

# The Rock And Roll Religion

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### Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Newsletter:

It is hard to believe that the media has succeeded in misleading most people to believe that we have entered a new millennium, when in actual fact the new millennium will be a year from now. This popular deception reminds us of a similar recent deceptive attempt of pope John Paul II to make the world believe that Sunday is the expression and embodiment of the Biblical Sabbath. The Pope's Pastoral Letter *Dies Domini* is examined in newsletter no. 6 and more fully (50 pages) in chapter 1 of *The Sabbath Under Crossfire*. These deceptive efforts should alert to the fact that we are leaving in the countdown to the final showdown when the whole world will be deceived and accept the false worship of Babylon (Rev 14:8-9). The essay of this newsletter on THE ROCK AND ROLL RELIGION focuses on the role of music in the final promotion of false worship.

The many messages, comments, and constructive criticism I have received during the past few days from many of you, have been of great help and encouragement to me. Many of you have shared with me the problems you are facing in your church as a result caused by the recent introduction of "Christian" rock in the worship service. Frankly, I was not aware of how widespread is the problem. It is providential that the Lord has impressed a group of us scholars to address this issue in the forthcoming book THE CHRISTIAN AND ROCK MUSIC. Two of the contributors sent me their chapters this past week.

The other day I received a message from a brother (young adult), who is the elder and youth leader of a 400 members congregation. He informed me about the recent sad experience of his church. About 30 members left when the church voted against their playing the rock band during the church service. They joined a Sundaykeeping church well-known for bashing our Adventist church. I could help but wonder if their commitment to rock was greater than their allegiance to the Rock of Ages.

Today I received both a telephone call and a lengthy email message from a fine young man who graduated with my son Dany with a degree in architecture from Andrews. He is a member of a large 600/700 members church, which is currently troubled by a new pastor who seems determined to introduce the so-called celebration style of worship with drums and pop music. He was most thankful for the material I emailed him and faxed me a most gracious thank you note.

Surprisingly most of the people who have contacted me for help in dealing with the infiltration of rock music in their churches, are not old timers, but young adults who are very concerned, especially because the impact of rock music upon their children. In most cases the problem is caused by a pastor or a youth leader who wants to bring some excitement to the church service through the hypnotic beat of rock. There is no doubt in my mind that these people are well-intentioned. Unfortunately they fail to realize the satanic nature of rock music.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that this symposium on THE CHRISTIAN AND ROCK MUSIC will help many people understand the true nature of rock music and resist the allurements of the music of Babylon. You will be pleased to know that several outstanding scholars and musicians are contributing chapters to this symposium. Yesterday I received a call from Prof. Calvin Johannson, a non-SDA author of two important books on church music. He informed me that he is working on his chapter on

"THE GOSPEL AND POP MUSIC." By God's grace we would like to see the book out by the end of May, in time for the General Conference.

Some of you have been asking if the book will deal with Contemporary Christian Music and with the actual Biblical teaching on music and worship. Rest assured that these are important topics that will be examined in considerable depth. As the editor and major contributor to this project, I do have a master plan in my mind. Just be patient and you will see that your questions will be addressed in this book.

The chapter you are about to read may prove to be an enlightening experience for you. It surely was enlightening for me to learn that rock and roll is not just a musical style, but a revolutionary religious movement. The scholarly literature that I reviewed, produced in most cases by sociologists who have no religious axe to grind, has helped me to see that rock beat, sex, drugs, and dance, are important rituals of the rock religion, because they are supposed to provide to its followers the means to transcend the limitation of time and space and experience the supernatural.

This research invites us to consider a timely question: Could it be that the worldwide popularity of rock music, which promotes the worship of self and human idols, is part of the mastermind strategy to promote the endtime false worship described in the Three Angels Message of Revelation 14? Read on and tell me what you think!

## Chapter 4

### THE ROCK AND ROLL RELIGION

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For almost half a century rock music has exercised a revolutionary impact on our society, shaping the thinking and living especially of the younger generation. Other musical styles like rag, jazz, and blues have come and gone. After a relative short period of popularity, they have gradually faded almost into oblivion. By contrast, the cultural resonance of rock music still remains unabated. As noted in the previous chapter, rock music has gone through an easily-discernible hardening process, from plain rock in the fifties, to metal rock and rap rock in the nineties. New types of rock music are constantly appearing, while the older ones are still acclaimed.

The impact of rock music is being felt not only on the secular society, but also in many Christians churches which have adopted sanitized forms of rock music for their worship services and their evangelistic outreach. Christian rock stars and concerts look and sound very much like their secular counterpart. Analysts predict that rock music is here to stay and its impact on the church and society will be felt even more deeply in the years to come. We are told that "the future of rock and roll will be even more diverse, and more excessive than the present."<sup>1</sup>

The prospect of a continuous increasing demand for more excessive and violent styles of rock music gives us reasons to be concerned, because, as we have seen in chapters 2 and 3, this music promotes, among other things, a pantheistic/hedonistic worldview, an open rejection of the Christian faith and values, sexual perversion, civil disobedience, violence, satanism, occultism, homosexuality, and masochism.

Some would disagree with this characterization of rock music, because the lyrics of some rock songs are not immoral and anti-Christian. On the contrary, they speak out against all manner of injustices, racism, hatred, and nuclear weapons. This is an important argument which is examined at the end of this chapter. We shall see that the presence and mixture of good and evil lyrics in rock music, may well represent an effective satanic strategy to use the good lyrics to lead some Christians to accept more readily the evil ones. If all the rock songs dealt only with sex, drugs, and violence, fewer Christians would be attracted to such music. But the fact that some rock songs address legitimate social concerns, this facilitate the acceptance of rock music as a whole, though much of it promotes anti-Christians values and life-style.

**Objectives of this Chapter.** This chapter seeks to understand what accounts for the long-lasting and overwhelming popularity of rock music, in spite of its revolutionary anti-Christian and countercultural nature. To find an answer to this question, we shall continue our analysis of the nature of rock music, by focusing in this chapter on rock music as a religious experience.

This chapter builds upon the conclusions that emerged in chapter 2 and 3 where we looked at the worldview of rock music and its historical development. We found that rock music draws its inspiration from a pantheistic conception of God as an immanent impersonal supernatural power which the individual can experience through the hypnotic rhythm of rock music, often accompanied by drugs. This pantheistic worldview promoted by rock music has eventually led to the rejection of the Christian faith and values, and the acceptance instead of "a new kind of religious experience for young people."<sup>2</sup>

This chapter takes a closer look at rock and roll as a religious experience which involves the use of rock music, drugs, and dance to transcend the limitation of time and space and connect with the supernatural.

The study which has been most helpful for my understanding of rock and roll as a religious phenomenon, is the book by Robert Pattison, entitled *The Triumph of Vulgarly. Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*. Pattison is a professor of humanities at Long Island University. His book is highly literate and provides an insightful analysis of the

ideological roots and social impact of rock and roll. The book was published by Oxford University Press in 1987 and is frequently cited by authors dealing with rock music.

The findings of this study are very important because they reveal that there is more to rock music than meets the eye. Contrary to what many Christians believe, rock music is not just another musical genre that can be sanitized to worship God and proclaim the Gospel. A closer look at the rock scene reveals that rock and roll embodies an endtime apostate religious movement of open rebellion against God and the moral principles revealed in His word. Thus, it is imperative for Christians to understand the broader implications of the rock and roll phenomenon.

## PART 1 THE ROCK AND ROLL RELIGION

In his book *You Say You Want a Revolution*, sociologist Robert G. Pielke argues that rock and roll can best be understood as a religious movement which has brought about a religious transformation in the American culture.<sup>3</sup> Pielke writes: "All cultural revolutions are, at their core, religious movements, and as such they are struggles and conflicts at the deepest level of our consciousness (personal and collective)."<sup>4</sup>

To characterize rock and roll as a religious movement may seem inappropriate because a religion presupposes the worship of a supernatural, transcendent Being. At first sight, this hardly seems to be the case with rock and roll which is a style of music concerned with such worldly interests as sex, drugs, violence, rebellion, and social issues. However, a closer look reveals that rock and roll is more than music. It involves a self-centered worldview, a commitment to a set of beliefs, a life-style with its own system of fashion, language, and values, and a pantheistic view of the supernatural, reflected in the worship of the rock stars as gods, and in the use of rock music, drugs, and dance to transcend the limitation of time and space and connect with the infinite.

**An Experience of the Supernatural.** If religion is defined as an experience of the supernatural which causes an individual to adopt a set of beliefs and practices, then rock and roll can be legitimately viewed as a religion. Observers of the rock scene acknowledge the religious nature of rock concerts. Referring to rock concerts a newspaper reporter wrote: "They are the religious ceremonies of a nonreligious age."<sup>5</sup> In actual fact, they are religious ceremonies of a pantheistic age which reduces God to an infinite power present everywhere and experienced through the rock rituals.

In his classic book *The Idea of the Holy*, Rudolf Otto describes the goal of religion as the apprehension and appreciation of the "holy," which he defines as "mysterium tremendum," that is, the indescribable majesty of the supernatural.<sup>6</sup>

In the presence of the supernatural, believers are overwhelmed by a sense of self-abasement, awe, and nothingness. In many ways rock fans have a similar experience, especially when attending a rock concert. As sociologist Charles Pressler points out, "It does not require a particular difficult stretch of the imagination to compare this feeling with that of the acolyte [fan] attending a rock concert, the epitome of the rock and roll experience, at which one's sensibilities are overwhelmed by the power and demands of the music. I suspect it does not matter whether the concert features The Beatles, Megadeath, or the New Kids on the Block—there are merely representatives of different rock and roll denominations—the loss of self in the presence of some kind of overwhelming agency would be the same."<sup>7</sup>

It could be argued that the intense feelings experienced by those who attend a rock concert are not different from the feelings experienced by those who attend a classical music concert. This argument ignores that classical music, does not involve, as does rock, "a lifestyle, a system of fashion, a set of values, etc.—only rock music conforms to the meaning of the term 'religion.'"<sup>8</sup>

Pressler argues that some of the characteristic feelings of Christian worship, such as awe, humility at the presence of divine majesty, attraction and appropriation of divine power, "also describe the feelings of a person attending a rock and roll concert or its electronic equivalent. Therefore, there seems to be legitimacy to the argument that at least emotionally, in terms of one's experience of the phenomenon, rock and roll constitutes a religion."<sup>9</sup>

Pressler extends the comparison to the awareness of the supernatural as experienced by Christians at church and by rock and rollers at a concert. He writes: "The experience of the rock and roll acolyte [fan] at the rock concert involves the presentation, by the priests, the rock band, of the concept of rock and roll, the concept that discloses the values, power, and revolutionary passions of rock and roll music. . . . Prior to the concert, the mysterium tremendum [the sense of the supernatural] hovers behind the acolyte, as a kind of expected presence that never becomes fully present. As the concert

or CD proceeds, the acolyte, and also the presenters, are swept into the maelstrom of energy issued by the numinous [supernatural power]."<sup>10</sup>

**Feelings Rather than Reason.** Unfortunately the energy released by rock music engages feelings rather than reason. Rationality is secondary to emotion. As the lyrics of the song "Oh, Me," of the rock band Meat Puppets puts it:

I don't have to think,  
I only have to do it.  
The results are always perfect . . .  
I formulate infinity.

The rocker knows the world as a feeling and this feeling is by and large an optimistic pantheistic experience of the infinite power. The Beach Boys express this feeling in the song "Good Vibrations," which speaks of "Good good good good good vibrations." In the album "Surf's Up," the Beach Boy elaborate on the feeling of good vibrations: "Feel flows. Feel goes." In their popular song "Love is All Around Us," the Troggs express this central tenet of rock religion: "My mind's made up by the way that I feel." Instinct and not reason is the measure of the rock's universe. We shall return in a moment to the rocker's pantheistic experience of the supernatural.

The rocker acts according to his uncontrolled passions, rather than according to clear moral directives. Here lies a fundamental difference between the Christian and the rocker experience of the supernatural. The Christian's encounter with God during the worship experience results in a clarification and reaffirmation of the moral directives already revealed in Scripture. By contrast, the rocker' experience of the supernatural leaves him without moral directives, only with inflamed passions to follow the excessive, violent, and immoral behavior of their rock stars.

**A Movement Toward the Excess.** Lacking the moral directives of a transcendent God, the rock and roll religion has given rise to what Pressler calls "the move toward excess." This means that the hardening process which rock music has experienced during the past half century, will continue into the twentieth century. As Pressler puts it, "the future of rock and roll will be even more diverse, and more excessive than the present. Female nudity has already become commercially considered in music videos, and has been for some time. Violence has become more graphic, more extensive, and more gratuitous, to the point that Blackie Lawless, of WASP, describes the presentation, on stage of the introduction of a nude woman into a meat grinder, whereupon the handle will be turned and raw hamburger will be sprayed over the audience."<sup>11</sup>

The movement toward excess promoted by the rock and roll religion will involve in the future experimentation with new instruments and louder electronic sound production in order to satisfy the addiction of its followers. In terms of moral behavior "Youth will continue to press on toward new ways of expressing their *difference* and will continue to provoke their elders through the presentation of excess—the values themselves cannot change that much, because the elders are members of the rock and roll generation themselves. So the tendency will be to continue to push, to deny similarity, and the children of our heavy-metalheads will find their own way to torment their parents. The concept of the colossal [supernatural] will always be presented in the insistence of the backbeat . . . and the beat goes on."<sup>12</sup>

**Worshipping Rock Stars.** The religious nature of the rock and roll movement can also be seen in the commitment of rock fans to the music and lifestyle of their rock stars—a commitment which competes with that of nominal Christians to their Lord Jesus Christ. Robert Pattison notes that "The rocker lives his music with an intensity few nominal Christians imitate in their devotion to the faith. He goes to concerts and listens to his music with the same fidelity with which the Christian of earlier generations attended church and read his Bible. One of the most frequently repeated mottoes in rock lyrics is 'Rock 'n' roll never die!'—a cry of belief. The stars of rock undergo literal apotheosis [deification]: 'Jim Morrison is God' is a graffito now perpetuated by a third generation of rockers."<sup>13</sup>

The apotheosis, that is, the deification of rock stars, is very important to the rock and roll religion, because it provides to the rockers the idols to be worshipped and to be imitated in real life. In an article entitled "Forever Elvis," *Newsweek* calls Presley "a saint" and a "Jesus-like" figure.<sup>14</sup> The article adds: "You were somehow caught up with this figure, you worshipped him."<sup>15</sup> The worship of any human being is plain idolatry and utter blasphemy against God. It is a clear violation of the First Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3).

The rock and roll religion promotes the worship of their rock stars like Christianity teaches the worship of Christ. Such worship entails, not only listening to the music of rock stars, but also imitating their life style, and visiting their shrines. This resembles the way Christians imitate Christ's life and visit the places associated with His life and death.

"Many Elvis impersonators continue to course the places of entertainment throughout the world. His antics are not only perpetuated by those who look and dress like him, but the whole mode of his style is preserved by hundreds of other entertainers throughout the music industry. His mannerism and techniques which made him a legend have not only pervaded popular secular music since his debut but are now imitated in much of the contemporary Christian music as well."<sup>16</sup>

The worship of Presley is indicated by the sale of "more than 1 billion records, tapes, and compact discs worldwide."<sup>17</sup> His Graceland estate has become a multimillion dollars industry and a virtual religious shrine for the pilgrimage of many rock and rollers. The *Daily News* reported that "Graceland has been drawing 3,500 fee-paying visitors each day—or a total of 1.5 million [in five years] since it opened to the public in 1982. . . . it has become the most recognizable and most visited private home in America, second only to the White House."<sup>18</sup>

What is true of the deification of Presley is also true of other rock stars. For example, Michael Jackson, as Hubert Spence points out, "has carefully staged himself throughout the world as an icon of deity. His videos regularly display him giving erotic gestures to the camera; his extravagantly-rendered stage productions present strong implications of his godhood (manifested in his entrances and exits), lauding him as the savior of the world."<sup>19</sup>

The worship of rock stars is also promoted by their biographies that exalt their saint-like qualities. Robert Pattison points out that "The most successful books about rock itself are the hagiographies [biographies of saints] of its stars, like Jerry Hopkins's and Danny Sugerman's life of Jim Morrison, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*."<sup>20</sup>

**The Music of Babylon.** The worship of rock stars has influenced an increasing number of Christian churches. In their thought-provoking book, *Music in the Balance*, Frank Garlock and Kurt Woetzel acknowledge that "A large segment of the Christian community has enthusiastically embraced this music of the world, the associated antics, and the philosophy. All three have been implanted into the life of the church. Not only have many Christians accepted the music as suitable for praise and worship, but an atmosphere pervades the contemporary Christian concerts not unlike the early concerts of the Elvis era. Believers have made idols of their own rock and roll singers and continue to worship at their feet with devotion and their pocket books."<sup>21</sup>

The imitation of the rock stars and of their music in church services and concerts, reminds us of the apocalyptic description of the endtime false worship promoted by those who bid to "make an image of the beast" (Rev 13:14). In Revelation 14 the beast and its image (v. 9) are identified with the false worship promoted by Babylon (v.8). Could it be that Satan is using today deceptive rock music to bring about the Endtime false worship, as he used in the Pain of Dura of ancient Babylon to lead all the people to worship the golden image (Dan 3:7, 10)? We will take up this question again in the closing remarks.

**A Pantheistic Religion.** Another significant indication of the religious nature of rock and roll, can be found in its pantheistic orientation. Robert Pattison offers an insightful analysis of the pantheistic beliefs present in rock music. He traces these beliefs to the

pantheistic ideas of Romanticism, a popular nineteenth century humanistic movement which is still very pervasive today.<sup>22</sup>

Pantheism rejects the existence of any transcendent being, identifying the divine with all the natural processes. What this means is that for the rock and rollers God is not a transcendent Being beyond them, but an infinite power present around them and within them. Incredible as it may seem, the goal of rock is to "subsume the universe and become God."<sup>23</sup> God is "obliterated in a pantheist's cosmic orgasm."<sup>24</sup> Rock music, according to Pattison, is the ritual of the pantheistic culture of our time, "a means of approaching the infinite."<sup>25</sup> Through the ecstasy of rock music, the rock and roller transcends the limitation of time and space and plugs into the infinite.

The pantheistic rocker equates self with God and the world at large. His feelings, rather than reason, are the fundamental way of knowing. This pantheistic mentality is reflected in the popular song "We Are the World," which was composed as a campaign song to raise money for African famine victim. Pattison observes that "by simultaneously playing on rock's expansive pantheism and its sentimentality about the primitive, the makers of 'We Are the World' created a song that zoomed to the top of the singles charts in four weeks and shipped 'multi-platinum' with certified sales of four million records in one month."<sup>26</sup>

The same pantheistic sentiment is expressed in the famous Beatles's song "I am the Walrus," which says: "I am he as you are he as you are me and as we are all together." "All variations of self—I, he, you, we, they—are interchangeable. All feelings and events are equally valid, equally present, equally, meaningful. Every event is the center of the universe. There is no transcendent location for meaning. . . . In *Eureka* Poe had written: 'That God may be all in all, each must become God.'"<sup>27</sup>

The goal of the rock religion is to subsume the universe and to become God, reminds us of the temptation which led our fore-parents to rebel against God, with all the attendant consequences. The Deceiver assured Adam and Eve that by partaking of the forbidden fruit, they would have a magic experience: "You will be like God" (Gen 3:5). In many ways this is what rock music promises to its followers: "If you listen to it you will loose conscience of your human limitations and enjoy a godlike experience."

**Pantheism and the Imperative of Fun.** By reducing God to the natural process of the universe which is also within ourselves, rock teaches people to forget about a transcendent God and to find meaning instead in the immediate pleasure offered by the material world which they can feel. This explains why the pantheistic orientation of rock and roll leads to an hedonistic lifestyle, that is, to the search for immediate pleasure.

Pattison gives several examples of rock musicians to illustrate this point. "Chuck Berry is the universally acclaimed black prophet of the rock era because his songs are relentlessly about fun: 'I'm keep on dancin' till I got my kicks!' Fun, the highest aesthetic achievement of a rigorous pantheism like Whitman's or rock's, is the pleasure derived from a universe which is ourselves and which we cannot transcend because to know it is to be in it:

Well if you feel it 'n' like it,  
Go get your lover, then reel it 'n' rock it.

Chuck Berry's is a universe that pivots on an untranscendent celebration of the energy I can extract from the present moment without recourse to anything but myself. 'Go, go' is the repeated imperative of his lyrics, the imperative of fun."<sup>28</sup>

Another example of pantheistic hedonism is the popular rock star Bob Dylan, of whom Pattison says: "After the religious imagery of 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' and the mystic allegory of 'All Along the Watchtower,' Dylan ended his *John Wesley Harding* album with the apparently incongruous country-rock ballad, 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight':

Kick your shoes off,  
Do not fear,  
Bring that bottle over here,  
I'll be your baby tonight.

The troubles of the world enumerated in the lyrics of *John Wesley Harding* vanish in the rocker's final commitment to the sensible present of tonight, and what Dylan tells his lover is what rock has to say to transcendental observers everywhere:

Close your eyes, close the door,  
You do not have to worry anymore,  
I'll be your baby tonight.

Dylan raises Chuck Berry's doctrine of fun to the highest of rock art.<sup>29</sup> The substitution of fun for the joy that comes from the enjoyment of respectable forms of art, reveals the depraved nature of rock music. Its goal is to lead people away from the enjoyment of beautiful genuine art inspired by a transcendent God, into the immediate excitement generated by the abuse of God's good creation.

## PART 2 THE RITUAL OF SEX, DRUGS, AND DANCE

**Sex as Union with the Infinite.** Sex plays a vital role in the pantheistic religion of rock and roll because it is seen as means of experiencing union with the infinite. Some of the lyrics of rock songs that glorify sex, are too obscene and offensive to be included in a book of this nature.<sup>30</sup> Even the less obscene samples given below are offensive.

Tone Loc is very graphic in the song "Wild Thing," which reached number two on the charts:

Could not get her off my \_\_\_\_\_  
She was like static cling.  
That's what happens  
When bodies start slappin'  
From Doing the wild thing.

In her song "Throb" Janet Jackson, Michael's younger sister relies on sexual sights that "build to an orgasmic, S——." The song "Anytime, Anyplace" depicts public sex. Paula Abdul uses sensual and erotic lyrics in such songs as "Head Over Hells," "Get Your Groove On," and "Sexy Thoughts."

The rock religion worship the genitalia as the creative hub of the universe. "I am the creative hub of the universe, and the creative hub of me is my genitalia. Little Feat says: 'I have a rocket in my pocket.' The crotch is the launchpad for the conquest of the universe. Rock has restored the pantheistic adoration of the phallus to the West. The real rock star is a young male, horny, and well-hung. Jim Morrison and Iggy Pop are the most prominent of a series of rock stars who have exposed themselves for a grateful public. Other rock stars, intimidated by modesty or the law, have propitiated the ritual demands of their audience by padding their crotches or highlighting their endowments. David Lee Roth, formerly of Van Halen and one of rock's transient sex symbols, usually performs in tight outfits accented by a bulging red G-string. With minor variations, his is the costume of most hard-rock idols."<sup>31</sup>

The worship of the sexual organs is evident even in some album covers. The album's cover of "Velvet Underground and Nico" by Velvet Underground, features a yellow banana that peels back to reveal pink banana-flesh beneath. The album "Sticky Fingers" by Rolling Stones, features a crotch of a bulging pair of jeans with the zipper down to reveal the underwear.

"The ideal rock star is sexuality incarnate. He is the focus of every possible taste. . . . In life, Mick Jagger has come closest to fulfilling rock's pansexual fantasy, and he has received equal sexual obeisance from gushing girls, butch boys, mid-life sadists, and aging discomanes. A cunning rock star nourishes the fantasy that he is sexually omnivorous."<sup>32</sup>

The sexual appetite extends to incestual acts. The Artist, formerly known as Prince, praises his incestual relationship with his sister in his "Purple Rain" album:

My sister never made love  
to anyone but me.  
Incest is everything  
it's said to be.

Pattison concludes his analysis of sex in the rock scene with this arresting statement: "Nothing could more firmly distinguish rock from other forms of popular music than its insistent penis worship."<sup>33</sup> The worship of the genitalia is fundamental to the rock and roll religion, because, as stated before, they are seen as the creative hub of the universe. This reminds of the fertility cults of the ancient world where sexual organs and sacred prostitution played an important role in their pagan worship.

The sexual perversion promoted by the rock movement and the entertainment industry reminds us of the sexual sins and moral depravity of the days of Noah and Lot. Jesus referred to those days to characterize the age preceding His Return (Luke 17:27). Similarly Paul predicted that "in the last day" many will be "without natural affection, . . . incontinent" (2 Tim 3:3; KJV). We are witnessing today the unprecedented fulfillment of this endtime sign given by Christ and clarified by Paul.

**Drugs to Experience the Infinite.** Drugs, like sex, play a vital role in the rituals of the rock and roll religion, because they alter the mind in ways conducive to a deceptive consciousness of the infinite. The rocker, who is "bound on an expedition to infinity, demands constant infusion of cosmic energy."<sup>34</sup> Drugs are supposed to provide such cosmic energy.

In the celebrated drug song, "White Rabbit," the Jefferson Airplane's mention the potential of drugs:

One pill makes you bigger,  
And one pill makes you small,  
And the pills that mother gives you don't do anything at all.

Mother's licit prescriptions are seen as worthless because they do not alter the consciousness by making a person feel bigger or smaller. Drugs like amphetamines and cocaine produce an euphoric state that makes the rocker believe to find himself at the center of a universe of pure energy.

"Rock's speed-freak envisions a totality comprised of what the Velvet Underground calls 'white light/white heat: 'White light, don't you know it lighten up my eyes, Don't you know it fills me with surprise.' The perfect self, of which uppers provide a fleeting apprehension, is identical with the pure energy of white heat. Speed and coke are traditional fare on the menus of rock precisely because they are comestibles that expand the self to incandescent godhead."<sup>35</sup>

This is also the reason for the use of hallucinogenic drugs like LSD and mescaline. They provide a similar experience of the "White light/white heat." In the song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," the Beatles describe a world seen through "kaleidoscopic eyes" which is alive with "tangerine trees and marmalade skies." Pattison explains that "the difference between speed and hallucinogenic visions is one of quality, not of kind. Both aim to provide the self with a godlike eminence from which to apprehend its embrace of totality."<sup>36</sup>

Drugs provide to rock musicians the ecstatic inspiration needed to produce their music. In his book *Lennon Remembers*, Jann Wenner quotes John Lennon, saying: "'Help' was made on Pot. 'A Hard Day's Night' I was on pills. That's drugs, that's bigger drugs than Pot. . . . Since I became a musician I've always needed a drug to survive."<sup>37</sup>

The rockers' use of various kinds of drugs to obliterate consciousness and experience contact with the supernatural, reveals their desperate effort to fill the emptiness of their lives by reaching out to the supernatural through the hypnotic power of the rock beat and drugs. The results of such efforts are often tragic. Some reports list over eighty rock stars who have died in recent years in drug related incidents.<sup>38</sup>

The title of Steve Turner's book *Hungry for Heaven: Rock and Roll Search for Redemption*, sums up well the rock religion: It is a search for redemption through rock music and drugs. Turner describes drugs as "the Damascus Road" experience for the rockers. "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 see God or whether they were god."<sup>39</sup>

The Good News of the Gospel is that the "Damascus Road" experience is to be found not through the rock beat and mind-altering drugs, but through a Person—the Person of Jesus Christ who says: "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest" (Matt

11:28). The acceptance of Christ's provision of salvation, fills our life with peace and purpose—something that the rock beat and drug can never offer.

**The Rock Dance.** Dance is also an important aspect of the liturgy of rock and roll, because it offers to the rockers an opportunity to imitate and represent bodily everything that they feel about the infinity. "The liturgy of rock repeatedly call on the believer to 'dance dance dance,' to 'keep on dancing and a-prancin.'" One of the central texts of rock is the introduction to the Contours' 1962 hit, 'Do You Love Me Now That I can Dance?':

You broke my heart and made me cry  
When you said I couldn't dance—  
But now I'm back to let you know  
That I can really make romance.

The ability to dance is equivalent to the ability to feel. It is the ritual celebration of the sentient self imitating the Dionysian infinity. . . . Dance is one of the sacraments of rock."<sup>40</sup> The importance of dance lies in the fact that it enables the rocker to express bodily the experience of the supernatural induced by the beat and, often, by drugs.

Pattison explains that while in rock mythology the ritual of dancing is performed in the street, in real life it is done in discos and at parties. "If rock is a new religion, it is not the oriental paganism portrayed in its own mythology but a fairly decorous pantheism whose practice no more demands orgies than Christian ritual requires human sacrifice at the mass. The dancing of rock happens in discos and at parties, not in the streets. Rock is the liturgy of this pantheism, . . . But the pantheism behind the liturgy, though vulgar, is tolerant and pluralistic."<sup>41</sup>

**The Eclectic and Deceptive Nature of Rock Music.** The pluralistic and eclectic nature of rock music can be very deceptive for Christians, because some rock songs sound Christian while others Satanic. Pattison explains: "Some rock, like the songs of Soft Cell, is overly 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, and thanks to Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys, even Jewish rock, each distinguished by its vulgar treatment of the religious material. Rock's pantheism happily accommodates the varieties of religious experience, careless of whatever contradiction arises, and on the *Billboard* album charts a record by U2 that features lead singer Bono's adaptation of the Gloria from the mass appears next to Mötley Crüe's *Shout at the Devil*."<sup>42</sup>

The eclectic and pantheistic nature of rock music makes it possible for rock's fans to adore Satan "in the disco by night and Christ in the cathedral by day. Rock merely continues the American democratic religious tolerance and diversity."<sup>43</sup>

The mingling of the sacred with the sacrilegious in rock music, may explain why so many Christians see nothing wrong with such music. Several reviewers of the first draft of this manuscript that went out to the 8000 plus subscribers to my ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTERS, alerted me to fact that the lyrics of some rock songs are not anti-Christian. In fact, they speak out against all manner of injustices, racism, hatred, and nuclear weapons. Thus, their contention is that rock music can be legitimately adopted for Christian worship, after altering its lyrics.

This observation is correct but the contention is wrong because it ignores three major considerations. First, rock music, as we shall see in chapter 5, makes its impact *musically* rather than *lyrically*. As sociologist Simon Frith points out in his book *Sound Effects, Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll*, "A word-based approach is not helpful at getting at the meaning of rock . . . The words, if they are noticed at all, are absorbed after the music has made its mark."<sup>44</sup> This means that the hypnotic beat of rock music neutralizes whatever positive message the lyrics may contain. This important point will be considered more fully in the following chapter.

Second, good and evil are often mixed in the same rock song. Take Alanis Morissette, for example. Her songs are popular because of her passion and rage at some of the social problems. But her language contains obscenities and psychosexual matter. Even those songs which contain no obscene language, offer no Biblical answer to human dilemmas. For example in her song "You Learn," she croons:

I recommend getting your heart  
trampled on to anyone,  
I recommend walking around naked  
in your living room.  
Swallow it down  
(what a jagged little pill).  
It feels so good  
(swimming in your stomach),  
Then wait until dust settles.  
You live, you learn,  
You love, you learn,  
You cry, you learn,  
You lose, you learn,  
You bleed, you learn,  
You scream, you learn.

This song speaks of learning from pain. It may echo what living for Christ is all about, but Morissette does not offer the right answer. The solution to the problem of pain is to be found not in swallowing a pill (most likely an addictive drug), but in trusting in God's overruling providence to sustain us through the suffering.

Lastly, the mixture of good and evil lyrics in rock music, may well represent an effective satanic strategy to use the good lyrics to lead some Christians to accept more readily the evil ones. If all the rock songs dealt only with sex, drugs, and violence, fewer Christians would be attracted to such kind of music. But the fact that some rock songs address legitimate social concerns, this facilitate the acceptance of those rock songs which promote anti-Christians values and life-style.

Throughout the course of its history, Christianity has been plagued by the mixing of truth with error. The result has been the rise of countless heretical movements. The religious and social revolution brought about by the rock and roll movement must be seen within this historical context. The best Christian defense against all forms of deceptions, including that of rock music, is to be found in a clear understanding of their false teachings and practices. This is what this symposium is all about. So far we have examined in chapter 2 the philosophical worldview of rock music; in chapter 3 the discernible hardening process of rock music; and in this chapter the deceptive religious experience offered by rock. In the following chapter we take a closer look to the actual structure and values of rock music.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural revolution brought about by rock music during the latter half of the nineteenth century is at its roots a religious movement which is based on a pantheistic understanding of God. For the rock and rollers God is not a transcendent Being beyond them, but an infinite power present around them and within them. Rock music, sex, drugs, and dance, are important rituals of the rock religion, because they are supposed to provide to its followers the means to transcend the limitation of time and space and experience the supernatural.

In many ways rock music promises to his followers what Satan promised to Adam and Eve: You can become like God by partaking of the forbidden fruit. Like our fore-parents at the beginning of human history, many today are succumbing to Satan's temptation in the hope to enjoy a godlike experience.

This investigation conducted in this chapter on the religious, social, and moral implications of the rock and roll movement, invite us to consider a timely question: Could it be that the worldwide popularity of rock music, which promotes the worship of self and human idols, is part of the mastermind strategy to promote the endtime false worship described in the Three Angels Message of Revelation 14?

It is important to remember that the apocalyptic imagery of the false worship promoted by Babylon in Revelation 13 and 14, is derived from the historical chapter of Daniel 3, which describes an event of prophetic endtime significance. On Plain of Dura all the inhabitants of the Babylonian empire were called to worship the golden image of king Nebuchadnezzar. A fiery furnace was prepared for those who refused to do homage to the golden image. Daniel informs us that "every kind of music" (Dan 3:7, 10) was used to cause all classes of people from all the provinces of the empire to corporately worship the golden image (Dan 3:10).

Twice in Daniel 3 there is a long list of the different musical instruments used to produce "every kind of music" (Dan 3:7, 10). This eclectic music was played to induce people to worship the golden image. Could it be that like in ancient Babylon, Satan is using today "every kind of music" to lead the world into the endtime false worship of the "beast and its image" (Rev 14:9)? Could it be that a Satanic stroke of genius will write Gospel songs that will have the marking of every taste of music: folk music, jazz, rock, disco, country-western, rap, calypso, etc.? Could it be that many Christians will come to love this kind of Gospel songs, because they sound very much like the music of Babylon?

The summon of the Three Angels Message to come out of spiritual Babylon, by rejecting its false worship, could well include also the rejection of the rock music of Babylon. Soon the whole world will be gathered for the final showdown in the antitypical, apocalyptic Plain of Dura and "every kind of music" will be played to lead the inhabitants of the earth to "worship the beast and its image" (Rev 14:9).

Those who reason that there is nothing wrong with the music of Babylon, may be conditioning themselves to accept the false worship promoted by Babylon. Satan has his own songs to promote the endtime false worship. Could it be that by adopting the music of Babylon, some will miss the chance to sing the New Song of Moses and of the Lamb? May this question resonate in our consciousness and challenge us to stand for truth like the three Hebrew worthies.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

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