

# God Rocks!

Standard Publishing and Chelsea Road Productions Create New Kid-Vid Series

By Jenna Lusby

To introduce Standard Publishing "sparkin'" new video series, God Rocks!®, we interviewed the series creator, Bruce Stacey, President of Canada-based Chelsea Road Productions, and Brook Agliata, Standard Publishing Senior Marketing Manager of Consumer Products.

**Lookout: Bruce, why did you form Chelsea Road Productions, Inc.?**

**Bruce:** The company was born about 10 years ago out of a desire to bring together a dedicated, professional, creative team to produce high quality animation, broadcast, and music projects that would both entertain and communicate truth about the God of the Bible.

**Lookout: What prompted you to approach Standard Publishing with the idea for the God Rocks!® series?**

**Bruce:** I knew about the company's successful history. They were convinced it was time to explore new ways to reach their audience. I really liked the friendly team and thought working together could be fun and productive.

**Lookout: Brook, what made Standard Publishing latch onto the idea?**

**Brook:** Standard had been thinking about new ways to reach young people. I came on board just as Standard was firming up plans with Chelsea Road. All this has happened in a little over a year!

**Lookout:** That's a lot of work, especially breaking into a new market.

**Brook:** It's been a whirlwind. But my previous experience was in advertising, which included video production, directing, and scriptwriting, so it's a good fit. We believe the series will help fulfill our mission to kids, which is to provide meaningful products that bring the Bible to life for children of all ages. We want to serve as a resource to parents, to help them grow kids in God's light.

**Lookout: How does the God Rocks!® series fulfill this vision?**

**Brook:** Videos are one of the most popular items on the market, and still growing. Parents and churches are looking for ways to teach their children in smart, visual ways. One point of distinction in the God Rocks!® series is that each video tells a Bible story.

**Lookout: Other cartoons, such as "Peanuts" and "Veggie Tales" have been able to communicate profound truths in the context of humor. What take-away truths will kids learn from your rainbow of quartz and limestone characters?**

**Brook:** The concept for the video services comes from Luke 19:40: "If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out!" We want to convey the truths of the Bible; and not just in the scripts alone, but in the music. These videos have great new songs in each story.

**Lookout: Bruce, the God Rocks!® band is a real band. Did they get started as an outcropping of the series?**

**Bruce:** We wanted to create great music for the youth audience. We put together a real band to help write and sing the songs, and to provide the voices for the characters. The songs stand on their own. We think kids are going to love 'em.

**Lookout: Do you plan to offer the music on CD?**

**Bruce:** The first God Rocks!® album is set for release in the spring of 2003.

**Lookout: What kinds of lyrics and musical styles can we look forward to?**

**Bruce:** We jokingly say that if you mix N Sync, The Monkees, and Keith Green, you'd end up with the God Rocks!® sound. It's a mix of hip-hop and melodic happy-pop, driven by cool grooves and rockin' guitar. The lyrics are direct in terms of the gospel message. Since parents are sometimes forced to listen to their kid's music in the car and home, we thought it a good idea to make music fun enough for moms and dads to enjoy, too. (Just don't tell the kids you like it.)

**Lookout: Is the band touring?**

**Bruce:** We've had requests for a 12-city tour this year and for appearances at some major Christian music festivals. Stay tuned to the website, [www.godrockvideo.com](http://www.godrockvideo.com), for details.

**Brook:** Also on the website we have samples of the music, kids' games, a parent page, and ideas for retailers. We plan to publish a new video every six months for the next few years. We're also bringing out apparel and jewelry this summer (2003). There are devotion and fiction



books in the works, too.

**Lookout:** *Any huge undertaking like this is always a team effort. Bruce, who are your major players and how have they inspired you?*

**Bruce:** My wife of 25 years, Elaine, has been my greatest partner in ministry. We are realizing this dream together. I don't think I could have achieved anything without her wisdom, friendship and encouragement. A project like *God Rocks!@* can only happen with a great crew. Our animation director is Hubert Den Draak; our music director is Ian Tanner; the technical director is Nikola Milosevic. We have a 30-member support staff.

**Lookout:** *What can you tell me about your animators' backgrounds?*

**Bruce:** Hubert Den Draak ran one of the largest animation companies in Holland before moving to North America five years ago. He studied theology as a young Christian but always felt drawn to the world of animation. Now he gets to pursue both his passions. We also have an experienced team of former Disney animators and recent animation college grads, who are into the latest 3-D computer techniques.

**Lookout:** *There is increasing moral outrage in America against the kind of material our children are exposed to in the media. Is the moral climate in Canadian TV, movies, and music the same?*

**Bruce:** Without question! The permissive values set before our children in the media respect no borders. Combine many of our TV shows, movies, music, and the Internet and you have a dangerous mix. Parents must be pro-active in helping their children learn how to make discerning choices.

**Lookout:** *Where do you think we went wrong?*

**Bruce:** Much of the church abandoned the significance of the creative arts as a means to communicate truth to the world. In many ways Christians

have retreated from the mainstream of society into a sub-culture that has become largely ineffective in reaching its neighbors and communicating truth to the next generation.

Parents everywhere are concerned for the hearts and minds of their children in a world devoid of absolute moral values. God's Word is the same yesterday, today and forever, and believers need to continue to explore creative means to present its uncompromising truths. The power of the media is undeniable. But Jesus captured the hearts and minds of people by teaching through parables in a cultural context, and we are following his example. We have to find ways to communicate to today's generation.

**Lookout:** *The Livingstones are more like the traditional TV families of a couple of decades ago, than the families we're seeing on prime time now.*

**Bruce:** Exactly. The trend in so-called "reality TV" has robbed us of real, positive family models in much of the media. We know the shape of current families today and the efforts by some to even redefine what constitutes a family. Through Chip's family, the Livingstone's, Gem's single parent family, and their friends, we're trying to portray families that are really working. We're modeling positive relationships in a fun way, hoping everyone can relate on some level.

**Lookout:** *Brook, are you hoping to reach the same cross-over market as the wildly popular Veggie Tales?*

**Brook:** Veggie Tales was designed for a younger audience, but fortunate-



ly, their appeal has spanned all ages, toddlers to adults. *God Rocks!@* was written for ages 7-12, but the music is sophisticated enough for older youth and adults. The computer animation appeals to very young children, too. We're starting exclusively in Christian stores. But we believe that *God Rocks!@* has great cross-over potential. There's certainly a need for high quality, creative resources that don't shy away from the Christian message.

**Lookout:** *The competition in the show business industry is vicious and there are certainly no guarantees. Why take the risk?*

**Bruce:** I've considered myself called to ministry all my life and really have never looked for any show business guarantees. I consider it a privilege to serve God in this way, and will continue to do so as long as the Lord provides opportunities, big or small. ■

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