



-- FEATURES
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82-25

Second in a Series:

Jesus Movement

Spawns Industry

By Walker L. Knight

AB

Of all the Jesus Movement legacies, perhaps none exceeds its healthy contribution to new forms of Christian music. The result of the breakthrough of contemporary sound to sacred verse has been the mushrooming growth of the Christian music market.

Today its estimated annual gross tops \$100 million on tapes and records, with sheet music reaching \$75 million, and gate receipts of about 500 Christian artists totaling \$50 million.

No event in the 1980s duplicates the excitement of the Jesus Movement as does Creation '81, a contemporary music festival staged in the rolling fields outside Lancaster, Pa. Featuring nationally known musical groups, drama, comedy, art and renowned speakers, Creation '81 drew people of all ages, races, manner of dress--but again, young adults predominate. The Jesus Movement heritage of openness to everyone, celebration of God's gifts, victory in Jesus permeated the crowd.

Harry Thomas, promoter of Creation '81 and Jesus '81 in Orlando, Fla., says the festivals are risky business. "Only five out of 11 major and another 15 smaller festivals broke even or made money," he says. "One director lost his home, another his business when their festivals lost money."

One manifestation of the Jesus Movement which did not involve music occurred in February 1970 at tiny Asbury College in Wilmore, Ky. Professor C.B. Hunter, a faculty advisor more or less in charge of the event, remembers: "It started toward the close of chapel. A faculty member felt there was such a great spirit of God an invitation ought to be extended. People began to come.

"From then on people kept coming to the little wooden altar. Maybe 50 people could kneel at one time. Without stopping, we had revival and witnessing without any preaching for eight days and nights.

"When classes were not in session, the revival continued for another eight days. Finally, the services were reduced to nights through the last day of May."

Students shared their experiences throughout Kentucky and eventually into most areas of the United States. They reached Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where their testimony became the catalyst for a revival on that campus. Jack Gray, professor of missions, remembers, "We heard each other; we saw each other's tears. You saw their agony; you saw their sudden burst of joy, and you saw that radical change the days after."

Other students spoke at Southern seminary, witnessed in scores of Southern Baptist churches. Southwestern students carried the renewal into other parts of the denomination.

Gray concludes, "The Jesus Movement gave us a large set of redeemed people and showed us that God is still in the business of breaking some old shells, some old wineskins. It showed us that there is something genuine in that which arises outside the church."

The Jesus revolution touched "straights" as well as counterculture, adds Roy Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern: "We still feel the effect in that we not only get students who were converted during the Jesus revolution, but I think the emphasis on youth in that particular mild spiritual awakening gave to youth a new credibility. We see the effects in our large enrollments in the seminaries."

One Baptist leader to sense the potential of the Jesus Movement was Harry Williams, who became director of evangelism for California Southern Baptists in 1970. Closely involved with the California expressions of the Jesus Movement, Williams lists five legacies:

First, a higher visibility for evangelicals.

Second, the revolutionizing of Christian music; some radio stations now play only Christian music.

Third, the churches are more open.

Fourth, dress code is different; it's not uncommon to see youth in church in jeans, even adult dress is more relaxed.

Finally, with church youth directors, youth are given new leadership roles and opportunities for service in addition to traditional SBC youth organizations.

Many denominations benefited from the sweep of the Jesus Movement but few, thinks John Havlik of the Home Mission Board evangelism section, gained as much as Southern Baptists, simply because the denomination has a genius for organization.

Havlik thinks the Jesus Movement was an attempt to get back to basics, to fundamentals, back to what America was. In a profound way the Movement started the shift to fundamentalism in politics, economics and religion.

Tom Peterson of Atlanta, a staffer with a church hunger-related publication, Seeds, says after he hit bottom in the drug and party scene at the University of Texas he gave God a last chance to reclaim him. Peterson began to read his Bible "voraciously," got involved in the church's youth group; he worked in a coffeehouse, ministering to hippies and counterculture groups.

Tongues and prophecies and demon exorcism were part of his experience. Rationality was disdained, education suspect. He remembers pressure to drop out of college.

A turning point came when a fundamentalist team visited a Texas border town to give testimonies and witness. Following the service one girl desired the gift of the Spirit, for, she was told, "you are second-class without it." Team members, gathering round her, finally pressured her into "just babbling. She was just destroyed that night," Peterson says. She had accepted Christ, was excited, and then, "they laid this big guilt number on her."

By 1972, Peterson "had my belly filled, not of Christianity, but I wanted to put some distance between the fad and my own journey."

However, the Jesus Movement made lasting contributions, Peterson thinks. "It got a lot of people involved who would have just floated through. The churches were really dead and the Movement threw a spark that excited people. Some main leaders at my home church got turned on through the Movement."

The Movement also surfaced another trend gaining popularity within today's society: the coming end of the world. The difference between it and secular fears of nuclear holocaust is its emphasis on the apocalyptic return of Christ.

And so the Jesus Movement shifts into its conservative 1980s garb, consolidating and organizing, institutionalizing and programming, and sounding a note that can be, without careful scrutiny and a holistic approach, an excuse to trumpet evangelical notes of urgency without the accompanying social emphases of the gospel. (BP)

Retired Missionaries
Send Grateful Thanks

RB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Eighty-nine letters from retired Southern Baptist missionaries expressed a grateful "thank you" for the upgraded retirement benefits the Foreign Mission Board voted for them in December.

Some of them even sent part of the money back as their personal contribution to missions, President R. Keith Parks reported at the Foreign Mission Board meeting Feb. 9.

One woman who worked 40 years in China enclosed a check for \$300 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions though she already had contributed to the offering through her church, Parks said.

Another man wrote: "We need this money, but don't send it to me if you need it for new missionaries."

The December action increasing missionary pension benefits was possible because of increased overall giving by Southern Baptists, money saved by Congress action restoring the U.S. income tax exclusion for charitable workers overseas, and improved return from investment income.

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Smith Witnesses Signing
Of Prayer Proclamation

WB

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey E. Smith and other religious leaders met with President Reagan at the White House Feb. 12 and heard him declare that a nation that forgets God will not survive.

Smith was asked by the White House to attend the signing of Reagan's proclamation declaring May 6, 1982 as National Day of Prayer, a custom dating to 1775.

Reagan's proclamation asks Americans "to join with me in giving thanks to Almighty God for the blessings He has bestowed on this land and the protection He affords us as a people."

Smith flew into Washington from a revival meeting he was preaching in Ringgold, Ga.

He and some 30 other leaders from the U.S. religious community joined Reagan in the Roosevelt Room for the brief ceremony.

Besides inviting leaders from Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups, Reagan also asked some television evangelists to attend, including Pat Robertson and Jim Bakker.

Smith, who received one of only two pens Reagan used to sign the proclamation, said he told Reagan he is "proud of the job you're doing" and is praying for him.

Smith said he believes Reagan is "genuinely interested in spiritual values."

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Evangelism Thrust Planned
For New Orleans Meeting

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

CO

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Baptists are making extensive plans to share their Christian faith with residents of New Orleans when the Southern Baptist Convention meets there in June.

Ron Herrod, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kenner, and chairman of "Bold Mission--New Orleans," said approximately 5,000 ministers and laypersons from all areas of the country are expected to participate in an adult evangelism effort June 12 and 13, prior to the convention meeting June 15-17.

A special youth evangelism program, also expected to draw 5,000 participants, will take place June 11 and 12. Evangelist Arthur Blessitt and singer David Meece will lead a youth rally at New Orleans Municipal Auditorium June 11. The following day the young people, currently studying witness techniques, will move into suburban areas of New Orleans for house-to-house visitation, according to Calvin Cantrell, associate evangelism director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and coordinator for the youth rally.

Adults will meet in the afternoon June 13 at the Superdome to organize into teams then disburse into inner-city residential and business areas for witnessing, Herrod said.

Billy Graham is scheduled to preach in the Superdome that night at an evangelistic rally to climax the witnessing efforts of the two days.

Ed Young, president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church, said the June 13 evening session of the annual Pastors' Conference will join in with the rally when Graham preaches.

SBC-affiliated groups that traditionally meet before the convention are expected to participate in the Superdome rally and Herrod expects many city churches to transfer their Sunday night services to the Superdome.

The evangelistic thrust was prompted by a resolution passed at the 1981 convention in Los Angeles asking for an evangelistic outreach during the SBC meeting in New Orleans.

Herrod said the Sunday schedule begins at the Superdome with bus captains meeting at 1 p.m. Participants gather at 2 p.m. for materials and assignments to pre-arranged areas of the city. Buses will leave no later than 3 p.m. and return to the Superdome at 5:30 p.m.

Persons making visits will be organized into teams. Each worker will be given materials including evangelistic tracts and information about Southern Baptists. Names of local Baptist churches will be printed on materials so people will have a specific place to contact if they are interested in attending church.

Preliminary planners noted that 2,500 witness teams, each visiting five households during the afternoon, could contact 12,500 households. Statistics indicate the inner city of New Orleans has approximately 110,000 households.

Herrod said, "Obviously the task is enormous and the potential is tremendous."

Alan Woodward, pastor of Highland Baptist Church and chairman of the bus committee, said 170 to 200 buses will be needed to transport workers. He asked that churches contact him to offer use of their buses or vans.

Herrod said while the opportunity for witnessing is great in a city the size of New Orleans, the task will not be easy.

"Many of the people of New Orleans have experienced so many types of events and lifestyles they tend to be blase' about most things," he said. "The only way we can reach this world city is to be in the spirit of prayer and in God's will. Just because we visit them at the doors of their homes or in the streets does not mean great throngs will come to the Superdome for the Sunday night evangelistic service. We must be serious about our commitment to share our faith with those who do not know Christ as Savior and be concerned about their spiritual needs."

Baptists of New Orleans, organized into various committees, are completing plans for a media promotion telling New Orleans about Southern Baptists prior to the convention.

A 30-minute special about the Southern Baptist Convention and the Superdome rally will be aired on the local NBC station the afternoon of June 13. The program was arranged with the cooperation of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

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Texan Fish Story
Dangles Large Bait

CO

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--Eleven Texas Baptists returned from Alaska recently with a big fish story guaranteed to hook the most ardent angler.

While in Anchorage leading lay renewal programs in First Baptist Church and Calvary Baptist Church, the Texans were invited to try their luck at ice fishing.

"Did you have any luck?" a friend asked Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men and coordinator for the lay renewal programs.

"Yes, we caught a 180-pounder and a 160-pounder," replied Dixon.

As his listener looked incredulous, Dixon explained that while the Texans were fishing, two Alaskans came out to fish also.

"As we shared Christ with them, we had the joy of seeing both men kneel there on the ice and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior," said Dixon.

The new Christians' names were given to the pastor of a nearby Baptist church for followup ministry.

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