



"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

10/23/08

Program 55 "Rocky Raccoon" © 1968 John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Our featured song is a whimsical number from the legendary super group, The Beatles. In a folksy way, it spins a Wild West tale that weaves in a couple references to "Gideon's Bible". While the lyrics to "Rocky Raccoon" are not intrinsically spiritual (indeed, the plot deals with jealousy and a gunfight!), they do give us a great segue into discussion of how the Lord has used the Gideons' ministry to reach the lost, and how God's Word does not return to Him void!



The Song ¹

- Folk rock song written in India while Beatles were there on a retreat
- From the 1968 double-disk album "The Beatles", a.k.a. "White Album"
- Originally named "Rocky Sassoon", but renamed to sound more like a cowboy
- Story: a man tries to shoot a fellow who stole his lover, but gets wounded himself
- Also covered by Richie Havens, James Blunt, and Phish

The Group – The Beatles ²

- *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked them #1 on its list of 100 Greatest Artists of All Time
- Evolution of a name: Began as The Quarrymen in 1957, changed to Johnny And The Moondogs, The Silver Beetles, The Beatles (honoring Buddy Holly and the Crickets), Long John And The Beatles, and, ultimately, The Beatles
- Featured John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and a litany of drummers before adding Ringo Starr in 1962
- Became extremely popular in the UK in '62-'63, and the USA in '63-'64
- The rest is history!
- (See Program 23 for notes on another Lennon-McCartney song, "Nowhere Man")

Now somewhere in the black mining hills of Dakota
There lived a young boy named Rocky Raccoon
And one day his woman ran off with another guy
Hit young Rocky in the eye Rocky didn't like that
He said I'm gonna get that boy
So one day he walked into town
Booked himself a room in the local saloon.

- OK, we agree this isn't your classic Cross Connection number!
- Honky-tonk piano adds quite the flavor of an old frontier saloon hall
- Hard to comprehend how two young fellows from England wrote this!
- 3 wrongs in the song so far:
 - Infidelity
 - Physical battery
 - Plot for revenge

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocky_Raccoon

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beatles

Rocky Raccoon checked into his room
 Only to find Gideon's Bible
 Rocky had come equipped with a gun
 To shoot off the legs of his rival
 His rival it seems had broken his dreams
 By stealing the girl of his fancy.
 Her name was Magil and she called herself Lil
 But everyone knew her as Nancy.
 Now she and her man who called himself Dan
 Were in the next room at the hoe down
 Rocky burst in and grinning a grin
 He said Danny boy this is a showdown
 But Daniel was hot -- he drew first and shot
 And Rocky collapsed in the corner.

- Rocky finds a Gideon-placed Bible in his room, but apparently doesn't read it
- Where have you seen Gideon Bibles?
- Do you own one?

Now the doctor came in stinking of gin
 And proceeded to lie on the table
 He said Rocky you met your match
 And Rocky said, Doc it's only a scratch
 And I'll be better doc as soon as I am able.

- Let's face it, Rocky is rather pitiful...
 - He loves an unfaithful woman with 3 names
 - He thinks he'll get revenge by shooting at his rival's legs
 - He's a lousy shot... if not lousy, then slow
 - He's got a drunk doctor who lies down on the treatment table
 - He doesn't get treated, but retreats to his room

Now Rocky Raccoon he fell back in his room
 Only to find Gideon's Bible
 A Gideon checked out and he left it no doubt
 To help with good Rocky's revival.

- The story ends here, so we really don't know what Rocky did with that Gideon Bible
- We do know what motivates the Gideon organization to place Bibles in various locations (see verses below)

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

Isaiah 55:10-11, TNIV

The remainder of this program will be spent looking at testimonies concerning how lives have been changed when searching souls have discovered God's word, took it to heart, and placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. The accounts in the attached pages come from the Gideon's ministry website.

Final Thoughts...

What is the Bible to you? Just a piece of ancient literature? A dusty book on the coffee table or somewhere in a book case? Or is it the prime way that the Creator of all things communicates his Character and Love to us?

Have you ever read a passage of Scripture that simply seemed to come alive with meaning and jump of the page at you? I hope so. I can remember a time when I read in the book of Revelation about the Heavenly City that God is preparing for those who have placed their faith and trust in Him through Jesus Christ. It brought me to tears, considering how painful the trials in this life can become. Consider what the Lord can do for you through reading and meditating on His written word!

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Personal Testimonies ³



I Found Comfort, Faith And Salvation In God's Word

"For three months, I stayed with and waited on my husband who was dying of cancer at the Medical College of Virginia Hospital. I found a Gideon placed Holy Bible on the dresser in the hospital and began to read it as my husband slept.

There is absolutely nothing like the Word of the Lord! It spoke to my heart in this time of great need. I found comfort, faith and salvation.

By the time I read through the Gospel of John, I had accepted Christ as my personal Savior. My husband accepted the Lord as his Savior through the 23rd Psalm, which I read to him two weeks before he died. And on the day he went to be with the Lord, God comforted me with Psalm 34, especially verse 4: 'I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.'

I am indeed grateful for the Bibles which are placed by Gideons everywhere—in hospitals, in hotels, in doctors' offices, in prisons—for the Word of God does not return void. Praise His wonderful name!"

The Only Book I Had To Read In A New York Prison

"I was married, had six kids, a good education, and for all practical purposes, was happy—or so I thought.

One day I got drunk, hit a child with my car, and went to jail in New York for fifteen years for first-degree assault. Initially, I thought of ending my life. Then one day I stabbed another inmate who attacked me, and I was sent to solitary confinement for one year. There in that lonely cell, the only book I had to read was a Gideon Bible.

For a couple of months, the Bible just lay there. But one day, I picked it up and began to read in the book of Genesis. After long weeks passed, I finished the Old Testament and began the Gospel of John. While I was reading John 11:25, I suddenly realized the Bible wasn't just a book of interesting stories. It was the Word of God. I prayed the sinner's prayer, and I asked Jesus to save me. Since that time, my life has not been the same. I have finished many Bible studies, and I want to be a pastor upon my release from prison. I know now that God has plans for my life."

A Stolen Opportunity

A young man from Brazil was skilled at stealing wallets. One day, he took something that looked like a wallet full of money only to discover, when he returned to his hiding place, that it was a copy of the New Testament. Angry, he threw it on the ground. Yet that night, unable to sleep, he remembered the little book. He started to read the New Testament, soon abandoned his addictions, and surrendered his heart to Christ. Years later, he dedicated his life to distributing the Word.

³http://www.gideons.org/TGI.Web/TGI.Web.PublicWebSite/pages/changed_lives_text.aspx?source=IDidntKnowAnythingAboutGod

A Russian Murderer

A much-feared man—a known killer—in the village of Virirba, Russia, obtained some pages torn from a Gideon New Testament. In the process of rolling cigarettes with them, he read on one of the pages that God loved him. He wept all night because no one had ever loved him before. The very next day, he went to a neighboring town, found a pastor and was led to the Lord. Four years later, 150 people—nearly his entire village—had accepted Christ thanks to his testimony and the evidence of his changed life.

I doubted God could forgive me.

“I had been searching for God, but since there seemed to be so many religions, I didn’t know which one was the right one.

Just before I began a long drive across two states, my friends asked if they could pray for me. I agreed, but I doubted God could forgive me for the way I had lived and all the things I had done.

I stopped at a motel along the way that first night of my trip. I saw the Gideon Bible on the nightstand, but I just ignored it. I couldn’t find anything on TV, so I finally decided to read the Bible. As I read, I called out to God, ‘If You are real, and if You can forgive me, please show me somehow!’

As I turned the page, the Bible fell out of my hand. I picked it back up, and when I did, I read Hebrews 11:1: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* This was the very same verse that my friends had quoted to me before I began my trip that morning.

I got on my knees and asked God to forgive me and come into my life. I still have page 913 from the Gideon Bible in that motel room. I have it taped to the wall of my bus above the windshield.

Now I am living my life for Jesus. I help poor people by doing things like repair work and painting for them. The Lord provides for my needs. My ‘Chapel on Wheels’ is a testimony of what God has done in my life.”

On The Streets Of Nepal

A Nepalese Gideon and his friends were walking down the street witnessing about Jesus when they realized that they were being followed by plainclothes policemen. When they sat down for lunch, one of the policemen approached them, asking what they were doing. The friends invited the policeman to sit with them and one of the Christians boldly witnessed to him. This brave believer went even further and gave the policeman his business card plus an invitation to contact him if he wanted to learn more about Jesus. Two weeks later, the policeman knocked on the door, not to make an arrest but to ask to be led to Christ. Today, that inquiring policeman is a Gideon.

Miracle From A Helicopter

The following story was told to Robert W., a Florida Gideon, by Alexi T., pastor of the evangelical Christian Baptist Church in Noyabrisk, Siberia:

Several years ago, a hungry Nemets fisherman left the town of Ceaca on the Yamal Peninsula in Siberia. The Nemets are hunters and fishermen who live on the Siberian tundra. This Nemets man went looking for food, and he prayed to any god who might hear him, asking for a sign.

Not long after he finished his prayer, a Bible fell from the sky and landed near him. He went back into town with the Bible saying, "I have received a sign." Today, he is part of a church where there are 30 Nemets Christians.

What the villager did not know is that a helicopter had flown from Slaekhard the day he got his sign. In that helicopter were two government officials bringing relief aid to needy locales. As they flew, they sorted through their cargo. One said the other, "The cans of food are good, but what do we need with these books?" So he began throwing Gideon Bibles out the window.

It may have been a miracle of God that the Bible fell beside that fisherman, but it was an act of obedience that put the Bible on the helicopter in the first place. Christians paid money to have those Bibles printed; they paid to have them delivered to Siberia. Others were praying that the Gospel would find good soil among the Nemets people, and God used their faithfulness, their commitment to His mission, and their love for the Nemets people to perform this miracle.

I Found Things I Never Knew Before

Stan F. was born and raised on an island off the coast of Maine. The island was predominantly first and second generation Irish immigrants.

Following graduation from high school, he went to Navy boot camp in Illinois, and while there, he received a little Gideon Testament from the local Gideons. It got shoved into his sea bag, and there it stayed for several years.

Years into his Navy career, Stan's life was in shambles. He had begun to drink heavily and his marriage was in trouble. "I began searching, and realized something was sick and very wrong inside me" he said.

One day, in a submarine off the Atlantic coast, Stan remembered the New Testament he received in boot camp and removed it from his sea bag. Here's what happened next.

"I began to read and found in that New Testament things I never knew before. I found that while I was still a sinner, God loved me and sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for me. And there, 400 feet under the ocean, I surrendered my life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank God for Jesus and for His precious life poured out for me. I thank God for His Word and I thank God for The Gideons, especially for the man who stood in a line at boot camp, giving of his time and taking the ridicule to hand out God's Word to someone like me."

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