

#### IV. THE CASE MADE BY PROPONENTS OF CCM

**Case: Music is amoral or neutral and whatever I choose to listen to is my preference.**

What is CCM?

John Makujina: CCM is really a generic label that refers to any modern style of music whose lyrical content reflects the Christian values or worldview of its composers and performers. Consequently, CCM can include within its domain country and jazz.

Kimberly Smith: It evolved from Jesus Music and southern gospel. CCM is any form of Christian music that imitates secular styles of blues, jazz, rap, rock, or techno music (and its many derivatives). It also includes any contemporary praise and worship music that imitates soft rock and rock, or contains other sensual music or vocal techniques.

What is rock or rock and roll?

K. Smith: Rock is a generic word for the many musical styles that were offshoots of the original (white) rock and roll music of the mid 50's, characterized by backbeat accents and played by keyboard, drums, electric guitar, and electric bass guitar. The term rock and roll was an old African-American slang term meaning fornication.

Allan Bloom says "rock gives us (rock musicians) 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."

Music is a language, as is English. We have to understand the language to know how it is used to communicate. Assuming that a rock-centered CCM is not good for Christian worship, let us examine how proponents defend its use. We will also assume that the proponents are attempting to incorporate Christ-honoring music in their worship of God. Here is what they say, in their own words

"It draws the crowds."

Youth are drawn like moths to a light to rock concerts to express supposed spirituality. This generation is satisfied with more and more trivial methods of expressing themselves. They are drawn to that which satisfies self and not to what they need.

"It communicates to unchurched people in a language they can understand."

Pro-rock people claim Paul in 1 Cor. 9.22, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." This is a perversion of the text, taking it out of context. Paul is emphasizing the centrality of preaching, not making a case for all sorts of methods of delivering the Word. Does this music communicate the gospel? Yes, it is a language they can understand, but what is it that they are understanding?

"Music is essentially neutral (amoral) – only the words count"

Quote by Rick Warren (Calif. Mega-church and author, *The Purpose Driven Life*):  
God loves all kinds of music because He invented it all, there is no biblical style, and God likes variety and enjoys it all."

A single musical note might be neutral, but once notes are combined into a composition, they reflect a style, depending upon how they are played.

How powerful is music? Aristotle said that music has power to form a character. His teacher, Plato, said that music was a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul."

John Calvin said "there is hardly anything in the world with more power to turn or bend, this way or that, the morals of men...it has a secret power to move our hearts in one way or another. Wherefore we must be the more diligent in ruling it in such a manner that it may be useful to us and in no way pernicious."

Dr. Max Schoen in *The Psychology of Music* says the music is the most powerful stimulus known among the perceptive senses. The medical, psychiatric, and other evidences for the non-neutrality of music is so overwhelming that it frankly amazes me that anyone should seriously say otherwise."

"The church has always borrowed from secular music"

The myth persists that as one rock musician says, hymns were the top 40 of their day. Did Luther, the Wesleys, and William Booth take bar-room songs and use them with Christian words? What do the experts say? Use of secular melodies did become popular in the Renaissance (1450-1600). Luther lived in an age of unaccompanied choral music. He borrowed tunes, but mostly from the Roman church. He then changed the words. Between 1524 and 1545, Luther composed and compiled nine hymnals, which were a mix of Latin hymns, popular religious songs, and secular tunes recast in religious context. He discarded some of the popular secular chorale melodies, because they were popular in the taverns and dance halls, he wanted to "let the devil have it back again. Young people...must receive an education in music if we are to wean them away from carnal and lascivious songs and interest them in what is good and wholesome."

Calvin hired Louis Bourgeois, a composer in the French Court, to set the Psalms to simple and modest tunes, resulting in the Geneva Psalter (1562). Calvin wrote, "Music of itself cannot be condemned, but forasmuch as the world almost always abuses, we ought to be so much the more circumspect... The Spirit of God condemns the vanities that are committed in music... because men delight too much in them, and when they set their delight and pleasure in these base and earthly things, they think not a whit upon God."

Johann Sebastian Bach is quoted by rockers to justify their position, namely that their music is beyond criticism since Bach said that the aim and final end of music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul. But they don't mention the next part of what he said, "If heed is not paid to this, it is not a true music but a diabolical bawling and twanging."

Have we used secular tunes in our hymnal? Yes, but as these men said, not just any tune.

"There is a distinctive difference between Christian and secular rock"

A rocker said, "If you took the lyrics away and changed them to a secular message, I don't think you would be able to tell the music apart from pop, rock-oriented music." It was reported that in a controlled test at a Belgian youth club, hearers couldn't tell the difference between gospel and secular rock records.

Dr. Frank Garlock says, "The words only let you know what the music already says... the music is its own message and it can completely change the message of the words." (If the words are paramount, why are they drowned out by the music?)

"It helps us to worship God better."

The worship music industry promotes the idea that the ultimate worship act is listening to or singing to certain pop/rock styles and that this music experience even has the power to conjure up the presence of God.

Michael W. Smith, the well-known Christian singer and worship leader at his own church, says, "the new music that's coming out – it's a great new thing God's doing. Can you hear it? It's in the music. When music helps you enter into the presence of God, you know it. It's you and God."

Is there a place in the Bible we are told that worship is about seeking an emotional musical experience to make us feel God's presence. Pagans have used a strong, hypnotic beat to summon their gods and demons. Frank Zappa said, "The loud sounds and bright lights of today's rock are tremendous indoctrination tools."

Makjina: “Music has powers of its own, powers of persuasion and sentimentality that often counterfeit the work of the Holy Spirit. Even some CCM promoters agree:

J. Nathan Corbitt: Because of its power to motivate, music has a tremendous appeal. For this reason, music is often used as an attractive part of proclamation events. Crusades, evangelistic rallies, and revivals often feature a soloist or music group who will appeal to the musical tastes of the audience. At the same time, music can also be manipulative. The power of music to affect the emotions can create an atmosphere in which people respond solely out of emotion without cognitive understanding.

Al Menconi says, “ If the music says, “rock out”, how can that encourage a deeper commitment to Jesus or a rational decision to repent?”

A word about country music:

Major theme is triangle relationships. The glory of alcohol, lost loves, and broken homes comprise many of the subjects of lyrics. Why do so many like it? It mirrors their lives. Why do the lyrics live on so many lips? They are living it. The traditions of Afro-American music and country music make up rock. Country does not take much skill to do, which is why so many love their star performers, they feel through them.

## **V. How Music Affects Us:**

### **Music affects the mind:**

Music can alter brain waves. Beta, alpha, theta, delta. Gentle-alpha, lowers blood pressure. Tempo between 55 and 65 beats per minute causes the brain to slow the heartbeat. Concertos in the Baroque period have slower movements at this tempo. Music with a higher frequencies helps the brain to recharge. Mozart’s music contains higher frequencies than other composers as a rule. Music can reach autistic children as well as the aged with dementia.

Negative effects on the mind:

Low frequencies, especially with the pounding sounds of a rhythm guitar and/or drums, is a brain drain. A driving beat in excess of 3-4 beats/sec. will drive the brain into a state of stress, regardless of whether or not the listener likes the music.

### **Music affects the emotions and our behavior:**

Music can be sensual, and the body knows when that is. A drumbeat is not the only sensual factor, there may a be an instrument played in a sultry way or a

song sung in that way, in which the singer “invades” the listener’s intimated social space. We defend music we like, even wrongly, because we are stimulated and manipulated by it. As a result, we are committed to it. What is the difference between worship and a musically induced emotional state? True worship comes from the heart, the other from the body.

The principle of replacement: always replace something undesirable with something good. Heb. 4.12” For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”