

Karl Tsatalbasidis

**Drums,
Rock,
and
WORSHIP**

A photograph of a drum set, including a bass drum, snare drum, two toms, and four cymbals, set against a vibrant sunset background with orange and red hues. The drum set is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the cymbals extending upwards. The overall composition is dynamic and energetic.

**modern music
in today's church**

Drums, and Rock, WORSHIP

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CHAPTER 1

A TESTIMONY OF EXPERIENCE

The Search of My Life

For my first 23 years, I experienced a very secular life. Although I grew up in a very fine Greek Orthodox family, we were not particularly religious, visiting church perhaps only twice a year.

It was in this environment that I developed my sense of truth, of right and wrong, which was much bolstered by a worldly education. I also acquired an acute interest in music, especially rock and jazz.

Eventually, I would be trained in Canada by the nation's most-renowned jazz musicians; it seemed I very much had everything going for me. But I soon began sensing that something was missing. I wanted a rational, time-tested ideology by which to live. My response to this void was studying philosophy and psychology at York University in Toronto. I delved into the classic works of Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche and submerged myself in classes that promoted humanistic thinking. I focused my energies on worldly ideas such as determinism and evolution, listening to professors teach at great length how the world functioned on scientifically determined naturalistic laws in a universe that could be explained away by natural causes alone.

Yet after all this study, I was nowhere closer to filling that void. I felt confused and bewildered, because although these ideas represented a variety of possible answers, their potential truths rested solely on their own presuppositions. In that light, each answer could be true. But which one was right? I began to wonder if we could really know the truth; indeed, maybe one was true, maybe all of them. Worse yet, maybe truth really didn't exist at all. Soon I was convinced that truth, if it existed at all, simply rested in the eye of the beholder.

Amazingly, it was against this chaotic backdrop that I finally heard and accepted the universal truth of the three angels' messages. These messages of warning brought certainty to a world crumbling all around me. As much as goodness, my rational mind demanded logical truth. That's exactly what the messages provided; they offered a complete system of truth that appealed to my mind as well as my searching heart.

The Bible became the final authority in my life, and I realized that it could settle issues without being contradictory, as so many of my mentors taught openly. I believed in *Sola Scriptura*, *Tota Scriptura*, and *Prima Scriptura*—the Bible and the Bible only, the whole Bible, and the Bible first.

I finally understood that I could know the truth, and it would set me free. I rejoiced in joining a movement that knew truth existed whether I accepted it or not. This truth was not simply something in the eye of a beholder, but an objective and universal system. The Psalmist says, "The truth of the Lord endureth forever" (Psalm 117:2).

I was rescued, and it opened my eyes to the world in which I had lived for 23 years—a life I knew so well and deeply that I am qualified to speak the truth about it.

My First Set: An Addiction Begins

The drum set has always fascinated me. When I was very young, my parents took me to several Greek dances, and the one object that held all of my youthful fascination was the drum set. It was loud and commanded attention. I remember thinking that's what I wanted to do when I grew up.

I purchased my first drum set when I was just 13 years old, and I also financed my own lessons. My joy in life was practicing for endless hours and imagining that someday I would hit the big time. So I pursued playing the drums to the best of my ability.

Then the inevitable happened: By the end of elementary school, I was introduced to rock music. It changed me completely. The driving rhythms powered by the drums absorbed all my attention, and all day long I listened to it dreaming one day it would be me powering those drums in a rock or jazz band.

I spent hundreds if not thousands of hours (and dollars) listening to such groups as Rush, Yes, Led Zeppelin, and many others. But what is it that attracted me to this music? It certainly wasn't the words—I never really cared about lyrics even though I'd memorized them easily.

Indeed, the bands I listened to produced many songs that had little or no words at all. These songs appealed to me the most—their high energy and sheer emotional impact mesmerized me. They captivated my senses with their feverish kinetic sound, and the seduction was enhanced by its entertainment and popularity wherever I went.

In fact, it became more than just a way to pass time or a vocation. It became my religion. And every time I would listen to the music, it was a religious experience—full of visceral spiritual power.

The Church of a Rock-n-Roll Religion

The Bible says there may be pleasure in sin, but it lasts for only a season (Hebrews 11:25). And this certainly applied to me. Soon I almost couldn't function without rock music. Time stood still as I listened, and rock music proved to be the perfect vehicle to escape life's problems. It was a cure for all my ailments. It gave me an identity, worth, and a life's mission.

Practicing soon became a rock-n-roll church experience full of spiritual meaning, especially as the rhythms became more complex. During this intense time of practice, I was oblivious to my surroundings; the outside world didn't exist. The rhythms engulfed me; real but unreal, like a drug.

The goal was to internalize that rhythm and become "one" with it. When that was achieved, it became easier to play counter rhythms. A teacher once said that a good performance feels as though you're not playing—but that something else is playing through you. He was describing the "oneness" that is supposed to exist between the performer and time, the rhythm that powered the music. When "oneness" is achieved, it becomes hard to tell who is really playing. I never realized that in my playing, I was inviting demons into my life.

During high school, I played in garage bands and even in bars. I also drummed in the school jazz band, which performed twice a year and went on tour in Boston. Like addicts of a different sort, my grades in high school were terrible. I spent most of my time practicing and playing with as many other musicians as I could find.

Naturally, I soon began experimenting with alcohol and drugs. In the rock-n-roll religion, part of the faithful experience is using drugs. It's almost impossible to be free from alcohol, drugs, the occult, and sex while in the rock industry—they go hand in hand.

In my final two years of high school, I spent more days out of my right mind than in it. This state of mind would only lead to an even greater mistake.

Switching “Denominations”

After high school, I went on to attend York University to study jazz performance. I still loved rock music, but my tastes desired rhythms that were more challenging and complex. Jazz was the easy answer.

I have had a chance to play with and be trained by some of the best jazz musicians in Canada. I excelled in my playing and school work in regard to jazz. In two years I went from a simple beginner to being in the best workshop in the school, taught by the very best.

I was involved with four bands playing different styles of music—jazz (which included the jazz workshop for the college), fusion (meaning fusing rock and jazz together), 50's and 60's music, and a band called Indigo Blue that played in nightclubs hunting for a record contract.

I have been totally immersed in rock and jazz music. I know what it means to be a part of that experience. Indeed, I would have received a bachelor's degree in music and no doubt pursued my childhood ambitions of rock-n-roll stardom had not the Lord specially intervened.

Rescued

While still attending a university full of heathenism and skepticism, the Lord revealed Himself to me. The special truths that make up the three angels' messages made it possible to take a stand for Christ made impossible in the trappings of rock and jazz.

Its reasoning and appeals were undeniable, and I fell in love with the Carpenter that so many in my environment despised. I began to follow something different than anything I'd known, and it became a great test.

The Sabbath in particular was a great bulwark against the life I'd led. Musicians thrive on playing Friday and Saturday. Yet on learning about Jesus and His Sabbath, I had to take a stand. I knew it would be a decision that would alter my life greatly; indeed, I had to turn my back on everything.

Of course no one could understand my decision, and it wasn't long after that I stopped playing. No one would want a drummer that couldn't play Friday or Saturday nights. My bands, and my career, had ended.

Even though I abandoned all for which I had ever worked, I felt a great sense of peace unlike anything I had ever experienced. I knew I was doing the right thing, and I wasn't going to walk away from the certainty of Jesus.

I believe it marked the beginning of my true manhood, and it meant everything to me. Jesus and His Truth gave me self-respect and a purpose in life. Real answers that rock and jazz could never provide. This blessing was infinitely greater than all the praise and adoration that millions of fans could give.

Furthermore, Jesus was coming, and I wanted to live eternally with Him.

A Questionable Transition

Once I found a church, it wasn't long before I was urged to "use all of my talents" for the Lord. As yet unaware of the complexity over issues concerning music and worship, I gladly agreed to use my talents with the drums.

My wife, who happens to be the real musician, would always form a singing group wherever we went, so we gathered the best singers we could find and formed a group in our new church. I was probably the first drummer to ever set up a drum set on that University Church Campus, and it was an awkward step "using my talents" for the Lord.

And soon I began to feel even more uneasy about it. I started reading some materials on music that said some pretty striking things I'd never heard before. One particular passage caught my attention. It described a church using unconventional worship and music in its services, and what would happen if it were allowed to persist in God's end-time church:

"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. ... No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. ... Satan will make music a snare by the way in which it is conducted." ¹

The part of the quote about drums that I've highlighted here really caught my attention. It was my instrument, referenced by the same brilliant author of *The Great Controversy*. That book proved to be an incredible blessing in my life, and I knew the author to be a well-respected church leader and inspired writer. From that great work, I had chosen to follow Jesus no matter the earthly sacrifice.

I was soon convinced about the awful role drums would play in church just prior to Christ's return. I no longer wanted to be used by the devil to bring confusion and deception into God's church, so I determined never to use the drum set again.

I withdrew from our popular group, disappointing eight singers and a bass guitar player. They were sincere, loving Christians, so it was difficult for me to articulate to them why I was no longer going to play the drums.

Like me, they realized all Christians have talents, be it drums, sports, or entertainment. Each of us feels an awesome obligation and privilege to advance the good news of Christ's soon return, which can often mean using our talents. We look to Matthew 25, which speaks of the importance of using our gifts to build God's kingdom on earth, and we are saddened when we hear about the servant who buried his "talent" in the earth.

So we go forward without thinking the issues through. We're told that as long as we praise God from the heart, it doesn't really matter what style, expression, or form we use because God looks on the heart. But I know this just isn't true, because I know what rock, jazz, and most especially, what drums are all about.

My experience here is not unique. Many have faced these same questions in different ways. However, I studied music with some of the most respected musicians in Canada, and I know the culture that it creates. I hope the information I share here will be a blessing to you as much as it has been to me. Keep an open heart, and pray in Jesus' name for discernment as you

read.

1. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages Book 2* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1958), pp. 36-38.

CHAPTER 2

THE DRUM SET & ROCK MUSIC

The Problem of the Trap Set

The drum set, or trap set, used in rock and jazz music is gaining wide acceptance in churches, spanning many denominations, as an instrument that's suitable for worshipping God. In truth, I imagine rock music and the drums are drawing crowds to churches that might not otherwise come.

However, could there be a danger in this unusual attraction? We must take time to explore this instrument further to determine whether it is acceptable to God—a path that will truly lead many to Jesus.

Sincere people often confuse other percussion instruments and drums with what is called the trap set, what you find in rock and jazz bands, so much so that the two are inseparable for most people. This error often leads to the false conclusion that since the Bible mentions some percussive instruments and drums, then playing the trap set is acceptable for worship. For example, the Bible mentions the use of timbrels, tabrets, loud cymbals, and high-sounding cymbals for praising the Lord (Psalm 150). (We'll address the drums in the Bible specifically a bit later.)

Of course, the trap set contains all of these elements, but before we go one, it's important clarify our terms.

Two Different Instruments

The trap set and other percussive instrument come from two different families.

“Each drum, or each drum family, requires specialized training, just the way violin or viola, cello or bass, piccolo or B-flat flute do. Don't chump yourself or the instrument, saying, 'I play one, I can play them all.' ”²

In fact, the difference between drums and percussion and drummers and percussionists is something that's plainly understood by the two groups that play them.

“As long as we are at it, let us put a little difference between the 'percussionist' and the 'drummer.' These two have been sharing the same room for a very long time. They may be cousins, but still keep in mind, they are from two different families.”³

From experts in the field, experts who love playing the drums, we see a distinction between drummers and percussionists. Furthermore,

“There is a difference between drummers and percussionists. A drummer usually plays a drum or drums, whereas a percussionist not only plays drums but is also skilled in the

playing of a wide range of percussive instruments. Even in a western style orchestra we have our drummers, those who primarily play the timpani, snare and bass drum, and then we have percussionists who handle the parts calling for bells, xylophone, woodblock, tubular bells, glockenspiel, cymbals and triangle. And last but not least, we have the trap set ... used to refer to a collection of drums and percussion accessories including cymbals”⁴

We see here that the trap set is classed with the drums. However, we must make a distinction between the drums that a percussionist plays (timpani, snare, and bass drum) and the trap set.

A basic trap set in a rock or jazz band consists of a bass drum played with the right foot, usually 20 to 24 inches in diameter; a hi-hat (two cymbals 13 to 15 inches in diameter) played with the left foot and right hand; and a snare drum positioned between your legs. Attached to the bass drum is a 13-inch “tom tom” and the 16-inch floor tom is placed to the right of the snare drum. The ride cymbal (anywhere from 20 to 22 inches) is played by the right hand when not playing the hi-hat. Drummers often add tom toms and cymbals to their preference, but that’s the basic trap set. To play this drum set, one must be seated.

This trap set is also known as “the traps, short for contraption [which] is a generic term used to refer to a collection of drums and percussion accessories including cymbals.”⁵ There are two unique elements to a trap set: One is the hi-hat, and the other is that the arrangement, which covers the spectrum of tuned drums and cymbals, “can be played by only one person.”⁶

The percussive instruments in an orchestra actually contain all the elements of the trap set and more, but they are not played in the same way. In fact, there is a major difference in the way the drums are played in an orchestra and the drum set in a rock band.

Worlds Apart

The drums that are found in the orchestra (bass drum, snare drum, and timpani) are not played the same way as the trap set. In fact, the difference is undeniable. A good percussionist in an orchestra does not necessarily make a good drummer in a rock band and vice versa. Indeed, the trap set is a unique instrument that’s specifically designed to play rock and jazz.

In this way, a rock or jazz drummer would never buy a trap set to play it like a percussionist in an orchestra—that is simply not what it is designed to do. Its sole purpose is for rock and its hybrids (soft, punk, heavy metal, acid, alternative, etc.) and jazz and its hybrids (Dixieland, ragtime, big band, bebop, etc.). It’s also incorporated in blues, rhythm and blues, soul, country, Latin, and fusion.

I have never heard a recording of a modern trap set being used to play anything other than a hybrid of rock or jazz. Even when the trap set is used to accompany an orchestra, the music is no longer associated with the baroque, classical, or romantic genres of music; instead, it’s transformed into a rock or jazz hybrid. The rhythms of rock music are so powerful that the traditional instruments found in the orchestra and the way they are played are automatically grafted into the rock rhythms.

A good example of this is found in the music of popular New Age artist Yanni, especially his album featuring the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Live at the Acropolis). This recording demonstrates how rock music acts like a melting pot, absorbing the melodies and rhythms of

Greek music and combining it with an orchestra. Greeks easily recognize the melodies and rhythms as characteristic to their ethnic music; however, the way these same melodies are played has been transformed by the rock rhythms via the trap set.

The rock rhythms are like a black hole that everything else gets “trapped” into. Those trained in western classical music recognize its almost exclusive instruments, but they also hear those instruments being played differently. The same holds true for big band music. The instruments are European, but it’s transformed into jazz.

Again, it only happens through trap set, which is specifically designed to play rock and jazz. It is possible for a percussionist to play rock and jazz rhythms on percussion instruments designed for classical orchestra music. However, the trap set cannot be used to play classical orchestra music! Whenever the trap set is played the way it was designed to be played in another music form, that form automatically changes to a rock or jazz hybrid.

Indeed, the trap set is absolutely unique from other instruments in many different ways. Here is a summary of what we’ve already covered.

“I am sure we are all familiar with the trap set through its use in jazz and rock music, even though the traps are the new kids on the block. *The trap drums are not only unique in their construction but also in how they are played.* Each trap drummer is required to be virtually a one-man band of percussive sounds, and this demands of him being able to split his attention evenly between both feet and both hands as well as the music of which he is a part. This alone is a skill in itself not found among most percussionists and usually takes years of training to develop.”⁷

An Unholy Alliance

The trap set was invented for the sole purpose of powering the music known as jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, and all the varieties of rock-n-roll. The fact that drums are mentioned in the Bible leads many to believe that playing the traps is acceptable. Though we’ve already addressed this by seeing that the trap set is not only constructed differently but also played differently than the percussive instruments named in the Bible, there is another argument against it.

The argument that the Bible approves of the trap set by mere mention of its separate articles also fails in the fact that the music that the traps were designed to accompany was not invented until very recently.

The trap set (and the music that it powers) was invented in the early 1900s, thousands of years after the Old Testament was written. This means that the trap set is a unique instrument, as yet unknown by the Bible’s writers. It should never be confused with other drums (such as a snare, bass, tom toms, and other percussion instruments that one would normally find in an orchestra.)

In addition, it’s also interesting and necessary to note that the meanings of rock-n-roll and jazz themselves should be very unattractive to Christians. The phrase rock-n-roll was coined by a disc jockey to describe the act of sexual intercourse in the back seat of a car. Also,

“Jazz is supposed to be dance music, to be functional, invocational. It was designed by God to make you dance, to “forget your troubles ... get happy ... [and] get ready for the

Judgment Day” ... Besides what does the word “jazz” mean? To say to someone you’re gonna “jazz’em” means you want to sex them up, you want to jump their bones and do the Wild Thing. What am I saying? The music is made from primal energy. Jazz is more than improvisation: it is reproduction, resurrection of your down trodden soul.”⁸

Does this sound like music we should simply put Christian words to and then sell to our young people? As I said earlier, when I was younger, I hardly cared for the lyrics to music, and I wouldn’t be fooled by children today repeating lyrics they have simply heard over and over again. It is the music that’s driving their interest, not the words.

Therefore, if rock and jazz are unsuitable forms of music for worship, then the trap set is automatically implicated because it was designed solely to be the fundamental driving force of that music!

While at Seminary, I took a course called “Worship and Music.” There was another drummer in the class along with me. One day in class, the professor asked me whether I could use the trap set in the worship of God.

I had to answer “No. It’s only designed to play rock and jazz rhythms, which are associated with sex, drugs, the occult, and rebellion.” She then asked the other drummer the same question, but he answered yes, which surprised me.

However, she then asked him if he played the trap set differently when he became a Christian—if his form had changed. He could only answer no. But he persisted in saying that the difference for him was that he was now thinking of the Lord now while he was playing.

His message was again the adage that as long as you are praising God from the heart, the form doesn’t matter. However, can acts and instruments associated with rebellion, sexual perversity, and the occult be considered Christian by making a melody in your heart to the Lord or by saying that we’re thinking of the Lord as we’re doing those acts?

Absolutely not, just as it holds true that practicing homosexuals try to justify their sin. God condemns homosexuality, but homosexual couples legitimize their relationships by saying that as long as they love, God’s okay with it because He is love. But most Christians know this is very weak reasoning. God set the standard of love as between a man and woman, and He also set the standard in His worship—including the Sabbath.

The point is that you cannot “Christianize” the trap set any more than you can make Sunday the new Sabbath day.

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2. Sule Greg Wilson, *The Drummer’s Path: Moving the Spirit with Ritual and Traditional Drumming* (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1992), p.74.
 3. Dru Kristel, *Breath was the First Drummer: A Treatise on Drums Drumming and Drummers* (Santa Fe, NM: QX Publications/A.D.A.M. Inc., 1995), p.23.
 4. *Ibid*, 29-30.
 5. *Ibid*, 30.
 6. *Ibid*, 30.
 7. *Ibid*, 30-31 (emphasis supplied).
 8. Sule Greg Wilson, 29.

CHAPTER 3

THE DRUM SET & SPIRITUALISM

The Spiritualism Connection

I have a library containing books written by drummers dealing with the subject of drums, drummers, and drumming. Each one articulates the close relationship between drums and the “Spirit.”⁹

Mickey Hart, long time drummer for the rock group The Grateful Dead, says that the drums have two voices, one is technical and the other he calls the “spirit side of the drum.”¹⁰ The spirit or trance side of the drum is “a side recognized by almost every culture on the planet”¹¹

So the question now becomes: Is the trap set associated with the “spirit” side?

To answer this question, we must look at the origin of the trap set. In doing so, we’ll soon discover that the trap set cannot be separated from the origin of jazz and rock music.

“When the slave ships began plying the waters between the New World and West Africa, everyone thought they carried just strong, expendable bodies. But they were also carrying the Counterplayer culture—maybe even the mother goddess culture—preserved in the form of drum rhythms that could call down the *Orisha* [ancestor spirits that possess the worshippers] from their time to ours.”¹²

“West Africans believe that the spirits ride the drumbeat down into the body of the dancers, who then begin the erratic shaking movements of the possessed. ... The Yoruba say that anyone who does something so great that it can never be forgotten becomes an *Orisha*. And some become so famous that their status begins to approach the godlike. Shango, Kori (the goddess of fertility), and Ogun (the god of iron and war) are all examples of *Orisha* who have inspired their own cults and are worshipped by thousands of people.”¹³

Notice that it’s the drum rhythms that call down the *Orisha*, with the end result being possession. The drums are the medium being used to contact supposed ancestors, and this type of spiritualistic communication is absolutely condemned in the Bible. Indeed, the “dead know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). Therefore, this is communication with evil spirits—spiritualism.

“In the Caribbean and South America, slaves were allowed to keep their drums and thus preserved their vital connection with the *Orisha*, though the sudden mingling of so many different tribes produced new variations like candomblé, santería, and vòdun. But in North America the slaves were not allowed to keep their drums and they lost the means by which to keep the rhythms of their spirit world alive. And out of this severing came jazz, the blues, the backbeat, rhythm and blues, rock and roll—some of the most powerful rhythms on the planet.”¹⁴

At this point, you might be wondering how this “spirit side” connects with jazz, blues, and rock-n-roll. Well, as African-American drummer Sule Greg Wilson notes, the “no drumming” laws were powerless to stop the “Spirit.”

According to Wilson, black individuals such as Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver, El Hajj Malik Shabazz (Malcom X), and Nat Turner all had the “Spirit.” He writes, “Those are all leaders—manifestations of Black Power—coming straight from the Spirit. Nothing more, nothing less.”¹⁵

So how then did the “Spirit” survive in the United States? Wilson cites several examples, and then he describes the situation at the end of the 19th century.

“The only place in the West where it was decreed that Africans could not play hand drums was the one place where they came up with foot drums—tap dancing, that is. It’s dancing and drumming, all in one, the way playing trap drums is being a traditional drum ensemble all by yourself. U.S. African society wasn’t smashed to nothing, it was just condensed. What does that mean to today’s people? It means that into the feet is where the Spirit, the African vocabulary of Spirit-calling, went to. Ask your elders on this side of the Atlantic—the old time jazz drummers—where they got their rhythms and the answer will be as from any other African musician: they watched the people carrying the Spirit—the dancers—and played what they saw coming at them. ... External circumstances can bust up any drum, but no one can break up the Spirit that makes you dance.”¹⁶

Consequently, the rhythms of jazz came directly from the “Spirit.” We should also note that these rhythms constitute the African vocabulary of “Spirit-calling.” According to Wilson, it was the “Spirit” working through African-American drummers, such as Baby Dodds, that set the standard for drumming the trap set in the United States. This includes rock drumming, since it evolved from jazz.

Wilson asks,

“Why have a drum set? Development of such a polyrhythmic instrument is not the European way. Traditional Euro-drumming is identical: twenty people playing the same *purrr-rum-pa-pum-pum*, or, in another scenario, just one bodhran or tabor player. African drums play in parts that combine to make a melody, just like trap-set drums are played.”¹⁷

Thus emphasizing that the traps are a package deal. The philosophy behind their construction (how they are put together) is African, and it cannot be distanced from the “Spirit.”

The Evolution of Spiritualism in U.S. Music

As the industrial revolution took hold, a new soundscape was born, or what is known as:

“The auditory chaos of industrial urban noise. And it was out of this soundscape that the backbeat emerged, its first manifestation appearing in those New Orleans brass bands—African rhythms and African sensibility channeled through the unfamiliar instruments of the American marching band—and in the syncopated ragtime of Scott Joplin. The front line of these bands consisted of trumpet, clarinet, and trombone, *but sitting in the back*,

*propelling this new beat, was an invention that to my mind rivals those of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. I speak of course of the drum set.”*¹⁸

Here, Hart actually puts the invention of the trap set on par with the Model T and the light bulb! And this is another reason why the trap set is separate from other percussion instruments; by virtue of its origin and the way it's played, it is simply in a class all by itself.

According to Hart, the backbeat, which is your basic rock rhythm, grew out of African rhythms and African sensibility. Thus there's not only a family tie between rock, jazz, and African rhythms, but there is also a “spiritual” unity that pervades all three rhythms as well. Hart also credits the African-American consciousness with the origin of the trap set. He goes on to say:

“The specifics of the West African rhythmic tradition were lost, except for in the secret societies that still followed vòdun. All that remained was an urge that, once freed, satisfied itself by creating something totally new, a polyrhythmic instrument that one person could play handily.”¹⁹

John Miller Chernoff spent 10 years studying African drumming. He makes this important observation concerning the unity of Latin and jazz rhythms, which also applies to rock rhythms as well:

“Certainly there is a musical continuity which reaches in an easily distinguishable way into the Americas [from Africa], and music continues to carry a message of solidarity to African peoples throughout the world. You can hear Soul and Latin music almost anywhere in Africa; you can hear African and West Indian music on the radio at various times in most large cities in the United States; you can sit in a bar in Ghana, Togo, or the Ivory Coast and hear music from Zaire and Congo, from Nigeria, from South Africa, from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and the United States; *great drummers, aficionados, and scholars can trace the rhythms of Latin dance halls of New York to Cuban and Brazilian cults and then to West Africa.*”²⁰

In one of the most striking connections, West African drummer Babatunde Olatunji made an amazing discovery when he first came by boat to New Orleans. He said that back home in West Africa, there are many rhythms for different occasions, but “the most important rhythms in Yoruba land are those that communicate with the *Orisha*.”²¹

He goes on to describe his experience in these words:

“I never became a master drummer in the old sense of knowing all the village rhythms, because when I was twenty-three—in 1950—I won a scholarship to college in Atlanta. I came by boat, arriving in New Orleans. I was going to study sociology. My drumming was behind me I thought; I'd only brought a small frame drum to amuse myself on board the ship. But when I got to college and first turned on the radio and heard, “When I love my baby, every time it rains I think of you and I feel blue,” I was so stunned. *I remember thinking, hey that's African music; it sounds like what's at home. And the same thing happened when I heard gospel music.* So I joined the campus jazz combo.”²²

Thus the same rhythms that were used to communicate with the Orisha can now be found in

jazz, blues, and 50's music, which is unquestionably the beginning of rock music. And so the "Spirit" lives on—and is a vital part of rock music today and, in particular, to the trap set that was designed to be the foundation in rock and jazz music.

This is clear in Mickey Hart's testimony. He says:

"It's hard to pinpoint the exact moment when I awoke to the fact that my tradition—rock and roll—*did have a spirit side, that there was a branch of the family that had maintained the ancient connection between the drum and the gods.* I suppose it was a little like meeting some long lost cousins and realizing with a start that these are your relatives, that you are rhythmically related, and in drumming that's the same as blood."²³

Here again we can plainly see how the modern trap set developed and it's close connection to the spiritualistic roots of rock and jazz music. Those most notable in the profession of drumming make the connection themselves, and not just Christians.

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9. See Mickey Hart with Jay Stevens *Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990); Dru Kristel and Sule Greg Wilson.
 10. Mickey Hart with Jay Stevens *Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), p. 18.
 11. *Ibid*, 23. See also Mickey Hart and Fredric Lieberman *Planet Drum: A Celebration of Percussion and Rhythm* (Petaluma, CA: Acid Test Productions, 1991).
 12. *Ibid*, 209.
 13. *Ibid*, 202-203.
 14. *Ibid*, 209-210.
 15. Sule Greg Wilson, 20.
 16. *Ibid*, 24-25.
 17. *Ibid*, 27.
 18. Mickey Hart, 227. (emphasis supplied).
 19. *Ibid*, 227.
 20. John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979) p.29. (emphasis supplied).
 21. Mickey Hart, 215.
 22. *Ibid*, 215. (emphasis supplied).
 23. *Ibid*, 212. (emphasis supplied).

CHAPTER 4

THE DRUM SET & POSTMODERNISM

Promoting More than Just Rhythm and Spiritualism

One fundamental error that many sincere people make regarding the drum set, and music in general, is that it merely communicates rhythm, melody, and harmony. For instance, other experts have acknowledged that it can change moods and emotions as well as have measurable physiological effects. However, rarely do people realize that music and drums communicate even more. Because it is inseparably linked with rock music, the drum set communicates the rock-n-roll philosophy of truth: postmodernism.

Postmodernism Explained

According to one expert:

“Postmodernism assumes various forms. It is embodied in certain attitudes and expressions that touch the day-to-day lives of a broad diversity of people in contemporary society. Such expressions range from *fashions to television* and include such pervasive aspects of our culture as *music and film*. Postmodernism is likewise incarnated in a variety of cultural expressions, including *architecture, art and literature*. But postmodernism is above all an *intellectual outlook*.”²⁴

It is an intellectual movement that has *found expression* in architecture, art, television, film, theater—and of course music. Notice how intellectual ideas can be expressed through music. This demonstrates that music, along with the drum set, communicates a lot more than just rhythm, melody, and harmony; it also communicates ideas, philosophy, and theology. This fact must not be overlooked when making the choices regarding the type of music and musical instruments to be used in worship.

The Postmodern “Truth”

The error-filled philosophy of postmodernism is readily expressed by experts and proponents:

“The postmodern worldview operates with a community-based understanding of truth. It affirms that whatever we accept as truth and even the way we envision truth are dependent on the community in which we participate. Further, and far more radically, the postmodern worldview affirms that this relativity extends beyond our perceptions of truth to its essence: there is *no absolute truth; rather, truth, is relative to the community in which we participate*.”²⁵

“The conviction that each person is embedded in a particular human community leads to

a corporate understanding of truth. Postmoderns believe that not only our specific beliefs but also our understanding of truth is rooted in the community in which we participate. ... In this sense, then, postmodern truth is relative to the community in which a person participates. And since there are many human communities, there are necessarily many different truths. Most postmoderns make the leap of believing that *this plurality of truths can exist along side of one another. The postmodern consciousness entails a radical kind of relativism and pluralism.*" ²⁶

"Scholars disagree among themselves as to what postmodernism involves, but they have reached a consensus on one point: this phenomenon marks the end of a *single, universal worldview*. The postmodern ethos *resists unified, all-encompassing, and universally valid explanations*. It replaces these with a respect for difference and a celebration of the local and particular at the expense of the universal." ²⁷

Six Postmodern Principles

We can summarize the postmodern philosophy and understanding of truth by stating that:

1. Truth is not "rooted" in the Bible, rather it's "rooted" in my community or culture.
2. Truth does not exist outside of my community or culture. Truth does not exist outside of ourselves.
3. There is no such thing as an all-encompassing Truth, universally valid for everyone.
4. There are as many truths as there are peoples and cultures.
5. There are many truths, which exist along side of one another.
6. There is no absolute Truth.

This view of Truth is devastating for anyone who believes that the Bible is God's revelation to humankind.

Postmodernism and Rock Music

Again, remember that postmodernism is an intellectual movement that has found expression in architecture, art, TV, film and movies. But note how this one author sees rock music.

"Film may have made postmodern popular culture possible, and television may have disseminated that culture, but rock music is probably the most representative form of postmodern culture ... Rock music embodies a central hallmark of postmodernity: its dual focus on the global and the local. ... In the offerings of the big stars and the small-town bands alike, rock reflects a plurality of styles borrowed from local and ethnic musical forms." ²⁸

"The pop culture of our day reflects the centerless pluralism of postmodernity and gives expression to the antirationalism of postmodernism. *As evidenced in the clothes they wear and the music they listen to, postmoderns are no longer convinced that their world has a center.* ... They live in a world in which the distinction between truth and

fiction has evaporated. Consequently, they have become collectors of experiences, repositories of transitory, fleeting images produced and fostered by the diversity of media forms endemic in postmodern society.”²⁹

This demonstrates the pervasive influence of postmodern ideas in the area rock music, which is a product of the drum set. The principle is very clear: rock music communicates the postmodern understanding of truth. The words could be communicating the most sublime truths but the music itself preaches another gospel. The music teaches that there is no absolute truth; there is no objective standard for judging whether something is right or wrong. This is the real message that is being preached by using the drum set.

An Unavoidable Conclusion

It's clear that rock music (and by implication the drum set) is designed to refute the biblical understanding of truth. So to use rock music and the drum set to proclaim the everlasting gospel would be nothing less than Babylonian-style worship, which in essence is truth mixed with lies. While the words of a rock song might be very biblical, the music is directly undermining that message by preaching postmodernism. The music says God's Truth is a lie.

Postmodernism's view of truth even provides the basis of the flawed ecumenical movement, and it enlists rock music as the ideal ecumenical weapon in Satan's arsenal against God's end-time church. There are several reasons why.

First, rock music draws together people who otherwise have contradictory views about God and the world.

“Some rock, like the songs of Soft Cell, is overtly Christian; other rock, like Feederz's ‘Jesus Entering from the Rear,’ is blasphemous; and still other rock, like the music of the Police, is arguably Christian and atheistic all at once. There is Vedic rock, Zen rock, Rastafarian rock, born- again rock, never-born rock ... even Jewish rock. ... Rock's pantheism happily accommodates the varieties of religious experience, careless of whatever contradiction arises.”³⁰

Rock music is rhythmically related to many rhythms found in the world today. I first started listening to and playing rock music, but then I moved into Latin, blues, and jazz.

“You can hear Soul and Latin music almost anywhere in Africa; you can hear African and West Indian music on the radio at various times in most large cities in the United States; you can sit in a bar in Ghana, Togo, or the Ivory Coast and hear music from Zaire and Congo, from Nigeria, from South Africa, from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and the United States; *great drummers, aficionados, and scholars can trace the rhythms of Latin dance halls of New York to Cuban and Brazilian cults and then to West Africa.*”³¹

The influence of rock music is universal. The title of the Fall 2001 special issue of *Time* magazine is “*Music Goes Global.*”

“Globalization may be a fighting word in politics and business, but in the realm of music it has a nice ring to it—and a funky beat, and a tantalizing groove. Today musicians and

listeners the world over are plugged into one another via the Internet, TV and ubiquitous recordings. The result is a vast electronic bazaar through which South African kwaito music can make pulses pound in Sweden, or Brazilian post-mambo can set feet dancing in Tokyo. Cultures are borrowing the sounds of other cultures, creating vibrant hybrids that are then instantly disseminated around the globe to begin the blending process all over again. 'Musically, to an unprecedented degree, the U.S. is part of the world and the world is part of our experience,' says Christopher John Farley, editor of this special issue devoted to capturing the verve, color and variety of the global-music phenomenon."

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Stanley Grenz argues, "Rock music is probably the most representative form of postmodern culture. ... Rock music embodies a central hallmark of postmodernity: its dual focus on the global and the local. ... In the offerings of the big stars and the small-town bands alike, rock reflects a plurality of styles borrowed from local and ethnic musical forms." ³³ Again, it's important to realize that in rock-n-roll's rhythmic phenomenon, words mean very little, if anything at all. Rock music is designed to be felt rather than heard. The rhythms generated by the drum set are a very big part of this experience. Simply putting religious words to rock music does not make it Christian.

"The we-are-the-world maxim is this: music is the universal language. For the mainstream record industry in the U.S., however, music in languages other than English often wasn't considered universal; it was controversial. ... Now tongues are coming untied. Increasingly, world-beaters are collaborating and connecting with one another. ... Pop music and global music aren't mutually exclusive categories. In the '80s Paul Simon, David Byrne and Peter Gabriel blended world beats. More recently, Sting scored a hit with Algerian rai star Cheb Mami, ... and Brittany Spears has made a habit of working with Swedish songwriter Max Martin.

"Lyrics are important, but they don't have to matter. Even when Bob Dylan, arguably America's finest lyricist, mumbles through a number, the poetry of his words comes out in the phrasing. "How does it feel?" Dylan famously asked on Like a Rolling Stone. We may not have known exactly what he meant, but we knew how it felt. Today's musicians have taken that lesson to heart. Thom Yorke of the British band Radiohead wrote some songs for his album Kid A by cutting up lyric sheets and pulling lines out of a top hat. ... Many of today's global musicians move back and forth from their native tongues to English, on the same album, sometimes on the same song. ... Listening to music in an unfamiliar tongue can be more thrilling than listening to a song whose lyrics are instantly intelligible. Because if you can connect with another person beyond lyrics, beyond language, then you have engaged in a kind of telepathy. You have managed to escape the mundane realm of ordinary communication and entered a place where souls communicate directly." ³⁴

Clearly, words have little to do with a person's attraction to rock music. Christians don't realize, sometimes by choice, that the rhythms of rock music powered by the drum set are driving their spirit and not the Christian words—even if they sing along. But how can Christians claim a "blessing" with music preaching spiritualism and the false postmodern gospel?

Revelation 13:12-14 and 19:20 teaches that the False Prophet brings down fire from heaven

to deceive God's people into receiving the Mark of the Beast. Fire in the Bible is often a symbol of the Holy Spirit,³⁵ however the Holy Spirit does not deceive people into receiving the Mark of the Beast. This means that this fire could represent the power of spiritualism.

Rock music is a "spiritual" music, and it's uniting the world and the Christian Church. The Charismatic movement has crept into nearly every denomination and "praise music and praise bands" masquerading as Christian music are preparing people for some of the greatest deceptions that will ever be experienced.

Implications for the Drum Set

As has been shown, the origin of the drum set can not be separated from jazz and rock music. Rock music communicates the postmodern gospel, and is therefore an unacceptable form of music for praising God. Since the drum set can only be used to play jazz, rock, and their related hybrids, then the drum set is automatically ruled out as well. The real message being preached by the drum set is clear: Relativism and pluralism are today's truth, because the Bible cannot settle issues of right and wrong. Morality and ethics are based on personal tastes, preferences, intuitions, and feelings instead of God's Word.

A Destiny with Deceit

The power of the music in Daniel 3 led many in Babylon to bow down to the image. This is a universal setting that is paralleled in Revelation 13, which concerns the image to the beast and the mark of the beast. Could it be that the kind of music for which drums are used will be a causative factor in setting the stage for the worship of the beast and its image?

"No country in the world is unaffected by the way in which the twentieth century mass media ... have created a universal pop aesthetic. ... Popular music is recognized as a powerful, unifying force. It is seen as a significant component in the process of global integration and the struggle for planetary order."³⁶

"Could it be that by fostering a homogenized global musical style—a style that is increasingly visible in the Christian music culture—the stage is being set for a global, religious identity response? A response that will allow people of all nations, all religious backgrounds to say 'Yes, this is my music, this is who I am: this is my music for being happy and religious and I am part of it; I am right at home now.'"³⁷

24. Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 38, emphasis supplied

25. *Ibid*, 8, emphasis supplied.

26. *Ibid*, 14, emphasis supplied.

27. *Ibid*, 11-12, emphasis supplied.

28. Grenz, 36.

29. *Ibid*, 37-38.

30. Robert Pattison, *The Triumph of Vulgarly: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*, p. 174.

31. John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979) p.29. (emphasis supplied).

32. *Time* magazine, *Music Goes Global*, Fall 2001, p.1 (emphasis supplied).

33. Grenz, 36.

34. Time, 6-7.
35. See Rev 4:5; Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost.
36. Wolfgang H.M. Stefani, "Endnotes: Music as Ecumenical Force," JATS 5/1 (1994): 219.
37. Ibid, 221-222.

CHAPTER 5

DRUM SET EVANGELISM: IS IT JUSTIFIED?

A Study in Scripture

In 1 Chronicles 19:6-7, the children of Ammon send a thousand talents of silver to the Syrians to hire 32,000 chariots and horsemen to fight against David and Israel. King David, being a good student of the Bible and history, remembered advice in Deuteronomy 17:14–16 that says that a king should not multiply horses to himself. He also remembered the battle at the Red Sea when God opened up the sea for His people. After that famous battle Moses wrote these words, “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. ... Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea” (Exodus 15:1, 4).

Consequently, David relied on the Lord for strength during the battle with Ammon and Syria. When the battle was over, his enemies had suffered many casualties. Furthermore, the children of Ammon became the servants of Israel.

In Psalm 20:7, 8, David writes these insightful words: “Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.” And in Isaiah 31:1–4, the prophet reiterated the counsel of Moses by warning Israel not to go down to Egypt to get help in their battle with the Assyrians. The lesson seems clear: We can only put our trust in God and His methods or deny Him in hiring chariots and horses. Those who place their trust in chariots and horses forfeit God’s help.

In Joshua 11, the Bible records a predicament where all of the heathen nations came against Israel to destroy them; they were numbered as the sand on the seashore. The Lord’s instruction in this situation bears notice. He commands, “though shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire” (Joshua 11:6). Commenting on this situation, one commentator writes:

“The chariots and horses that had been the pride and boast of the Canaanites were not to be appropriated by Israel. At the command of God the chariots were burned, and horses lamed, and thus rendered unfit for use in battle. The Israelites were not to put their trust in chariots or horses, but in the name of the Lord their God.”³⁸

Symbolism of the Horse and Chariot

The horse and chariot were instruments of warfare in ancient times, primarily used by God’s enemies to conquer territory. They were very effective in battle and struck fear into many hearts. For instance, the Assyrian army was an incredible war machine. The charioteers were one of the most dreaded units of the Assyrian army, whose thunderous charge coward many opponents.³⁹ However, in Deuteronomy 20:1, God admonishes His people, “When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots ... be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee.”

The mission given to literal Israel was to conquer nations to show God's glory. They were not free to devise their own plans to accomplish this mission. Indeed, the battle of Jericho and Gideon's battle against the Midianites demonstrates that God employs the most seemingly unpromising methods. God did not want them to use chariots and horses to achieve His objective, and there are two major reasons for this.

First, in using horses and chariots, they would trust more in the strength of human might than of Divine power. This is demonstrated in Isaiah 31:1, which records, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are* many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!"

Second, the horse and chariot were dedicated to the sun. One of the greatest reformations in the Bible took place during the days of Josiah. When the book of the law was rediscovered and read before the king, he wept and was determined to carry out the principles contained in the law so that the nation might escape the coming judgments of God. As a result, many reforms were implemented. In 2 Kings 23:11, the Bible says, "He removed from the entrance to the temple of the Lord the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were in the court near the room of an official named Nathan-Melech. Josiah then burned the chariots dedicated to the sun" (NIV).

Whatever is dedicated to the sun will eventually lead to the worship of the sun. According to the reforms enacted in Josiah's day, the ends do not justify the means. The chariots and horses could not be "christianized" and adopted into Israel's army without seriously compromising the message and mission of God's people.

Today's Horses and Chariots

Today the church no longer fights a physical war but a spiritual war.⁴⁰ Instead of conquering nations, the church is to conquer hearts by preaching the gospel. In Revelation 6:2, the church is pictured as a white horse, whose rider has a bow and goes to conquer. And Jesus, in His charge of the great commission, said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

So what might the chariots and horses represent today? They could symbolize Babylonian-style methods not sanctioned by God's Words to attract members to the church. I firmly believe that the use of the drum set in rock, jazz, and their hybrids constitute part of the modern war horses and chariots that many churches are using today to conquer "new territory" for the Lord.

Time magazine has reported on "Funday schools," or churches that use many so-called innovative approaches to attract young people to church, such as explaining "the Gospel according to Harry Potter and the Gospel according to the Simpsons."⁴¹ Some churches are even hiring "Wacky World Studios, a set-design company in Tampa, Fla., that specializes in Sunday-school makeovers, to turn a room ... into a zany Toon Town where buzzers go off and confetti rains down during celebrations like baptisms."⁴²

One "Sunday school" session actually takes place on Thursday. A growing number of ministers around the country aren't letting details, like days of worship, get in the way of their

outreach to young. Even churches that strive to keep God's Sabbath have begun relying on gospel clowns, gospel cafes, gospel magicians, and gospel rock in youth services. "You've got to do whatever it takes to keep the kids' attention focused on God." ⁴³

However, once entertainment and pragmatism become the principles on which outreach decisions are made, it becomes easier and easier to compromise. Indeed, much of what is called gospel and praise music is nothing more than rock or blues in different clothing. And whenever there is rock music, there is the drum set.

This is something that Christian artists acknowledge. Brett Barry is recognized as "an acoustic folk/rock artist." Big Face Grace is described as "an eclectic folk rock-style CCM band with an alternative vibe and a heart to share Christ with unsaved kids." John Stoddard's first solo album is described as "a blend of rhythm and blues sounds accentuated by some serious jazz stylings." ⁴⁴ The group Quintessence has a drummer, so their music is rock, jazz, or one of their hybrids. The music of Nicholas & Veruschka is described as a mix of "folk, Latin, neo-classic, gospel, jazz and inspirational." ⁴⁵ When anyone classifies their music as rock, blues, or jazz, it means the drum set will fit perfectly into their music, even if they are not using a drum set.

Of course, those advocating that churches use the drum set and rock music state to reach more souls should take note that when the Israelites chose to accept variant interpretations of God, salvation, worship, and ethics, the mission of the church suffered horribly. They failed to conquer the Promised Land. God told them that incorporating the gods of foreign nations would be a snare unto them (Judges 2:3).

The Drum Set in Sabbath-Keeping Churches

Even churches in which the commandments are kept stridently, the Law is kept literally, and where the day of worship is essential are being surprisingly compromised when incorporating the drum set in their services.

Several Sabbath-keeping congregations have adopted the church growth methods used by the popular Willow Creek and other non-traditional churches. The results are undeniable.

"At its height it (the Colton Celebration Church) had more than a thousand members. However, with the passing of time, some interesting developments took place. Its leading pastor developed an independent spirit. This led to internal problems in the congregation. This coupled with an unwillingness to take counsel from his conference leadership led to him leaving the ministry. Today he has joined forces with those who are most bitterly attacking the Adventist church and its fundamental doctrines. Buying into the same spirit, one of his leading elders left the church and started his own Sunday keeping church. ... The two new pastors ... were dismissed over doctrinal issues. ... Decline in attendance and membership followed. ... This series of sorrows finally led the group that was left to merge with another congregation." ⁴⁶

Amazingly, when these methods are introduced into Sabbath-keeping churches, they lead to Sunday worship! Sabbath-keeping churches using today's chariots and horses have discovered that it's impossible to keep drawing crowds on their day of worship. As a result, some churches and pastors have left their Sabbath-keeping churches completely. ⁴⁷ This amazing report lends

even more evidence that the drum set can ruin God's churches.

“Five new contemporary churches which were ‘planted’ in the South Pacific Division between 1985 and 1997 have experienced similar disasters and tragedies as those reported of the celebration churches in the North American Division on which they were patterned. Many members of these churches were lost and sometimes their pastors with them. Only one of the five is still in the sisterhood of Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Many [other] established churches also adopted contemporary worship styles ... [but] not one of these churches ... experienced any significant church growth through baptisms. “Financial reports ... reveal their churches ... have not returned faithful tithes and offerings. One administrator lamented the huge amounts of money, which have been lost on such church plants with poor returns.”⁴⁸

There has been an incredible loss of finances, churches, pastors, and worse, souls in Sabbath-keeping churches when rock music and drum sets are used. This shouldn't be a surprise. In Judges 2:3, the Lord says, “Their gods shall be a snare unto you,” and this has indeed happened to His modern Israel. The disastrous results in the Sabbath-keeping church demonstrate that changing the forms of worship by introducing rock music and the drum set does not bring souls into the church. In fact, it has been repeatedly shown to do the opposite. Young people are still leaving even as churches vainly try to meet their worship “needs.”

Drums in the Bible

Since drums are mentioned in the Bible, we also need to tackle exactly to what they refer.

“The principal percussion instrument, the toph, is represented in English Versions of the Bible by “tabret” and “timbre,” two words of different origin. “Tabret” is derived from Arabic tanbur, the name of a sort of mandolin. “Timbre” comes from Latin-Greek tympanum, through the French timbre, a small tambourine. The Arabs of today possess an instrument called the *duf*, a name that corresponds to the Hebrew toph. The *duf* is a circle of thin wood 11 inches in diameter and 2 inches in depth. Over this is tightly stretched a piece of skin, and in the wood are 5 openings in which thin metal disks are hung loosely; these jingle when the *duf* is struck by the hand. The toph probably resembled the *duf*. Other drums are shown on the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments. In the Kouyunjik bas-relief the second last performer beats with his hands a small, barrel-like drum fixed at his waist. In the Old Testament the drum is used on festive occasions; it is not mentioned in connection with Divine service. It was generally played by women, and marked the time at dances or processions (Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 18:6; Jeremiah 31:4; Psalms 150:4). At banquets (Isaiah 24:8; 30:32; Job 21:12) and at marriages (1 Maccabees 9:39) it accompanied the kinnor and nebel. In solemn processions it was also occasionally played by men.”⁴⁹

Notice that the drum is used only on festive occasions in the Bible, and never in connection with divine service or worship. They also were systematically excluded from the Jerusalem temple and from the heavenly music found in the book of Revelation.

Music formed an integral part of Israel's culture, especially on special occasions like the crossing of the Red Sea, victory over the Canaanites, and the ark's return to Jerusalem. During David's time, the king organized all the musicians from the tribe of Levi, as well as the musical instruments. In 1 Chronicles 23:5 and 2 Chronicles 7:6, King David is said to have actually invented some of the instruments. In the temple worship service, only four different kinds of instruments were set apart, namely: lyres, harps, trumpets, and cymbals (1 Chronicles 15:16,19; 16:4-5). The lyre and harp were basically string instruments that would provide support to the choir. The cymbals were not played like a drummer in a jazz or rock band, they were sounded.

“The cymbals were not used by the precantor to conduct the singing by beating out the rhythm of the song or a stanza in the song, but rather to announce the beginning of the song or a stanza in the song. Since they were used to introduce the song, they were wielded by the head of choir on ordinary occasions (1 Chronicles 16:5) or by the three heads of the guilds on extraordinary occasions (1 Chronicles 15:19). ... Since the trumpets and the cymbals were played together to announce the beginning of the song, the players of both are called the ‘sunder’ in 1 Chronicles 16:42.”⁵⁰

Some argue that the use of rock music and the drum set in church is legitimized because cymbals were used in ancient worship. However, this ignores the fact that cymbals were not used to drive song rhythms, but merely to announce the beginning of a song or a stanza in the song.⁵¹ Simply put, how drums and cymbals are used in rock and jazz is very different from how the cymbal was used in the temple.

The use of instruments in the temple service also reveals the biblical philosophy of music. It shows the importance and priority of melody and harmony over rhythm. The lyre and harp are designed to give support to the melody. However, in rock and jazz music, the primary consideration is rhythm. Thus the philosophy behind rock music is diametrically opposed to the philosophy of music in temple worship.

Similarly, in Revelation the only accompanying instrument is the harp, which supports singing. Instruments associated with percussion are excluded from both the temple service and the book of Revelation. Clearly, then, the drum set is not mentioned in the Bible. Since it is a relatively recent invention, it cannot be linked to the Bible. It is also therefore wrong to assume that the percussive instruments in the Bible would have been played the same way as the drum set is today.

Rock rhythms are rampaging into every world culture, attempting to engulf the sounds of different cultures into its rhythms to legitimize it and give it an honored place among other forms of music. For instance, recently the violin has been incorporated into rock music, functioning like an electric guitar. Yet we should not be deceived! Stringed instruments were never really associated with rock rhythms. However, no music can incorporate the drum set without automatically morphing it into a rock or jazz hybrid.

38. E.G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1958), 510.

39. J.A. Thompson, *The Bible And Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's, 1982), 119.

40. See, Eph 6:10-17; 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim 2:3-4; 4:7; John 18:36; 1 Cor 9:26-27; 2 Cor 10:3-5

41. *Time Magazine*, “The New Funday School,” December 16, 2002, 60-62.

42. *Ibid.*, 62.

43. Ibid, 60.
44. Jeff Trubey, "Making Waves," *The Adventist Review*, July 17, 1997, pgs. 10-13.
45. A. Monise Hamilton, "The Ministry of Music and the Power of Praise at Andrews University," *Lake Union Herald*, March 2000, pgs. 8-9.
46. Jay Gallimore, "Can The Church Be Relevant and Survive?" (A paper passed out to Pastors/Conference Office Directors and Associates of the Michigan Conference: September 2001) pgs 2-3.
47. See, William Johnson, "Where Are They Now?" *The Adventist Review*, Feb 17, 2000, pg. 5. The article states that several congregations broke away after Richard Fredericks was fired. "In Denver, Grace Place is changing to a Sunday service and trying to decide whether to retain a Saturday morning event." Their pastor, Clay Peck has now left the Adventist Church and is keeping Sunday. In Boise, Idaho, pastor Harry Krueger of the Church of the Crossroads (an Adventist Church) was asked to resign and has since started another congregation with Sunday services.
48. E.B. Price, "Church Growth in Contemporary Churches In the South Pacific Division" (A paper passed out through the Michigan Conference Mailgram: October 31, 2002) pg. 1.
49. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (emphasis supplied).
50. John W. Kleining, *The Lord's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* (Sheffield, England, 1993) pg. 82-83.
51. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Christian and Rock Music* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2000) p. 206-209.

CHAPTER 6

A CALL FOR REFORMATION

Renewed Purpose

In Revelation 14:6–12, God’s church is commanded to preach the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred tongue, and people. We saw in part five that today’s Israel, the church, cannot use just any means to conquer territory and gain converts to the faith. The drum set and rock music are the horses and chariots of the Old Testament, and it is reasonable to believe that eventually these forms of music, no matter in how much good faith they are used, will lead people to full pagan worship.

The Church of today needs to make the same decisions that Joshua and David made when they set out to do God’s will. It needs to avoid using horses and chariots and remember that true victory will only come in the name of the Lord.

It’s also interesting to note that chariots and horses found in Psalm 20:7 are placed in opposition to the name of the Lord. In Revelation 14:1, we’re told that the Father’s name will be written on the foreheads of His followers. How can anyone be a follower of God when relying on those things that are in opposition to Him?

In addition, many believe that the only effective way to reach this new generation is to incorporate rock music and the drum set into the worship service. But I know from experience that such thinking is flawed. I came to know the truth at the time when I was deeply involved in rock and jazz. The blending of this music with worship was unattractive, and almost laughable, because if I really wanted to hear that music I would go to a place where it came from: the world. And young people who are honest realize that their experience in church should be different than what they receive from the world.

Bible Examples of Music Reformation

It was a rediscovery of the principles found in the Bible that led to a great revival and reformation during Josiah’s reign. Today, we know that the Bible must once again be the standard for all doctrine and the basis for all reform. When this happens, we will no longer look to the drum set and rock music to advance the kingdom of God, we will only look to Him and His unchanging Word.

Hezekiah’s Reform

In 2 Chronicles 29:25–30, the Bible records:

“And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. And the Levites

stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

This reformation took place about 300 years after King David. Chronicles says it is God who inspired David regarding the use of instruments in the temple—each of which is listed in this passage. This affirms that the biblical philosophy of music is grounded in God, and not simply in Hebrew culture. God dictated by His prophets those instruments that were appropriate in worship, and those that were an abomination. Since melody and harmony take precedence over rhythm and since all other percussive instruments were excluded, then again we can easily conclude that there is no room for the drum set today in the worship service.

Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s Reform

Another musical reformation took place approximately 600 years after King David. Because of Israel’s sins, God allowed Babylon to sweep them into captivity for 70 years. Yet after this captivity, there was a call for Israel to come out of Babylon for the purpose of rebuilding the city, the wall, and the temple in Jerusalem.

Both Ezra and Nehemiah, two powerful leaders, responded to this call. As for all successful reformations, theirs was based on the Word of God. In addition to the work on the temple, both Ezra and Nehemiah called attention to the ordinances of king David regarding music and worship.

“And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel” (Ezra 3:10).

“And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. ... And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them” (Nehemiah 12:27,36).

God’s leaders once again led the church back to the instruments of David, which excluded all instruments associated with percussion, except for the cymbal that was played in a completely different manner that the drum set is played.

Reformation Today

Every successful reformation in worship and music was based on King David's ordinance. Should this be any different for the church today when setting out to conquer new territory for the Lord?

“The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration that is to be wrought in the closing days of this earth's history They were the guardians of the true worship, the keepers of the holy oracles.”⁵²

What was once meant for national Israel is now connected by the cross to God's church today—His Spiritual Israel. As God called His people out of Babylon to rebuild the temple and reestablish its services, God today is calling His people to leave spiritual Babylon and rebuild His church. Isaiah 58:12,13 says, “And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.”

God's people would do well to return to the worship music ordinances of King David. Should the church only use lyres, harps, cymbals, and trumpets? The answer is no. Rather, instruments should be evaluated based on their melodic and harmonic capabilities, as well as their ability to accompany the human voice without drowning it out. This is exactly why the drum set should be excluded from the worship service—its only function is rhythm, which takes precedence over harmony, a complete contradiction to Bible principles repeatedly seen in the Old and New Testaments.

In Acts 3:21 Peter reminds us that there is to be a restoration of all things before Jesus comes again. This restoration must include worship and music. My prayer is that God would enlighten and strengthen local church leaders, pastors, and laypersons to return to His Divine Pattern for worship.

The Trap Set Trap

Jesus says that a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Both the origins of the trap set (drum set) and the way it's played are associated with spiritualism and postmodernism—their roots are intrinsically tied to one another. I strongly believe that Satan has used these instruments as conduits for his demons, and they will go to where this instrument is played and wreak havoc on a church and in believer's lives.

Like the guitar or piano, is it possible to play the trap set in a way that is acceptable for worship? No. While the guitar and piano can be played to give honor and praise to God, the trap set clearly cannot. It was designed to play solely rock or jazz, or some hybrid, and it cannot be used without turning even “Amazing Grace” into a rock hybrid. Even the idea of turning beloved hymns into music associated with spiritualism and postmodernism should give all Christians pause.

As Christians who want to worship the Father in heaven in His way and bring glory to His son Jesus, should we even attempt to harmonize the evil pagan roots of the trap set and rock or jazz in our worship services? That's the question facing you and your church right now.

But what is no longer a question for you is this: the trap set, and the music for which it was conceived, sprang from an evil that God commands us to avoid.

52. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 677.