

# PC007

*The Good News* (Manhattan Beach) 1; 2 (Summer, 1973), Covenant Media Foundation, [www.cmfnow.cmo](http://www.cmfnow.cmo)

---

## **“Mama Don’t Take My Kodachrome Away”**

*by Greg L. Bahnsen*

George Harrison, having made a trek from Beatle-mania to East mysticism, is now singing “Give me hope, help me cope . . .” seems that everything he has tried still has not settled his personal fears or agitations. For a man with his fame and finances we might not have expected such a frank admission that life is a rough haul, a miserable headache, a frightening and confusing experience. But it is.

Three-dog Night thinks that they can find the hope necessary to cope with the harshness of life in “Shambala,” where the rain washes away all the unpleasant things in the world: my tears, my pain, my sorrow, and even my shame. Swell place this Shambala. Everything is sweet and nice – you can even tell who your brothers and sisters are by the look in their eye! Ah, but how do you get to Shambala? Where is it? What exactly is it? What makes things any different there than they are here? Of course it is ridiculous to address such questions to Three-dog Night; they would simply say that their song is not intended to be taken so literally. There is no Shambala, just like there is no Santa Claus, no Easter bunny, no Tooth Fairy. But it eases the pain and frustration of life to pretend that Shambala exists.

Thus while Harrison continues to look for hope in this life to cope with his difficulties, Three-dog Night has been afflicted with a terminal case of wishful thinking. Big help that is to Harrison! When you are up against the realities of life in this world, empty dreams will be of no concrete value to you. If the answer to your problems is “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” then you’d better not count on finding anything but a weird dude like the Wizard of Oz. How can you cope with life if your hopes are unrealistic?

And don’t be so unrealistic as to think that you haven’t got problems in this life. You can’t fool anybody but yourself. Consider your social relations. Struggling to find friends? Worried about impressing people around you? Found the right boyfriend or girlfriend? Struggling with questions about sexual desire? Getting along with your parents? Sure that there is going to be a place for you in life? But even more importantly, consider your spiritual life. How do you cope with your genuine guilt before God? Are you just indulging in a wishful thinking that God’s anger will go away? Are you a bit worried that your evident lack of interest in Scripture, prayer, worship and witnessing are signs that you are actually spiritually dead in God’s sight? If you have known friends or classmates who have met an early death, have you questioned what that experience is going to be like for you?

Well then, how do you cope with life? What hope do you have for solutions to your problems, your doubts, your immediate and your eternal future? But you say, I don't want to think about these questions. Forget the serious, realistic matters for now, and tune back into the radio.

There we find "Rhymin (Paul) Simon" singing about all the crap he learned in high school. Just a bunch of serious nonsense. He admits that his life has not matched his sweet imagination; things simply have not worked out as well as he hoped – and "everything looks worse in black and white." But he has found a way to cope with life. He finds it in "Kodachrome." Instead of the bleakness of black and white, now his life has been transformed by color photography?

Gives us the nice bright colors,

Gives us the greens of summers,

Makes you think all the world's a sunny day

(O yeah).

Of course you only think all the world is a sunny day – because in fact the problems of your life continue to nag you, your worries and depression are still unrelieved, and the world is still an ugly place to live (just watch the six o'clock news).

So we are right back to the wishful thinking we saw in Three-dog Night. They hide behind utopian dreams, while Paul Simon makes believe with color photography. They cling to illusion, hoping that the real questions of life will go away. But those questions don't. The questions keep coming back to all of. How can we cope with our problems and fears? What hope do we have for the future?

Harrison is asking for help. Three-dog Night is lost in the dream world of Shambala. Paul Simon is pleading that his Kodachrome, his emotional crutch, not be taken away.

Maybe you are no better off than they are. Maybe you are just hoping against hope, wishful thinking, that life won't hold problems for you and that death will be nothing to fear. That is an empty dream. But if that is the only thing you have, then you'd better cling to your illusion. "Mama, don't take my Kodachrome away!"

But there is a better way to go. Get rid of your false hopes, you deluded illusions. "You were at one time separate from Christ. . . having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). "And you, being previously alienated and enemies in your mind and evil works, He has now reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before Him, if you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard" (Col. 1:21-23). Christ alone is your hope, your way to cope with life. "Christ in you (is) the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). This is not the wishful thinking of Shambala and Kodachrome. This is the living and true God, come to save His

people from their sins. Are you one of His people? What hope is there for you if you are not? "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15)!