

TODAY'S MUSIC & THE CHURCH

ROCK MUSIC –

A TREND THAT CANNOT BE REVERSED?

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As a new believer I attended a conservative fellowship that, at times, introduced rock music. Coming from an unsaved background that included singing in rock bands and living the 'rock' lifestyle, I found this type of music strangely inappropriate in church but did not know why.

Later, while I was training for the ministry, I attended a more biblical pre-millennial fellowship that only used hymns and choruses. I grew to have a deep love for these inherited masterpieces of the faith, as they sincerely impart a real and accurate sense of the righteousness, majesty and timelessness of God.

I have been truly changed by the Holy Spirit in this most important area of my walk with Christ and am thoroughly convinced that the much more common progression, in the opposite musical direction, is plainly spiritual error.

One of the most frequent justifications heard from Christians who support rock music in Churches actually tries to exploit the great work of the hymn writers. It is argued that because the hymn writers used some of the melodies of their day, it must be correct to use the music styles of our day, meaning 'rock'. On first hearing there seems to be a certain logic to this argument, yet in reality it is severely lacking in wisdom. Over the intervening centuries, music has degenerated at an alarming rate in tandem with other aspects of our society. Most of the music of the hymn writers' day did not bring forth the fruit of rebellion, especially because the society then would never have accepted otherwise. It was a unique time when the most beautiful music ever written was available to be used to glorify God, and the hymn writers did not miss this great opportunity.

A similar form of this argument is based on the lives of some of the classical composers themselves. It has become popular for historians to attempt to discover some transgression in the private lives of history's famous personalities. A number of the great classical composers have not escaped such treatment. These allegations are used to attempt to justify the use of rock music by bringing classical music 'down by association' with its less than perfect composers. Even if any of these allegations were true, again, this attempt fails because no matter what the lifestyles of the composers, the classical music in itself does not bring forth the fruit of rebellion.

The 'rock' era, like the Jazz era that preceded it, was marked by rebellion and sexual immorality. Rock music surely must be the greatest conduit of filth and depravity ever to assail mankind. It has the power to incite certain behaviour no matter why it was composed or what its lyrical content is because the hearer conforms to its fruit. This influence on society is clearly visible today and these obvious trends are more subtly emulated in the congregations that have introduced it. One only has to observe the effects on young females, the extreme emotional reactions and the unbridled illogical devotion to rock performers, to discern a hidden power in the music. A brief overview of the historical beginnings of rock music will amply provide evidence as to its fruit.

Described as a "seminal" and "pioneering" rock performer, Bill Haley's career was marred by acts of violence by his teenage audience. His song "Rock Around The Clock", when included in the soundtrack of the film "The Blackboard Jungle", incited the vandalism of cinemas. This was Britain's first taste of post-war hooliganism in November 1955.

On the 30th of June 1956, 25 fans were hospitalised from an incident at a concert at Asbury Park, New Jersey. The film "Don't Knock The Rock", which already had been previously banned in some countries', was withdrawn from Sunday screenings in Britain

in September 1956 due to a proliferation of 'rock' inspired gangs. On 10-26-58, at a concert in the then divided and isolated West Berlin, a major riot developed amongst 7000 of Haley's fans that resulted in a rise of East/West Cold War tensions.

Even in the twilight of his career in 1976 his music still incited violence at a London concert. However, Bill Haley's music does not have the monopoly on this kind of influence, as his successors in the Beatles and the Rolling Stones have also exhibited the fruit of rock music. The Beatles encouraged the use of L.S.D., the practice of Eastern religions and witchcraft, and John Lennon was a notorious blasphemer.

Their more disheveled cohorts, the Rolling Stones, were well aware of their power to manipulate fans into violence and sexual immorality and had close personal links with organised Witchcraft. This is well attested by the authors Tony Sanchez and Tony Scaduto.

From my own personal experience of the rock music industry, there were many young people who were seriously harmed. One young man was \$250,000 in debt by the age of 21 due to reckless ambition.

One young woman became suicidal after being influenced by her peers into casual sexual relationships. Evidence of Satanism and the Occult was also prevalent in the beginning of the "dance party" era. Certain individuals organized dance parties in the mid eighties that were dedicated to the ancient Greek deity Bacchus, the god of debauchery and immorality. Dance or 'Rave' parties with the attendant use of illegal drugs are still extremely popular twenty years later.

Even on becoming a believer, I was given a pertinent reminder of rock music's sheer incompatibility with the Christian life. On playing an old recording that I had come across I felt so oppressed by evil, that I had to cease playing the recording immediately. I

then recalled that one of the Band's other albums had displayed satanic symbols, so I did some research. I found some relevant information in the "Guinness Who's Who of Independent and New Wave Music", which said that the lead singer had been "fascinated by the Occult". The lead singer also had fled from the U.K. to Iceland a number of times, fearing that the end of the world had come, and had influenced a number of the band members to follow!

It could be argued that this was a more extreme form of 'rock', but I have seen so called 'Christian' Punk Rock advertised as being performed in conservative churches. However, one only has to walk out the front door to observe how rock culture has permeated society. The middle aged who refuse to grow up, with inappropriate fashions, much body piercing and tattoo's, obscene language (spoken and displayed), hearing damage, and so on. This is sheer paganism! To suggest that these 'outside influences' have not affected Christian congregations is not only naive, it is inaccurate as the influence of rock music is now often accepted and even cultivated within the church. Accusations of legalism and the need for relevance will abound if one suggests that the 'rock' path is an error to those who have committed themselves to its proliferation. However, the lack of separation from the world in the modern church is irrefutable evidence of the fruit of 'rock' music.

The Occult power of repetitive drums, rhythm, and chanting, has long been acknowledged as tools of mind manipulation and control. The ancient mystery cults, paganism, voodoo, shamanism, and certain so called 'Christian' cults, have in the past all used these well proven techniques to propagate their influence. Every genuine believer who is serious about their service to Christ should be dismayed at these Occult strategies becoming widespread in churches, especially when said techniques are expected to aid in the Lord's work. Yet there seems to be champions for rock music in almost every Christian denomination. Why?

Unfortunately it seems that rock music has been with us so long now and is so widespread that it is just accepted, without any spiritual discernment. Christians forget the appeal of the Apostle Paul in Romans Chapter 6. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are ashamed? For the end of those things is death." (Romans 6:21)

The fact is that many are unwilling to turn from the things of the World, being fearful of losing the acceptance of what must often be a 'Christian' rock majority in fellowships and even family. The path of Christ, however, is often unpopular and yet it is the necessary way to please our Lord and to have a good testimony. God requires the Christian to, *"make melody in your heart to the Lord."* (Eph 6: 19)

Rock music is anything but. Those under the influence of 'rock', in the Lord's strength, need to listen only to melodious music for a time and they will begin to notice the rebelliousness and lifelessness of the former. In spite of Christian 'fashions' the believer must discern.

Appropriate church music need not be the older compositions alone; any songs that are clear on doctrine and have a truly musical, as opposed to 'rock' style, are suitable. The melody must be beautiful and predominate, with the rhythm only in a limited supporting role as it is in classical music. There is also a need to encourage congregations to continue to give their gift of singing praise to the Lord.

Large bands and the use of projectors (though not bad in themselves) over hymnals in congregations sometimes create an atmosphere of a concert performance rather than that of a church service. Music should always complement and not overpower the voices of the saints.

It would seem the church as a whole could now easily be compared with one of Christ's observations of the Pharisees. Jesus rebuked them in chapter 16 of Matthews Gospel:

"When it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today; for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matthew 16:2-3)

The church age is ending and falsehood is increasing, but many overlook the Lord's prophesied warnings in His Word about the churches' increasing apostasy. Rather, believers rush head long to embrace the latest so-called 'Christian' fad.

Could it be that this new kind of 'fervor' for the Lord is actually a cloak for the contemporary believer's reticence to use the tried and true methods that God has already supplied? This would seem to be the case as in this country, as well as in many others, the church continues to decline and continues to ensnare itself more deeply with secular society.

Israel is again a nation and Europe maneuvers into unity. The stage is set for Antichrist to rise up and attempt to destroy God's newly regathered people. Daily the end of the Dispensation of Grace draws closer, yet many in the church ignore God's prophetic Scriptures. The ending of the Church Age, however, will mean much in the way of spiritual failure.

The late John F. Walvoord sums up the scriptural facts well when he says: "Major passages of Scripture deal with this subject and the expositor is embarrassed by the wealth of material which plainly teaches that the end of the age will be characterized by apostasy."

It is painfully obvious that rock music is not of God and does not produce the fruit of righteousness. This can be proved conclusively to any who are willing to impartially and objectively study this subject with the discernment of the Holy Spirit and in the light of

Scripture. Therefore, the predominance of 'rock' music in Christian congregations is in itself clear evidence of rising apostasy, a prophesied sign of the end of the age.