

Come on People, Save the Country

"Come on people, come on children," sing the Fifth Dimension in their newest song. Save the Country is a gospel song, sung by several black performers even before the Fifth Dimension, and written by a white gal, Laura Nyro. It just goes to show that in art and music, as it should be in all of life, "there is no separation."

It's a gospel song not only in style by also in words. "The glory river," "gonna wash you up and wash you down, gonna lay that devil down" — these are talking about the baptizing process, the cleansing rite that usually takes place (for Catholics, at least) at a time in life when the person's main problem is not so much a tarnished soul as it is a dirty diaper.

Such a facetious remark could point out the possible gap between the normal baptism service and the basic meaning of Christian morality. If baptism is simply an initiation rite into a particular church then we should insist on being "card carrying Catholics."

But if that's not important, and if baptism is a sign of the personal commitment to a goal which the person has set for himself, then it's fair to wonder how many — or how few — people have been helped to understand that it's their own responsibility to make that commitment.

We once asked a good number of people — young and old — why they were Catholics, rather than Lutheran or Hindu or Jewish. The vast majority — who were, on the whole, thoughtful and sincere — said they were Catholics mainly because they were born that way.

Is the Catholic religion, or any religion, an accident of birth? We don't think it should be, but for many people, this is

THE MUSIC BAG

Come on people, come on children, come on down to the glory river.

Gonna wash you up and wash you down, gonna lay that devil down,
Gonna lay that devil down.

Come on people, come on children, there's a king at the glory river,

And the precious king, he loved the people to sing,
Babes in the blinkin' sun sang "We Shall Overcome."

I got fury in my soul, fury's gonna take me to the glory goal in my mind.

I can't study war no more.

Save the people, save the children, save the country now.

Come on people, sons and mothers, keep the dream of the two young brothers.

Gonna take that dream and ride that dove.

We could build the dream with love, I know we could build the dream with love.

Save the people, save the children, save the country now.

(Published by Tuna Fish Music)

what it is. When it's time for people — this is especially true of kids growing up today — to make their basic commitment to life, to "lay that devil down," and to live a belief that "we shall overcome," many people often abandon that accident of birth along with other accidents such as position and location.

It is happening. People tend to associate specific regulations with the basic ideas of Christianity. They associate specific actions — or lack of action — with the idea of the Church. We know a lot of kids — older people, too, but mostly younger ones — who struggle to talk about Christ's morality without talking about Christianity. We can understand why they do this, for the "devil" in the Church is obvious enough.

But if you really mean "I got fury in my soul, fury's gonna take me to the glory goal in my mind," then you can't let that fury blind you to the good things in the Church. Don't let the fury destroy your goals in the holocaust of negative thinking. Be angry, as you should be, at abuses in the Church; but let your anger be positive in both your goals and your methods.

All this may seem a far cry from the obvious message of Save the Country. After all, how can we take a song like this and turn it into a discourse on religion?

The song itself gives an inkling of the reasons that let us — and should let everyone — be free in their interpretation and living of life: "Save the

people, save the children, save the country." This country is nothing but people; there is no separation. Life means people living; there is no separation. Religion is life, the sacred is the world; there is no separation.

Save the Country emphasizes that it's people that must be saved. People are beautiful. People are worth the effort.

When we write about songs, we try to write about people. We believe that religion can be an expression of people living in a vital way. If people — all of us — can save religion from the quagmire it's in, we'll do what the song asks: "Save the people, save the children, save the country."

(Catholic Press Features)

MINI MATH ANSWER

-5	+1		+2	-3
+3	+2		+3	+4
+3	-4		-5	+1
-1	+2		+3	-4

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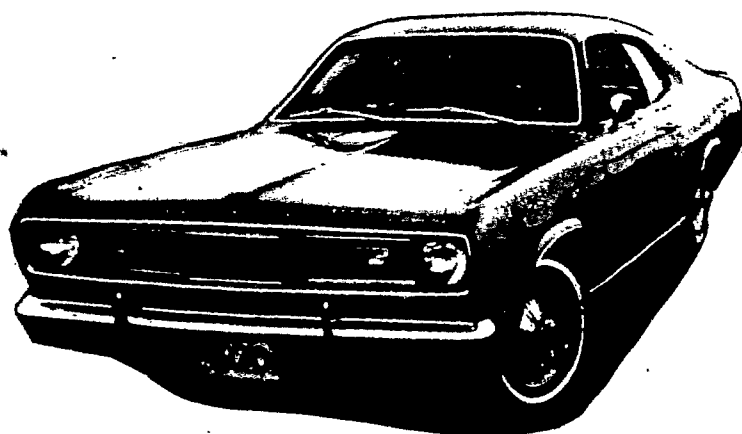
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