

What is Good Music?

Part 2

by Ralf Euerl

First printed in *Youth Ministry*, June 2006

We would like to continue our study of good music and summarize the thoughts from our last issue in the following list:

Characteristics of good music

- clear intonation
- correct pronunciation
- distinct utterance
- clear and soft tones
- subdued and melodious
- simple songs of praise sung in a natural tone
- every word is uttered clearly, in a musical tone
- beauty, pathos, and power
- harmony
- cheerful, yet solemn melodies
- correct, harmonious singing
- sacred, solemn psalms of praise
- to praise God and to unify
- to strengthen, encourage, and calm
- for joy together with the heavenly angels
- to imprint the truth more deeply in our hearts
- creates harmony of thoughts and deeds
- weapon against temptation

Characteristics of bad music

- harshness and shrillness
- loud singing
- long drawn-out notes
- the peculiar sounds common in operatic singing
- singing done from impulse
- those who sing are left to blunder along
- funeral notes
- jargon and discord

- frivolous waltz or flippant songs that extol man
- to praise self and exalt man
- in order to dream, distract, fall into
- for selfish joy - sometimes at a cost to others
- to imprint human wisdom and ways
- confuses, distracts
- best means to tempt

Some History of Music

When we look at the development of music down through history, we gain a much broader view than if we pick out only our time and look at it disconnected from the past. We will see how the adversary of God has misused music for his purposes, and we will learn how to avoid his snares.

Let's go back to the time when slaves were dragged from Africa to America. To brighten their future the oppressed sang songs which expressed not only their suffering but their hope that their simple, threadbare garments would be exchanged for white robes and that they would be delivered from this earth in chariots of fire. We know these songs as Negro spirituals. They are characterized by rhythm and simplicity. Even though they are not always theologically accurate, they express a faith that God is really the One who is in control.

The singers of these songs were Africans, even though they lived in America, and it is necessary to know the characteristics of this type of music in order to understand it aright. Of course Africa is a big continent, and local characteristics are not necessarily the rule everywhere. Nevertheless, there are common elements to be found almost everywhere in that land, and it is important for us to understand them.

A very important instrument in this area of the world is the drum.

He [the African] is intoxicated by this rhythmic harmony or rhythmic polyphony, just as we react to chordal harmony. It is this remarkable interplay of main beats that causes him

irresistibly, when he hears the drums, to start moving his feet, his arms, his whole body. This to him is real music. (A. M. Jones, "African Music," quoted in Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago, 1990), p. 242.)

You need to be aware of this characteristic of African music in order to understand it and correctly classify it.

There are many places in Africa where Christianity is unknown. Since there is no such thing as neutrality, the void is filled by heathenism which is characterized by seeming contact with the spirits of the dead. The incantations of the medicine man are made in combination with rhythmic movements. And the dances of many tribes are a physical expression of contact with the supernatural. The holy drum beats out the rhythm and the body sways to the beat.

Michael Ventura writes,

The metaphysical goal of the African way is to experience the intense meeting of the human world and the spirit world. Spurred by the holy drums, deep in the meditation of the dance, one is literally entered by a god or goddess. Goddesses may enter men, and gods may enter women. The body literally becomes the crossroads, human and divine are united within it - and it can happen to anyone.

In Abomey, Africa, these deities that speak through humans are called vodun. The word means "mysteries". From their vodun comes our Voodoo, and it is to Voodoos that we must look for the roots of our music... (Michael Ventura, "Hear that Long Snake Moan", *Whole Earth Review* (Spring 1987), pp. 28-33.)

These thoughts are not expressed in order to devalue the faith of the poor slaves. But it is interesting for us to see the background of these songs.

Blues and Rock'n Roll

A little later in the history of America there were negroes who discarded the faith expressed in spirituals and developed instead another form of song. These singers also expressed their suffering and despair, but they disassociated themselves from any and all divine solutions to their fate. The type of

music which developed from this is known as *Rhythm and Blues*. The spirit of this music is sadness and despair, and it is characterized by a steady, heavy beat.

Hubert Spence comments:

The “Blues” feeling was strongly evident but there was a clear rejection of any solution outside of man. Its message described man either drowning in his suffering, taking his life in the suffering, or partaking of some pleasurable act (such as fornication); through these actions the “blues” were relieved. And by the 1930's in the field and shanties of the delta country, there mutated this earthly, hard-driving style of music. It was played by blacks for the blacks (at that time called Negroes). Cured in misery, it was a lonesome, soul-sad music, full of cries and punctuated by a heavy regular beat. (Hubert T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music* (Dunn, North Carolina, 1997), p. 62.)

After World War II, the beat of the Blues became intensified with electric guitars, bass, and drums. The first recordings were made by Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and John Lee Hooker. These “race” records, as they were then known in the recording industry, were played in 1952 by disc jockey Alan Freed, on his late afternoon Moondog Matinee radio program in Cleveland. Borrowing a phrase occurring in several Rhythm-and-Blues songs, Freed dubbed the style “rock and roll”. This phrase was used in the ghetto as a euphemism for promiscuous sexual intercourse engaged in the back seat of a car. (Samuele Bacchiocchi, News Letter No. 34: The nature of rock music from a historical perspective. Later published in the book: *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music*. www.biblicalperspectives.com. Most of the information about history of music is taken from this article.)

Elvis Presley

A big change in the history of music occurred when Elvis Presley, at the age of nineteen, began to sing “Race” songs in the style of the blacks. Many consider 1954 to be the birth date of rock music when Presley, who was later dubbed “the king of rock'n'roll”, made his first professional appearance. He became a favorite among the youth who copied his way of

dressing, his hair style, and his way of speaking. This was a time when new styles of dance appeared. When he gave a concert, the applause was hysterical. Indeed, his style of music was the symbol of a young generation in rebellion against parental authority.

This new form of music was in many respects similar to what was already popular, but

...the sound was quite different: a constant drum beat permeated the music which made it very conducive to dancing. The back-beat or syncopation became the dominant characteristic in its rhythm. (Hubert T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music* (Dunn, North Carolina, 1997), p. 92.)

Girls were wild about Elvis and would gladly have had him as a lover or friend. The fruits of his music soon became obvious. There were riots during his rock concerts in London, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Atlanta, and San Jose, and California.

The older generation woke up. This snortin', snarlin' stallion of a singer was changing the way young people looked at life. Suddenly the triumvirate of school, family, and church had lost meaning. All that mattered was looking, acting, listening to, and being like Elvis. Pastors, parents, and newspaper editors took notice and began preaching against the rebelliousness that Presley symbolized. Something had to be done. (Steve Peters and Mark Littleton, *Truth about Rock* (Minneapolis, 1998), p. 15.)

But the parents, who themselves did not have an experience in the power of the gospel, had therefore nothing to pass on to their children. In despair they could only stand by and watch the effects of an influence which was far greater than theirs.

But for all that, Presley was to all appearance religious. During his life...

He spent hours reading the Bible aloud and forced the visitors to the converted church building house in Graceland to sit and listen to his readings. Throughout his career Presley had Gospel quartets backing his music. In his younger years Presley attended a black Baptist church in

Memphis (East Trigg), Tennessee, where he studied the responses of the people to rhythmic music. Presley was steeped in the Gospel style of singing. He unsuccessfully auditioned to join the Blackwood Gospel Quartet.

It appears as if his interest in gospel music had a large influence on his rock music. He died in August, 1977, as fourteen different drugs went to work in his body at the same time. His property in Graceland had become an industry that produced millions. His followers visited the place as pilgrims would a place of worship. Another form of religion took the place of the former.

Several factors contributed to the popularization of rock music in the 1960s. This was one of the most tempestuous decades in modern American history. The carnage of the Vietnam War, the “God-is-dead” movement, the rise of the hippies’ movement, political assassinations, the spread of mind-altering drugs, the fear of nuclear war, the violent protests in many college campuses, suspicion of conventional institutions, and other factors made this a time of great disillusionment among young people.

The seedbed of turbulence of the sixties facilitated the rapid growth of secular rock music on the one hand and of the Jesus movement on the other hand. Many young people who became disenchanted with the drug culture and the political establishment, began seeking for something deeper. Since they had long abandoned the traditional churches of their parents, they began developing their religious study groups. It became cool for young people to “try Jesus” as previously they had tried drugs.

To support the new religious experience, the Jesus movement introduced the so-called “Jesus Music,” which later became known as Contemporary Christian Music. This music was a sanitized version of secular rock to which Christian lyrics were added.

...The so-called Christian rock music was largely inspired by the secular rock, which at that time was successfully promoted, especially by the Beatles. (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Christian and Rock Music*)

Ecclesiastes 7

⁵ It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.

The Beatles

The Beatles are considered as the major players to hit the rock scene during the sixties. They were four English young men in high-heeled boots, undersized suits, and with bowl-shaped haircuts. When they appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964, sixty-eight million people (one of the largest TV audiences in history) tuned in to watch their performance. Initially they did not come across as vulgar and immoral as they had become known in England. Their songs like “Love Me Do,” “She Loves You,” and “I want to Hold Your Hand,” appeared innocuous enough. Parents felt that they could trust them with their daughters, for all that they wanted to do was to hold their hands.

The Beatles were overwhelmingly received in America. Their songs had a lock on the charts both in America and England. All ages opened their hearts to the fabulous four who seem to be an innocent, fun rock group. But it was not long before the Beatles revealed their true colors.

In the Summer of 1966 John Lennon made his controversial statement: “Christianity will go; it will vanish and shrink, I need not argue about that; I am right and we will be proved right. We are more popular than Jesus right now.” (As cited by Hubert T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music* (Dunn, North Carolina, 1997), pp. 79-80.) From this time on the Beatles became heavily involved into drugs and Eastern transcendentalism.

Lennon admitted that for three years he was constantly on LSD. He believed that LSD could lead people to the utopia for which they were looking. The Beatles often would spend the whole night under the influence of drugs during their recording session. Out of these recording sessions came the album called *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club*, which made manifest the Beatles' commitment to drugs.

By the end of 1967, most rock musicians were on LSD, commonly referred to as “acid.” The list included John

Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Brian Jones, Pete Townsend, Steve Winwood, Brian Wilson, Donovan, Cat Stevens, Jim Morrison, Eric Clapton, and Jimi Hendrix.

In his history of rock music entitled *Hungry for Heaven: Rock and Roll Search for Redemption*, Steve Turner writes: “This [LSD] was the Damascus Road tablet. People started out on trips as hard-nosed materialists after a bit of fun, and emerged with their egos ripped and mauled, unsure at first whether they’d seen God or whether they were god.” (Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven: Rock and Roll Search for Redemption* (London, 1994), p. 49.)

The association between rock music and the drug culture was influenced especially by Harvard University Professor Timothy Leary, the author of *The Psychedelic Reader* and *The Psychedelic Experience*. He was a close friend of the Beatles whom he called “The Four Evangelists.” Leary interpreted the effects of LSD on himself as “the deepest religious experience” of his life and founded the *League of Spiritual Discovery*, which campaigned for the legal use of LSD as the “sacramental catalyst to the new consciousness.” At a convention of psychologists in Philadelphia he stated: “Drugs are the religion of the twenty-first century. Pursuing religion without drugs is like studying astronomy with the naked eye.” (Quoted by David Marshall, *Occult Explosion* (Alma Park, Grentham, England), p. 42.)

The impact on the American public was astonishing. Suddenly marijuana, speed, and LSD were “cool,” the “in” thing to do. Songs like *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, allegedly an acronym for LSD, could best be listened to if a person was zonked. Tripping on LSD became the passage way to the rock scene. The music of Jimi Hendrix, The Grateful Dead, and Cream resonated with LSD consciousness.

For some rock groups LSD became more than a trip to a vague “psychedelic experience”. It was “disarranging minds by hauling demons and monsters from what appeared to be the depths of the sub-conscious.” Eric Clapton recalls a hallucinating experience in San Francisco while playing on stage with the group Cream. He felt “his guitar apparently

resonating with the spirit world.” (Quoted by Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 86.)

Drugs and rhythm became a staple of the rock movement, because they both function as stimulants to experience a “spiritual high.”

Rejection of Christianity

The theological views of the Beatles became clearer during the last five years of their writings (1965-1970). When they returned from India in 1965, they behaved as if they had some sort of “conversion” experience. Their “conversion,” however, took place not on Damascus road, but at the Ganges river. There they discovered that LSD allegedly reveals a truth hidden to people, namely, that the whole world is a massive heavenly divinity and we are all potentially divine. This meant that monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam were out; instead, pantheistic religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Age were in.

In the song *I Found Out*, the lyrics are very bold: “There ain’t no Jesus gonna come from the sky. Now that I found out I know I can cry.” Throughout the song Lennon states that he has seen through religion “from Jesus to Paul” and that religion was simply a form of drug. In the same song he declares, “God is merely a concept by which we measure our pain.”

In another song *God*, Lennon declared that he did not believe in the Bible, Jesus, magic, Buddha, Yoga, or even the Beatles; “I just believe in me, Yoko [his wife] and me, and that’s reality.” In the closing lyrics of the song *God*, he instructed his millions of listeners, “And so dear friends, you just have to carry on, the dream is over.” (Quoted by Hubert T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, p. 83.)

It is evident that for Lennon Christianity is only a fanciful dream which offers no hope for the future. The truth is that his songs have no message of hope—only an invitation to experience the fleeting pleasures of the moment. At times Lennon was brutally blasphemous, openly attacking Christ, Christianity and the clergy.

Paul McCartney, a member of the Beatles, publicly announced in 1965: "None of us believes in God." Their official press officer, Derek Taylor said: "It's incredible! Here are four boys from Liverpool. They're rude, they're profane, they're vulgar, and they've taken over the world. It's as if they'd founded a new religion. They're completely anti-Christ. I mean, I'm anti-Christ as well, but they're so anti-Christ they shock me, which isn't an easy thing." (Quoted by David Marshall, *Occult Explosion*, p. 84.)

When the rock people turned their back against Christianity, they swallowed Hindu teachings, especially those of the guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of the *Spiritual Regeneration Movement*. In Hindu teaching, rhythmic music releases souls trapped in the world of delusion, enabling them to experience a "god-consciousness." The rock group *The Who*, who adopted Hindu teachings, used their music as an allegorical description of a journey from spiritual darkness to "god-realization."

The attraction of the Indian gurus did not last long for rock musicians. The fabulous wealth of the gurus, the number of Rolls-Royces, and their abusive treatment of women, all revealed that they were less than gods. This disillusionment may have contributed to the obsession with Satanism, which became characteristic of the 1970s.

It is impossible to estimate the impact of the Beatles' music on western civilization. Their music and lyrics promoted philosophies characterized by atheism, nihilism, rebellion, mystical surrealism, instant gratification, and a life built on the ups and downs of drug culture.

An article in *Time* magazine rightly points out that there is more to the Beatles' music that meets the eyes: "The battle lines involved much more than their music. It involved a drug culture, an anti-God theme, an anti-America, pro-revolution stand. It involved recognizing that Lennon was more than a musician." (*Time*, September 22, 1967). As in the case of Elvis Presley, Lennon became for the rock fans a superhuman icon, a demigod...

Rock Music Today

The open rejection of Christianity, the disillusionment of Hindu teachings, and the use of drugs to induce a “psychedelic experience,” each in its own way contributed to the rise of a superstitious and Satanic music which dominated the 1970s and has continued to our times...

Rock music has gone through an easily-discernible hardening process. What began in the fifties as plain rock, it gradually became mellow rock, folk rock, soul rock, funk rock, psychedelic rock, disco, hard rock, heavy metal rock, punk rock, thrash metal rock, rave rock and rap rock. New types of rock music are constantly appearing, while the old ones are still acclaimed. (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The nature of Rock Music from a historical perspective*.)

Many musicians consciously studied the background of music which has percussion rhythm as its basis.

In his book *Dancing with Demons*, Jeff Godwin gives startling evidence on a number of popular rock musicians who have studied the ancient beat of satanic worship. These rockers include Brian Jones (Rolling Stones), John Phillips (The Mamas and the Papas), Paul McCartney (The Beatles), Mick Fleetwood (Led Zeppelin). (Jeff Godwin, *Dancing with Demons* (Chino, California 1988), pp. 126-128.) These men have studied with satanic masters in order to learn how to use effectively the hypnotic power of the rock beat in their songs. (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The nature of Rock Music from a historical perspective*.)

We will not go further into the development of modern music. But one principle has become already clear: This type of music is obviously built upon anti-Christian principles. It should suffice to say that this type of music speaks particularly to the feelings and gives them priority over the mind.

Classical music is more harmonic, while rock music is more rhythmic. Harmonic music appeals more to the mind and makes its listeners more contemplative. Rhythmic music on the contrary appeals more to the emotions and makes its listeners more passionate. The effect on the brain of prolonged exposure to electrical amplification of rhythmic music is “similar to that of drugs.” (Quoted by Allan Bloom, *The*

"Christian" Rock Music?

If you look for so-called "Christian" music, you will find an unusually wide variety of songs which are nothing more than modern rock music with Christian words. Sometimes the songs are deliberately grouped into *Christian Blues*, *Christian Jazz*, *Christian Rock*, *Christian Folk Music*, etc. Sometimes it is called *Soft Pop*, and there are also other names. But regardless of the designation, the principle is always the same. Young people, who have lost their interest in true religion, are being lured into religious fields through music which they like. The music is worldly, but it has a Christian coating.

Messages to Young People, p. 295

Music has occupied the hours which should have been devoted to prayer. Music is the idol which many professed Sabbath-keeping Christians worship. Satan has no objection to music, if he can make that a channel through which to gain access to the minds of the youth. Anything will suit his purpose that will divert the mind from God, and engage the time which should be devoted to His service. He works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power.

When turned to good account, music is a blessing, but it is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls. When abused, it leads the unconsecrated to pride, vanity, and folly. When allowed to take the place of devotion and prayer, it is a terrible curse. Young persons assemble to sing and, although professed Christians, frequently dishonor God and their faith by their frivolous conversation and their choice of music. Sacred music is not congenial to their taste.

And what is the result?

A new generation of youth who have deceived themselves into thinking that everything is in order, that they are listening to "spiritual" music. In reality they are not much different

from their unbelieving colleagues who listen to different words but have a similar experience. The enemy of truth doesn't care whether it is the drum beat of the natives or the drum set of a modern band. So long as feelings are in control, then he is happy.

It is no wonder that “Christian rock music” is very popular among charismatics. They as well as “worldly” rock musicians use loud, rhythmic music to cause feelings of ecstasy.

Music to Dream by

There is yet another style of modern music. It is designed to lead you to dream and forget everything. There are CD's which play the sound of ocean waves, the songs of birds, the splashing of a mountain stream, the songs of whales, or the sound of wind in the trees. They all invite you to turn off and relax. On the surface the purpose of this kind of music is to relieve stress. But the real purpose is to lead you to build your own dream world.

God gave us the songs of the birds for our enjoyment. The birds can teach us humility and simplicity. They also teach us that God cares for us and that we may be of good courage. When it is raining, the drenched birds continue their happy songs. This should teach us not to be discouraged by adverse circumstances. For other voices of nature basically the same thing is true. From them we should take courage in our service to others.

But if we use their influence for dreaming—for instance we could imagine ourselves in a hammock next to our own comfortable home on a pleasant acreage in the woods with a swimming pool, plenty of food in the fridge, etc.—if this is our thinking then it is very selfish and distracts us from our goal of giving the gospel to the world in our generation. It is no wonder that such kind of music is connected with the “New Age” movement. This is a religious movement which has rejected the gospel of salvation from sin and replaced it with pi-

ous feelings.

In the Time of Ellen White

In Ellen White's time there was a movement which was also based upon feelings. It was the "Holy Flesh" movement. The members of this movement also used music to reach their goals, and it is interesting to read eye witness accounts of what happened in Indiana.

S. N. Haskell report to E. G. White, September 25, 1900

There is a great power that goes with the movement [Holy Flesh] that is on foot there. It would almost bring anybody within its scope, if they are at all conscientious, and sit and listen with the least degree of favor; because of the music that is brought to play in the ceremony.

They have an organ, one bass viol, three fiddles, two flutes, three tambourines, three horns, and a big bass drum, and perhaps other instruments which I have not mentioned. They are as much trained in their musical line as any Salvation Army choir that you ever heard. In fact, their revival effort is simply a complete copy of the Salvation Army method, and when they get on a high key, you cannot hear a word from the congregation in their singing, nor hear anything, unless it be shrieks of those who are half insane.

After an appeal to come forward for prayers, a few of the leading ones would always come forward, to lead others to come; and then they would begin to play on the musical instruments, until you could not hear yourself think; and under the excitement of this strain, they get a large proportion of the congregation forward over and over again. (Italics ours).

Another statement reveals more:

Mrs. S. N. Haskell report to Sara McEnterfer, September 12, 1900

They have "Garden of Spices" as the songbook and play dance tunes to sacred words. They have never used our own hymn books, except when Elders Breed or Haskell speak, then they open and close with a hymn from our book, but all the other songs are from the other book. They shout Amens, and "Praise the Lord," "Glory to God," just like a Salvation

Army service. It is distressing to one's soul. The doctrines preached correspond to the rest. 'The poor sheep are truly confused. (Italics ours).

Even back then the most important thing for some people was an experience based on feelings.

Burton Wade account to A. L. White, January 12, 1962

I attended the camp meeting in September of 1900, which was held at Muncie, where I witnessed first-hand the fanatical excitement and activities of these people. There were numerous groups of people scattered all over the campground engaged in arguing and, when these fanatics conducted the services in the large pavilion, they worked themselves up to a high pitch of excitement by the use of musical instruments, such as: trumpets, flutes, stringed instruments, tambourines, an organ, and a big bass drum. They shouted and sang their lively songs with the aid of musical instruments until they became really hysterical. Many times I saw them, after these morning meetings, as they came to the dining tent fairly shaking as though they had the palsy. (Italics ours).

Ellen White had said already back then that this type of music would be repeated in our time:

Letter 132, 1900, to S. N. Haskell (published in *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 36, 37)

The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time.

Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this

kind in its work of converting souls.

A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working.

No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. The same kind of influence came in after the passing of the time in 1844. The same kind of representations were made. Men became excited, and were worked by a power thought to be the power of God. (*Italics ours*).

Letter 132, 1900 to S. N. Haskell (published in *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 37, 38)

Those things which have been in the past will be in the future. Satan will make music a snare by the way in which it is conducted. (*Italics ours*).

Again it is interesting that this type of music was connected with charismatics back then:

General Conference Bulletin, April 23, 1901 (published in *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 33-36)

I have been instructed by the Lord that this movement in Indiana is of the same character as have been the movements in years past. In your religious meetings there have been exercises similar to those I have witnessed in connection with those movements in the past...There was much excitement, with noise and confusion. One could not tell what was piped or what was harped. Some appeared to be in vision, and fell to the floor. Others were jumping, dancing, and shouting....

Many such movements will arise at this time, when the Lord's work should stand elevated, pure, unadulterated with superstition and fables. We need to be on our guard, to maintain a close connection with Christ, that we be not deceived by Satan's devices. (*Italics ours*).

Satan's snares are cunningly laid. From all sides and with all manner of temptations Satan tries to catch his prey. But everything he does is based on the same principles. When we study the truth, not just superficially read and listen to it, then we will be able to detect his devices. If we would allow

ourselves to be filled with love for right principles, then Satan would “find nothing in us” that would respond to his temptations (see *John* 14:30).

Do not be Unequally Yoked

With alcoholism there is a pre-alcoholic phase or beginning phase. A little alcohol is part of all classes of society. It is served on special occasions, but you're not supposed to get drunk. That is even frowned upon. The same is true with music. It is frowned upon to listen to heavy rock. But the lighter, rhythmic soft rock is considered all right because it lightens things as we go through our daily routine, and especially when it has Christian words...

If we live by this rule we shouldn't wonder that we make no advancement in our Christian experience. God's counsel is clear in this matter:

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁴ Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?

¹⁵ And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel?

¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

It is high time to learn what good music is, and to plead with God to teach us how to compose it. Our new song book, which can be found on the internet, is a start. Let us continue in this direction so that we can soon say,

Psalms 40

³ He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God.

Many will see it and fear and will trust in the Lord.

Revelation 14

³ They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.