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The Jesus Revolution: New Rebel Cry

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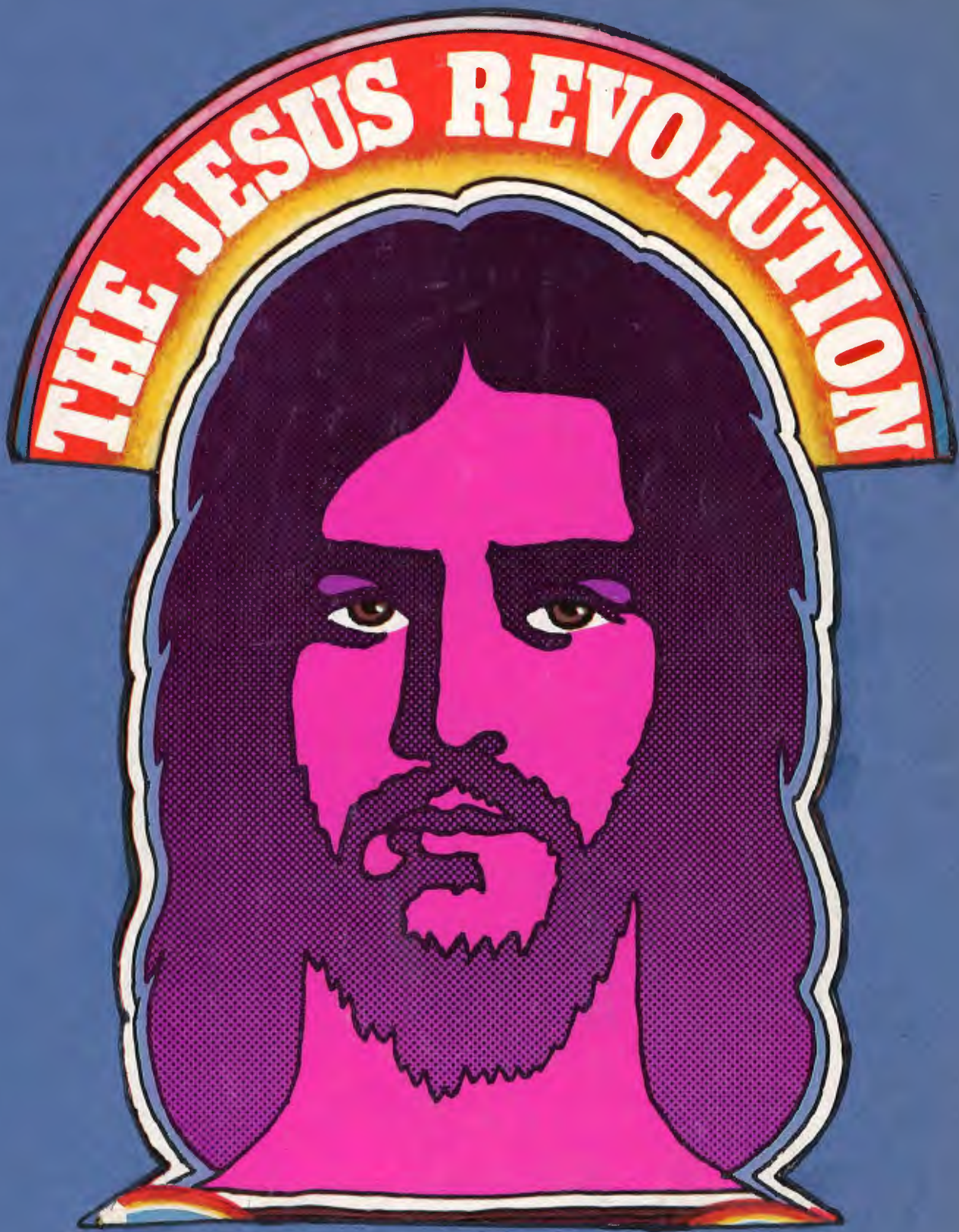
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THE JESUS REVOLUTION: NEW
REBEL DRY

An Honors' Special Study Project, Humanities
Division, English Department, Mrs. Quick
1 hour

Kathy Bittle
November 27, 1971

WANTED

JESUS CHRIST

▶ Notorious leader of an underground liberation movement

▶ Wanted for the following charges:

--Practicing medicine, winemaking and food distribution without a license.

--Interfering with businessmen in the temple.

--Associating with known criminals, radicals, subversives, prostitutes and street people.

--Claiming to have the authority to make people into God's children.

APPEARANCE: Typical hippie type--long hair, beard, robe, sandals.

▶ Hangs around slum areas, few rich firends, often sneaks out into the desert.

BEWARE: This man is extremely dangerous. His insidiously inflammatory message is particularly dangerous to young people who haven't been taught to ignore him yet. He changes men and claims to set them free.

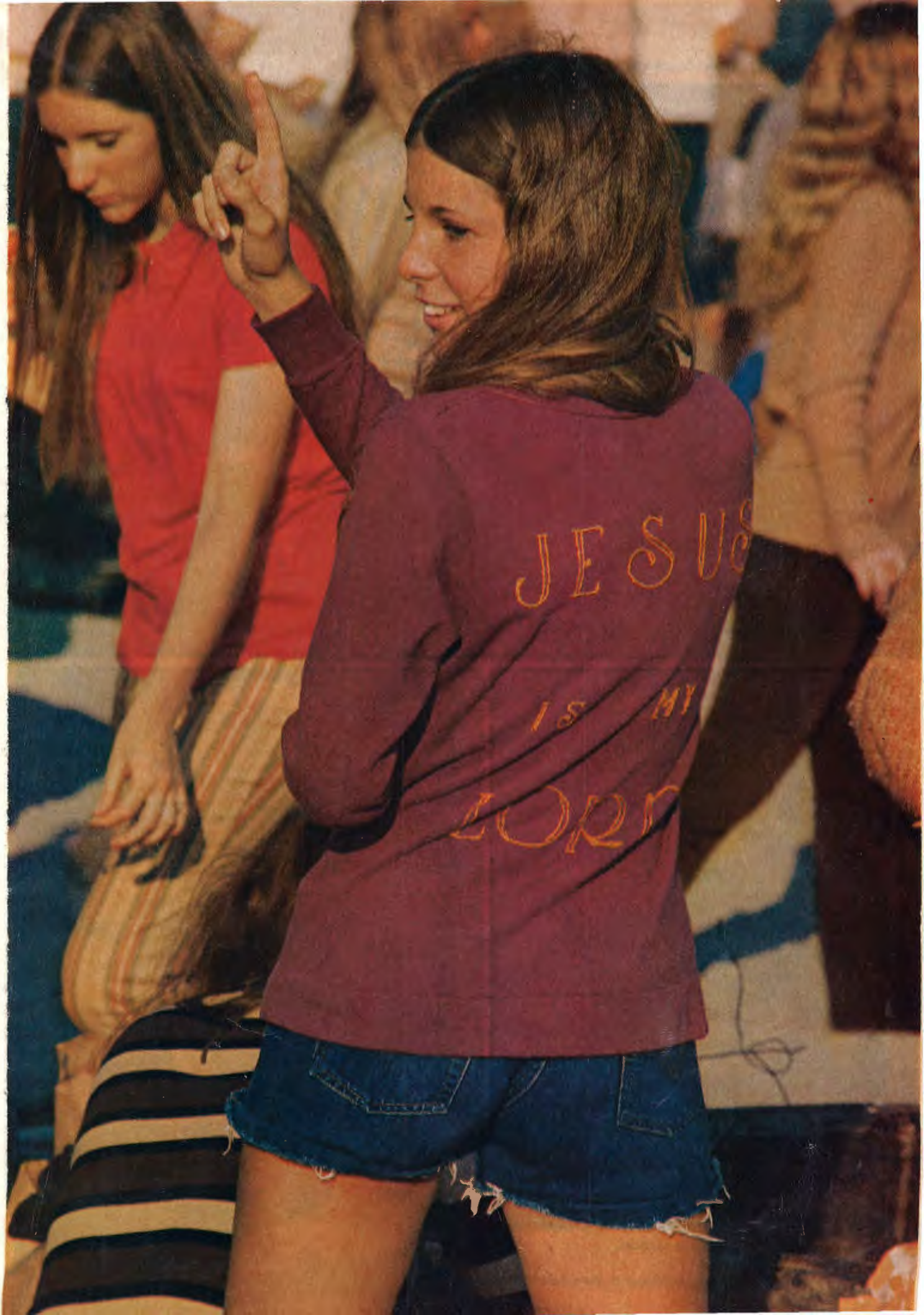
WARNING :

HE IS STILL AT LARGE

He is indeed. As the words of this Wanted poster from a Christian underground newspaper demonstrate, Jesus is alive and well and living in the radical spiritual fervor of a growing number of young Americans who have proclaimed an extraordinary religious revolution in his name. Their message: the Bible is true, miracles happen, God really did so love the world that He gave it His only begotten son. In 1966 Beatle John Lennon casually remarked that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ; now the Beatles are no more, and George Harrison is singing "My Sweet Lord." The new young followers of Jesus listen to Harrison, but they turn on only to the words of their Master: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is a startling development for a generation that has been constantly accused of tripping out or copping out with sex, drugs, and violence. Fresh-faced, wide-eyed young girls and earnest young men badger businessmen and shoppers on Hollywood Boulevard in Dallas, in Detroit and in Wichita witnessing for Christ. Christian coffeehouses have opened in many cities. A strip joint has been converted to a "Christian nightclub" in San Antonio. Communal "Christian houses" are multiplying for youngsters hungry for homes. Bibles abound: King James, pocket size paperbacks are well-thumbed and often memorized.

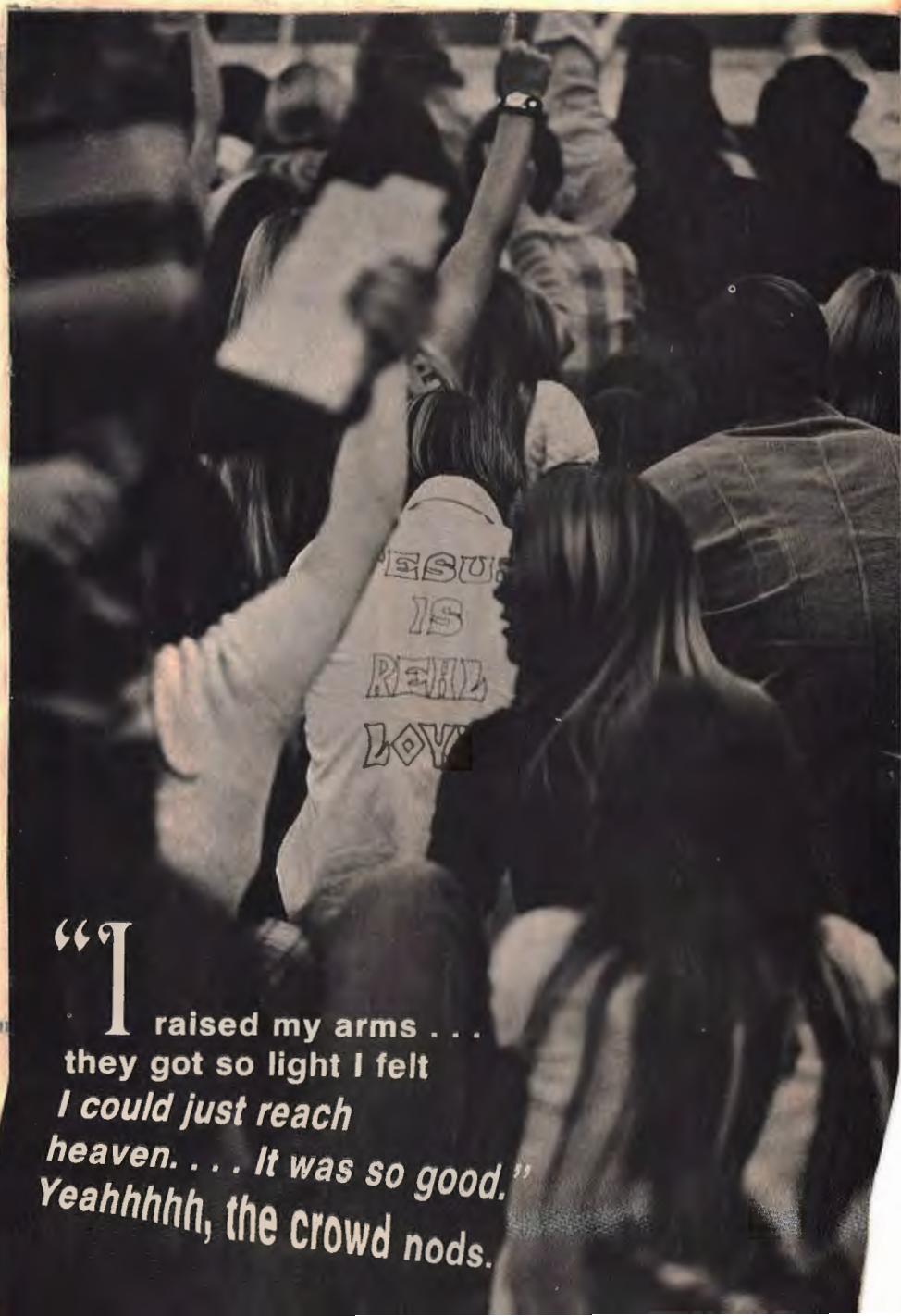
There is a buoyant atmosphere of hope and love along with the usual rebel zeal. Some converts translate their new faith into everyday life, like those who answer the phone with "Jesus Loves You" instead of "hello". But their love seems more sincere than a slogan: what startles the outsider is the extraordinary sense of joy that they are able to communicate.



Says Founder Bill Bright of the Campus Crusade for Christ: "Our target date for saturating the U. S. with the gospel of Christ is 1976 and the world by 1980. Of course if the Lord wants to work a bit slower, that's O.K. "

If any one mark clearly identifies them it is their total belief in an awesome, supernatural Jesus Christ; not just a marvelous man who lived 2,000 years ago but a living God who is both Saviour and Judge, the ruler of their destinies. Their lives revolve around the necessity for an intense personal relationship with Jesus, and the belief that the relationship should condition every human life. Many of them have had serious personal difficulties before their conversion.

This is the generation that has burned out many of its lights and lives before it is old enough to vote. "The first thing I realized was how different it is to go to high school today," wrote Maureen Orth. "Acid trips in the



"I raised my arms . . . they got so light I felt I could just reach heaven. . . . It was so good." Yeahhhhh, the crowd nods.

seventh grade, sex in the eighth, the Viet Nam War, a daily serial on TV since you were ten, parents and school meaningless. No wonder Jesus is making a great comeback."

The search for a meaning led thousands to the mystical, the occult and Satanism before they drew once again on familiar roots. One of the nation's successful young evangelists, Richard Hoag, 24, believes that many of his youthful converts see Jesus as a father figure. "The kids are searching for authority, love, and understanding--ingredients missing at home."

Some call the Jesus movement a fad or just another bad trip. Is it? There are obvious fad aspects: Jesus shirts (Jesus is My Lord), bumper stickers (Smile God Loves You), posters, buttons (The Messiah is the Message) and Jesus-People wristwatch. There are catch phrases: endless "Praise God's" and "Bless Yous". There is even a "Jesus cheer"-- "Give me a J, give me an E...." Rapidly catching on is the Jesus-people sign, a raised arm with clenched fist, the index finger pointed heavenward, to indicate Jesus as the "one way" to salvation. "If it is a fad," says Evangelist Billy Graham, "I welcome it." For many it is a fad, just the thing to do because so many others are doing it. They are tired of the same old thing and want to try something new.

"It's So Wild...
So Wild...
Dancing in the Streets...

The movement has been powerful enough to divert many young people from serious drug addiction. Its appeal is to Roman Catholics, Jews, and Protestants of every persuasion and many with no religion at all. "We are all brothers in Christ," says a California lay leader, and he adds: "We are on the threshold of the greatest spiritual revival the U.S. has ever experienced."

There are three types of Jesus people--Jesus Freaks, sometimes called "Street Christians", which are the most visible. Many trace their beginnings to the 1967 flower era in San Francisco. The "Straight People", by far the largest group, are mainly active in interdenominational, evangelical campus and youth movements. Most of them are Middle America, campus types. The Catholic Pentecostals emerged in 1967. They remained loyal to the church but unsettled some in the hierarchy. Together, all three types of people may number in the hundreds of thousands nationally, conceivably many more, but any figure is a guess. Much of the movement's main strength has been built where it started, along the West Coast.

At Encinitas, California is a brand of Christianity that is pure California. Ed Wright, 26, owner of the Sunset Surf Shop and principal apostle of the Christian surfers, tells how Jesus adds a special dimension to the sport. "It's so beautiful when you are with the Lord and catch a good ride. When you are piling out for the next one you just say "Thank you Lord for being so good to us and for the good waves and good 'vibes'!" Surfer Mike Wonder, a convert, sought Christ after he found the perfect wave in Hawaii and it failed to bring him happiness.

The Jesus revolution, like the others, has a flavor peculiarly American. Its strong Pentecostalism emphasizes speaking in tongues and healing by faith. But there are many people split in opinion on the speaking in tongues. For many, there is a strong conviction that Jesus' Second Coming is literally at hand.

The movement is apart from, rather than against, established religion; converts often speak of the hypocrisy of their former churches. But many counselors, like Billy Graham and Bob Harrington, urge the new converts to become active in the church of their choice. And many churches are changing their programs to meet the needs of the young people. First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, is going to start a service at 10:00 on Sunday nights in which the young people take charge. They

The New Rebel Cry: Jesus Is Coming!

do the speaking, scripture reading, prayers, and personal testimonies themselves. This service should better meet the needs of the youth, and more youth may be reached for the Lord.

At First Baptist Church in Houston, youth-minded Pastor Bisagno, 37, brought in Evangelist Hoag to recruit the young in a week-long revival. Hoag traveled from school to school and 11,000 young people stepped forward at Bisagno's church to declare themselves for Jesus. Now the first two pews at First Baptist are reserved for the youngsters. While the rest of the congregation mumble their amens, the kids punctuate Bisagno's sermons with yells of "Outta sight, man, bee-yoo-ti-ful."

From coast to coast, a new life-style emphasizing "Christian community" is springing up among young people. Mansion Messiah is a

The Christian Communes



dull green, two-story building sandwiched between a used furniture store and a filling station off a Costa Mesa, California boulevard. It is also a Christian commune. "We want this place to be an example of the way Christians should live," says 30 year-old leader Ed Smith, a former business executive. The rooms are spotlessly clean, though crowded, and a feeling of Puritanism hangs in the air. "The kids come here to experiment in Christian living and strengthen their Christian witness," says Frank, a commune member from New York. "We don't plan to stay here forever; its our lesson in community, in getting along with others. We have to apply it later." For the thirty single young people at Mansion Messiah, Bible study is important. They spend hours each day pouring



over their Testaments--and are quizzed about their studies before the evening's meal. "Here at the House young Christians grow fast," says Smith, "because they spend a lot of time in the Word." The house has rigid rules and curfews. Girls live upstairs and are permitted in the guys' rooms only to clean them. They've had no moral problems. To support the house, some kids work, turning over their entire paycheck each week. Others cook, clean house, repair things and garden. Kids from all over crowd the house, double and triple-bunking in the rooms. But sometimes the need for privacy surfaces. Then, they turn to the small "prayer box" outside where they can be alone with God. And after a few months, they're gone--many off to start ministries, other communes across the United States. Mansion Messiahs, in one name or another, are springing up all over the nation, fed by new Christians searching for the authentic life-style of Jesus.

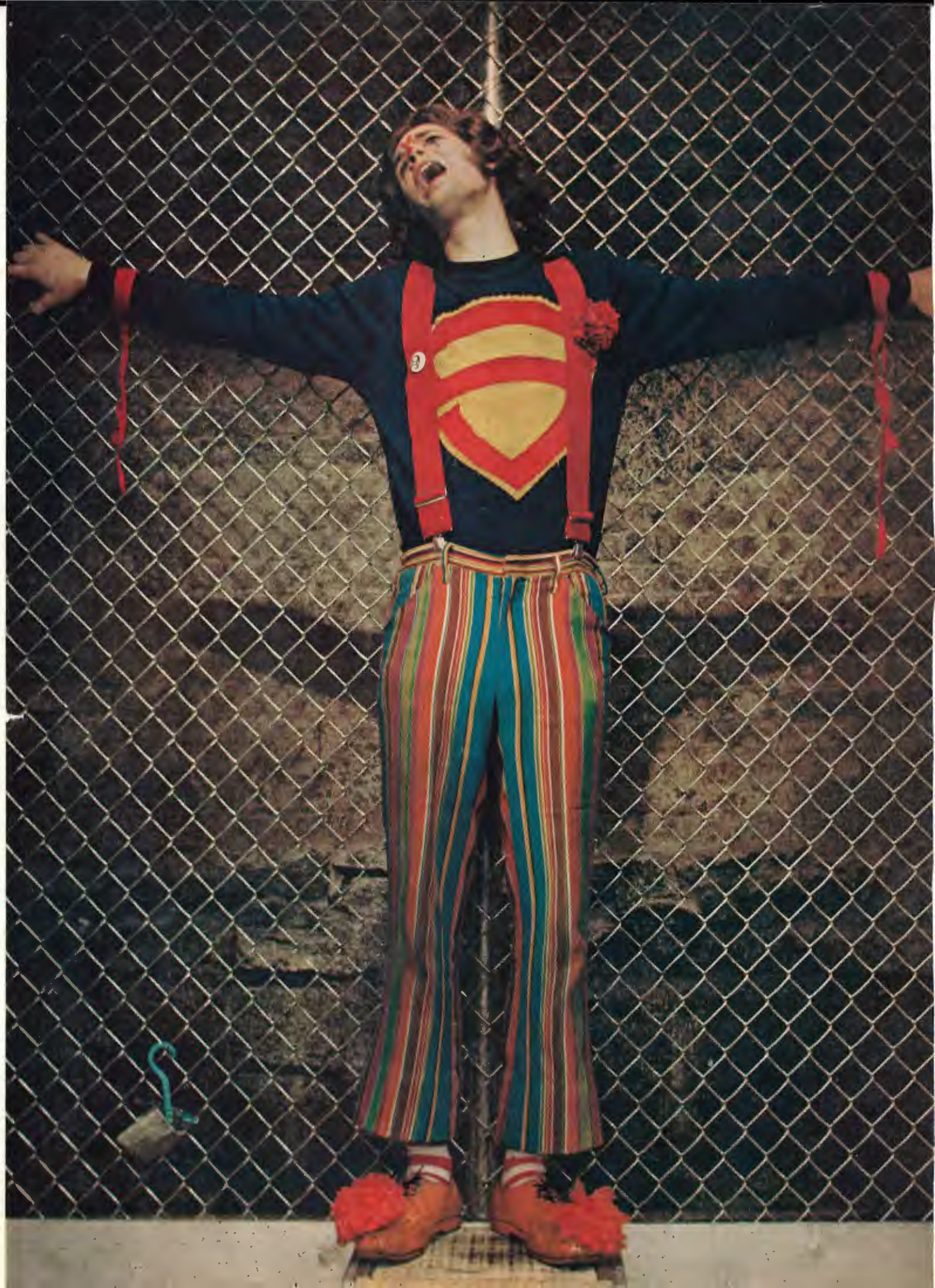
One argument against the movement is that the people are not sincere. Spokane's Voice of Elijah, a communal house, is as sincere as it can be. When house members heard of a hungry old woman who had been cut from welfare, they took up a \$42 collection at the I Am Coffeehouse, left her groceries, cash and a message that read simply "from Jesus." The house reaches large groups through its hard rock band, the Wilson McKinley, which recently helped draw 8,000 to a "Sweet Jesus Rock Concert" at Stanford University. The Jesus People almost lost the crowd when one evangelist told the college students they should "abstain from sexual immorality, and that means abstain except in marriage. We're finding this is the last area people want to give up." There were no cheers, but astonishingly, no hoots either.

Music has become the special medium of the Jesus Movement. "Godspell", a moving musical written by students and based on the Gospel of Matthew, is a sellout off Broadway. The rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" is a big hit. At New York City's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church recently, a minister smilingly baptized a baby "In the name of the Father, the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ Superstar." "Amazing Grace," "Put Your Hand in the Hand," and "My Sweet Lord" are top-40 hits, and Jesus-rock groups, most of them converts, roam the country under such names as Hope, Dove, and the Joyful Noise. Many Jesus-rock musicians commit their lives as well as their talent. Drummer Steve Hornyak, '30, of The Crimson Bridge, gave up a \$35,000 house, a Toronado, and a career as a school band director when another Jesus musician challenged him to "go tell about Jesus!"

Jeffery Fenhelt, portraying Christ in "Superstar" says, "I think there's a real interest in Jesus and God. You could see the swing coming in the songs that were making it on the hit lists--gospel music and songs about a redeemer.



Prophets in God Rock



"People are using the Superstar album as a sort of personal religious belief, something they can converse with.

"But they are using Him more than loving Him, the kids that have started popping out for Jesus. They have been called Jesus Freaks. I think the word freaks fits the best.

"I believe in love and God, but I can't see the fanatic because a fanatic is just using God.

"I hate to see people using Him."

As Jeffery Fenholt said some people do use God. They think of what God can do for themselves all the time, not what God can do for others, or what they can do for God. But Christians are to have fellowship with God, which is not a selfish reason on the part of the believer. We have to depend on God to lead us. Perhaps these are the ones Jeffery saw and perhaps he is a bit mixed up on the relationship of God and the Christian.

The revolutionary work is also spread by a growing free Jesus press that now numbers some 50 newspapers across the country. Donations are apparently enough to print 65,000 copies of Right On! in Berkeley and 400,000 copies of the Hollywood Free Paper, the movement's largest. Now Berkeley's CWLF is hoping to start a Jesus News service. There is much to report in all parts of the United States.

In Chicago's Grant Park bandshell, Street Evangelist Arthur Blessitt this summer warmed up a crowd of nearly 1,000 with a Jesus cheer, then led them off on a parade through the Loop, gathering people as they went. "Chicago police, we love you!" Blessitt also

passed a box through the crowd, asking for a special contribution: drugs. The box came back filled with marijuana, pills and LSD; it was turned over to the flabbergasted cops. Also this summer he was in New York City among the pimps, prostitutes and pornography shops of Times Square. He did have one unnerving setback. A streetwalker told him that she had worn one of his bright red stickers (TURN ON TO JESUS) and "never had a better night."

At Corona del Mar, California, the Reverend Chuck Smith had another mass baptism that ~~has~~ made his Calvary Chapel at Santa Anna famous. Several hundred converts ~~waded~~ waded into the cold Pacific, patiently waiting their turn for the rite. On the cliffs above hundreds more watched. Most of the baptized were young, tanned and casual in cut-off blue jeans, pullovers, and even an occasional bikini. A freshly dunked teenager, water streaming from her tie-dyed shirt, threw her arms around a woman and cried, "Mother, I love you!" A teenage drug user who had been suffering from recurring unscheduled trips suddenly screamed, "My flashbacks are gone!" As the baptisms ended, the crowd slowly climbed a narrow stairway up the cliff, singing the Lord's Prayer in the twilight.

A young minister, Breck Stevens, during a service promised a "30-second cure from heroin addiction, with no withdrawal pains," and half the heads in the room nod enthusiastically--knowingly. They've seen it happen over and over again. Over 15,000 kids have passed through the church in the last two years and at least 4,000 have stopped using heroin. They've had it happen to them. Addicts who come or are brought in for the cure are prayed over intensely by the



Her costume is informal, but there is nothing off-hand about her faith as she awaits baptism.

ex-addicts. Hands reach out to hold and support the new convert while other hands beseech supernatural help. When it's over the addict literally isn't an addict any more. He looks around, stunned at first, and then the hugging begins. Unrestrained and joyous hugging, anyone, everyone. "Oh God! Oh Praise Jesus! Oh thank you God." People are smiling and shaking hands now, pleased with the job well done.

Billy Graham's statement, "I have been convinced that the Jesus revolution is making a profound impact on the youth of America and shows all signs of spreading to other countries," has merit. One thing is certain: Jesus can no longer be ignored. This generation can no longer escape Him. It cannot dismiss Him as a myth or a figment of the imagination.

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