

American Icon Pat Boone Turns 88, Stars in Movie, Writes Book and Reveals How He Wrote Israel's (Unofficial) 'Second' National Anthem

Pat Boone turned 88 today, but instead of slowing down and enjoying retirement, he has been keeping active in many ways. He has recently starred as an old golf pro in the movie *The Mulligan*, he's just written a book called *If* that will release in September and he's working on a song about Jesus being Israel's Messiah that both Jews and Christians can sing together.

"If I'm talking fast, it's because I'm trying to relate to you the crazy myriad of things that God is giving me to do in these last hours," Boone said in a recent interview for my podcast, *The Strang Report*.

Boone rose to singing stardom in the 1950s and 60s with hits like "Speedy Gonzalez" and "Love Letters in the Sand." Since then, he has sold over 45 million records, appeared in multiple Hollywood films and authored many best-selling books including *New Song*, a book in which he detailed his rise to fame, his struggling personal life and his discovery of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which turned his life around.

Boone grew up in the Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. When *New Song* was released, it sold 2 million copies, but his church was not thrilled.

"They didn't believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They thought that was just for the first century and not for now," Boone says. "It seemed like heresy to them, and so I was

disfellowshipped.”

Although he was kicked out of his church, he says that now many of those ministers and members from the Church of Christ have since received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

“I have been completely restored in the church of my growing up days,” Boone says.

Because of his prolific performing and writing, Boone’s influence on American Christian culture and American pop culture is undeniable, but one of the songs he wrote that he’s most proud of is “Exodus (This Land is Mine),” a song that has become Israel’s second (unofficial) national anthem.

The song started out as Ernest Gold’s instrumental theme from the movie *Exodus*, a film about the 1948 rebirth of Israel. The movie premiered in 1960.

“I loved that song so much that I wanted to sing it, but the publisher let us know there were no lyrics,” Boone says.

Other professional writers had submitted lyrics, but they were rejected by the composer Ernest Gold, the publisher of the song and Otto Preminger, the director and producer of the movie.

“The publisher said to me as I was trying to get words to sing to the song,” Boone says, “‘There’s not going to be any lyrics ... It’s too hard of a subject—two and a half million people coming across the desert, escape from Egypt, coming into a new land, taking over land. The whole story is too much to put into that melody.’”

As he was wrapping presents with his wife on Christmas Eve, Boone listened to the record 40 times, and on the last time, he says, “The words popped into my head, ‘This land is mine.’” Boone says he got goosebumps, grabbed an empty Christmas card and started writing. “And in 20 minutes, I had written those

words like I was taking dictation,” Boone says. “Those words became the second national anthem of the nation of Israel.”

Boone has been invited to sing that song in Israel many times, and during his visits former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has become a dear friend of his. Netanyahu even calls Boone “Speedy” every time they’re together as a reference to Boone’s hit song, “Speedy Gonzalez.”

God has used Boone to share the good news of Jesus Christ with Netanyahu and other influential Jewish officials. In fact, Boone is working on a song right now called “Jehoshua,” a song that Jews and Christians can sing together honoring Jesus as Israel’s Messiah.

“The Lord is using every last ounce of me for His purposes, which was always my goal,” Boone says.

For the full interview with this American icon, please listen to my *Strang Report* podcast. And, please be sure to share it with your social media followers. {eoa}

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