

## **Song Stories: The Power of Your Love (Geoff Bullock)**

*By Angelica Del Vasto*

Nineteenth century literary giant Victor Hugo once wrote, "The greatest happiness in life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves." The song "The Power of Your Love," written by Geoff Bullock, encompasses the listener with this very sentiment; the empowering conviction that the Creator of the universe has done, and is doing, everything to convey His love to us. It compels us to face our own weaknesses and then fall into the arms of God who is, according to Bullock, "seeking, chasing, drawing, loving, enduring, suffering, forgiving, accepting and overwhelming us." A native of Sydney, Australia, Geoff Bullock is father to seven children; five of whom are his own and two whom he counts as "the most wonderful wedding presents." Bullock first started writing worship songs when he became music pastor at what now has become Hillsong Australia. However, for as long as he can remember, the songwriter always used music as a language to express his feelings.

In the early 1970s he played in "garage band after garage band," touring the east coast of Australia. Although a fan of the Beatles for their ingenuity and cultural relevance, and of Billy Joel for his narrative lyrics, Bullock's music is mostly inspired by classical melodies and hymns he remembers singing as a schoolboy.

In his early twenties, Bullock responded to an altar call and began his journey of faith claiming that he has always been overwhelmed by the depths of God's desire to draw near to each of us. Bullock wrote "Power of Your Love" with this in mind, oddly enough while waiting for dinner at a friend's house. "I wasn't trying to write a song," he remembers, "but I was actually praying while I was playing." The first verse and chorus was written that evening while the second verse came along after returning home that night. The completed work was hastily arranged over breakfast the next day and sung at church in the morning service. According to Bullock, the song has since "left home" and has traveled the world. "It has legs and it appears to have traveled everywhere. This so amazes me. I really have no role in its journeys. I simply get postcards occasionally."

Anyone who has used this song to address God in worship will not be surprised to know that "The Power of Your Love" song has influenced people all around the world. Spirit's seem to soar as the chorus begins, allowing singers to "get in" to Isaiah's bones, so to speak, when he writes, "But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (40:31, NIV). Coincidentally this is the very verse which influenced Bullock while he was writing of this song.

The songwriter attributes this musical feel of the song to the use of minor chords to break up the major chords, a typical approach in his writing. As one worship leader stated, "Musically, you feel yourself moving up and down stairs; the verses carry you down, the chorus takes you up."

The song has also impacted Bullock. He states that there was a time in his life when "these weaknesses I see in me," as he includes in the song, overcame him: "All of a sudden a song that was written so many years before became a precious and understanding friend. In fact, at that time so many of the songs that I had written were given new meaning as I had to live out their inspiration. It is far easier writing a song than having to live out its words." Bullock confesses that he is a very normal

person with self-professed "heavy-duty" flaws: "I have become far more aware of 'why grace needs to be sufficient in me.' "

With over 100 songs under his songwriting belt and so much ministry experience, one imagines that Bullock has a lot to say about the interaction between worship and faith. In fact, he has spent the last five years deeply pursuing these themes.

Bullock wonders whether we are in danger of building our Christianity around our own faith rather than God's faithfulness. He asks the question of whether Christianity becomes centered on what we do for God rather than what He has done for us? In an article for an Australian journal entitled "Beyond Self-centered Worship," Bullock writes; "We've made worship self-centered instead of God-centered ....It's as if we're worshipping worship instead of God."

He looks toward the day that people live out the sentiment of the worship songs that are being written and that the themes become reflections of Christ deep within purposeful lives and not simply advertising slogans. "I long for the day," Bullock offers, "when our songs are sung by those who have been touched by Jesus long before the song is ever heard."

Bullock hopes that the next song he writes will bring hope to those who feel disqualified from believing. He prays that his songs will reflect the "face of Christ." When asked if he had advice to give to fellow songwriters, he offers this plea: "Please do not be inspired primarily by the music. Please do not seek to inspire others primarily with your talents, your lyrics, melodies and musicianship. But be inspired first and foremost by Christ. Look toward Calvary and ask yourself, 'If this is God's final and absolute statement about His character and nature, does it change how you look at Him or what you expect of Him and what He expects of you?' Search for the answer. Let it permeate all that you do and then write about the journey that unfolds with all the passion, inspiration, melody and musicianship that you can muster."

By keeping our eyes on Christ, the Church's true worship leader, we will enter into what Bullock's song suggests, the overwhelming power of His love.

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