival also engendered much controversy. Many church members

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[47]Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 136.

thought that the Young Men's Christian Association had betrayed them by taking members from the church buildings and have them meet in other places. The true thrust of the Revival of 1857, like all awakenings, was not spearheaded by the churches at all, but through public prayer meetings and service organizations.

The Great Awakening of 1971 is similar to past revivals in that the churches have had little involvement with The Jesus Movement. Rev. Robert Terwilliger of New York City's Trinity Institute says: "There is a revival everywhere except in the Church".[48] Most of the Jesus People were alienated from traditional society before they became involved with the Jesus Movement. When they embraced religion they continued this alienation by simply becomming Christians outside of society's church. For example, Duane Pederson, the publisher of the largest Jesus Paper, The Hollywood Free Press, openly condemns the Institutional Church and flaunts the fact that he does not belong to it.[49]

The Jesus Movement has developed outside of the churches because the loyalties of its followers are to a personal savior not to a social institution. Many disavow allegience to any traditional denomination and profess allegience

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[48] Time, June 21, 1971, p. 56.

[49] Emoth, Ericson, Peters, Jesus People, p. 78.

only to Jesus. Most reject any denominational label and attend only religious church meetings in homes. A clergyman from Houston, Texas, John Bisagno,. expresses concern that the traditional church will reciprocate by rejecting the "Jesus Freaks": "All I know is that kids are turning on to Jesus. My concern is that the staid, traditional churches will not reject these kids and miss the most genuine revival of our lifetime."[50] The Jesus Movement is a movement back in time, back to the Apostolic age when all believers were called Christians and all meetings were in the home.

VIII. Salvation

The final element common to American Awakenings is the emphasis on salvation. Then the central concern of a preacher becomes the soul of a perspective Christian, and not his membership in the church, the preacher is less likely to insist that the person seeking salvation agree with him on every trivial point of doctrine. Such evangelical preachers stress major points common to most denominations. The revivalist generally preaches only the need to repent of sins and to accept Jesus as his Saviour. Anything more than that is superfluous to the purposes of the revivalist. He is not there not to educate, but

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[50] Time, June 21, 1971, p. 63.

to save.

While methods have changed throughout the history of American revivals, these changes have not altered the fundamental objective of salvation, because "the purpose of all revivals is to bring sinners to repentance and to win them to lives of faith and obedience."[51] Prayer has always been a method of dispensing the Gospel, and is an important part of the Jesus Movement. At the Calvary Chapel in southern California, for example, the Jesus people "will form a big circle, heads lifted upward softly singing and praying."[52]

In the First Great Awakening, the primary means of relating the Gospel was preaching. In the Second Great Awakening the primary means of communicating the Gospel was the camp meting. In the Great Revival, the "Union Prayer Meeting" and the use of tracts were the primary methods employed. The Jesus Movement seems to combine all of these methods in one form or another; preaching still plays an important part, and, the large Jesus Festivals are reminstant of the frontier camp meetings. Moreover, there are many underground newspapers and tracts being passed out, and there are gigantic home "union meetings".

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[51] Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, p. 1074.

[52] Emoth, Ericson, Peters, The Jesus People, p. 89.

The modern mass media also provide a completely twentieth-century means of getting the "Good News" to the people. Television and newspapers have given generous coverage to the Jesus Movement. Methods have changed, but an element common to all revivals is the need to communicate the Gospel of salvation in its purest and simplest form to the people.

Frank Beardsley made an interesting and prophetic comment in 1904. When he observed:

> It has been asserted that revivals are but temporal phenomena of religious life, and must ultimately pass away. Methods which do not constitute the permanent elements in revivals, much change, in fact are changing, so that revivals as we now know them may pass away, but with the passing of the old, newer and better methods will be devised, so that all revivals in some form or another will survive...[53]

Many people have failed to recognize the form or understand the methods used by the Jesus Movement, and for this reason they fail to see it as a genuine revival. Billy Graham was not so blinded by new form and new method. He recently observed that "America is on the verge of the greatest religious revival in its history. Nearly all observers agree that a major spiritual phenomenon is taking shape in young America."[54]

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[53]Beardsley, History of American Revivals, p. 313.

[54]Christianity Today, November 5, 1971, pp. 4-5.

In the history of colonial and national America, there have been only a few instances when religious interest and enthusiasm have reached a truely fervant pitch. These periods when large segments of American society have seemed to be suddenly awakened to the realm of religion have been termed religious "awakenings". The past religious awakenings seem to have held several elements in common. Among these common traditions are: 1.) a perceived declension in religious interest prior to the awakening, 2.) an emphasis on pietism, 3.) universal appeal, 4.) occurence ouside of America's traditional denominations, and 5.) an emphasis on the need to bring the "sinner" to salvation. These five characteristics have been shown to appear in the First Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening, and the Great Revival of 1857. When the current religious phenomenon commonly called The Jesus Movement is compared to these past religious awakenings, it is apparent that the Jesus Movement shows striking similarities to all of the five traditions that were characteristic of previous "awakenings". Will Herberg is correct. The Jesus Movement has placed itself "squarely in the line of 200 years of American revivalism" and is indeed the Great Awakening of 1971.

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