

MUSIC THAT GLORIFIES GOD

2 Peter 2:1-3

“... there shall be **false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

“And **many shall follow** their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

“And through **covetousness** shall they with **feigned words make merchandise of you ...**”

“... The most brutal, degenerate, vicious form of expression it has been my misfortune to hear – naturally, I refer to the bulk of rock and roll. It fosters almost totally negative and destructive reactions in young people. It smells phony and false. It is sung, played and written for the most part by cretinous goons and, by means of its almost imbecilic reiterations and sly – lewd – in plain fact, dirty lyrics, and, as I said before, it manages to be the martial music of the earth. This rancid aphrodisiac I deplore”

The above is not a quote from a fundamentalist preacher, but from old “blue eyes” himself, Frank Sinatra, in an article written during the fifties and quoted in the Detroit Free Press (April 18, 1987). Since that time the rock genre has become the dominant musical force in American culture. Without question rock is nearly synonymous with the youth culture. Professor Allan Bloom of the University of Chicago sums it up in his best-seller *The Closing of The American Mind*:

“Though students do not have books, they most emphatically do have music. Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music. This is the age of music and the states of soul that accompany it ... Today, a very large proportion of young people between the ages of ten and twenty live for music. It is their passion; nothing else excites them as it does; they cannot take seriously anything alien to music. When they are in school and with their families, they are longing to plug themselves back into their music. Nothing surrounding them – school, family, church – has anything to do with their musical world. At best ordinary life is neutral, but mostly it is an impediment drained of vital content, even a thing to be rebelled against... . The music of the new votaries, on the other hand, knows neither class nor nation. It is available twenty-four hours a day, everywhere. There is the stereo in the home, in the car; there are concerts; there are music videos, with special channels exclusively devoted to them, on the air nonstop; there are the walkmans so that no place – not public transportation, not the library – prevents students from communing with the muse, even while studying.”

How has the Christian community responded to this emerging, all-pervasive musical culture? The answer is not hard to find. Turn on your Christian radio station and listen ever so carefully. It sounds like rock and emotes like rock; yet, we are told it's the new methodology which will win the world to Christ. "Contemporary Christian Music" (CCM) has risen out of the sewage in the rock industry. As one reporter for the Milwaukee Journal defines CCM, **"it is essentially rock music with the lyrics changed to protect the innocent."**

For those "whose eyes have not seen nor ears have heard," *U.S. News & World Report* describes this new trend as **"a form that weds Christian lyrics with pop styles from folk rock to heavy metal."** Today, CCM inundates the church musical repertoire in Christian Bookstores, Christian radio, 24 hour music video channels, ecumenical concerts, and church "worship" services. One prima donna of the CCM trend summarizes the movement: "I'm not going to throw it (Christianity) in your face, but if you are searching, my songs will really say something to you." Many CCM artists have become millionaires, prompting Dennis White, vice-president of Capitol Records, to say, "it's a good trend to be on." Financially, yes! Many CCM entertainer\ministers are full-fledged stars with gold and platinum records, Grammy awards, and numerous network-TV appearances including the late night Letterman and Leno programs. Sales are now in the billions of dollars.

One CCM minister described her music and performance style by saying, "I am trying to be sexy in a Godly way" (*Christianity Today*, 8/19/85, p. 70) *TIME* describes a popular CCM singer by saying, "Sexy and insinuating! With a hoarse shrug of pleasure she pumps lust into the arrangements." Perhaps, these statements summarize the problem with the CCM movement. The seductive music of Western pop culture has found its way into our worship. As in the days of Israel when she was camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai, many are worshiping the right God the wrong way. Israel, an apostate nation, blended through syncretism the worship of the golden calf with the worship of Yahweh whom they envisioned to be riding on the back of the Apis-bull idol. Israel desired to blend the pagan worship of Egyptian deities with the true worship of Yahweh. From a distance Moses identified their musical sound as that of carnal celebration and executed severe punishment on the participants.

*Exodus 32:5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, **Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.***

*Exodus 32:17-18 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. 18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: **but the noise of them that sing do I hear.***

Likewise, the rock music genre from its sordid beginning has exalted and worshiped the modern 20th century idols of sex, humanism, materialism, rebellion, selfishness, nihilism and hedonistic pleasure both in lyrical text and musical composition/performance style. Now the church has adopted the world's vehicle for pagan worship in order to worship the true God. We must worship the right God the right way. Repeatedly, God condemns sensual worship in the Old Testament. In the Baal-Asherah cult Israel incessantly bought into the false promise of prosperity and fertility by acting out in worship *via* the drama of fornication what it wanted for fulfillment and happiness. When Israel synchronized the worship of Baal with the worship of Yahweh, the corporate people of God believed that the more sensual you were the more spiritual you were. The CCM movement, similarly, has fully embraced the sensual expression and celebration of the rock genre to worship the one and only true and living God. It is analogous to

the error of Balaam (Jude 1:11; Rev 2:14) who sowed the seeds of destruction in Israel by encouraging the people in sensual worship. Carnal music is a false tongue in the church breeding division and confusion all the while spiraling down a degenerative path with no end in sight.

It is modern day Baalism when one makes the fulfillment of the sensual appetites, fueled by the fleshly nature, a modern day expression of our faith and worship. In striking contrast, the Scripture says:

Colossians 3:16 Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

I. WHAT DO BELIEVERS SING?

When the Word of God dwells richly in our hearts, it will always produce the right kind of singing. When the Spirit of God puts his song in our hearts, his song will also be on our lips. The more our lives become consumed with his truth from his Word, the more our music will reflect the character of God. God loves music that rightly reflects him.

A. The distinction of the believer's music

Colossians 3:16 "Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs"

One of the greatest distinctions of Christianity should be in its music, because the music God gives is different from the music the world gives.

Christopher Hogwood, noted harpsichordist and conductor, quoted in the program, "What Is Music?", aired on Nova Public Television: **"Music is the USE of SOUND to move the Human Soul."**

1. Stated

In Scripture, the word "new" is used more frequently in relation to song than any other feature of our salvation. His new creations have a new song that is not new in the sense of time (*neos*) as much as the sense of kind (*kainos*).

The Greek term for "new" (*kainos*) used in reference to song means to be new in quality just as the "new" heaven and "new" earth are different in quality than the "old" heaven and earth. It is a song reflecting all the values of the new birth in Christ. The term "kainos" (new) is used in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Just as our new life in Christ is radically different after our salvation than before our salvation, so our new song which portrays our salvation should be different than any sensual/erotic music which characterizes the heart (mind, will, and emotions), governing disposition, and appetite of the unregenerate man. Regeneration is the impartation of spiritual life by God to the spiritually dead. It is the complete opposite of all aspects describing human depravity. Our "new song" should be free from the cultural manifestations of worldliness and human depravity originating from the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

2. Evidenced

In 2 Peter 1:5-10 we are told to add to our faith. The word “add” originates from the Greek word “*epikoreigeo*” (BAGD, p. 892) from which we derive our English word “chorus.” Our life is to be a chorus fully blending and harmonizing the following godly traits in verses 6-10 to our faith. It is interesting that the first note in this beautiful chorus is “virtue” (*aretein*) or “moral excellence.” If our new life in Christ is to be a living song reflecting moral excellence, then certainly our songs of redemption which grow out of such a faith should equally reflect moral excellence.

The Psalmist often links our salvation to a new song. The connection is obvious. Our new life in Christ should produce a new song as different and unique as our new life is from our old life.

Psalms 33:3-4 Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the Word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.

Psalms 40:1-3 I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.

Psalms 96:1-2 O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

Psalms 98:1-2 O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.

Psalms 144:9-10 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee. It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

Psalms 149:1 Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

The new song is seen in the new life. The new life is illustrated by the new song. The literal term for “horrible pit” in Hebrew means the “pit of noise” (*bor sha'on* - “roar, uproar, din, clashing,” BDB, p. 981). God brings our song and our life out of chaos and carnality. He gives us order, harmony, and purity in our life of faith. Our new song communicates about a life that is molded by the image of Christ. Look at the models for CCM music and one will quickly see that most are mimicking the most corrupt pop/rock musicians in their style of music, outlandish dress, pragmatic methodology, and Hollywood image. Imitation is the highest form of admiration. What we see is not the new song, but an old song emanating out of the pit of noise. The new song is only for those with new life to be sung in a new family, a new fellowship, a new

community of true believers. It is not the world's song. This new song is the clear manifestation of our salvation from sin to holiness and from carnal desires to an affection for the spiritual beauty of Christ and his truth.

Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down

by Marva J. Dawn (1995)

- P “Christians can help society recognize the danger of its loss of reasoned discourse in the all-consuming ubiquity of entertainment. By offering worship that educates instead of entertains, that uplifts and transforms through the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2), the Church can expose the meaninglessness of our present culture” (p. 72).
- P “Focusing worship on me and my feelings and my praising will nurture a character that is inward-turned, that thinks first of self rather than of God” (p. 109).
- P “Worship practices that only evoke good feelings and thereby foster a character that seeks instant gratification might be enormously successful at first, but the costs, though not immediately obvious, may be high. The very methods that attract crowds might also prevent the development of habits of reflection and learning. A focus on self and feelings limits the nurturing of a godly and outreaching character” (p. 111).

In Revelation chapter five we have the Four Living Creatures along with the twenty-four Elders representing all the redeemed in both the Old and the New Testaments. In the worship of the Lamb a sharp distinction is made in who sings the new song of redemption's story. In verse nine the redeemed from the earth sing:

Revelation 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Notice the angels don't sing until ...

Revelation 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

God's new song is the song of redemption. Only the redeemed sing it. Only the redeemed have it. In Revelation 14 the 144,000 witnesses who did not receive the identification of the Beast, but rather had their Father's name written on their foreheads, exclusively sang the new song:

Revelation 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

The new song is the believer's song designed by God to be sung by his true disciples as an act of holy worship and praise to the God of glory. The new song

reflects the new, divinely imparted life and should not be designed to appeal to the fleshly appetites of those who neither know our God nor understand our song.

We are to sing unto the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

2 Chronicles 20:21 *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness*

Psalms 7:17 *I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.*

Psalms 138:5 *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.*

1 Chronicles 16:29 *Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

Psalms 27:4 *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.*

Psalms 45:11 *So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.*

Psalms 29:2 *Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

Psalms 50:2 *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*

Isaiah 28:5 *In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,*

Holiness (*qadesh*) literally means “to cut, to separate, distinct, apartness, set apart as sacred by God’s presence” in the OT Hebrew (BDB, p. 871). Holiness refers first and foremost to the majestic transcendence of God, emphasizing the Creator/creature distinction. Second, it means that God is separate in his being from all that is evil, impure, and defiled. His own being defines purity with no trace of darkness in it. Holiness is God’s self-affirming purity. Nothing outside of God, himself, can define it. In the sheer weight (glory [“*kabod*”]) of God’s almighty presence men must worship God in the majestic beauty of holiness. Beauty is defined by God’s being, not by men’s subjective opinions. Beauty is not in the mind of the beholder. Beauty exists first and foremost in the mind of God. Man, who is created in the image of God, reflects beauty in holiness, righteousness, the skilled application of God’s truth, and knowledge. Beauty must be defined by the objective character of God and not the subjective impulses of unregenerate men. Our music should not blur the Creator/creature distinction by communicating undue familiarity with God in the lyrical text or an irreverent, sensual mood, atmosphere or disposition in the musical composition and performance style. Furthermore, our music should be free from all aspects of impurity evil in its cultural associations and musical compositions.

Righteousness relates to God's holiness in that it corresponds to that which is right. Righteousness is the concept which shows rectitude of action and disposition according to a perfect standard of Holiness. Righteous music operates according to the standard of holiness – God's self-affirming purity which sets him above his creation and separates himself from anything that defiles. There must be righteousness in musical text, composition, and performance style which operate according to the perfect standard of God's being and the objective, timeless principles of God's Word rooted in the unchanging, absolute character of God and the created order prior to the curse. Man cannot unilaterally operate on his own self-autonomy. To do so is sheer, unmitigated idolatry. True beauty, which is the basis for all the arts, including music, exists originally and eternally in the mind and very nature of God. Our concept of beauty must correspond to God's mind which we can know only through Scripture and see remnants of his beauty in a cursed creation. We are commanded to be holy and perfect even as God is holy and perfect. Because of resident sinfulness, we do not attain perfectly unto this standard. To be abandon that standard, however, would only invite the displeasure of God. Holiness is the standard for sacred music. Righteousness is the corresponding action which much conform to the standard.

Tone Deaf & All Thumbs?

Frank R. Wilson, Neurologist

“We are natural musicians because of the special nature of the human brain... .
Our responsiveness to music, however, like our responsiveness to language
(is) ... unique in the animal kingdom” (p. 2, 68).

God is our new song.

Psalm 118:14 *The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*

Isaiah 8:12 *God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

When we sing or play our instruments for the Lord, we are to illustrate to our listeners Who God is and what He is like.

B. The death of the believer's music

The loud cry of CCM entertainers\ministers is that music has no moral value. This claim they constantly reiterate. It is a recent claim which has little to no historical basis and has been invented by CCM entertainers to justify their new, very profitable venture into musical styles which have been considered unwholesome and incompatible with the message of praise, honor, redemption, and worship of the one true and living God.

1. Argument

The amorality of the arts, particularly music, is a very convenient claim often made by new evangelicals. This rubric allows any and every form of artistic expression to be valid and sacred if need be. Bill Gaither stated in Eternity magazine, “When we approach music, we have to realize it is only a vehicle – the means to an end.” Derald Daughtery, lead singer and guitarist for a Christian rock choir, said, “The music is basically a cultural thing (presupposes all culture to be amoral) and God can use anything. We have chosen this kind of music as a vehicle for God.” When justifying the jet engine volume of his band (120 decibels and up), Glenn Kaiser of the Resurrection band and pastor in the Jesus People USA Fellowship, said, “God speaks loud ... Why is it that Christian bands sound like wimps compared to secular bands?” (not any more!).

Music Through The Eyes of Faith

Harold M. Best, Dean of Music at Wheaton College

“There is nothing un-Christian or anti-Christian about any kind of music” (p. 52).

“The Christian is free of the moral nothingness of music” (p. 59).

2. Answer

Music as a language has moral value by virtue of its ability to communicate.

Isaiah 23:15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

There is a style by which a sensually oriented person performs sensual or provocative music. The Scripture assumes this to be true and does not bother to explain the metaphor. Such a truth is considered to be self-evident *via* the conscience, and the conscience must operate by the holy standard of the Word of God.

Proverbs 7:10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.

There is an appearance that communicates sensuality. Galatians 5:19-21 teaches us that the works of the flesh are obvious, listing fornication, impurity, lasciviousness, etc., and then the text adds “and things like these,” indicating this list of vices was only representative and not exhaustive. Hebrews 5:11-14 tells us that those who are inexperienced in the word of righteousness are infants who do not have their senses trained to discern between good and evil.

Ezekiel 33:32 And behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not practice them.

“Sensual song” is the Hebrew expression “*sher ‘agabim*,” which is literally translated as “song of lusts, inordinate affections, sensualities” (BDB, p. 721). BDB informs us that this grammatical usage is an “intensive plural” meaning that the subject is characterized by the quality in the genitive construct (Waltke and O’connor, pp. 122–24). In this particular case the song (subject) is characterized by sensuality. Another example of this grammatical usage is Hosea 1:12 where Hosea is commanded to marry a “wife of harlotries (*zinubim*).” Here, the plural (harlotries) indicates that Hosea’s wife was characterized by unfaithfulness. Ezekiel uses the same term, ‘*agabim*’ (Ezek 33:32), in Ezekiel 23: 5, 9, 12, 16, 20. In each of these usages the term is translated in NASB as “lust.”

- P Julian Johnson, author of *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value*, writes, “Different musics are not neutral in terms of value systems; they are positioned because they quite literally do different things” (p. 8). He further states that “in art, and music most of all, what is said is inseparable from how it is said” (p. 104). Johnson adds, “... music has an ethical dimension, and our use of music and the musical choices we make involve ethical decisions” (p. 115).
- P Dr. Peter Wicke, Director of the Center of Popular Music Research at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, writes in *Rockin’ the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, “Music is a medium which is able to convey meaning and values which ... can shape patterns of behavior imperceptibly over time until they become [the] visible background of real political activity” (p. 81).
- P Deryk Cooke, distinguished musicologist, writes in his classic book, *The Language of Music*, “Of course, rhythm and form play a large part in moral expression” (p. 271).
- P The leading musicologist of the *New York Times* says, “So when you play music, you also embrace a style. A style suggests ways to sit, ways to sing, ways to feel rhythm. It also suggests ways to think” (Rothstein, *Emblems of Mind*, p. 89).
- P David Brackett is highly regarded in music education circles. He writes in his highly acclaimed book, *Interpreting Popular Music*, “we remember a piece of music and return to it again and again because it means something, because it has the power to change our lives” (p. 201).
- P In a PBS documentary (“Jazz”, January 10, 2001), music critic Gary Giddins described the instrumental music as “hot, exotic, and sexy”. He continued his comments by saying that “the music itself becomes erotic. And so the band becomes a kind of participant with the dancers. They’re just as erotic. They’re just as seamy”

In light of the above, consider the implications of what *Time* reporter and music critic, Christopher Farley, writes in his article, “Motown with Angels’s Wings”: “Really great gospel sometimes sounds like the Devil. There are howls, whoops, shrieks, stomping feet, menacing bass licks and [word intentionally

omitted] musical undulations that would be downright sinful if they weren't being done in the name of the Lord" (April 8, 1996).

The words, "Jesus Rocks," were spread across the cover of *Newsweek* (July 16, 2001). After a thorough review of the CCM world, Lorraine Ali, a self-confessed "outsider" concluded that "... the values of Christianity and anti-values of rock seem morally incompatible" (p. 43).

Psalm 42:8 promises believers that in the night God's song will be with them. In contrast, Isaiah reminds us that "the noise of thy (Lucifer) viols" will be brought down to hell (14:11).

David Wilkerson (charismatic evangelist) wrote in his 7/8/94 newsletter:

"About five years ago I became disheartened when many pastors (charismatic) opened up their churches to rock concerts. Teenagers went wild, were dancing in the aisles, and going straight out of church and committing fornication in their cars... . Parents wrote to me brokenhearted saying my son got an appetite for occult music right in our own church."

Wall Street Journal 9/11/91

"Michael W. Smith, Geffen Record's, newest hot property... the same powerhouse that handles Guns N' Roses and Cher... Gospel singers, suddenly popular, are making videos, appearing on late-night television and being signed and promoted by the same big record companies that saturate the airwaves with satanic speed metal and misogynist rap... It gives them the awkward job of staking out a middle ground between the sacred and profane. When asked on "Live with Regis and Kathie Lee" whether he is a pop or gospel performer ... he squirms a little... The gospel artists have been copying secular acts in an attempt to get others to see the light. ... Mr. Smith's new fans don't know he's a gospel singer at all... . Another reason for that kind of confusion – and a key component in the presentation of Michael W. Smith to the pop world – is the chastely steamy video he made to promote 'Place in this World.' The video, produced by the same company that does sizzling videos for Prince, shows a dreamy Mr. Smith singing and playing the piano in the middle of the desert while a young, pouting, gorgeous woman wanders around in the sand. Eventually the two find each other, hold hands, hug, and sort of nuzzle. 'Making the video was hard at first,' concedes Mr. Smith who is married and the father of four young children. 'My wife, didn't like my hugging another woman, and my kids said Mom should have done the video.' . . . Not only are they (Smith and Amy Grant) pushing secular rock stars, but (their) show is sponsored by Budweiser... . Mr. Smith's music ranges from soothing ballads to danceable pop tunes... They (Geffen Records) like his catchy tunes, his moussed hair, his tight pants and his Don Johnson stubble ... (but) they wanted to be sure he wasn't handing out Bibles... The internal contradictions of his new stardom don't appear to bother Mr. Smith. (who said) 'I've been praying for mainstream success for years; now, it's finally happening.' ... At the same time he was penning gospel songs, he was also using marijuana, LSD and cocaine... .

Mr. Smith, for his part, is earning about \$1 million a year ... He is reveling in his new success, and he is comfortable in the curious musical territory he inhabits. "I know if I'm too blatant about my Christianity and talk about Jesus, I won't succeed in the mainstream; but hey, I'm not an evangelist, I'm a singer." The article concludes, "The gospel sector and major record labels are forming not-so-holy alliances to exploit the changing market place."

USA Today 4/22/91

"Her Baby Baby (Amy Grant) is No. 1 this week on the billboard chart. The song was written about her 16-month-old daughter, Millie, but in the video, 'baby' is a flirty, touchy guy... . Though she has bridged the chasm between Christian and pop genres, she insists she hasn't changed. The Baby Baby does give the song a sexier slant, but numerous references to Grant's religious faith remain"

James Chute, professional music critic for the *Milwaukee Journal*

"Tune in to any of the Christian cable programs and you won't have to wait long before some band, dressed in its best sequins and tuxedos, looking for all the world as if its last gig was at Caesar's Palace, will praise the Almighty in the same way Las Vegas praises the almighty dollar. They all make the same fatal mistake: that somehow the lyrics change the music's context, its subliminal message. More likely, the very opposite begins to happen: the Vegas/Wayne Newton lounge-act style is sanctified through its Christian associations (reverse effect)... . They sing about you— as in, "You Light Up My Life." All the listener has to do is fill in the blank: 'You' can be God, but it can also be a lover, a husband or a wife, a father or a mother, a dog or a cat. Lyrics aside, Grant uses all of the commercial weapons available, including sex, to promote her music. Maybe her come-hither look on the album cover really suggests that she wants to have you over to talk about God, but who is to know?"

"Let's not quibble. The music's message is clear, and adding the words Jesus Christ to the lyrics does not make one bit of difference... The music inevitably overwhelms the best intentions of lyrics."

Houston Chronicle 7/28/95 "Z Music Television" Christian alternative to MTV

"The musical styles from rock to rap to heavy metal have the same sound and fury on other music television networks."

Wall Street Journal, April 9, 1991, "Born-Again Rap: A New Medium For The Message," by Amy Gamerman, professional Arts critic.

"Borrowing the hip-hop rhythms and slanging styles from rappers as diverse as MC Hammer and Public enemy, groups such as P.I.D. (Preachers In Disguise), S.F.C. (Soldiers for Christ) and DC (Decent Christian) Talk are using rap to cool with the Creator Even Jerry Falwell is calling himself a convert to rap. 'I'm for it', said Mr. Falwell... . In fact, Mr. Falwell can take some credit for rap's rebirth, both

(rap groups) were started by undergrads at Liberty University... . ‘All our lyrics in the songs are based on the word of God,’ said Toby McKeehan, DC Talk’s 25-year-old founder and producer. ‘And they’re set to a beat you can dance to, even if the words occasionally dampen the mood.’”

TIME, “Reborn To Be Wild,” Jan 22, 1996, pp. 62-64. Christopher John Farley (Arts critic).

“Now a new generation of (Christian pop) stars has embraced a host of edgy sounds ... But the question remains, How good is the music? ... If Jesus Christ came back today would he be an alternative rocker?” Farley mentions they are “updating the message and making it 90’s friendly” and refers to these singers as divine goddesses (“diva”). He mentions that 500 radio stations now play their records and that concert sales and records alone last year were over 900 million dollars. “The Christian pop industry is also starting to produce some genuine stars ... pop crooners such as Steven Curtis Chapman and M. W. Smith.” New “alternative rockers (such as) Audio Adrenaline” are surfacing. “Christian pop has a kind of queasily earnest, ‘Kum Ba yah - ish’ quality.” “D. C. Talk’s ... new CD ‘Jesus Freak’ ... had the largest first week sales, 86,000, of any contemporary Christian act – there is something absurdly fun about hearing words of devotion screamed out over rampaging guitars. A Kirk Franklin concert ... (is) a similarly transporting experience as he struts James Brown -like across the stage while exhorting fans to love God.” Farley concludes that “keeping the message pure will be a challenge as the music’s popularity brings fame and ...temptation.” After mentioning the affair of Michael English, Farley quotes M.W. Smith, “When you have the after concert parties and the babes are around, I’ll grab one of my managers and say, ‘You need to hang tight with me, because we’re going into the lion’s den!’” Finally, he mentions a new all-female CCM rock group called “Point of Grace” who “don’t believe they are out of the mainstream” (because) “I (they) read John Grisham books” and watch “Friends.” “We’re not so separated from regular girls.” (“Friends” is the most notoriously liberal sit-com on network TV which featured a lesbian minister performing a public wedding ceremony for two lesbians. [ABC News, Jan 23, 1996])

Detroit Free Press, Friday, June 12, 1992, “Church is ‘Full Tilt Road Show’” by David Crumm (Free Press Religion Writer)

“Pete hurries across the big stage to see if the electric guitars, drums and synthesizers have been properly laid out. ‘This is a full-tilt road show’ ... the band will soon be rocking the (church) auditorium in Troy (Michigan). A guitarist rehearses a few bars of the Styx tune ‘Show Me the Way’ ... actors gather offstage, ready to rehearse their comedy sketches. It’s just a typical Sunday morning at Kensington Community Church – the explosively successful church for people who hate going to church... . A typical Sunday morning begins with a half-hour of irreverent good humor and light rock music ... Old fashioned words like ‘blessed’ and ‘Amen’ are taboo. More popular are: ‘Yeeeeeah!’ ‘Unbelieeeevable!’

‘Awwwwawesome!’ After hauling in 13,000 lbs. of stage equipment they are ready for the service. Concerning the baptismal service, ‘nothing is too sacred to be modified.’ Kensington threw a ‘pool party’ for those to be baptized.” After saying they will use any mode of baptism anyone prefers and will baptize infants if that is what anyone prefers, the associate pastor comments, “We’ll back-flip someone into the pool if that’s what they really want ... People who try to push us into doctrinal corners are always going to be disappointed.”

Detroit Free Press, Jan 25, 1995, “Troy Church Service to use a Script, Not Scripture” by George Waldman (This church has now formally removed “Baptist” from its name).

“It could become the ultimate stage show for Baby Boomers seeking spiritual answers in the ‘90s; a takeoff on ‘Saturday Night Live’ with God as the host. It will probably come across as sacrilege to some. But two celebrities who have become devout Christians are forging ahead with a plan for a daring blend of religion, rock music, MTV-style video, comedy skits and monologues... They have tossed out nearly all of the trappings of church. There will be no ... hymns, no choir, very few prayers ... (it does include) actors, ushers, stage hands, and the rock band that will play each week.” At the end of the article, the Pastor acknowledges that the “new show may offend” (cf. 1 Cor 10:52 “give no offense to Jews, Gentiles, nor the church of God”).

Grand Valley Community Church (advertisement)

“WE’RE BACK! We invite you to join us this Sunday as we celebrate a new ministry season by listening to some upbeat music, and as a special treat, Grand Valley’s very own **DANCE TROOP** will perform ... we are committed to being relevant and authentic ... We will make whatever adjustments need to be made to be relevant.”

Southsider, Vol. 26, No. 7, “Let Me Share My Vision: A Fresh Look At Where We Are and Where We’re Going,” by Pastor Walt Handford.

“Together learning to worship and praise God using Christ-honoring music. Because **Southsiders enjoy a wide variety of Christian music personally, our public services will present some variety as well. This automatically produces some tension. It is my task to lead our fellowship to learn to appreciate others in the body who have differing musical tastes...** Since God gave us music to worship and praise Him, let’s **allow all our music** to lift our hearts together.” (emphasis mine)

Southside, once a strong fundamental work, regularly brings in CCM artists using the rock genre. In addition, they have taken their youth group to Christian rock concerts and sponsored such concerts in the Greenville area. Also, they have separated from fundamental colleges, camps, and speakers. Their entire philosophy of ministry and methodology has reversed. Southside has even advertised in their church the notorious Christian rap group DC Talk.

CCM Magazine

- P “Christian music offers great sounds that mirror today’s Pop music.”
- P “CCM uses the power of smooth sophisticated Pop including soft rock.”
- P “One of CCM’s most prominent vocalists and hardest-rocking female guitarists, Margaret Becker.”
- P “Amy Grant has bridged the gap between Christian and mainstream Pop.”
- P “Steven Curtis Chapman ... a sophisticated blend of Rock and Pop.”
- P “PFR ... It’s loud (120 decibels and up), its’ rocking... The sound is pure Rock ‘n’ Roll... recalling the melodic innovation of the Beatles.”
- P “The Prayer Chain ... combines world beats with stunning melodies to create a masterpiece of sonic tension ... messages of faith amidst alternative dance beats.”
- P “Church of Rhythm ... with a danceable high-tech style ... to usher in the next generation of Christian music.”

CORNERSTONE ‘96, July 4-7, Bushnell, Illinois (Advertisement)

Features 120 Christian Rock bands on 13 stages with “**art rageous**” celebration. The brochure (2 ft. sq.) pictures modern dancing, immodesty, licentious performance styles, freakish hair and clothing styles, and a direct imitation of Woodstock which is considered by the unsaved world as one of the great celebrations of hedonism in 20th century America. The speakers at this event include Norman Geisler, John Whitehead, and Erwin Lutzer – senior pastor of Moody Memorial. Charles Stanley has been the featured speaker at a similar event occurring annually in Atlanta at Six Flags.

Only artistic ignorance, willful blindness, intellectual dishonesty, or theological indifference could suggest that music particularly and the arts by implication are “amoral” in their communicative influence. One of the foundational principles of music theory is that every conceivable emotion and mood can be created or enhanced with music. At the highly esteemed Interlocken School of Music stand the enormous letters lifted high over the main concert hall stating – “Music Is The Universal Language.” Deryk Cooke in his classic *The Language of Music* writes, “We may say then that, whatever else the mysterious art known as music may eventually be found to express, it is primarily and basically a language of the emotions, through which we directly experience the fundamental urges that move mankind” (p. 272). Robert Shaw wrote to his Collegiate Chorale, “Neither weight lifting nor watchmaking is the concern of our singing – but mood and meaning (*Dear People ... Robert Shaw*, Joseph A. Mussulman, p. 26). He later commented in an personal interview with Kurt Woetzel, “All the arts are moral ... music is the most moral of the arts” (Ibid., p. 108).

“The language of music is readable, writable, and recitable”

(World-renowned pianist Van Cliburn: ABC News/Person of the Week/ July

15, 1994). Music communicates through textual content and poetic form. All divine/human communication has the capability to influence the thinking, values, and emotions of its audience on account of the image of God in man. God judges every idle word. Even casual communication is judged by God.

Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Words are symbols with attached meaning and significance *via* conventional use. Music, though less articulate than “words,” still has culturally attached meaning which cannot be divorced or dichotomized from the lyrics. One could foolishly argue that swear words are mere collections of sound and therefore have no intrinsic potential for good or evil—an arbitrary collection of vowels and consonants. Yet we are told, “let no **corrupt communication** proceed out of your mouth” (Eph 4:29). How the words and phrases are composed governs how the text communicates to the emotions. In this sense meaning can never be totally severed from the form through which one communicates (*Worship*, Scott Aniol, p. 42). For example, in the poem, “Twas the Night Before Christmas,” the first couplet is written in a poetic form that enhances the light and humorous nature of the poem’s content (anapestic feet—weak, weak, STRONG ...) which intentionally gives the form a skipping sound. However, if one changed the form to the meter of iambic feet (weak, STRONG, weak, STRONG ...) it would give the same words a more sober and stately treatment – “Twas Christmas eve, the house was still, And not a creature stirred” (Austin Lovelace, *The Anatomy of Hymnody*, p. 14).

2. Music communicates through associative and intrinsic meaning.

The tunes to patriotic songs can engender strong emotional responses in the audience. Certain melodies remind us of birthday celebrations, weddings, funerals, commercial products (Oscar Mayer Hotdog tune), television personalities (Lone Ranger), special occasions, or even the introduction of the President of the United States (“Hail to the Chief”). The associative meaning does not necessarily indicate the intrinsic meaning of the music, but most often there is a compatibility with the music’s meaning and the associative purpose. The “William Tell Overture” will not be compatible with a funeral, nor will the well-known tune to the Oscar Mayer commercial be appropriate for a bride coming down the aisle during her wedding.

On the other hand, the very nature of music carries emotional meaning by resembling the characteristics inherently connected with emotion through sound. Music can mimic the naturally physical and associative expressions of a wide variety of human emotions. Bouwsma offers a simple example of this musical characteristic in his chapter, “The Expression Theory of Art,” in *Aesthetics and Language*: “Sad music has some of the characteristics of people who are sad. It will be slow, not tripping; it will be low, not tinkling. People who are sad move more slowly, and when they speak, they speak softly and low” (p. 99). The emotional values of lullabies and war marches cannot be interchanged. If one attempts to do so, the babies will cry and the soldiers will die.

John Hospers argues in his article, “Problems of Aesthetics,” that “If someone were to insist that a fast sprightly waltz was really sad or melancholy, we would refer him to the behavioral features of sad people and show him that when people are in that state they do exhibit the qualities in question (i.e., the qualities of sad music), rather than speed or sprightliness” (*Introductory Readings in Aesthetics*, p. 47). “Loud, fast music is arousing, while soft, slow music is soothing” (John Sloboda, *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music*, p. 1). This explains the fact that in the nearly 600 references to music in the Scriptures, the majority are connected with various emotional expressions. In some cases the instruments themselves such as the lyre and the harp are associated with positive emotional expression (Ps 45:9; 71:22; 81:2; 92:1-4; 108:2) [Aniol, p. 47]. David’s soothing instrumental performance on the harp had a positive emotional and spiritual influence on Saul, even though Saul more than likely was unregenerate (1 Sam 16:23). Gordon Bruner argues in his article, “Music, Mood, and Marketing,” that music can be evaluated as a whole and the author provides a helpful table which demonstrates specifically the emotional expressions connected to various components of music (*Journal of Marketing*, vol. 54, no. 4 [October 1990], 94-104). This is very helpful in showing how music communicates. Bruner carefully breaks music down to Time-Related Expressions, Pitch-Related Expressions, Texture-Related Expressions, Serious Emotional Expression, Sad Emotional Expression, Sentimental Emotional Expression, Serene Emotional Expression, Humorous, Exciting, Majestic, and even Frightening Emotional Expression. Bruner’s point is that music carries meaning. Christian musicians must carefully examine the meaning of their music and lyrics and determine whether or not it is appropriate to their sacred message.

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

We are going to be judged for the things done in the body. The “body” is used here as a synecdoche for the entire person, both material and immaterial. Music composition and performance involves the entire operation of man’s material and immaterial being. Few activities demand such a marriage of the aesthetic and utilitarian. To think such activity is beyond the judgment of God is to reduce music to the meaninglessness and absurdity of random, non-communicative noise. Enjoying and interpreting music is the operation of the image of God in man. We can sing and play beautifully because God sings perfectly and righteously.

*Numbers 10:9 “Then ye shall blow an **alarm with the trumpets**”*

1 Corinthians 14:7-11 is an analogy of music and human language where if a trumpet blows an uncertain sound no one will prepare himself for battle.

Deuteronomy 31:19 “This song may be a witness”

Deuteronomy 31:21 “This song shall testify”

1 Chronicles 25:3 “**Prophesied** with a harp”

Jeremiah 51:27 “*Mine heart shall sound like pipes*”

Job 30:31 “*Mine harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep*”

Psalms 49:4 “*I will open my dark saying upon the harp*”

Psalms 71:22 “*I will praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God*”

Singing is a Divine activity implying moral value.

2 Chronicles 7:6 “*The Levites also **with instruments of music of the Lord** ... and the priests sounded trumpets*”

Zechariah 9:14 “*The Lord God shall blow the trumpet*”

Zephaniah 3:17 “*The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, **he will joy over thee with singing***”

Job 35:10 “*God my maker who giveth songs in the night*”

Job 38:7 “*When the morning stars sang together*” (reference to angels)

God is not an arbitrary being. All his attributes are involved in his actions. Divine artistic activity originated with the Lord and is replicated by creatures who reflect his divine image spiritually, morally, cognitively, emotionally, and volitionally. All true artistry is a reflection of the infinite perfections of the Creator replicated in a finite fashion by beings made in the image of God. We do not believe in the “is-ness” (things just are) of music anymore than we believe in the “is-ness” of language, artistic painting, sculpture, poetry, truth, virtue, righteousness or holiness. The ‘universe’ is defined as all that is not God. These entities all existed in their perfections in the infinitely perfect and holy mind of God prior to the creation of the universe as stated in Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God”!

The truth about the arts is what God has said or would say about the arts based on the correlation of all his truth as revealed in the inscripturated Word. God’s nature and his truth form the objective truth deposit through which all “facts” must be interpreted. There is no such thing as neutral facts. Facts mean only what God says they mean. Truth is not what we perceive to be reality (humanism, man-centered theology), but what God has said, could say, or would say about that reality (theism, God-centered theology). We must interpret all musical “facts” as God would. Therefore, the best theologian makes the best apologist for a biblical defense of the arts as a reflection of the infinite perfections of God. This is why Paul prefaces his command to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with the qualification, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you **richly**.” A believer whose life is characterized by the Spirit will reflect his spiritual condition by the musical choices he makes (Eph 5:15-20).

- P *The Music Within You* by Shelley Katsh and Carol Merle-Fishman (Certified Music Therapists, Instructors at NY Univ., Consultants for numerous family child service organizations, Musicians)
- “Music is not just a special part of life; it represents life itself.” (p. 208)
- “From it (music) we receive inspiration, excitement, and emotional enrichment. With it we create, communicate and express who we are.” (p. 208)
- P *Reader’s Digest*, August ‘93, p. 131 – Results of a study by communications expert, Dr. Albert Mehrabian
- “93% of human communication is non-verbal!” (i.e. tone of voice, inflection, pace, facial expression, gesture, etc.)
- P *Hole In Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music* by Martha Bayles (1994). Bayles is both a graduate of and professor at Harvard, Arts Critic for WSJ, and writes for: Atlantic Monthly, Harpers, Brookings Review.
- “I argue that something has gone seriously wrong, both with the sound of popular music and with the sensibility it expresses.” (p. 3)
- “Few critics have addressed the subject of sound, which is, after all, what the music is made of.” (p. 4)
- “This neglect of music is regrettable, because just as assaultive (as) the lyrics and images of contemporary popular music are many of the sounds.” (p. 4)
- “Popular music seems terminally hostile to any sound traditionally associated with music.” (p. 4)
- Rock is characterized by “monotonous rhythm that carries sexual feeling to dehumanized extremes.” (p. 281)

“It is ironic that , in this age of multiculturalism, so many people seem intent upon ignoring the fact that the West is the only civilization to have created a form of art whose sole purpose is to attack morality” (p. 388). “Much of show business now involves vulgarians entertaining barbarians” (Steve Allen, “Bloomberg Forum,” WGBH, Channel 2, 2/2/98).

3. **Music must reflect a harmonious union between its emotional and textual message.**

1 Corinthians 14:15 *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: **I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.**”*

John 4:23 *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.**”*

John 4:24 “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must worship him in spirit and in truth.***”

1 John 4:1 “*Beloved, **believe not every spirit, but try the spirits** whether they are of God.*”

John 3:8 “*The wind blows where it wishes **and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.***” (NASB)

The Holy Spirit manifests himself in spiritual fruit consisting of all righteousness, holiness, and agreement with all the truth statements of Scripture:

Ephesians 5:9 “*For the fruit of the Spirit is in **all goodness and righteousness and truth***”

The nine-fold fruit of the Spirit manifests itself by temperance (self-control), faith (unreserved trust in God and all aspects of His Word), love (willingness to deny oneself for the benefit of another – absence of selfishness), goodness (that which corresponds to the moral goodness of God and has an honorable reputation with men), meekness (God’s strength under control by the Holy Spirit), and other virtuous qualities.

Since music is the communication of our spirit (mind, will, and emotions) to God and to men in the form of musical composition, lyrical text, and performance, the “spirit” of music can be judged (1 Cor 2:12-14). Later in John 3:19ff, the Lord teaches that those who are born of the Spirit hate the darkness and love the light. Imitating the darkness reveals that one loves the darkness and therefore hates the light. Imitation still is the highest form of admiration (Rom 12:1-2).

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

The essence of music is spirit. We need to test the spirit of music by the mood which it creates in audiences. What is the typical response in those who hear a live concert at a traditional classical concert as opposed to those responses commonly observed at a rock concert? In the former we see discipline, self-control, contemplation; in the latter we see sexual provocation, a lack of self-control, and no serious attempt to think or contemplate.

The nature of music can be best illustrated when one examines other fields of art and education. Chemistry may have a moral value (bombs, bio-terrorism, medicine), but isolated elements do not. Language has a moral value, but individual letters do not. Math has a moral value ($2 + 2 = 4$ not 5), but individual numbers do not. Art has a moral value, but individual angles, lines, and curves do not. Music has a moral value, but individual notes do not. Once you start putting individual elements together, those elements can be judged. If you put letters together, you can make a curse word. If you put lines together,

you can make pornography. If you put numbers together, you can make false statements. If you put notes, time signatures, rhythms, inflections, harmony, and melody together combined with a variety of performance styles, you can create confusion, sensuality, chaos, relativism or on the other hand you can communicate beauty, loveliness, and absolutism. Just as a solution plus one equals an incorrect answer, so rhythm plus imbalance, contradiction, and distortion equal rock. In language letters become words; words grow into sentences which in turn develop into paragraphs. Paragraphs mature into chapters and chapters add up to books. Likewise, in music, notes become chords; chords develop into phrases; phrases combine into sections and movements. Movements make up a composition. As language necessitates rules of grammar and syntax in order to be intelligible, so music operates according to the laws and principles of music theory. Both language and music employ sounds with varied durations, dynamics, and timbre causing us to think, muse, and ponder. Deryk Cooke summarizes his technical analysis of music by saying, “Music and form play a large part in moral expression” (*The Language of Music*, p. 271). Robert Shaw writes, “Neither weight lifting nor watchmaking is the concern of our singing—but mood and meaning” (*Dear People ... Robert Shaw*, Joseph A. Mussulman, p. 26). Edward Rothstein says, “Music has the power to change the way we see things, to transform our senses and our understanding” (Arts Critic for the *New York Times* in *Emblems of Mind*, p. 171). Rothstein continues, “So when you play music, you also embrace a style. A style suggests ways to sit, ways to sing, ways to feel rhythm. It also suggests ways to think (Ibid, p. 89). Music has great power to influence. Music with words has even greater power to influence – “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov 23:7).

(Unduly graphic, offensive, or inappropriate language in the following has been substituted with appropriate euphemism or circumlocution as indicated by the use of brackets)

Stuart Goldman who is a nationally syndicated columnist for *National Review*:

- P “I am a refugee from the world of rock ‘n’ roll. After eight years playing guitar in nightclubs and two on the road as a member of a band ... I bailed out in 1975 with a case of severely jangled nerves, a blown-out eardrum, and not much else to show for the dues I’d paid. After several more years as a pop-music critic in which I wrote for all the usual publications, I finally threw in the towel. I did not want it anymore ... No more bad music.”
- P “But what are the values that rock purveys? Back in 1966 Bob Dylan told an interviewer, ‘if people knew what this stuff was about, we’d probably all get arrested.’ The words *rock and roll* in the original patios drawn from the lingo of the blues and jazz players of the early fifties were synonymous with the act of [fornication]... . [Lust] is the main ingredient in rock music and the artists and producers who crank it out make no bones about this.” (*National Review*, Feb, 1989)

Professor Allan Bloom of the University of Chicago recognizes the lascivious nature of rock music in his provocative best-seller *The Closing of the American*

Mind. Bloom who has taught at Yale, the University of Paris, and Cornell devotes a full chapter of his book to music.

P “Plato’s teaching about music is, put simply, that **rhythm and melody, accompanied by dance, are the barbarous expression of the soul ... Music is the medium of the human soul** in its most ecstatic condition of wonder and terror. Nietzsche, who in large measure agrees with Plato’s analysis, says in ‘**The birth of tragedy out of the spirit of music**’ that a **mixture of cruelty and coarse sensuality characterized this state, which of course was religious, in the service of (their) gods. Music is the soul’s primitive and primary speech ... Even when articulate speech is added, it is utterly subordinate and determined by the music and the passions it expresses.**”

P “Music always demands a **delicate balance between passion and reason ... Out of the music emerge the gods that suit it ... This is the significance of rock music.** I do not suggest that it has any high intellectual sources. But it has risen to its current heights in the education of the young on the ashes of classical music and in an atmosphere in which there is no intellectual resistance to attempts to tap the rawest passions. Modern-day rationalists are indifferent to it and what it represents. The irrationalists are all for it ... **Rock music has one appeal only, a barbaric appeal, to sexual desire, not love, but sexual desire undeveloped and untutored.** It acknowledges the first emanations of children’s emerging sensuality and addresses them seriously, eliciting them and legitimating them, not as little sprouts that must be carefully tended in order to grow into gorgeous flowers, but as the real thing. Rock gives children, on a silver platter, with all the public authority of the entertainment industry, everything their parents always used to tell them they had to wait for until they grew up and would understand later.”

P “Young people know that rock has the beat of [physical relations] ... It may well be that a society’s greatest madness seems normal to itself.”

P “Control over music is control over character.”

Alice English Monsarrat article, “Music – soothing, sedative or savage?” (personal summation of article cited in material published by *Positive Action for Christ* [POSACT]).

Rock music does not have rhythm per se. It has an incessant, monotonous, hypnotic, addictive beat. Rhythm varies in music whereas rock only has a beat. Until the advent of the twentieth century, the normal easy meter in music was waltz-like (1, 2, 3; 1,2,3) or a march/walk pace (one and two and three and four and). The normal accent being on one and three. With the invention of rock which borrowed heavily from the Jazz styles and combined it with rhythm and blues, the meters began to gallop brokenly with heavy syncopation in the melodic line (such as one and two and THREE FOUR; one and two and THREE FOUR) while simultaneously in the base line a driving, predominant back beat throbbed: one **TWO** three **FOUR ...** . Monsarrat demonstrates that the contradictory rhythms pull

the performer and listener in two opposite directions simultaneously which influences the body to respond erotically while adversely affecting one's ability to think rationally. The throbbing, pulsating, contradictory rhythms combined with intermittent syncopated explosions in the melody line create a musical semblance of erotica as seen in the universal response of the modern dance in all cultures regardless of race, language, or religion. **There are certainly other techniques to give music a more subtle atmosphere of eroticism and sensuality, but rock is the most egregious and popular genre.**

Mike Quatro, a well-known producer of rock, states: "Rock motivates you internally, gives you a sensual feeling. A girl can be turned on by the music. It releases her inhibitions. The beat of the drum has always been a factor A girl realizes her own [lustful desires] through the music" (POSACT).

LA Times, "Rock music deals with [lustful] drives and taboo rhythms" (Ibid).

Cheetah magazine (rock magazine): "If people knew what today's pop music was saying—not what the words are saying, but what the music itself is saying—they would ban it, smash all the records, and arrest anyone who tried to play it" (Ibid).

Frank Zappa, a well known rock promoter, said in *TIME*: "Rock music is [fornication]. The big beat matches the body's rhythms" (Ibid).

Manager of Rolling Stones in same article said: "Pop music is [fornication], and you have to hit them in the face with it" (Ibid). Gerald Jackson says in his popular song, "Turn the Beat Around": "I know that you want to get your [word omitted] off, But you see I've made up my mind about it, It's got to be the rhythm, no doubt about it" Gloria Estefan sings in her pop song entitled "The Rhythm is Gonna Getcha": "At night when you turn off all the lights . . . the rhythm is gonna getcha. In bed, throw the covers on your head . . . But I know it, the rhythm is gonna getcha. No way, you can fight it every day . . . And before this night is through, Ooh baby, the rhythm is gonna getcha tonight."

"Barbara Walters Special" (aired 3/29/94): Walters asks, "How would you describe what you do?" Garth Brooks . . . "It's sex." Another popular country music performer, Willie Nelson, said, "As a country artist . . . there is no doubt that we are contributing to the moral decline in America."

John Kay, professional rock musician (Steppenwolf) from the sixties: "We are successful in that we are able to keep the music hard and direct so that it communicates directly with the body. . . .By carefully controlling the sequence of the rhythms, any pop performer can create audience hysteria. We know how to do it" (Ibid). This group recorded "Born to be Wild." The kind of music they chose for the song illustrated the lifestyle they advocated in the lyrics. The rock genre whether subtle or overt is body music in the sinful sense of that term. It is not music that appeals to the mind. As my revered systematic theology professor, Dr. Rolland McCune, often said, "Beware of anything that by passes the mind!"

1 Peter 1:13-16 *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

Hebrews 5:14 *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

TIME, Oct 31, 1969, p. 49: “Rock ‘n roll has by its very beat and sound always celebrated [sensuality].” “I’ve always thought that the main ingredients in rock are sex, really good stage shows and really sassy music. Sex and sass, I really think that’s where it’s at (Debbie Harry, lead singer of the Blondies (*Hit Parader*, Sept 1979)). “Rock and Roll is 99% sex (John Oates of Hall and Oats; *Circus*; 31.1.7). “Our music is, and always has been, fueled by a strong sexual undertow” (Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys; Stan Hawkins, “The Pet Shop Boys: Musicology, Masculinity and Banality,” In *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, p. 124).

USA Today Oct. 11, 1985: “The Senate hearing on dirty-word rock should have found that the obscenity didn’t start with the words but with the music.” One cannot have “dirty dancing” without “dirty music.”

Mark 6:22ff *And when the daughter of Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.*

Why Johnny Can’t Tell Right From Wrong by William Kilpatrick, Professor of Education at Boston College

Chapter entitled, “Music and Morality”: “Rock confirms their right to have and express strong, sensual emotions. The message is ‘Your feelings are sacred, and nothing is set above them.’ This, in its essence, is all that rock is about” (p. 178). “Rock can’t be made respectable The music will simply subvert the words No matter how many reforms are attempted, rock will always gravitate in the direction of violence and uncommitted [lust]. The beat says, ‘Do what you want to do’” (p. 179).

Detroit Free Press, Oct 17, 1990: “[Lust] Lives and Audiotape,” by music critics Robin Givian and Gary Graff:

“All pretense aside, it’s [lust] music . . . some noncommittal types refer to it as ‘mood music.’ . . . but, deep down, they all know the truth. Those thumping beats, those seductive lyrics that’s [lust] music men and women use to rev their hormones and kick start their fantasies . . . But always the music hits a nerve that sends chills up the spine and has love hounds gasping for air Music is the universal aphrodisiac. A mainstream

[lust] toy. It helps rhythmless souls find their [lust] groove... .
Nederlander (professional psychologist) says that music is more powerful than any other element in creating this 'mood.' ... Experts on the boudoir boogie say it's the fellas who go for rap or hip-hop because they choose their sex tunes based on the rhythm rather than the words... . when the attempt is to seduce ... choose music with a constant, driving rhythm... . Musicians know exactly what they are doing when they put together the music we make love by ... the songs work on a couple of levels. There's a part of them that goes right to the subconscious and affects them (listeners) in ways they don't even know... It's all about creating a feeling... . If you can tap into that feeling, you can touch someone right at their core. Barry White has the touch. Singing with a basso profundo rumble that's the personification of pillow talk." These authors list dozens of soft, light rock songs which produce this effect. Rock whether overt or subtle has a sensuous effect on an audience especially when CCM artists imitate the stylistic intimacies of these "lust" songs with such techniques as sliding, flipping, crooning, scooping, delayed vibrato, and intimate use of the microphone. (Circumlocutions and/or synonyms have been inserted in appropriate places to replace more graphic terminology in the original article.)

Why do some people claim to be unaffected by the sensuality of Pop music today? For the same reason Larry Flint claimed on a 20/20 news magazine interview with Barbara Walters that he was unaffected by pornographic films. He told her that after viewing so many films, he had become somewhat immune to their stimulation and thereby required greater stimulation to create an erotic effect. The thrill-level rises when one becomes use to a certain amount of stimulation. Much like roller coasters which must be faster and higher to create a sense of thrill, so rock music must become more erotic and extreme in order to create its conscious effect. However, just because one is not conscious of the erotic effects, his subconscious and physical responses are still there. Simply because someone claims to be unaffected by rock music, only reveals the cauterizing of the conscience by repeated exposure to the ubiquitous presence of the rock genre in our increasingly decadent American culture.

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

4. Historically music has been considered to have moral value.

Plato – “styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions” (*Republic* cited in *A History of Western Music* by Donald Jay Grout).

Aristotle – “Music directly represents the passions or states of the soul - gentleness, anger, courage, temperance ... if one listens to the wrong kind of music he will become the wrong kind of person; but conversely, if he listens to the right kind of music he will tend to become the right kind of person” (Ibid).

Claudio Monteverdi, “The end of all music is to affect the soul.”

J. S. Bach, “The aim and final reason of music should be nothing else but the glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit.”

Robert Schumann, “Music is the perfect expression of the soul.”

Musak Inc., “Unlike drugs, music affects us psychologically and physiologically without invading the blood stream. The subtle influence of music has been harnessed in programs providing controlled stimulus progression for people at work and play.”

Edwin Bodky in *The Interpretation of Bach’s Keyboard Works* lists the various emotions which can be used as a guide when interpreting Bach’s music. Over 60 emotions are found.

II. WHY AND WHERE DO BELIEVERS SING?

Colossians 3:16 “*among one another*”

Ephesians 5:19 “*speaking to yourselves*”

Throughout the Word of God, God’s people sang among themselves.

A. The purpose of music

CCM performers were interviewed as to what the goal and purpose of music are in Scripture. Their answers are in the following chart:

| | PURPOSE/GOAL | RESPONSES |
|----|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Evangelism | 66 |
| 2. | Encouragement | 28 |
| 3. | Communicate God | 15 |
| 4. | Positive Influence | 11 |
| 5. | Be relevant | 11 |
| 6. | Nebulous | 28 |
| 7. | Praise God | 3 |
| 8. | Used Scripture | 1 |

The purpose of music in Scripture was never primarily to reach the lost. When emotions are played on without a clear and complete presentation of God’s truth, it can be counter productive producing a feeling of well-being and contentment that is a counterfeit of God’s peace. Thus, we insulate the unbeliever from the gospel.

1. To Praise and Glorify God in over 100 of the 500 music verses

2 Chronicles 5:13 “It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good;

for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD;”

Cf. Psalm 7:17; 18:49; 47:6-7; 27:6; 68:4, 32; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 30:21; Judges 5:2; Jeremiah 20:13; Hebrews 2:12

Our sacrificial praise is God’s pleasure (Hebrews 13:15-16).

2. To Teach Doctrine and Admonish Believers

Colossians 3:16 “Teaching and admonishing one another”

Ephesians 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”

3. To Unify Believers

Jeremiah 31:12 “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD ... and they shall not sorrow any more at all.”

Romans 15:5-9 “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God ... for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.”

4. To Testify of our Holy God and our Changed Life to Unbelievers

1 Chronicles 16:23 “Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation.”

Psalms 40:1-3 “I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”

Psalms 96:2 “Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day.”

Acts 16:25-30 “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”

The above order must be maintained in proper sequence.

Music is directed to God in each case.

Unity and testimony are by-products of praise and teaching – not the purpose!

When the Israelites were taken captive by the Babylonians, the faithful were asked by their pagan captors to sing the songs of Zion. The response reveals a great principle in music.

Psalms 137:1-4 “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and

*they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion. **How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?***"

God chose preaching, not music, to reach the world for Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:21 *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*

B. The perversion of music

CCM entertainers who think they are reaching the lost are actually weakening the church and deceiving the lost. There are serious flaws when we try to evangelize with music.

CCM makes the Gospel a matter of entertainment when there is absolutely nothing entertaining at all about it.

CCM turns the public proclaimers of truth and Christ into those who are loved and accepted by the world contrary to what Christ said the world would think of true disciples.

CCM demotes the godly and gifted teachers of truth who are worthy of double honor, replacing them with singing stars whose lives, theology, and testimony are highly suspect.

CCM blurs the gap between the values of Satan and the values of God, the values of the world and the values of the church.

CCM denies the power of the simple saving Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit to draw men to Christ through the spoken and understood Word.

CCM propagates bad and weak theology, and it drags the name of the Lord down to the level of the world.

Romans 10:17 *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Romans 1:16 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the **power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

CCM cheapens what is priceless; trivializes what is profound; mixes sensuality with sanctification; confuses lust with biblical love; blends carnality with Christ likeness; blurs the distinction between the holy and the profane, and blends light with darkness.

P *Group* magazine, Sept 1990, listed dozens of secular rock singers along with their "Christian" counter part. Kool and the Gang are targeting those that like Paula Abdul and New Kids on the Block. Heather and Kirsten are geared for those who like pop/dance tunes "a la Janet Jackson." On Fire will appeal to fans of MC Hammer. 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"

P Take 6 performs concerts with Stevie Wonder, appeared on the "Murphy Brown" show and "Arsenio Hall" Show, Saturday Night Live, Soul Train

Awards and performed for Nelson Mandella, a Spike Lee movie, and Dick Tracy sound track. John 2:15-17 “Love not the world ... if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

- P Jim Fischer, *CCM mag.*: “Relevancy Isn’t Everything,” – “As one of the founders of CCM ... I had an immediate hearing with my generation... . The real question is, what are they accepting if they do embrace the message? ... Is it the same message we think we are giving? Is it Jesus Christ they are responding to – the one who lived in history and died on the cross? By trying to make the Gospel culturally relevant, we may be operating at cross purposes to God and canceling out it’s very effectiveness ... Doesn’t it seem that we might be running against God’s intended purposes when we try and make becoming a Christian the exciting, culturally relevant thing to do. And if becoming a Christian suddenly becomes cool, one has to wonder if this is the same Christianity Jesus was talking about.”
- P Carman said, “For years we have said in Christian music that we want to evangelize the world ... I can’t find music used as evangelism in the Scripture ... and I’m a part of the CCM scene... .What I have seen over the years is that when we try to use music as a tool for evangelism, we want to become as much like the people we are evangelizing as we can ...” (Carman, *CCM mag.*, March 1988, p. 2).

What you win them with, you have won them to!

Where the true Gospel is believed, God’s music is loved and sung. Before the Reformation during the dark ages between 500 and 1500 AD, there was little to no music in the churches for the saints. After Martin Luther started the Reformation, singing once again became an important part of congregational worship. Martin Luther is still considered to be one of the greatest hymn writers in church history (*Battle for Christian Music* by Tim Fisher for discussion of Luther’s cultural age and the music he used).

III. HOW DO BELIEVERS SING?

Colossians 3:16 “*singing with grace in your hearts*”

A. The source of singing

1. **The phrase, “in your hearts,” is in the dative case and has the idea of cause or “by means of.”**

It is the operation of Almighty grace upon our hearts that causes us to sing and make melody to the Lord. If the heart is not right, the song cannot be right.

Amos 5:10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

Amos 5:14-15 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and

love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

Amos 5:23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

Why didn't God want to hear their music?

Amos 5:26 But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

At the 21st Annual Dove Awards for CCM on April 5, 1990 hosted by Sandi Patti. Dolly Parton sang the finale, "He's Alive." She received a standing ovation. All the mainstream CCM stars participated in the program and joined in the finale. It did not seem to matter that Dolly Parton has a reputation for being the "sex symbol" of country-rock music and had recently done the lead role in the movie, "The Best Little _____ in Texas," (House of ill repute) which according to the American Federation of Decency contained nudity, pornographic situations, and obscene language. One CCM star said, "We are proud to have them (rock and country stars) associate with us. It makes us look good."

Kim Boyce – "I listen to Janet Jackson and Madonna because they are pushing the edge stylistically."

2. Our music cannot be like the world's music because our God is not like their gods.

The world's music reflects the world's ways, standards, attitudes, spirit, mood – the world's gods. If the gospel is spread through music that is identical to theirs, the unsaved will be inclined to think that the Christian life is identical to theirs.

Nehemiah 10:28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding;

Psalms 119:54 Thy statutes have been my songs.

Full Time Christian Musicians are to be:

- P Chosen (1 Chronicles 16:41-42; Nehemiah 7:1)
- P Well Organized (2 Chronicles 7:6; 8:14; 31:2)
- P Consecrated (Numbers 8:15-16)
- P Diligent, Trustworthy, Obedient (Nehemiah 10:28-29)
- P Mature in the Lord (Numbers 4:46, 47; 1 Chronicles 23:3-5)

Full Time Christian Ministers are to be: (Titus 1 and 1 Tim 3)

- P Blameless,
- P Able to teach ("teaching and admonishing" Colossians 3:16)
- P Of good reputation within and without the church
- P Not novices in the faith
- P Sober
- P Devoted to their spouses

- P Godly managers of their homes
- P Doctrinally sound
- P Scripturally obedient to all the commands in the epistles including the commands for personal and ecclesiastical separation. (2 Thessalonians 3; 2 Corinthians 6; 1 Corinthians 5 - cf. Appendix on separation)

Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology by Peter Wicke who received his doctorate for his thesis on the aesthetics of popular music, and who also is the General Secretary for the *International Association of the Study of Popular Music*. Chapter three is entitled, “The Aesthetics of Sensuousness.”

“Thus there is a sensuous truth behind rock music which is not attached to the logic of the structural detail but rather to the sound of the surface characteristics of the music form... this musical form ... is not taken as a form of expression similar to speech with prescribed structures of meaning but as a body-oriented sensuous experience” (p. 72).

Hole In Our Soul by Martha Bayles

“It would be absurd to argue that 1950's rock ‘n’ roll is ‘religious’ in the sense of being ethereal, reflective, and contemplative, as opposed to physical, emotional, and erotic” (p. 132).

Sandi Patti’s release, “Another Time ... Another Place” has a new age, existential sound. “There is a subtle shift in this record ... it includes a more universal pop feel. And it’s a change that sounds very natural for Sandi” (*In Music*, Jan/Feb, pp. 31-32). Sandi Patti left her husband and children and committed fornication with an assistant pastor of a new-evangelical church who later became a part of her band. She then divorced her husband, as did the assistant pastor his wife, married the man she committed adultery with and subsequently made a new CCM album entitled, “O Holy Night.” When questioned about her sin, she said she was trying to find “wholeness.” The *Detroit News* article said that at the very least she should consider changing the title of her new album. Sandi still travels and stars in CCM concerts all over the nation and is advertised in all the usual publications. Her “ministry” continues unabated (cf. articles in *Detroit News* and *Christianity Today*).

Steve Green, considered to be one of the most legitimate of the CCM singers, traveled and sang rock-and-roll for a hard rock CCM group entitled “White Heart.” Green said, “I sang some rock-and-roll, traveling with White Heart for a while. So I have a wide appreciation for a lot of styles.” He also traveled with the Gaithers for nearly five years who were performing disco music in the early 80's. Green adds to the confusion by stating that “rock music is not inherently evil.” Green admitted that “gospel music was a tremendous relief to me because it was a ministry where I could have a shallow commitment. I could do everything I wanted and still be called a minister. I could have my cake and eat it too (Steve claims he is committed to Christ now)” [*Christian Herald*, Feb 1986, pp. 23-25]. One of Steve’s most popular songs, “Let the Walls Come Down,” uses the rock genre and encourages all denominational barriers to come down. He wants personal and ecclesiastical unity between Protestants, Catholics, and Charismatics. He believes that the disunity caused by articulating

the doctrinal differences between these groups is “designed by Satan.” Steve was a major attraction at the ecumenical “Promise Keeper” meetings whose purpose according to its founder Bill McCartney is to unify Evangelicals and Catholics as brothers and sisters in Christ (cf. lyrics to “Let the Walls Come Down”).

The Christian’s heart and music belongs to God and his righteousness. The world’s heart and music belongs to Satan and his unrighteousness. Satan’s music will come to an end. Speaking of Babylon the apostle John said:

Revelation 18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee.

Ezekiel 26:13 And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

B. The style of singing

1. Melody is commended

Ephesians 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

1 Corinthians 14:7-8 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

Wholesome melody illustrates a heart cleansed by God’s grace. Dissonance, imbalance, driving rock beats, contradictory rhythms, endless repetition, mindless unrestrained self-expression, and erotic performance styles reflects a heart dead in sin.

CNN, May 6, 1995 News report on a rock-and-roll course taught at the University of Southern California. The professor who admitted that he loves rock music said, “**Rock is at its core raw carnality. Rock is completely self-absorbed and self-focused.**”

Matthew 16:24-26 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (come under the absolute authority of Christ), and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Sound Effects, Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock ‘n’ Roll by Simon Frith: “The sexuality of music is referred to in terms of its rhythm – it is the beat that commands a directly physical response.” (p. 240)

The Secret Power of Music by David Tame: “When pulsation and syncopation are the rhythmic foundations of the music at a dance hall, the movements of the dancers can invariably be seen to become very sensual ... “ (p. 199).

Dancing In The Dark : Youth, Popular Culture, and the Electronic Media by Quentin J. Schultze and Roy M. Anker: “Music tends to be a predictor of behavior and social values,” explained MTV executive; “You tell me the music people like and I’ll tell you their views on abortion ... or what their sense of humor is like” (p. 181).

EXAMPLES OF STYLES

- P The pulsating rhythms of Africa mimic the restless passions of their culture and religion.
- P The music of the orient, with its dissonant and unresolved chord structures, music which seemingly comes out of no where and goes no where with no beginning and no end, reflects the eastern mystic new age religions which teach that life goes on from cycle to cycle – an endless repetition of meaningless existence.
- P There is the music of the Western world characterized by seduction and sensuality – a musical reflection of an immoral, lust sick society that produces, sings, and enjoys it.
- P Rock music, with its bombastic dissonance and pulsating rhythms, mirrors the hopeless, standardless, purposeless philosophy that rejects God and reason. Rock floats in a sea of relativity and unrestrained self-expression. Rock violates the mind because rock philosophy violates reason. Rock violates the spirit because it violates truth and goodness. Rock violates God, because it violates all authority but self. It has all the moral dignity of drug trafficking and the beauty of an orchestra of jack hammers.

2. Sensuous style of singing is condemned

Isaiah 4:4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion

Isaiah 5:1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved.

Isaiah 23:15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

Mark 4:24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear ...

Our melodies must be sung for the purpose of showing our affection for God without any overtones of impurity or flirting. The harlot can sing the same melody and corrupt it by “singing as an harlot” with the result that the listener’s thoughts turn to her and not to God.

The average symphony orchestra (100-120 instruments) has 40-45 strings playing melody and harmony, 35-40 woodwinds playing melody and harmony,

10-15 brass playing melody and harmony, and 2-3 playing percussion. Numerically, about 3% rhythm makes up an orchestral composition and performance. Contrariwise, a typical rock group has a rhythm guitar, bass guitar (rhythm instrument), array of amplified drums, and lead guitar for melody. Numerically, a rock band is 75% rhythm with an incessant, monotonous, erotic beat. Rock music whether secular or “sacred” is sensual. Contrariwise, in 1 Chronicles 23:5; 25:7; 9:33 Israel worships with 120 trumpets, 4000 in the orchestra, and 200,000 in the choir.

The noise emanating from a bar or nightclub causes a variety of unwholesome images to flood the mind. What kind of picture does the world get in its mind as it passes your church when the windows or doors are open?

Jacy Cocks of *TIME* describes a female singer’s vocal style as, “one of the easiest and (sensual) voices in anyone’s neighborhood” (October, 1979, p. 85).

Ralph Novak, music commentator for *People*, comments on a CCM performer’s singing style: “for those who like to dance and pray, her stuff can’t be beat” (June, 1985, p. 20).

3. Deliberate Vocal Techniques for sensual, relative, existential expression:

a. Scooping

Charles Henderson, author of *How To Sing For Money*, explains that “Scooping (sliding up to a note from an attack below its true pitch) is a common practice ... as a swing effect” (p. 36).

Charles Brown, author of *The Art of Rock and Roll*, admits that these “vocal slides” are viewed as “sexual utterances” (p. 68).

b. Flipping

Flipping below and above the actual note repetitively through the melody

“The classically trained singer has an ingrained respect for any written melody and hesitates to tamper with it. The born swinger, on the other hand, looks on written melody as simply a convenient starting point for his variations” (Henderson, p. 85).

c. Whispersy, Breathy Voice

Parade describes this “born again Christian performer” as having a voice that “coos” and as a “whispersy, breathy moan” (November, p. 11).

“Microphone Technique – “Through the agency of a microphone, ... The accent today is on intimacy” (Henderson, p. 4).

Proverbs 5:3,8 “The mouth of a strange woman is smoother than oil” ... “Come not near the door of her house”

4. Style is an extension of a philosophy

Music for Pleasure by Simon Frith (English Music Critic, Author of 15 books, Prof. at Univ. of Warwick): “All pop singers, male and female, have to express direct emotion ... the voice is an apparently transparent reflection of feeling ...

it is the sound of the voice, not the words sung, which suggests what a singer really means” (p. 154).

Music, Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages by Cyril Scott: “Artifice was substituted for art, and sensuous effect for heartfelt emotion” (p. 175).

IV. TO WHOM DO WE SING?

Colossians 3:16 *To the Lord*

Psalm 66:2 *Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.*

Philippians 1:10 *That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ;*

A. The command of scripture

We are commanded to sing to the Lord. Our music is primarily to him and for him in order to reflect him.

1 Corinthians 10:31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Colossians 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* (This verse comes in the immediate context of sacred music)

Johann Sebastian Bach, the greatest musician of all time, said, “the aim of all music is the glory of God.”

B. The attributes of God

1. Glory in Hebrew (כבוד – *kabod*)

The meaning is “fatness, heaviness, weight, importance, honour,” (*BDB*, p. 459).

“That which makes God impressive” (*TDNT*).

The term meant one was to acknowledge the sheer weight of God’s presence in one’s life, worship, labor, home life, and to worship him in keeping with the infinite perfections of all his attributes. God’s governing attribute is his holiness (Isa 6).

It meant to live in the proper reverential fear of God.

Men in God’s presence were so struck with the holiness and glory of God they universally thought they would physically die in his presence. The glory of God produced the most profound humility in those who saw it (i.e. Gideon, Moses, Isaiah).

2. **Glory in Koine Greek (*doxa*)**

The meaning is “opinion, one who stands in good repute, honor, divine radiance” (*BDAG* and *TDNT*).

It denotes “good reputation and good standing.”

Our music is sung to the Lord and is to give the right opinion of God.

God is Truth: Music should be biblical – clearly, distinctly, accurately teaching the truths of God’s Word. A great deal of CCM lyrics are theological “mush” at best and outright heresy in some cases. The message is usually on a horizontal, man-centered level. When God is addressed, it is done in flippant and trite phrases or in mindless, hypnotic repetition – “God is an Awesome God, Siss Boom Bah!”

God is Light: There is no darkness in God. Music should be free from the sinful manifestations of worldliness.

God is Pure: We are never to mix good with evil. The evil will always defile the good.

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

Haggai 2:11-14 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work.

Ezekiel 44:23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

2 Corinthians 6: 17 Touch not the unclean thing!

God is Holy: God is free from all evil and separate from anything that defiles. He is majestically transcendent above man. We should never violate the Creator/creature distinction.

Numbers 20:10-12 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we (Moses put himself on the same plane with God) fetch you water out of this rock. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify (set apart) me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

God is Love: Music should edify and sanctify the saints rather than create Hollywood stardom and worship for the singers.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 Love suffereth long, and is kind; Love envieth not; Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up ... Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, ... rejoices not in iniquity ...

God is Orderly: Music should not be contradictory, filled with dissonance, confusion, or lack of the finer aspects of musical composition. Music should be done “decently” and in “order.”

God is the essence of Beauty: Music should use the wide range of notes, melodies, harmony and life-giving rhythm with proper shade and color – not the mindless repetition of pop music reflecting its appetite for the trite, mundane, profane, banal and outright carnal values of a nihilistic culture which has lost its way and wholly abandoned the common grace of God.

God is Righteous: Music, like all art, should conform to highest standards of God’s Word and societal culture which evidences the greatest influence of common grace.

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,
but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.
2 Corinthians 10:4*

CONCLUSION

1 Samuel 16:23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God (permitted by God) was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

- P Emotionally – refreshed
- P Physically – made well
- P Spiritually – evil spirit departed

We need beautiful music in our churches today in order to be spiritually healthy. In *Pilgrim’s Progress* Christian is falling in the slough of despondency, straying in doubting castle, enduring hardship and failure. We never see the expression, “filled with the Spirit,” describing Christian on his spiritual pilgrimage, but each time Christian is delivered we see him going on his way singing. Every time he was under the Holy Spirit’s control he had a song in his heart and a song on his lips. This was Bunyan’s allegorical way of communicating the Spirit-controlled life. Only Spirit-filled believers will be able to exercise the necessary discernment in the area of music (Eph 5:18-20).

Psalm 119:66 “Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Thy commandments”

Proverbs 16:21 “The wise in heart will be called discerning”

John 7:24 “Judge with righteous judgment”

1 Thessalonians 5:21 “Examine everything carefully, hold fast to that which is good”

Philippians 1:10 “So that you may be able to discern what is best”

Ephesians 5:10 “Find out what pleases the Lord”

Hebrews 5:14 “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil”

Ephesians 5:10 “Proving what is acceptable to the Lord”

No Compromise

Charles H. Spurgeon

This is the suggestion of the present hour: If the world will not come to Jesus ... Shall not the church go down to the world? Instead of bidding men to be converted, and come out from among sinners, and be separate from them, let us join with the ungodly world, enter into union with it, and so pervade it with our influence by allowing it to influence us. Let us have a Christian world.

Certain ministers are treacherously betraying our holy religion under pretense of adapting it to this present age. The new plan is to assimilate the church to the world by semi-dramatic performances they make the house of prayer to approximate to the theater; they turn their services into musical displays in fact, they exchange the temple for the theater, and turn the ministers of God into actors, whose business it is to amuse men. This then is the proposal. In order to win the world, the Lord Jesus must conform himself, his people, and his Word to the world. I will not dwell on so loathsome a proposal.

My dear hearers, how much I long to see you saved! But I would not belie my Lord, even to win your souls, if they could be won so. The true servant of God is not responsible for success or non-success. Results are in God's hands.