

## Jesus Now: Hogwash and Holy Water

**S**WEPT ALONG IN THE SQUALL of *Peace on Right Now* *You-Name-It Against The War* placards at the Spring Offensive in San Francisco waved a flimsy blue poster with drippy red lettering that read *Jesus: A Bridge Over Troubled Waters*. The bearer wasn't a collared cleric or a Youth Fellowship chalking up merit points for heaven, but a scroungy, ponchoed, bell-bottomed veteran of the streets. Anyone at all familiar with what is happening in California simply nodded a recognition—ah, a Jesus freak—accepted his tract and plowed on to the polo field. A few stopped and stared, obviously shaken to their Sunday School roots by the very idea of freak evangelism, a fairly new breed in the hip-liberation menagerie. But there he was, marching right-on along with

the red armbands, the lavender headbands, the brown berets, the black berets, the inverted flags, the hardstepping women, the saffron robes and the green earth insignias. And this barefoot boy with his flimsy blue bridge-over-troubled-waters certainly did not seem to have come at the wrong time or to the wrong place with whatever message he had to give America in the Seventies.

The message of Jesus-freaks, in case you haven't been able to skim their tracts or sit still through their spiel, is simply down-home, Jesus-is-the-way, evangelical fundamentalism delivered with flower-child innocence and visionary fervor. The movement is incredibly broad-based. There are over 200 Jesus communes in California alone, a Jesus headquarters coffeehouse or headshop in every

by James Nolan

Photograph by Elihu Blotnick/BBM

major city in the country, and missionary troops in motion everywhere, converting, founding, funding and then moving on. The large wall map at the Christian World Liberation Front in Berkeley is studded with pinheads marking the places where the movement has taken root, giving you the same they're-really-out-there feeling of a Howard Johnson's placemat map. Despite the bare feet and patches, it really is big time stuff, concentrated mostly along the West Coast in Vancouver, Seattle, the Bay Area and Los Angeles, with another contingent distributed throughout the South. Most Jesus communes publish amateurish underground newspapers and bear names like the folksy Children of God Soul Clinic, the obscure Koinonia Community, and the clever House of the Risen Son.

American blow-your-mind, zappo-revolutionary kids are literally flocking into these fundamentalist conversion parlors and coming out with handfuls of psychedelic-looking tracts, a "Biblical" set of morals and big Billy James Hargis friend-do-you-know-the-Lord grins. The Jesus houses offer a place to crash indefinitely, free food and free medical care, a toothbrush and comb, enough to do and more than enough to believe in; and there's usually a Mother or Daddy figure who, despite the preaching and soul-saving, really seems to care, and won't make you cut your hair. All in all, it's an unbeatable combination if you're 18 years old, a runaway from some cowtown Paducah or plastic Executive Oaks, used to dropping acid by the six-pack, alone and penniless in the ghetto-zoo, fucked-up and fucked-over, testing around for some ultimate reality trip, with nothing to do and no place in particular to do it.

The Jesus trip is particularly attractive to children brought up in staunchly religious homes (there are many former Catholics and Baptists) or to kids reared on suburban textbook agnosticism, the ones who are lost even before they've found anything to be lost from. Most of the converted are between 14 and 20, and they possess an amazingly glowing energy and commitment, all shining as though they've just washed their hair. Maybe the Jesus movement is only a later version of Love-Generation-Haight-Ashbury optimism, the flowers-and-transcendence stage of growing up American, that will eventually turn the same worn path to skepticism and militancy when they reach 23.

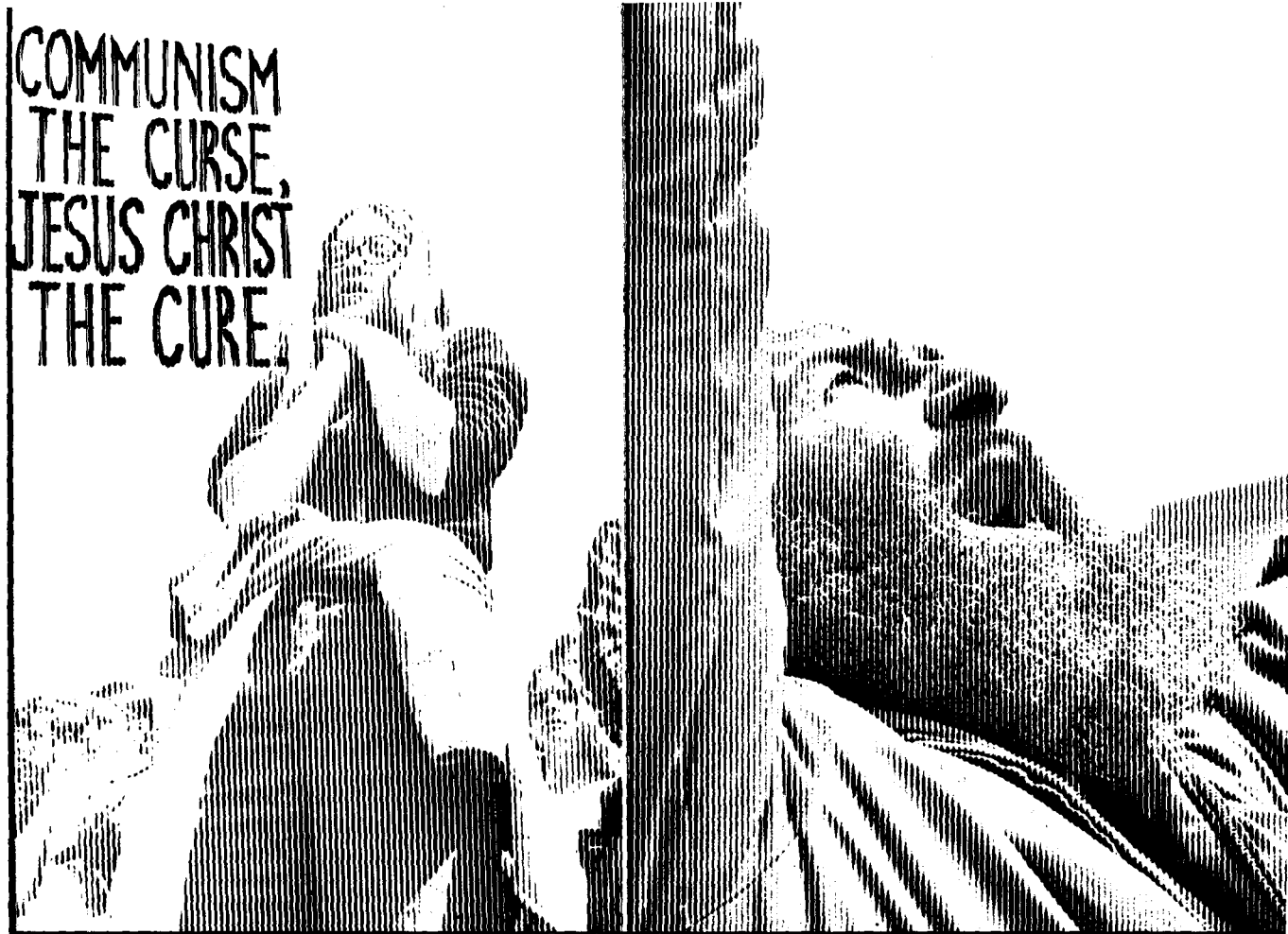
**B**UT IT CAN'T BE THIS ALONE. There is a great difference between an imported novelty fetish like, say, Hare Krishna—which is essentially hip faddism in search of faith, a turn-on that soon burns itself out into a religion of Indian-print bedspreads and incense, and deeply ingrained, evangelical Christianity—upon which, they tell us, this Nation of Ours was founded and the West was Won. They are partially right, of course. And, even if Jesus was not in cahoots with Christopher Columbus and Kit Carson, Bible Belt Christianity is not simply another American fad—it runs too deep in too many people. Like that trout-fishing cabin in Utah, it is at least what part of America is all about. Whether the new masses of Jesus-freaks are only visiting or whether they plan to stay, they are pitching their tents very close to one of the main arteries of the American heart.

Jesus-freaks have introduced only a few real variations to Bible-pounding, tent-revival, fundamentalist Christianity, among them street language (Jesus is no longer Lord and Savior but Leader and Liberator) and the communal lifestyle. But over-arching all else is a passionate belief that the world will end within their lifetime while Jesus returns to rapture them off to a very literal heaven with streets of gold and angels twanging on electric-amp harps, the thought of which clouds their eyes and leaves them murmuring "fa-a-ar out."

Fundamentalists are a tricky lot. Between the ages of 6 and 12 I probably gave my life to Christ about two or three hundred times in the fundamentalist church in New Orleans that I was combed and bow-tied off to every Sunday morning. *Are you washed in the blood of the lamb? Do you recognize yourself as a miserable sinner wretched in God's sight? Are you ready to get down on your knees and accept Jesus into your heart as your own personal savior? All those ready to make a decision for Christ, just step on up to the front of the church and praise* deedum deedum deedee. Sunday morning was bringing in the sheaves (and usually the same old ones), followed by the Sunday evening Saved for Christ Scoreboard, followed by Bible study with Dixie cups of punch and cookies, everyone feverishly fanning himself in the sultry New Orleans night with picture fans of Jesus-in-the-Garden-of-Gethsemane supplied by a local mortuary. It was a hell of a way to grow up, I suppose, but I eventually felt secure enough in my solid-rock salvation to sneak off to the drugstore from Bible study to read *Playboy*, though not without the puffy red face of the preacher following me in my mind, exhorting me to give my life to Christ again.

The fundamentalist works on an appeal to guilt, which suburban drop-outs are particularly full of, on a thundering fear of hell and a candy-sweet promise of heaven, on a complete negation of any other possible means to happiness, and on a repetition of phrases so unrelenting as to make a Madison Avenue advertiser stutter. You either give in or walk out. His pitch is an express train with only one stop: your salvation. All questions are answered by vague and enigmatic Bible quotations followed by chapter and verse number so that you cannot *possibly* doubt their truth, and key simplicities are underlined in verbal red. If you protest even the slightest, you are told that Satan has planted his seed in your brain, a notion with disturbing implications to be sure, and, if you protest too much, you are told that you are possessed of a demon from which only the blood of Jesus Christ can deliver you. Then it starts all over again, back to original sin and the goddamned Garden of Eden. In the end, if you become a passive enough listener, you are rewarded with a paperback Bible, the converter tape-loop is shut-off, pleasantries are exchanged about automobiles or summer vacations, and you can leave, promising to read the Bible and "look over" the tract.

**I** O.D.'D ON PEANUT BUTTER WHEN I was 10 and fundamentalism when I was 12 and haven't been able to stand the taste of either since. Every time I hear the familiar strains of one of those mournful old hymns, I gag on years of undigested punch and cookies. I can make no pretense about my feelings about fundamentalist



theology, fundamentalist evangelism and the whole fundamentalist fandango of faith-healing, Bible-beating and tent-shouting: it's hogwash. It is a political opiate and a psychological crutch. Fundamentalism is truly the wading pool of religious faith, reserved for the fearful, the guilt-ridden and the childish, for those unprepared to dive, to make their faith leap into a political reality or mystical depth.

In America, fundamentalism has always been associated with the forces of political reaction, with the blathering God-on-our-side cross and flag confusers, and, even worse, with the phony racketeers of religious ecstasy, the Elmer Gantry of *Miracle* magazine or the Oral Roberts variety who feed on the hopelessness of uneducated minorities who cough up ten dollars a month or more so that some sleazy preacher with a slick-backed pompadour and sequin jacket will pray over miniature healing aprons to cure them of their vitamin deficiencies and other ghetto diseases, all of which is nothing less than a kind of lower-class voodoo. Most peculiar about Jesus-freaks is the combined tradition of middle-class hypocrisy and lower-class viciousness out of which they bloom, with their flowers and smiles and God-bless-you's. The sources and purveyors of this tradition were the first to prey upon this open-armed innocence, with the greasy *Miracle* magazine and the staid *Christianity Today* being among the first to report the Jesus Movement.

Fundamentalist theologian Carl F. H. Henry writes in *Christianity Today* that Jesus-freaks have "succeeded in redirecting the revolutionary enthusiasm of not a few converts into recreative channels and toward durable

Christian goals." Few young Jesus-freaks understand the perspective in which their leaders and elders see them: they just want to stand in white robes on mountain tops and wait for the light show of the Second Coming. They do not see themselves as long-haired chalk-ups on the large conversion scoreboard, as part of a power-game whose rules, goals and techniques have not changed one bit in the last hundred years or more. After all, they are told, we are not of this world.

Reverend Blessit of "His Place" on Sunset Strip in Los Angeles is a particularly flashy example of this Campus Crusade for Christ mentality, boutiqued over with paste-board psychedelic finish and restocked on the shelves as the Real Thing for the Youth Market, the Uncola of religious persuasion, bearing about as close a resemblance to anything revolutionary as those cleverly advertised, insipid little cheese-nothings, Screaming Yellow Zonkers, had to the nutrition revolution.

This plasticine selling-of-the-revolution is operating on all levels now, and is particularly aimed at media-impressionable teeny- and micro-boppers. And it should be no surprise that the evangelism industry—which has used everything from Motown to motel-drawers in the past to push its product—should shift into the third-gear of its get-with-it campaign and begin strutting its stuff with a hippie-drug-cult border around it. Reverend Blessit, duded up in bell-bottoms and his "hippie vest," does the rock-festival circuit, bringing in the sheaves by sowing psychedelic brochures, sandwiches with tracts tucked inside, and frothing around on stage with such big-name Decisions for Christ



as the manager of the Chambers Brothers. The marriage of Pop myths and evangelism is almost as perfect a union as the one between Hollywood and establishment politics, both based on the manipulation of empty media myths to extort either souls or votes from the star-struck masses.

Even Pat Boone, who was last seen posing for the covers of Pony Tail autograph albums, has white-buckled it back on the scene, and now peppers his ever-wholesome sermonettes with hip argot as he conducts mass baptisms in his Beverly Hills swimming pool, walking with floppy flipper feet and chlorinated eyes down the paths of righteousness.

SITTING AROUND THE NICELY table-clothed, properly-set dinner table at Harvest House "commune" in San Francisco, brought an incredible psychological flashback to my punch-and-cookie years in Youth Fellowship. The feeling was amazingly the same, a sort of strained institutional good humor. Pass the biscuits and praise the Lord. Talking with the soft-spoken, Alabama-bred Oliver Heath, an ordained minister of the Southern Baptist Church and graduate of the Golden Gate Theological Seminary in Marin County, a fundamentalist school which is the seedbed of the Jesus movement in northern California, while his Louisiana-bred wife, Mary Louise, padded about in fluffy pink bedroom slippers and curlers serving up cornbread and potluck, it really felt like a corner of Kansas pocketed by comic mistakes in the teeming heavy freak scene of Haight-Ashbury.

A shaggy young hippie-type in a corner was for some reason knotted into a red tie and starched white collar with an ill-fitting grey sport-coat, and kept giving me that strangled home-for-the-holidays look which I remember only too well. He looked as though he were trying to win the keys to the family car for the night by painfully self-conscious good behavior. Oliver kept interrupting our discussion of original sin and repentance to deliver stern reprimands to various scruffies: "Eric, you know you're not allowed to smoke in here, put that cigarette out!" and "Dennis, don't you have a comb!" Eric, the communal scapegoat, at 17 is so disoriented by his 100 or more acid trips that he would bring back groceries to the wrong apartment door, and therefore, the others explained, could not be trusted, so everyone prayed constantly for his soul to be purged of its demons. And Dennis was having Satan's seed planted in his brain by such Little Rascals' naughties as not coming home right after school but sneaking off to some suspicious Haight hash house, where he brushed shoulders with the devil's crowd, all fanged and horned and high on the Killer Weed.

At Harvest House there was much talk of the Enemy, who was on guard at all times, waiting for any opportunity to slither into their midst like some green gaseous malevolence sent from below. A young girl named Rose Marie, who seemed to become upset often, pleaded to the others that she needed to be left alone when she was disturbed, but the others insisted that such was the easiest time for Satan to stick a lie into her head. *The devil gonna git your soul, honey.* Huddling like a small child in a large, over-stuffed armchair, Rose Marie seemed close to freaking out.

Like a camp shower room, all the towels in the bathroom were pegged and labeled *Mary, Johnny, Sue* and so forth; and for some reason that simpy Sunday School picture of Jesus-in-the-Garden-of-Gethsemane was iconed over the toothbrush rack, probably to remind early morning brushers of their oft-bannered slogan: *after Jesus, everything else is toothpaste.* The orderly atmosphere, I was informed, was enforced in order to keep the "children" together—but not too together, for according to the strict precepts of Biblical morality (no screwing without a license), the boys and girls are carefully chaperoned and sleep in segregated quarters because "too much friction between the sexes tends to distract from the Lord's work."

THE LORD'S WORK AT HARVEST HOUSE consists of putting out a Jesus newspaper called the *Oracle* (which is an almost campy, religious, calendar-art revival of the old Haight-Ashbury *Oracle*), running a free store, printing tracts, helping to manage three adjoining communes in the city, and evangelizing in the streets. After Bible study at a local church that evening, the commune regathered for a sort of community encounter with each other. One wide-eyed young man confessed that, when he thought of all the things he had done wrong that very day, it was like going up and hitting God right in the mouth, WHAMMM. A very pregnant girl offered that, since she had become a Christian, she couldn't associate with her friends—they are "so steeped in sin," as she had been. Oliver told the group: "If you think



I'm a phony, if you think I'm dishonest, if you think I'm not like Jesus, tell me now." Everyone beamed. A 17 year old volunteered that he now felt closer to his parents (since he accepted Jesus) than ever before, and that his father had taught him not to lie and, even after all the acid and all the meth, that still made sense.

Spontaneous eruptions of conscience continued for about an hour, moving around the room like some T-group rendition of the White Tornado. My heart sank. Here it all was—the entire American mythology of growing up, freaking out, and running away; the well-powdered, Bible-preaching forces of Aunt Em, Aunt Sally, Miss Crabtree, confronting the primitive scraggly-haired, dirty faces of the perverse, freedom-loving Dorothy, Huck Finn and Our Gang; and Aunt Sally was winning. Dorothy had finally made it back to hug her Aunt Em and gasp about the bad dreams she had just tripped through. The high school drop-outs in the room were all going back to school, the rest were getting jobs and re-establishing contact with their parents or going home. Intuitively I realized what the Jesus trip really meant to a lot of these kids; it is a way of getting back to Kansas from the tortured and confusing psychedelic world of surreal low-life munchkins, witches and wizards, back to the comfort and reassurance of your own backyard. Back from the drop-a-tab, crash-pad spirituality of cross-country hitchhiking, of protesting and confronting, of open-ended grooving that somehow always ended with the needle, getting busted, having your head swagger-sticked open, or getting pregnant. I didn't, I couldn't, have any more questions of these people.

I still think Aunt Sally with her comb and her toothbrush and her Bible is a stifling bitch, but I know those dead-ends that the river can lead to, and that sometimes you have to try to get back to where you once belonged. This, Oliver explained to me, is the function of Harvest House and others like it: it is a hospital, a half-way house back to stability and wholeness through, he added, Jesus Christ. There is a time to argue theology, and I think his is wrong. There is a time to argue politics, and I think, whether he knows it or not, his are reactionary. There is a time to argue the revolution, and the Jesus-movement is definitely *not* where it's happening. But there is also a time to shut up and let people heal. And this, if Harvest House can accomplish it, may be worth all the rest.

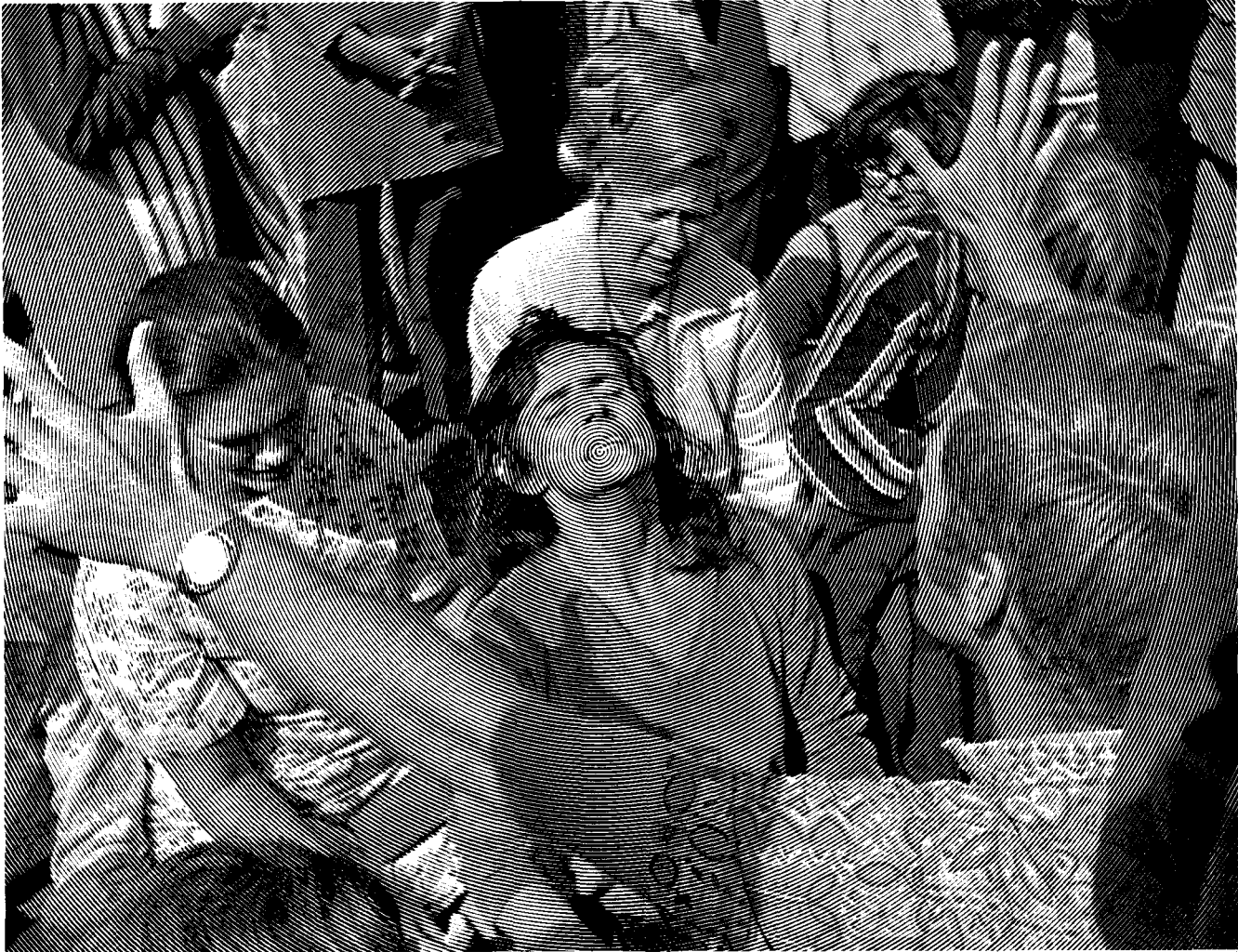
**T**HE JESUS MOVEMENT'S RECOGNITION of, and struggle with, the literal presence of the Satanic forces of darkness is a phenomenon preceded in America only by Cotton Mather's persecution of his neighbors as witches in Salem over two hundred and fifty years ago. Mather's account of the witch epidemic, *Wonders of the Invisible World*, a book which has puzzled and fascinated history and theology students for centuries, would make complete sense to these people. That's how freaked-out certain elements in the movement *really* are. Ecstatic religious practices, such as speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*, rolling on the floor, and raising arms heavenward and shouting, are common in the movement—although many prefer to sit with their legs crossed and study the Bible.

The Pentecostals, who speak in tongues and writhe about, have been making quite an impact lately not only in Protestant circles but also in Catholicism, but most Jesus people feel as estranged from the established Pentecostal churches as they do from their icier Methodist brethren. Margaret Ravick, the remarkable Big Mama of the Koinonia Community in Santa Cruz, says that when she listened to her first tape of Pentecostals she accidentally played the thing backwards, and for at least two weeks that is what she thought it sounded like to speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues is simply the gibberish, or angelic secret language, that descends on certain individuals in ecstatic fits of spiritual communication. Although they feel that psychedelics are the instruments of Satan, it certainly seems that their widespread use has been the very thing which has turned most Jesus people on to the realities of the spiritual realm. For the ecstasies, acid is almost a conversion prerequisite. The kids have the visions and blow out; and the evangelists put them together again by explaining what their visions mean—structuring, out of a nightmarish morass of tripping, a Biblical value system of significances, interpretations and codes, functioning as a poor man's Jung to the overloaded and chaotically explored psyches of acid-heads.

Identifying itself with the armies of God, Koinonia Community is currently waging war with the Satanist churches in Santa Cruz, which they say are everywhere. Recently it exorcised, in the name of Jesus Christ, a particular accident-ridden location on the main highway after discovering that a coven of witches and warlocks lives only a few yards away. Koinonia claims that the Satanist churches are becoming tightly organized, cutting their hair and mustering their energies for the final knock-down, drag-out battle with God. A crew-cut, collared priest was recently turned away from their doors because Michael, who possesses the gift of discerning evil spirits because he was once occupied by one, detected him to be a spy of Satan. The community later linked the priest to a large Satanist church in the area.

According to this particular band of Jesus people (who assert that they were there before the plastic Jesus-freak movement started and will be there when it is over), the occult is the devil's map of the spiritual world, and the Bible of course is God's map. They believe that the real battle being waged in California is not between reactionary Reaganism and the people, or between pollution and ecology, but between the forces of God, and those of Satan; and this is one of the first battles of the Apocalypse, or the final separation of light from darkness. The state not being big enough for both of them, perhaps they'll swagger out the swinging saloon door all holstered up for a showdown, shoot-it-out, mini-Armageddon, with black cloaks flying and brandished crosses gleaming in some wildly surrealistic alcove on the dramatically appropriate California coastline.

**E**XAMINED CLOSELY, THE JESUS MOVEMENT really separates into three distinct directions: the ecstasies, who live in relative seclusion; the do-good evangelists, who run the Jesus crashpads; and the quasi-politicos, who bait left-wing causes and occasionally



disrupt radical rallies and congregations, while insisting they are apolitical. "Everyone says we're something we're not," protests Jeanette, a worker at the Christian World Liberation Front in Berkeley. "The right-wing says we're a bunch of long-haired communists and the left-wing says we're reactionaries."

Because the Jesus movement does claim apoliticism, it has attracted numerous disillusioned campus radicals and street revolutionaries who now argue that nothing can be accomplished on *that level*. "I don't believe in the peace movement," said a young Jesus-freak handing me a tract at the spring offensive, "but I believe in Jesus who can bring peace." Jeanette, who was, strangely enough, turned on to drugs by fellow workers at the Campus Crusade for Christ in southern California and did not repent until her third dope bust, feels that Jesus is a non-political answer. But the CWLF newspaper, *Right On*, and the reams of tracts which CWLF prints and distributes are nothing but half-baked and awkward attempts at political relevancy, written from a perspective which dissolves every issue into the world cynicism and downright doomsday-preaching of the fundamentalist salvation formula.

In an age of choose-your-apocalypse—ecological, political thermonuclear, social, famine, over-population, natural disaster (experts say it's *all* about to happen) this doomsday-preaching has an infantile appeal. It is the chief drawing

card of the hippie-evangelist as he whips out his Book of Revelation and rattles through a cookbook account of how it all will come to pass. "I'll be so disappointed if the world doesn't end soon," one Jesus person told me with a look of gleeful death-obsession on his face. The end is so near, one tract advises, that there is no point even in getting married—stay celibate until Armageddon and save it all up for the Second Coming.

THE JESUS MOVEMENT MUST NOT be confused with the left-wing underground church, which preaches the full exercise of the Christian social conscience against the war and against oppression of any kind, which affirms the celebration of life on earth, not the other-worldly negation of it. The Free Church in Berkeley and Glide Memorial in San Francisco, two Bay Area underground churches, have been at constant odds with the Jesus people. One Sunday last autumn the Jesus freaks stormed Glide with posters announcing: "This Congregation Uses Jesus but Does not Honor Him as Lord" and pushed tracts titled, "Glide into Hell." The week before, a band of Jesus people made up of members of the CWLF, the Jesus Mobilization Committee of Marin, and other Bay Area communes, started such a row at the West Coast SDS conference that they were bodily removed from the gathering.



Whenever the members of the God Squad *do* express a political sentiment, in some evangelical attempt at relevancy, it is consistently reactionary. The CWLF's attitude toward Women's Liberation is, according to *Right On*, that "the real power of a woman is in loving a man. Let Jesus free you from yourself and free you to love a man. When you love a man, you will know what it is to be a woman. And you will see how only God can liberate women." As far as Gay Liberation is concerned, they simply feel that it is an "awful thing to do." And they do not allow homosexual couples to spend the night on their premises.

Despite the see-through veil of apoliticism and despite hard-sell pseudo-militancy, the Jesus movement is rife for a takeover by right-wing sugar-daddies. Already they control a small part of it. The Jesus newspaper, *For Real*, published in Buena Park, California, by the Living Issues Foundation, is "a dedicated effort to counteract the evil influences on campuses today by radical and anti-God elements. . . . *For Real* takes aim at that large fringe element who are being influenced by what the agitators are saying." Sandwiched between the turn-on-with-Jesus spreads, the Jesus-rock advertisements, and the pseudo-relevant articles on Leary and Women's Lib, *For Real* contains pro-militaristic, anti-welfare, capitalist harangues.

As to the financial source of all these free newspapers, free pass-outs, free food and lodging, the Jesus people respond with big lilies-of-the-field smiles: the Lord Provideth. And the Lord worketh in some pretty mysterious ways, they'll say, reeling out stories of \$10 bills wrapped in toilet paper sent in the mail every month, commune members' back paychecks arriving miraculously on rent day as the landlord menacingly twirls his moustache, \$50 for car payments sent from churches back home in Alabama. Despite their patches-and-leftovers life style, Jesus people usually have an impressive business set-up. One example is Harvest House which, together with Zion's Inn, a Jesus commune in nearby Marin County, have formed the Solid Rock Construction Company, which does housepainting. Most of the communes have prospered because of a Calvinist dedication to hard work and self-improvement, making carpenters, printers and soup-makers of the aimless kids who stumble in. The kids seem to enjoy the work, bustling about with sacks of flour and bundles of paper with a door-to-door-for-McCarthy cheerfulness. After all, with no dope or sex or Zap Comix or TV, what else is there to do?

**S**UDDENLY, JESUS IS EVERYWHERE. Jesus buttons, Jesus sweatshirts, Honk-if-you-love-Jesus bumper-stickers, Jesus day-glo posters, Jesus on the cover of the *Whole Earth Supplement*, Jesus comics, the Jesus, look, *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, Jesus rock.

Jesus is even more popular than John Lennon. Put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee, how I changed from Krishna to Christ, how I lost 300 lbs. and saved my marriage with Jesus. Somehow fundamentalist evangelism has caught up with mass media and is plastering stickers, converting rock stars and plugging in amps all over the place.

As people lose their grip on the revolution, they seem to be grasping for absolutes. In the heavily moralistic South,

the Jesus line seems appropriate—else no one would listen. But in the super-relativistic do-your-own-thing, mobile California scene, it is jarring. Yet it is perhaps this absolutism which attracts the blown-out 17 year old who simply has nothing to do. High school has not prepared him for anything creative or constructive; it has only driven him to drop acid three times a week. Once that's done, it is impossible to be processed through the mind-cannery of a large university for very long. Nor can he go back home to the carport and a bag-boy job in the supermarket. With neither answers nor alternatives, with the visionary acid world of angels and demons his only certainty, the fast-talking, self-confident preacher steps in and puts his big Biblical foot down, taps it in a few familiar rhythms, stamps it in the fervor of his belief and everything falls into place.

The real issue at stake here is that drug-blown, pop-freaked, ego-defenseless kids, who in their innocence, openness and idealism are truly beautiful, can easily become the victims of a desperate evangelism of any kind—that, just as a handful of Hell's Angels can stomp in and take over a pop festival, a small collection of bell-bottomed Baptists and, at worst, Elmer Gantry's, can begin to redirect whole generations into their scripture-lined tents. It is the same with the Scientologists, the chanters, the T-groupies, the occultists and certain of the liberationist bandwagons.

The preacher does not offer a choice between a confusing array of life styles and locations, but rather a choice between eternal salvation and eternal damnation—which isn't a choice at all. Whether the content of his message is hogwash or holy water doesn't make too much difference. Whether these evangelistic Christians are, as Nietzsche accused, predatory birds who swoop down on weak life in distress or, in a more charitable view, fanatical do-gooders with an overly developed, paternal sense, makes little difference. The fact is, these people, and the leaders of other mass movements like them, are bringing freaked-out kids down and placing them in a community situation where roles are assigned and talents encouraged.

Mything-out on Jesus, though, is not too different from spacing-out on drugs; and once Jesus has brought them down from drugs, what's going to bring them down from Jesus? This kind of ultimate-trip carousel will continue to spin as long as, America being what it is now, there is nothing to come down to. So finally, a message to Jesus-boppers: If your apocalypse does not happen on schedule, and if and when you are lemming off in some new direction, realizing the torment and difficulty of true sainthood and that salvation is not just a shot of anything away, spare us one vision: a littered, trampled post-festival shambles with Jesus Christ, a blown-out superstar, back where he started, unplugging the amps and picking up the empty dixie punch cups and sweeping up the cookie crumbs scattered by the marauding packs of crowded, lonely people: no one was saved.

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*James Nolan is a poet from New Orleans now living in Sonoma County, California.*

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## Move Over Mayor Daley: Here comes Frank Rizzo

IT WAS MAY 18, 1971, IN PHILADELPHIA and the huge man with the slicked-down hair and the wide smile was addressing a television camera and talking about his victory in the Democratic mayoralty primary race. The candidate, the former police commissioner of Philadelphia who had resigned in February to seek the Mayor's chair, was Frank Rizzo, the man who had used the media to build so powerful an image that now, when he was seeking the highest post in the nation's fourth largest city, he literally did not have to wage a campaign. He spoke with the media only in tightly controlled situations; his campaign appearances were limited only to favorable audiences in friendly neighborhoods; he granted interviews only to "friendly" writers and commentators; he refused to address the city council on financial matters; and he refused all debates and joint appearances with the other three candidates. What Frank Rizzo did, was tell the faithful about the civics books and how he had learned at a very early age that "Only in America" could a man without a high school or college degree or a personal fortune become the Mayor of a city like Philadelphia.

To appreciate the irony of that moment and of the Democratic primary in Philadelphia, one need only reach back

a few years in Philadelphia history when Rizzo was constructing his image by staging heavily publicized raids on center coffeehouses, by running longhairs out of Rittenhouse Square, by trying to close down the local rock hall, the Electric Factory, by boasting about his file of 1800 subversives, by detailing "revolutionary" plots aimed at him, the city and the country, flamboyant plots which local reporters loved but which mysteriously never seemed to produce any convictions once the cases reached court.

Shortly after Rizzo's resignation as Police Commissioner, two officers were murdered within a five-hour period on a Saturday night and early Sunday morning. The new commissioner, Joseph O'Neill, a tough, silent type, conducted the search for the killers in an unemotional, professional manner. Tom Fox, a columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, and one of the major architects of the Rizzo image (Fox being a gifted writer), walked into O'Neill's office to discuss progress in the case.

"A helluva way to break in a commissioner," Fox said.

O'Neill stared blankly at Fox.

Fox, lunging for an angle, laughed somewhat nervously, then said, "You're a lot different than Rizzo. . . . If Rizzo were here, he'd be storming around . . . ranting and raving."