



"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

03/12/08

Program 28 – “That’s The Way God Planned It” © 1969 Billy Preston

While not a top-of-the-charts hit, this song by Billy Preston reflects yet another example of a song about God’s love and His plan for mankind going out over the secular airwaves during the Jesus Movement era. The lyrics clearly convey the author’s frustration with greed in the world, and a longing for people to be humble and love one another.

The Songwriter / Performer, Billy Preston^{1,2} (1946-2006) –

- Highly successful American soul musician from Houston, Texas; raised in Los Angeles
- Began playing piano at age 3; performed with Mahalia Jackson and James Cleveland by age 10; portrayed blues composer W.C. Handy in 1958 film “St. Louis Blues” at age 12
- Collaborated with great names in the music industry, e.g. -- Beatles, Rolling Stones, Little Richard, Ray Charles, George Harrison, Elton John, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, Sam Cooke, King Curtis, Sammy Davis Jr., Sly Stone, Aretha Franklin, Jackson 5
- Sometimes known as the "Fifth Beatle" for work on the “Get Back” sessions
- Other hits – “Outa Space” (Grammy winner), “Will It Go Round In Circles”, “Nothing From Nothing”, “Space Race”, and “With You, I’m Born Again”; co-wrote “You Are So Beautiful”
- Helped bring gospel into the pop mainstream; recorded 9 gospel albums 1962-2001
- Overcame struggles with alcohol, cocaine addictions, arrests / legal problems

The Song, “That’s The Way God Planned It”^{1,2} --

- From 1969 album of the same name on the Beatles' Apple label
- Reached #62 on the Billboard pop singles charts
- Produced by George Harrison

Why can't we be humble
Like the good lord say
He promised to exalt us
but no-one is away
How men be so greedy
When there's so much left?
All things are God given
And they all have been blessed

- *“...everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted”* – Luke 14:11
- Greed -- an inordinate desire to acquire and possess
 - Someone once remarked that *“The man who has everything often wants two of everything”*
 - Greed is consistently listed in the Bible as sin -- Mark 7:22; Romans 1:29; I Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:3
 - *“... Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”* – Luke 12:15

That's the way God planned it
That's the way God wants it to be, be
That's the way God planned it
That's the way God wants it to be, be

“For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer” – 1 Tim 4:4-5

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

² <http://oldies.about.com/od/70spopandsoul/p/billypreston.htm>

Let not your heart be troubled
Let mourning sobbing cease
Learn to help one another
And live in perfect peace

- The “Golden Rule”, also known as the ethic of reciprocity, is a common tenet across world religions³
- Jesus tells us – *“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets”* – Mat. 7:12

If we'd just be humbler
Like the good lord say
He promised to exalt us
But love is the way
That's the way God planned it
That's the way God wants it to be, be
You better believe me
That's the way God planned it
That's the way God wants it to be, be

- God's original plan: an idyllic place – the Garden of Eden
- God's ultimate plan: Heaven
- Eden foreshadowed Heaven in many respects, e.g. --
 - Man in God's presence in a paradise
 - Tree of Life in both Eden (Genesis 2:9) and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:2)
- God's plan of salvation: bridges God's original plan with His ultimate plan for mankind

I hope you get this message
Where you won't others will
You don't understand me
But I'll love you still
That's the way God planned it
That's the way God wants it to be, be

Expresses unconditional love

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” – 1 John 4:10-11

Final Thoughts:

As long as there is sin in the world, the love for one another for which so many songs plead, will only be realized in limited measure. Aren't you glad that some day, as another song says, “Evil [will be] banished to eternal hell”?

Billy Preston understood God's plan. Although, like many popular musicians, he struggled with harmful habits and sinful behavior, sources report that he was restored during the 1990s. He knew the truth, and I trust that his faith in God did not fail.

“Music is my life and everyday I live it...you don't know how glad I am God laid his hands on me.”

-- Billy Preston, from liner notes to his album, “That's The Way God Planned It”

* * * * *

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethic_of_reciprocity