



"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 24 – “Teach Your Children” – © 1970 Graham Nash

This song was one of several hits from the *Déjà Vu* album by David Crosby (Byrds), Stephen Stills (Buffalo Springfield), Graham Nash (Hollies) and Neil Young (also Buffalo Springfield). Other well-known songs from that album included "Woodstock" (by Joni Mitchell), "Our House", "Carry On" and "Helpless".¹ The author, Graham Nash, drew inspiration from his often difficult relationship with his father, who had spent time in prison.² Other facts:

- Features Jerry Garcia (Grateful Dead) on pedal steel guitar³
- Neil Young did not play on this particular song²
- Considered a counter-culture anthem³
- Used in a 1970s public service message on television highlighting the negative aspect of nuclear testing and proliferation³
- Graham Nash commented...

"The idea is that you write something so personal that every single person on the planet can relate to it. Once it's there on vinyl it unfolds, outwards, so that it applies to almost any situation."²

Since there is no obvious reference to God in the following lyrics, where is the “cross connection”? The answer lies in considering the lyrical statements concerning roles / relationships between parents and children, and looking at what God desires in terms of interactions, expectations and communications.

You who are on the road
Must have a code that you can live by
And so become yourself
Because the past is just a good bye.

- We all find ourselves on the “road of life”
- Ultimately, we become aware there are 2 roads
 - Wide → destruction; narrow → life – Mat. 7:13-14
 - Our choice of roads determines the “code” we live by

- Many feel they must chart their own course; that they cannot be fulfilled or “become themselves” by surrendering their lives to anything, anyone, or God
- The present & future are all any of us have to work with
- Jesus gives us opportunity for a new start (2 Cor. 5:17)

Teach your children well,
Their father's hell did slowly go by,
And feed them on your dreams
The one they picked, the one you'll know by.

- God instructs Christian parents to raise their children in the faith... *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* -- Proverbs 22:6
- What might be meant by “father’s hell”?
- Some parents try to live their personal “dreams” through their children
 - How does God want us to guide our children concerning their personal future?

¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9j%C3%A0_Vu_\(album\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9j%C3%A0_Vu_(album))
² <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=3274>
³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teach_Your_Children

“One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts.”

-- Psalm 145:4, NASV

Don't you ever ask them why,
If they told you, you would cry,
So just look at them and sigh
And know they love you.

- Experts seem to delight in “classifying” the generations
- Much has been said about “generation gap”
- Do you think these lyrics speak to a universal truth?
- Does godly parenting guarantee understanding & harmony?

And you, of tender years,
Can't know the fears that your elders grew by,
And so please help them with your youth,
They seek the truth before they can die.

- Singer shifts focus to address children
- Baby-boomers don't know what their parents went through in Great Depression era
- Implies youth have market cornered on truth
- Godly youth can lead unbelieving parents to Jesus – who is The Truth

Teach your parents well,
Their children's hell will slowly go by,
And feed them on your dreams
The one they picked, the one you'll know by.

or “picks” or “fix”

- Christians who are “young” in the faith are counseled to “...*imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*” – Heb. 6:12, NIV
- What might be meant by “children's hell”?
- “*When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in 7 years.*” – Mark Twain

Don't you ever ask them why,
if they told you, you would cry,
So just look at them and sigh
And know they love you.

Final Thoughts:

As a young man, I thought long and serious thought to the idea of bringing children into a world so racked and battered by sin, pain and disappointment. All around us, we see disillusioned people, both young and old, trying to escape life's dark side through self-destructive habits and even suicide. But then, I realized that if there is going to be any hope for this world, Christian parents raising godly children must surely play a key role in the advancing the cause of Christ. To pass the faith along – to ground our children in God's truth – and encourage them, by teaching and example, to trust Him in all things, brings true hope – not only for our children, but to those who will be reached for Jesus through the faith and witness of our children.

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”

-- Ephesians 6:4