

'Heaven Help Us All'

By THE MISSION SINGERS

Stevie Wonder is a great, great artist, and many of his songs are tributes to his talent. Heaven Help Us All is his newest, and we'll bet it'll be one of his biggest. But not one of his sweetest.

Heaven Help Us All is a two-edged sword. The first idea you might get is the obvious one: the song is a plea for aid from God for people who are suffering. In part, at least, the song could be considered a modern version of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice" sounds pretty much like "Heaven help the Black man if he struggles one more day."

Of course, that kind of thing

makes the Beatitudes a little too practical and close-to-home for comfort, but that's the way it goes. Religion is supposed to challenge us, and Christ once said he came not to bring peace but a sword. Heaven Help Us All in this sense is a cry to God for justice.

But in a less obvious — but perhaps more important — way, Heaven Help Us All is a song that grabs the sword for its own use. If the line, "Heaven help the boy who won't reach twenty-one" is a plea for justice, the next line — "Heaven help the man who gave that boy a gun" — is a threat. In the former line, the singer trusts in Divine Providence. In the latter, he takes to heart the bromide, "Heaven helps those who help themselves."

This second attitude runs right alongside the first one throughout the song. We think it gives the song the kind of realism and balance that's needed. One of the greatest criticisms of traditional religion is that it makes people think they're puppets, unable to move

unless someone up there pulls some strings.

Heaven Help Us All echoes John F. Kennedy's words, "Here on this earth, God's work must truly be our own." The singer is saying, "Heaven better help the unseeing White man, because I'm going to make sure that that man finds no comfort in false security. Heaven better help that man who uses people for his football, because I'm going to get him thrown out of the game of life."

If that sounds bitter, or vengeful, just remember that justice is the greatest threat to the unjust. If we work for truth and right, we might as well recognize that our success will crush many who struggle only for injustice.

Let's not have a false charity that permits us to excuse the obvious unfairness of so many people. That's the meaning of Heaven Help Us All. Let's work to help people who really need help, and let Heaven take care of those who try to hurt.

THE MUSIC BAG

HEAVEN HELP US ALL

Heaven help the child who never had a home.
Heaven help the girl who walks the streets alone.
Heaven help the roses if the bombs begin to fall.
Heaven help us all.

Heaven help the Black man if he struggles one more day.
Heaven help the White man if he turns his back away.
Heaven help the man who kicks the man who has to crawl.
Heaven help us all.

Heaven help us all, Heaven help us all.
Heaven help us, Lord, hear our call when we fall.

Heaven help the boy who won't reach twenty-one
Heaven help the man who gave that boy a gun.
Heaven help the people with their backs against the wall.
Lord, Heaven help us all.

When I lay me down, before I go to sleep,
In a troubled world I pray the Lord to keep
Hatred from the mighty and the mighty from the weak.
Heaven help us all.

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'Junque Sale' Set in Penfield

A parish wide "Junque Sale" sponsored by the Home School Association, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 21, at St. Joseph's School Hall, 39 Gebhardt Road, Penfield, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A variety of booths will feature items such as housewares, small furniture and appliances, new-to-you clothing, boutique shop, toys, books and sporting equipment and home baked goods. Refreshments will be sold. Chairmen are Mr. and Mrs. Edward Gartland, 71 Wedgwood Drive. The public is invited.

God's Good Earth Education Topic

"Conserving God's Good Earth" is the topic for an adult education seminar tomorrow night, Nov. 19, at St. Joseph's, Penfield.

The movie, Multiply and Subdue the Earth, will be shown, and discussion will be led by Christian Kling and Sister Joan Rowan of the St. John Fisher faculty.

The education series, arranged by laymen of the parish, opened Nov. 5 with a program on the suburban Christian's relationship to the underprivileged of the city. The final Fall program, on church music, will be held at the Church of the Incarnation. All meetings begin at 8 p.m. and are open to the public.

Jesuit Historian Here to Discuss Vatican Councils

"The Vatican Councils: The Church Becomes Universal" is the title of a talk to be given by a Jesuit historian at 7:30 tonight, Nov. 18, at St. Bernard's Seminary.

He is Father James J. Hennessey, S.J., associate professor of modern and American church history at Fordham University, who was a participant at the recent Concilium Congress on the Future of the Church held in Brussels.

Father Hennessey's talk is in commemoration of the centennial of the First Vatican Council, held in 1869-70. The talk is open to the public at no charge.

College Players Perform Woyzeck

The Nazareth-St. John Fisher Drama Club, backed by the Nazareth Theatre Department, will present final performances of Georg Buchner's Woyzeck tonight (Nov. 18) and tomorrow night at 8:15, in the Arts Center. After the play tonight, performers and production staff will discuss it with the audience.

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