



STATEMENT DR180

ROCK MUSIC

Is rock music of the devil? The Christian community has failed to reach a consensus on this question. Many Christians believe that the “beat” of rock music is inherently evil, so that all rock music, even the relatively mild rock of such dedicated Christian performers as Randy Stonehill and the late Keith Green is regarded as Satan’s instrument. Other Christians believe that there is nothing at all wrong with rock music, and see nothing harmful in listening even to the most popular secular rock artists.

Our conviction is that music, in and of itself, is neither good nor evil, and that the claim that the rock beat is inherently evil has yet to be proved. Performed in a certain way and with worldly lyrics, of course, rock music can and unquestionably is used or produce a sensuous, sinful reaction. However, in many cases, with little modification, if the same rhythm or beat had accompanying biblical lyrics, the resulting song could be used to convict sinner, encourage saints, and glorify God. We need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and discerning as to the particular message in the piece of music in question.

It is undeniable that the secular “rock and roll” music industry has had a significant role in promoting sexual immorality and drug abuse. This is due, however, to the immorality of the musicians, not the form of the music itself. We believe that Christians should beware of the destructive role models which young people too often find and follow in secular rock stars. The solution, however, is not to prohibit all forms of rock music, but to substitute the rock of godly musicians in place of the rock of the ungodly world. This does not mean that we endorse all musicians who call themselves “Christians,” since it must be admitted that some such performers are Christian in name only. For the most part, however, Christian rock musicians are conscientious, ministry-minded believers who perform with responsibility and integrity, and who are leading people to Christ. Whether we personally like the style of their music is another matter altogether.

Perhaps the most common criticism of secular rock music is that it uses “backward masking,” supposedly a method by which messages are recorded backwards and communicated subliminally when the records are played. The results of our investigation have, to date, failed to substantiate the widespread existence of backward masking. Our findings indicate that by listening to the garbled sounds in reverse it is just as possible to discover a “hallelujah” or “praise God” in the muffled cacophony. However, most of these “decoded” messages appear to be unintentional. It is true that backward messages have been used intentionally on two or three records, most notably the “White Album” of the Beatles (who admitted using it). However, none of these messages have anything to do with Satanic worship. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful that such messages, barely discernible as such when the records are playing backwards, could be transmitted to the human mind when the records are played forwards. Is the idea of “dog” communicated subliminally whenever the word “God” is heard? Surely not! the overtly immoral messages of the actual songs are far more destructive than backward masking ever could be. Our opinion therefore is that Christians should focus on the known evils of ungodly rock music, rather than discrediting themselves by searching for Satanic needles in “musical” haystacks.

For more information on rock music, we recommend *Rock Music: A Window to Your Child’s Soul* by Dave Hart and Al Menconi. You can special order this book from CRI by credit card by calling (888) 7000-CRI.