



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.5, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

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Program 12 – "And When I Die" © Laura Nyro

Written by a teenager! Laura Nyro was an American composer, lyricist, singer and pianist. Between 1968 and 1970 a number of groups and singers had significant hits with her songs, including the **Fifth Dimension** with "Wedding Bell Blues" and "Stoned Soul Picnic", "Sweet Blindness", and "Save The Country"; **Three Dog Night** with "Eli's Coming"; **Barbra Streisand** with "Stoney End"; and of course, the song featured in this program, "And When I Die", performed by **Blood Sweat And Tears**. BS&T took this song to #2 on the U.S. charts in 1969. (source: Wikipedia)

Years ago, I presented a series of teachings on angels to a Sunday school class. While the class members found the study of God's holy angels inspiring and uplifting, they simply did not wish to look at what the Bible has to say about fallen angels. Why? They found the subject distasteful and repulsive. The mere mention of the word "demon" elicited pushback. Sadly, their reaction did not make fallen angels any less real. But it typified how many folks deal (or don't deal) with another reality – death. Remarkably, "And When I Die" specifically considers this issue that nobody likes to think or talk about, and does so in the context of pop music. As such, it's certainly a credit to BS&T's great performance that the song became such a hit! As a minimum, the lyrics make listeners reflect on death and their own readiness (or lack thereof) for this inevitable event.

Thanks to what Jesus Christ has done for us, a Christian facing death has a significantly different outlook than one who has consciously declined Christ's offer of salvation! Let's consider the lyrics to "And When I Die" in light of God's word...

I'm not scared of dying, ←
And I don't really care.
If it's peace you find in dying, —
Well then let the time be near.
If it's peace you find in dying,
And if dying time is here,
Just bundle up my coffin
'Cause it's cold way down there.
I hear that its cold way down there.
Yeah, crazy cold way down there.

- Not many people can say this! Fear of dying is "Thanatophobia"
- Stark contrast: funerals of believers vs. those of unsaved
- Conditional statement, but flawed premise
- Some claim to have "visited" hell in near-death experience(s), finding anything but peace, e.g., the book *23 Minutes in Hell* by: Bill Wiese
- Account of rich man and beggar Lazarus gives clear picture of what believers vs. non-believers can expect at death (Luke 16:19-31)
 - Angels carried beggar into presence of God
 - Rich man – agony, thirst... in a place of fire, torment
 - No opportunity to leave, or to return to warn others
- Separation of body from soul and spirit. When Jesus cried, "It is finished", His body was nailed to a cross, but not His soul and spirit

And when I die, and when I'm gone,
There'll be one child born
In this world to carry on,
to carry on.

- Importance of Christian families to pass on the faith!
- My father started a ministry which I am carrying forward
- Timothy's faith, from infancy, was nurtured by his mother, and his grandmother... *"I have been reminded of your sincere faith which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."* -- 2 Timothy 1:5

Now troubles are many, they're as deep as a well.
I can swear there ain't no heaven but I pray there ain't no hell.
Swear there ain't no heaven and I pray there ain't no hell,
But I'll never know by living, only my dying will tell.
Yes only my dying will tell.
Yeah, only my dying will tell.

- If there's no heaven or hell, who is the singer praying to?
- God's word confirms that there is a real heaven and a real hell. We accept this by faith and trust in God

Give me my freedom for as long as I be.
All I ask of living is to have no chains on me.
All I ask of living is to have no chains on me,
And all I ask of dying is to go naturally.
Oh I want to go naturally.

- *"...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"*
– John 8:36
- I suspect most of us would want to "go naturally", but that doesn't negate realities of the afterlife

Here I go,
Hey Hey!
Here comes the devil,
Right Behind.
Look out children,
Here he comes!
Here he comes! Hey...

Three prevalent fears of death we all need to address:

- Fear of standing before God Almighty
- Fear of the unknown (being able to face the great mystery of death)
- Fear of facing death alone

See www.biblehelp.org/feardeath.htm

Don't want to go by the devil.
Don't want to go by demon.
Don't want to go by Satan,
Don't want to die uneasy.
Just let me go naturally.

- What will it feel like? What will be waiting for us?
- Death is unavoidable -- no respecter of persons
- So, should we become obsessed with death? Or do we ignore it and hope it goes away?
- Neither... deal with the issues of death, then press on with life, giving thanks to Jesus for each new day
- *"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."* – Psalm 116:15 ...here's why...
- When believers die, holy angels carry them into God's presence where *"...God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain..."* – Revelation 21:3b, 4

and when I die,
When I'm dead, dead and gone,
There'll be one child born in our world to carry on,
To carry on.
Yeah, yeah...

"Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord." – 2 Corinthians 5:8 NLT

Final thoughts...

Ironically, Laura Nyro, author of "And When I Die", passed away at the relatively young age of 49 as the result of ovarian cancer. We don't know the number of our days, but God does. The Psalmist wrote... *"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."* – Psalm 139:16. We must be prepared to meet God.

*"Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine.
Lord help me today -- show me the way -- one day at a time"*
– from "One Day At A Time" by Kris Kristofferson

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