PBK obsolete?

By Harry Hope

While I was in New York, I visited the prestigious firm of Paul, Roberts, Graham and God, Ltd., international distributors of fine Jesus products.

This firm is said by some to be the founders of the new Jesus cult now sweeping the land. I was shown the various departments of the company by Father William, S. J., a former Methodist bishop who converted from Methodist to Judaism to Bahai before taking his vows as a Jesuit priest.

"Man," ecumenicalism is into Dig it, now before we discovered what a cool dude of J. C. was, Pope Paul Oral Roberts and Billy Graham were working their tails off, but there was no bread. Dig? All the cash was gone waste.

"But now. Now, we have discovered Jesus and have given him his image, see. He used to be the Son of God. He was mystical. Never smiled. All he did was hang around and prophesy, work a few miracles and fight the five o'clock traffic. Nobody identified with him because, well, for one thing, back in those days long hair and beards weren't cool. But now, it's all cool, and we're here with it. And best of all, Jesus is with it too. None of these Jesus freaks think of him like they used to. Now he's a confident, pious, aging, upright citizen of today busting into interesting, like looking for himself. And the Establishment doesn't like it, so they kill him. Can you dig it?"

"Now everybody is on the Jesus boat. It's the new thing. Last year, women's lib was in style. Year before that, ecology. Before that, civil rights. It's just the same people all the time, man. And this year, we are on top of it all. All that money. Do you know how many people are willing to pay for things like crosses of nails, hand-made rosaries, psychedelic Resurrection posters, Jesus sandals, Jesus beard combs, plastic Jesus statues for dashboards, Jesus watches. What about Jesus beer, Jesus wine, Jesus dolls? And bumper stickers—"Honk if you love Jesus!" "God Squad," "Have a hit of God!"

"We sell the New Testament in comic book form. We also sell records. Man, we have gone beyond "Superstar" and "Godspell." Right now our biggest seller is a rock-blues-country version of the Messiahs with Pat Boone, George Beverly Shea, Ethel Waters, Richard and Patty Roberts, the Ralph Carmichael Orchestra, Chicago Grand Pamp Railroad, Dave Brubeck and Ed MacMahan. We also sell cards with Marjoe Gortner's picture on them. Man, we are making millions in this Jesus racket. Oh, some of it goes to worthy causes, of course. We have a charity drive in full swing for poor-but-deserving Jesus Freaks to send them on tours of the Holy Land. We're also financing Hi-Reel for Bob Jones University. Those fine WASP's down there in South Carolina need all the help they can get.

"You see," he continued, "we gotta make this Christianity simple. Keep it on the kids' level, you know. Nobody gets turned on with the King James Bible and Bach's Magnificat. That ain't where it's at.

"I happen to like Bach," I said. He seemed stupidified.

"Well, in that case, let me sell you a copy of 'An Wasserflüssen Babylon' or 'Christ Lag in Todesbanden' played by Leo Brown and his Band of Recknow." I threw up.