



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.1, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

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Program 80 "Pray" © 1990 M. C. Hammer

In a sense, M. C. Hammer's story resembles that of the prodigal son parable in the Bible. He had Christian roots, lost all his money through frivolous spending, and then, ultimately, became a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hammer's story isn't over yet, but let's look at his most successful hit song – "Pray" – in which it's not all that difficult to find the Cross Connection!

The Song ¹

- Most successful hit by rapper M. C. Hammer
 - #2 on Billboard Hot 100 in U.S.; #8 in the U.K.
- From 1990 album *Please Hammer Don't Hurt' Em*
- Used beat sampled from Prince's "When Doves Cry"
- Upbeat video posted on YouTube
- Significant emphasis on prayer to God in a variety of life's situations



The Artist – M. C. Hammer (Stanley Kirk Burrell) (1962-) ¹

- Multi-platinum selling rapper / dancer popular in late 80s - mid-'90s
- Experienced an incredible rise and fall from fame and fortune
 - Squandered fortune of \$33 million
 - Filed bankruptcy in '96, \$13 million in debt
- Considered a "god-father" of pop rap at one time
- More recently, a co-founder of a dance website, television show host and CEO
- Still performs occasionally at concerts and other functions
- Ranked #7 Best Dancer of All Time" by Black Entertainment Television
- Was once a batboy with the Oakland Athletics
 - A reported clubhouse informant for the A's colorful owner Charlie Finley
 - Received "Hammer" name from A's slugger Reggie Jackson
 - Danced outside the stadium to earn enough money to attend games
- Started attending Bible studies in '84; conducted street ministry
- Formed a gospel rap group -- *Holy Ghost Boys* -- prior to mainstream career
- Became a preacher in late '90s
- Hosted ministry TV show "*MC Hammer and Friends*" on TBN in '97
- Dedicated at least one song on each album to God
- Criticized for repetitive lyrics, sampling hooks from other songs, clean-cut image
- Other hits: "U Can't Touch This", "Have You Seen Her" and "Addams Groove"

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Please_Hammer_Don%27t_Hurt_%27Em

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

That's word, we pray (pray, pray)
We got to pray -- just to make it today
I said we pray (pray) ah, yeah, pray (pray)
We got to (need to) pray -- just to make it today
That's word, we pray

- Song's title repeats over 100 times!
- Matthew 6:34 emphasizes the importance of focusing on today –
"...do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own"
- We are instructed to **first** seek the Lord's kingdom and His righteousness

All my life I wanted to make it to the top
(That's word, we pray)
Some said I wouldn't
They told me no, but I didn't stop
(That's word, we pray)
Working hard, making those movies everyday
(That's word, we pray)
And on my knees every night, you know I pray

- Do you think the Lord answers prayers like this? Why or why not?
- *"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures"* – James 4:3, NIV

Refrain

Now I just think that you
Can do what ever you want
(That's word, we pray)
I'm bustin' these rhymes
Making this money and I won't
(That's word, we pray)
Forget my people or my town or my ways
(That's word, we pray)
And on my knees every night I'm still gonna pray

- *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others"* – Phil. 2:3-4
- Hammer spent his millions on luxurious items, including a \$12 million house, 17 autos, 2 helicopters, several race horses, and a leased Boeing 727³
- He also hired hundreds of friends on a \$500,000 monthly payroll⁴

Refrain

Time and time and time and time again
(That's word, we pray)
I kept on knocking, but
These people wouldn't let me in
(That's word, we pray)
I tried and tried and tried and tried to make a way
(That's word, we pray)
But nothing happened till that day I prayed

- The author attributes his success to prayer. What do you think?
- *"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain"* – Psalm 127:1

Refrain

Children dying, oh, so fast from this or that
(That's word, we pray)
Needing that money
Smoking that dope and doing that crack
(That's word, we pray)
Ten years old stand outside
Better look out
(That's word, we pray)
Dead and gone, never had a chance
What's it all about?

- God cares about troubled youth too
"...if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" – Matthew 18:6, NIV
- What is intercessory prayer?
- What do you think Jesus would have us pray on behalf of troubled young people?

Refrain

³ Ibid 2

⁴ Ibid 2

That's word, we pray (x3)

Refrain

On a mission start to doubt. here we go
(That's word, we pray)
Kicking back, read these words we need to know
(That's word, we pray)
Living high, living good, living long
(That's word, we pray)
Take a minute, bust a prayer
And you're good to go

• What does the Bible teach about lifestyle?
The Apostle Paul said...
"...godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" – 1 Timothy 6:6-8, NIV
• Does prayer guarantee living "high", "good" or "long"? Does anything?

Refrain

We're sending this one out to the Lord
(That's word, we pray)
And we thank you and we know we need to pray
(That's word, we pray)
Cause all the blessings that are good they come from above
(That's word, we pray)
And once again we want
To say "thank you" to the Lord with all our love

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..."
– James 1:17

Refrain

That's word, we pray (pray, pray) (x4) That's word, we pray

Final Thoughts:

The Bible describes and encourages all kinds of prayer. In each and every situation, however, Christians should seek to partner with God by asking that His will would be done. This is an instruction to all Christians – not just to the rich or just to the poor. God's will and purpose must come first in all we do, and all we pray!

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests..." – Ephesians 6:18a

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven..." – Matthew 6:19-20a

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" – Matthew 6:33
