

*Milwaukee*MUSIC CAN HURT YOU6633 W. WARBURG CIRCLE
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Wisconsin State Teachers' Conference (WELS) October, 1978

When I was assigned the above topic in December of 1977, the following brief description was added to the assignment: "Physical aspects - Spiritual considerations. Understanding, what is 'ominous' within music often thought to be innocent." Since I'm a pastor, not a physician, I've concentrated in my presentation on the spiritual considerations of the topic and what I believe to be morally "ominous" and obviously evil in modern music, rather than the physical aspect.

However, the following item in the 4/30/77 Milwaukee Journal (hereafter abbreviated TMJ), written by Bill Milkowski concerning a rock concert in Milwaukee indicates that there is some real physical danger connected with certain forms of modern music:

"Rex has what it takes to drive teenage ears wild and to make it financially in the rock business world today - hard driving, metal grinding guitars; a hip swiveling, prancing lead singer spouting suggestive lyrics; a few choreographed kicks and theatrics; and, of course, plenty of decibels.

The 300 bopper rockers experienced a double treat with this New York band, - they got to feel their music as well as hear it. And for some, the feeling was quite painful. Many of the ushers wore ear plugs or stuffed tissues in the ears, and a few in the audience even walked out because of the volume.

But the hard rocking enthusiasts from the front row to the back loved every decibel. High screaming lead singer Rex Smith acknowledged their faith, 'At least now we know who our friends are in this town.'

. . . But the sound was dangerously loud. When the level reaches 120 decibels physical damage occurs, often accompanied by pain. The hairlike cilia inside the ear that aids the hearing process begin to crumble and break off at this point causing temporary and possibly long term hearing problems. Rex was dangerously close to that 120 decibel level Friday night.

It's a shame that young ears are attracted to such intense volume levels without realizing the dangers involved."

Surely conscientious parents and Christian teachers will want to warn their children and students about this element of physical danger in modern music, but I look upon this as a relatively minor danger in comparison with the moral pitfalls our kids can tumble into if they are habitual rock concert-goers and are constantly tuned into raunchy rock music on their omnipresent transistors. I must also confess that my long-suffering wife has predicted for years that I'm going to go deaf because I have the volume tuned up too high when I get my daily fix of Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven

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on Milwaukee's "fine" or classical music station, WFMR.

1. SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

If I chose to, I would have no problem filling up the hour assigned to this workshop with hair-raising quotes I've accumulated over the years in my files that document the disgusting degeneracy, degradation and debauchery that is all too common in the most popular form of modern music known as ROCK. Instead of taking up the whole hour or more, I have selected just a few of the scores of news items that should put all Lutheran Christian parents and teachers on guard against that harmless-appearing radio or record-player our youngsters love to listen to. The 3/21/77 issue of Christian News offered the following comment on "Sex-oriented music - radio's invisible poison" by Jesse L. Jackson, a disciple of the late Martin Luther King Jr.:

"The deadliest poisons are colorless, odorless and tasteless toxins with the power to penetrate anywhere, undetected. No effective way exists to develop, resistance against such invisible poisons. Traditional safeguards are ineffective, and to rely on them blindly can be a fatal mistake.

And so it is today, when parents look to traditional institutions either as sources of help or as scapegoats in their frustrating battles to reach or save the minds of their children. Home, school, church and synagogue are no longer strong enough to save children, because their combined power cannot match or overcome the other forces that also shape children's lives and attitudes. Foremost among these is the power of the media.

Consider only one potent media influence on children that parents generally are insensitive or deaf to: the radio. Those parents who do become aware of their children's addiction to radio and the music it broadcasts deal with it by ordering the volume turned down. But loud or soft, the beat goes on and its message comes through.

In the days when popular music first began flirting with sexually suggestive lyrics, program directors dropped the offending songs once they realized what was going on; some even bleeped or muddled the suggestions. But now the songs are sexually directive, with explicit instructions, and with radios amplifying their messages.

Do you know what songs radios are beaming into the ears of 14-, 15-, and 16-year olds, and their 4-, 5-, and 6-year-old brothers and sisters? There have been 'Shake Your Booty,' 'Ain't That a Bitch,' 'I Want to Do It to You All Night Long,' 'Let's Spend the Night Together,' 'I Want to Do Something Freaky to You,' 'It's Alright to Make Love on the First Night,' 'Squeeze Box,' and 'Love to Love You, Baby,' the short version of which, Time magazine said, features the singer, Donna Summer, having 22 orgasms.

These present-day heroines and heroes of the young use their art, through the medium of radio, to transmit a moral tone and an ethical content that, at the least, encourages their listeners, our children, into premature heat. The pervasiveness of radio and pop music is undeniable. Wherever young people go,

their radios are with them, from waking to sleeping, playing through the hours. Are our children its audience or its victims?

This year, our nation is in the midst of a teen-age pregnancy epidemic, babies having babies. This year, more than one of every 10 of this country's 15- to 19-year-old girls will be pregnant -- and so will another 30,000 or more 10-14-year-old girls. Only a third -- or less -- of these million-plus child-mothers will conceive in wedlock. Where do you suppose they have been tuned while developing their attitudes about love and lovemaking?

The victims of the pregnancy epidemic aren't just our children, but their children, too. Children they really don't want, children they don't know how to care for, children they lack the maturity to care for -- or love -- intelligently. Because they may foresee this, more than a fourth of the teen-age girls who will get pregnant this year will have abortions. That's a step we should see as another horrifying symptom, rather than as a cure.

Of those teen-agers who will bear their children, nine of 10 will take their babies home. They will take them to homes where, because their mothers are immature, unprepared, too poorly educated to find meaningful employment, these children of children will experience enormous family insecurity and, all too often, be condemned to lives of material and mental poverty, physical and psychic deprivation.

All this defies other trends in American life. For more than a decade, the overall birthrate has been dropping -- but not among 15- 17-year olds. Not only is pregnancy increasing among younger girls, so is the proportion of them who conceive their children out of wedlock. The birthrate for unmarried 18- and 19-year-olds is now higher than that of unmarried women 20 to 24 years old -- a reversal of traditional patterns. What ideals of love and attitudes about lovemaking are these young women and their lovers tuning into?

Can anyone doubt that the teen-ager's constant, transistorized companion doesn't influence him? Does anyone doubt that music heard on the radio doesn't motivate millions of teen-agers to spend millions to buy the records the radio stations play -- and some they don't, like the 16-minute version of Donna Summers' 'Love to Love You, Baby?' Can anyone doubt that radio and other media exercise very real power in directing our children's lives?

If the media are to have power over the minds of children, then they must accept responsibility to see that it's done. Educators have a responsibility, too. And so too, do the heroes and heroines of the young. It may be too late to save the children of the children.

It still amazes me that so many of abortion's enlightened proponents only focus on the consequences of decadence, not on causes. Their concern is panicked reaction to immediate impact, not with the roots of a problem for which their panacea is abortion.

Isn't it logical that teaching too little, too late, about sex and failing to teach anything about moral responsibilities has produced too many ignorant and irresponsible young men and women?

We can't wait to see who might be willing to take responsibility. Abortion might prevent the arrival of our children's children, but it won't save our children. We -- all of us -- need to realize and communicate that we cannot and will not allow our public airwaves to transmit society's lowest and most debased values to our youngest and most impressionable citizens."

Just as I was in the final stage of writing this paper I came across this more recent reaction by the Reverend Jesse Jackson (who is scheduled to be a featured speaker at the public schools' Wisconsin State Teachers' Convention in Milwaukee this week) to the seamy side of modern music as reported in the 10/9/78 Milwaukee Sentinel which took the article from the Universal Press Syndicate:

"One of the ways of appraising a civilization, of determining its spiritual tone and moral value, is to listen to its music. Music, as do the other arts, comes closer to expressing the true essence of a culture than do technological or commercial achievements. In that sense, music is more closely aligned with religion than it is with science - though music is a science, as well.

Music can express hope or despair, positive or negative values. It can affirm life or negate it. Music can lift the human spirit or degrade it. It can evoke joy or tears, excite or soothe emotions. Music can give life meaning or express a nihilistic philosophy.

In many ways music has become the major educator of our young people. The average 15 year old has watched 18,000 hours of television, but probably listened to many, many more hours of radio. That same 15 year old has spent some 13,000 hours in school. Quantitatively, then, radio may well have greater access to our children's minds than does school - and qualitatively its impressions are deeper. If you doubt this, check out your son or daughter's T-shirt or the pictures on their bedroom walls to see whom they are looking to as role models.

Often parents are irritated at the loud music played by their children, but seldom do that they take time to listen to the words. Usually, we dismiss the words with the comment that we can't understand what they're saying anyway.

It's as if parents and children are operating on two different wavelengths. Parents and adults are sending signals on one frequency and young people are receiving on another.

There was a time when much of the contemporary music interpreted what was going on in this society in a socially redemptive way. One appealing aspect of Bob Dylan's 'Blowin' in the Wind' was its expression of our agony over the Vietnam War. Aretha Franklin interpreted the black movement in the 1960's with her rendition of 'Respect.' Marvin Gaye sang about life in the ghetto in his 'Inner City Blues.' Even today, Stevie Wonder's album, 'Songs in the Key of Life,' continues in that tradition.

Generally, however, for a variety of reasons, things have changed for the worse. Woodstock came along with its drug-oriented music. Love songs were reduced to intercourse without discourse and became not just sexually suggestive but sexually explicit and directive. It wasn't long before 'punk rock' attempted to elevate violence to an art form.

Recently, someone called my attention to the latest hit album of Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones, entitled 'Some Girls.' On the album, in a song by the same name, Jagger wrote and sings the following lyrics:

French girls want Cartier/Italian girls want cars/American girls want everything in the world you can possibly imagine/English girls are prissy/I can't stand 'em on the telephone/Sometimes I take the receiver off the hook/I don't want them to ever call. White girls are pretty funny/Sometimes they drive me

mad/Black girls just want to get all night/I just don't have that much jam.'

That song, first of all, is an insult to all women; secondly, a racial slur against black people; and thirdly, outrageously degrading to black women in particular and to all decent thinking people in general.

Mass communicators like entertainers (who not only entertain but educate) must assume social and moral responsibility equal to the power they possess.

If you are concerned about the above record, you may want to write or send a telegram to Ahmet Ertegun, president of Atlantic Records, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019, and express your sense of moral concern and outrage."

Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly, best known for her determined opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, expressed her agreement with Jackson's concern about the evil influence of so-called sex rock and added her warnings about the close correlation between rock music and drug use in a column which appeared originally in the 3/15/78 St. Louis Globe-Democrat and was reprinted in the 3/27/78 Christian News:

"Several months ago, I wrote a column commending the Rev. Jesse Jackson for his criticism of sex rock - the so-called music that promotes immoral sex habits among teenagers and thereby contributes to the high rate of venereal disease, illegitimate pregnancies and broken lives.

Among the letters I subsequently received was one from a union musician, Jack Staulcup, who agreed, but said that I told only half the story. The other half is the fact that hard rock music has fostered the great wave of drug addiction among young people in the United States and England.

Prior to 1964 drug use among grade school, high school and college students was almost unheard of. Since 1964 television, radio, movies and juke boxes have built multimillion-dollar stars out of drug-using rock 'singers'. They peddle the line that drug use, as well as illicit sex, sloppy dress, atheism and rebellion against authority are the 'in'activities. Even a lot of country music dwells on adultery and divorce.

It is self-evident that certain kinds of music create different moods and emotions. Music is widely used as therapy in mental institutions. Music piped into factories is estimated to increase employee efficiency up to 20 percent. Soothing music is used in the waiting rooms of doctors and dentists to alleviate anxiety.

Most church services use music to inspire and motivate the congregation. 'Star Wars' is only the most recent striking example of how background music is artfully used to create a mood, to play on the emotions and to achieve psychological effects.

We are kidding ourselves if we think that hard rock is unique among music and that it has no effect on its listeners. According to Staulcup, a steady diet of rock and roll junk promotes degenerate rebelliousness among teenagers that finds its outlet in drugs, alcohol and illicit sex. Teenagers really do not even dance to it; all they can do is to move their bodies in an obscene motion.

Some will argue that every generation had had its 'fad' dances such as the Charleston, the Big Apple and the Jitterbug. Some were silly, some were energetic exercise, but none of the previous fads was lewd or obscene.

The older dances required competent musicians to play the music, whereas hard rock does not.

Most of the so-called music on television, radio and juke boxes is performed by screaming, moaning singers accompanied by racket makers who never had a music lesson.

For a time I, too, thought rock and roll was a fad that would go away. But it persists year after ear-splitting year. The latest version is 'punk-rock' which originated in England. It preys on the instability of children between the ages of 10 and 16, and is twice as loud, vulgar and revolutionary as ordinary hard rock.

It is strange that government and public interest groups, which have been so concerned about air, water and land pollution, never utter a word about ear, mind or moral pollution. Cigarette and liquor commercials have long been outlawed from television and radio, but still the drug-pushing, sex-stimulating singers survive without protest.

Staulcup's criticism comes from authentic information. An experienced and successful musician, he has attended many rock festivals to see what goes on. He has conducted thousands of interviews with teenagers and learned from their own mouths how rock and roll promotes immoral activities and attitudes.

His interviews also reveal that most talented young music students who have learned to play good music despise the rock noise. Of course, every teenager who likes rock and roll is not a juvenile delinquent, but most go along with the crowd because of peer pressure.

Staulcup concludes that rock and roll is the biggest legalized racket this country has ever seen. If we value civilization, we cannot afford to ignore any longer the high correlation between the multibillion-dollar hard-rock racket and the explosion of drug use and illicit sex among their teenage victims. Parents should take a more active part in monitoring their children's entertainment."

In addition to the above concerns regarding teen-age sexual promiscuity and pregnancy plus drug abuse being promoted by raucous ranting and roaring rock-n-roll musicians, I would offer the following pieces of evidence from the Milwaukee Journal in recent years with these headlines describing rock concerts: "Milwaukee Gets a Taste of Hell," "Tubes' Dirt Not Groovy," "Crowd Liked Perversion," and "Foghat-Smoke, Noise, Ecstasy." Under the latter title Journal writer Stephen Wiest (note that these articles were written by secular newspapermen, not by blue-nosed clergymen) had this description in the 4/10/74 TMJ:

"Rock concerts at the Riverside Theater have become quite predictable of late. Each affair features a sellout crowd of high school age kids, smoke so thick it stings the eyes, music so loud it numbs the ears, and a patrol wagon parked out front to haul the naughtier juveniles away.

English rock quartet Foghat's appearance Tuesday was no exception to the rock 'n' roll rule. Scores of lit marijuana cigarettes passed around in the dark, vomit on the lounge stairways, and widespread temporary deafness after the show, all testified to Foghat's ability to inspire Dionysian ecstasy among the young.

. . . The scatological comments of bassist Tony Stevens and hairy seminudity of drummer Roger Earle went well with Peverett's grimacing and phallic guitar postures."

About two years later (TMJ 5/15/76) Wiest described a concert (to use that term very loosely) presented by a group known as the Tubes:

"The Tubes, described in local newspaper ads as 'an uproarious assemblage of 30 men and women combined to entertain you in a fashion that can only be described as unbelievable,' played at the Oriental Theater Friday. The group's soft core porno theatrics and hard rock sounds were indeed uproarious, but the only unbelievable thing was that about 400 people paid \$6 and \$6.50 to see it. . . .

The Tubes show has something to titillate almost every kind of deviate impulse - bare skin, foul language, elaborate pantomimes of perverted sexual acts. They are all worked into big production numbers involving motorcycles, whips and wheelchairs."

Almost two years later (TMJ 3/14/78) journal writer Bill Milkowski described another Tubes appearance in Milwaukee as follows:

. . . "Sure, they're outrageous. Parts of their act would easily be considered downright perverted by most people, but satirical perversion is a borderline case. It's grossness with that popular West Coast touch of black humor to remove the reality and make it somehow more acceptable.

The sight of a drug-induced British punk rocker teetering on his two foot high platform shoes and throwing up between lyrics is disgusting. But if you take it as just another skit and one more absurd role that Fee Waydill puts himself through, you can recognize it as sheer farce and parody. . . .

. . . Monday night we saw him strut around in a G-string, simulate abnormal sex acts on stage and whirl a live buzz saw over his head like a lasso while singing the Beatles' 'When I Saw Her Standing There.' Definitely too weird for most people, but the 800 fans ate it up.

. . . a grand finale featur(ed) the whole cast on 'White Punks on Dope.'

Some of the lowlights included a sadistic simulation of a brutal rape scene. Not funny."

The most recent entry in my grim file of modern music perversion goes back to TMJ 8/23/78 when Daniel P. Kelly reported how Milwaukee got a taste of hell as follows:

". . . Anyone attending the premiere performance of the 10th anniversary tour by Britain's Black Sabbath learned that hell was alive and well and living in the Milwaukee Arena Tuesday night.

And, as with nearly everything else these days, you had to pay to get in, too. Tuesday night's crowd of about 10,400 people - the second largest indoor rock show of the year here - coughed up about \$75,000 for the privilege of being pulverized

by this slightly satanic, extremely silly quartet.

Judging by the stumbling bodies and damp piles of sawdust in the Arena hallways between acts, some of the listeners coughed up more than that, although the Traveling Medicine Show first aid crews reported a light night. Security head Terry Cullen blamed groups of motorcycle club members for most of his many headaches."

There is no doubt in my mind that many of our Wisconsin Synod youth regularly and routinely attend rock concerts like the ones described above and their parents either are unaware of or uncaring about the sadistic and viciously satanic side of this so-called entertainment. Surely Christian teachers and pastors have the responsibility to sound the alarm about this spiritually sick music and to ask the parents of our highly impressionable youth: "Parents, do you know and do you care where your children are turning for amusement and musical entertainment?"

In his famous speech at Harvard University earlier this year the exiled Soviet author, Alexander Solzhenitsyn criticized (with good reason, I believe) America's "intolerable music." Surprisingly, the famous T.V. star and song writer Steve Allen expressed similar sentiments in a 3/13/78 U.S. News and World Report article reprinted in the 3/13/78 Christian News as follows:

"Most music on the 'Top 40' today is junk. There are at least 57 reasons for this, but one is the popularity of the guitar in the last 20 years.

"If you have the gift or the tendency to composition, you now generally start composing about three weeks after you get your first guitar. At that time, you know only four or five chords, so a lot of the garbage music which has been written in the last 20 years is very primitive harmonically. When you compare it to Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin or Cole Porter, it's like a different art form altogether.

"Another reason is Elvis Presley, who became a sensation after one appearance on my show in 1956. Of all the singers who have ever been popular in our culture, he was the most popular. But his songs were the worst, averaged out, that any established singer has ever recorded. The fact that someone with so little ability became the most popular singer in history says something significant about our cultural standards."

Obviously Allen did not have too high an opinion of Elvis Presley's musicianship, but the 7/24/78 issue of Time Magazine reports that the late Elvis, who in some circles is rapidly achieving the status of a deity, himself "was peeved at the Beatles for their filthy, unkempt appearance and suggestive music." I would call that a

classic case of the pot calling the kettle black. Surely even the most broad-minded member of our WELS has to concede that modern music of the rock variety poses powerful temptations for our youth and to pretend that it's not much different than the Charleston and jazz music of earlier years is not facing reality. I have to agree with a writer in Time magazine (7/24/78) who in a movie review of the "Buddy Holly Story" declared that "rock unleashed the nation's sexuality." I also share the view of Leland Ryken, who in a Christianity Today 4/7/78 article "Were the Puritans Wrong about Sex?" observed that "today's popular music and cinema" tries to "titillate people's sexual desires with the notion that secretive adulterous love(?) is more exciting than married love."

2. DANCING

Closely related to the subject of music and its potential for spiritual hurt or harm is the thorny topic of dancing, which is steadily becoming more and more controversial and confusing in our circles. For many years, at least from my middle-aged vantage point, the majority of WELS people, pastors, and teachers seemed to agree with the position expressed in the January 1978 Outlook which reprinted the article "Dating: With or Without Dancing?" from "His", student magazine of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship as follows: ". . . If Christian young men and women are to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, and if the body is a sacred trust from God, the 'temple of the Holy Spirit,' then it is only reasonable to evaluate modern dancing as a perilous incitement to lust. And since dancing involves two persons, one who dances without impure thoughts cannot assume that this will also be true of the other. Thus one may unknowingly contribute to the secret indulgence of lust in another.

"Dancing, like petting, will remove the desire for other wholesome activities which a couple may enjoy together with more profit and less tension. It is for these considerations that dancing may be regarded by the Christian as falling far short of the purposes of God for the sanctity of dating."

Today it makes one feel like a hopelessly old-fashioned old fogey to express serious reservations about dancing since it seems that increasing numbers of WELS laypeople, teachers and pastors are looking to the dance floor and the discos as places of harmless fun and wholesome amusement. Thus the following confessions by a 17 year old girl in an advice to the lovelorn column (TMJ 5/28/63) sounds rather

unreal, Victorian, naive, and quaint in this sophisticated generation in which we live:

" . . . Last weekend we decided to go dancing. It's the only way (?) we can meet people and the only way (?) we can have fun. . . . We had a wonderful time dancing and I met two fellows. One was a very fresh fellow. He also danced rather suggestively, but he was such a 'living doll' I about fell for him."

3. VOICES OF CAUTION AND MODERATION

In June, 1976 Prof. E. Fredrich of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary revealed his considerable courage when he actually had the temerity to tackle the topic "How Should We Handle Social Dancing among Our Students?" At a Synod-wide faculty conference at Northwestern College, Watertown. In his 16 page paper Prof. Fredrich did not come up with the final word on dancing, but his customarily astute observations from his viewpoint as a learned historian were most helpful to me in preparing this paper. There is a "Pietist strain" in our church body and, I must confess, also in me, a "tendency to overreach, to regulate and compartmentalize the sanctified life of the free Christian" (p. 2 of the paper). Prof. Fredrich states in no uncertain terms that "Where the dancing involves the provocation of lust and unchastity, there is sin. Where the dance is in itself unchaste, and there is such dancing, there is sin. . . . all social dancing that is sinful is to be condemned" (p. 3). However, Fredrich warns that to say "all social dancing is sin. . . that just isn't the case" (p. 3). He describes much of modern dancing with his typically colorful vocabulary as follows: "violent motion is involved instead of vile emotion" and it seems to him that "lust is being suppressed rather than expressed" (p. 3). He reminds us that in folk dancing and square dancing there is the "element of sociability and rhythm and fun," that "the touch amounts to the lightest of embraces and the movements are graceful rather than seductive" (p. 4). He warns against loveless judging of others as he insists: "we have to take the word of fellow Christians who insist that they can dance without being provoked" (p. 4).

Excellent historian that he is, Fredrich shows how the passage of time, changing customs, and new fashions can influence our view of dancing: "when the glimpse of the

female ankle and a touch of her arm was in the realm of high adventure for the young man, one could readily ascribe to the dance great provocation to lust" (p.6). But he contends that our present "generation geared to huddling and cuddling on car seats" (p.7) is not likely to be led into the depths of depravity by the physical contact connected with modern-day dancing.

Much of his paper explores the subject of giving or taking offense with respect to dancing. A copy is available through our Seminary Library and offers very worthwhile reading. Fredrich's most direct answer to the question explored by his paper is in my opinion, as follows: "The record suggests trouble ahead if we play the role of advocate and promoter (of social dancing at our Synod schools)" (p. 9). In an article entitled "Hair-raising Rules" in TMJ on 10/8/78 free lance writer Frank Kolar offered some historical background on society's attitudes toward the length of hair on males, the use of tobacco, movies, gambling, the use of alcohol, etc. In the section on dancing he wrote as follows to remind us that we can easily make fools of ourselves if we become extremists or overreact to social phenomena like modern music and the inclination of people to enjoy dancing:

. . . "How about dancing? The early Christian church condemned dancing and St. Augustine went on record as saying: 'The dance is a circle with the devil in the center.'

In 16th century Spain, a popular dance known as the 'saraband' so rankled some that a law was passed forbidding anyone to even hum the music.

In Victorian England, the sedate waltz was denounced as 'the most degenerate dance that the last or present century can see.' And in 19th century America, the lively polka came under attack because the ladies were showing their ankles.

In 19th century Paris, a dancer was brought into court on the charge that she performed in her bare feet, and the charges stated that 'the sight of light blue veins against white skin was a deliberate act of indecent sexual attraction.

When the tango became a US craze in the early 1920s, the raging evangelist Billy Sunday called it 'the most hellish institution that ever wriggled from the depths of perdition.'

Jazz dancing also was denounced in a newspaper: 'The dance, and the music, with its abominable rhythm and copulative beat, was imported from Central Africa by a gang of Bolsheviks in America, their aim being to strike at Christian civilization throughout the world.'

For almost every new dance craze, there was some kind of reaction. Iowa

City once prohibited the Charleston, the Grizzly Bear, the Texas Tommy, the Turkey Trot and the Bunny Hug to be danced in a public hall.

In Belt, Mont., dancers were forbidden to do the Kangaroo Glide, the Duck Wobble, the Angle Worm Wiggle and the Tango. A 1926 law in Stockton, Calif., said that it was illegal to wiggle while dancing. And a Monroe (Utah) law said there had to be daylight between a couple while dancing."

Another effective voice of caution and moderation on the subjects of dancing and modern music belongs to Dale Topp, the author of "Music in the Christian Community" (Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1976, available also through our Sem library). Topp, Professor of Music at Calvin College and an experienced choir and band director as well as a former elementary school music teacher, takes a thoughtful middle-of-the-road approach to rock music and modern forms of dancing. He believes that we dare not throw out the baby with the bath water by rigidly rejecting every form of music which bears the label "rock", because beautiful melodies and worthwhile lyrics can be found in that musical format. He exposes the inconsistency of those who would forbid any form of dancing for Christians. I found his views on these subjects very thought-provoking and worthy of careful consideration by WELS teachers, pastors, and laypeople of all ages, especially teen-agers and their concerned parents.

On the subject of teen-agers' rock music Topp writes on pps. 131-133 of his book as follows:

"One word comes to our minds when we think of teen-agers listening to music-- 'rock.' Chapter Two suggested that one reason teen-agers listen to rock (or any other style of currently popular music) is to proclaim to their parents and teachers that they are seeking their own style of living. The Christian community often overreacts to the potential threat of popular music. Aware of the life-style of certain performers and the immorality reflected in certain texts, a conscientious parent may forbid his children to listen to that music. Here again we need to label the problems specifically. We serve our teen-agers poorly by restricting their contact with popular music unless we explain our position. Before a Christian parent can show favorable reactions to and an interest in popular music, however, he must get over an initial fear. Certain articles and books have warned Christians not to let their children become involved with rock music. I personally believe that the private beliefs and lives of rock musicians should have no more relevance in our use of their music than do the beliefs and lives of classical composers in our use of their music. Moreover, a solidly Christian upbringing is not going to be broken down simply by listening to some song lyrics. When you no longer see popular music as a strong moral threat, you may wish to try the following suggestions in your home. Teen-age interest in popular music is another prime opportunity for Christians to imitate the suggestions that Paul gives for the body of Christ.

(a) Be honest. Do not try to win the approval of your adolescent child by complimenting his musical choices unless you mean what you say. On the other hand, do not make blanket condemnations of the music or its performers. Try to distinguish between matters of genuine musical value and simply matters of taste.

(b) Be kind. Do not express your dislike unkindly.

(c) Show respect. Recognize your adolescent as a member of a new generation and respect his needs to find his own ideas in many aspects of life. Also respect and encourage his ability to evaluate rock music and to spend time with the best of that music available. For example, although I have little taste for rock music in general, my experiences with teen-agers at home and in school have led me to an open admiration of certain compositions performed by such groups as the Beatles, the Symphonic Metamorphoses, and Blood, Sweat, and Tears.

(d) Show interest. Ask your teen-ager to play and explain his favorite record of rock music. Ask sincere questions about the music and the reasons for his preferences. Comment occasionally about newspaper and magazine coverage of rock music, asking him if he believes the coverage to be fair or biased. In spite of the inane exceptions that every generation seems to enjoy, popular music in the last ten years contains more music of greater musical quality than did most popular music of previous generations. Some popular music achieves musical importance. Show interest in the best current popular music that your child enjoys.

An important aspect of your interest is to ask the sorts of questions that you hope your child will ask in relation to popular music. However, ask questions rather than pronouncing judgments.

(e) Plant seeds in other ground. Try to maintain other musical activities during adolescence. Some young people follow only the shallower forms of popular music as dished out by certain local radio stations. They need other music to turn to when this music begins to wear thin. It has been fascinating in my own home to see my teen-agers develop strong likes and dislikes in both rock music and classical music. Encourage continued participation in the school band or the church choir. Buy as gifts records of other styles of music. Encourage musical hobbies like playing the uke or singing in a trio or quartet. Attend live concerts. Continue to play a variety of musical styles as appropriate background music in the home. In this connection, 'Christian folk music' has contributed a healthy alternative for the Christian teen-ager.

Some Christian teen-agers use popular music to declare a certain amount of independence from the current adult generation. Many use popular music simply as an auditory background to other activities and pay little attention to the meaning of the words. Christian parents should certainly be concerned about the possible influences of popular music on the lives of their children; but until they see a clear influence of popular music on their children's behavior, they should probably restrain their concern to the less obvious activities of patience, prayer, and faith."

Under the heading "Choice of Music" Topp has more to say about rock, hymns, jazz, etc. and their relative merits as follows (pps. 147-149):

"Recently I received an advertising brochure promoting a music instruction program for use in Christian schools. The brochure reassured the potential buyer that 'questionable' topics like folk, rock, and jazz music had been avoided. Let me say once again that saying yes to hymns and saying no to rock, jazz, etc. is a pitifully weak way to live the Christian life in music. Hymns do not automatically serve Christ, and rock music does not automatically serve Satan; Christian living is just not that simple. Both types of music must be used responsibly.

Some Christian school administrators enjoy the convenience of defining their curricula for music in terms of worship music. Once that guideline has been established, the music instruction program needs little more administrative attention. These people not only accept music with Christian texts and associations; they encourage its greatest possible use. If second-graders in physical education classes march to 'Onward Christian Soldiers' rather than 'The Stars and Stripes Forever,' some administrators and parents believe the school has become more Christian than before. In similar fashion they prefer that the high school band play hymn transcriptions rather than 'secular' overtures.

A Christian school should indeed include some worship - sacred - music in its curriculum. A Christian school should also have a sign in front of the building that declares the Christian purposes of that school. However, defining the 'Christian-ness' of the music program in terms of the amount of worship music used is like defining the 'Christian-ness' of the entire school in terms of the size of the sign in front of the building. Both the worship music and the sign declare a Christian purpose that needs to be shown in the actions of teachers and students. The quality of worship music usage far outweighs the importance of the quality of such music used in a Christian school.

Music instruction in Christian schools ought to promote Christian living. The way in which members are selected for a small high school madrigal choir might promote Christian living far more than the band's marching in the local Memorial Day parade to a martial arrangement of 'Stand Up for Jesus.' An elementary classroom's singing of one carefully applied hymn stanza might promote Christian living far more than a half-hour of miscellaneous hymn choices every morning. A careful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of rock music in a junior high school general music class might promote Christian living far more than an extensive study of the biographies of hymn authors and composers.

Christian schools must lead students to a responsible use of worship music. This includes a need to help students discover the weaknesses in some worship music and our common usage of it, as well as a presentation of the strengths that are present and possible. In that way Christian schools can lead the way in Christian growth in the use of worship music.

Christian schools should also lead students to a responsible use of other types of music. We need to help teen-agers learn about the good rock music being written by certain competent composers, much of which is perhaps not included in the broadcasts of local rock stations. We must also help students evaluate the words of rock music - words which teen-agers might absorb in an unconscious and facile manner. Far from the neutral emptiness of many songs popular during my teen-age years, rock music today has texts ranging from perceptive social commentary, which Christians could endorse with enthusiasm, to explicit appeals to immorality, which Christians should condemn with equal vigor. Christian schools should also help students discover the genius and beauty of jazz music, with its celebrative joy and expressive sorrow. Some immoral associations of

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jazz, which have accompanied its history and tended to taint its reputation among many Christians, should be seen in the light of similar excesses among 'classical' composers - clearly as peripheral associations and not as natural outgrowths of the music itself. Today many outstanding musicians, including symphony orchestra performers, play jazz music. This slow but inevitable recognition by respected and responsible musicians of the musical respectability and quality of jazz - as well as its widespread performance in concert halls - has helped jazz outgrow its past associations with sleazy dives and immoral lifestyles. In addition to the wealth of Afro-American spirituals which America has inherited, jazz composers like Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck have written religious oratorios to be performed by church choir and orchestra. Christians need to claim the values of these contributions. In similar ways, Christian schools should foster a responsible study of dance music, country and western music, folk music, etc., claiming the value and usefulness of the music as well as clearly labeling the problems involved.

A desire for simple answers to Christian living in music reveals an unwillingness to pray for guidance with complex questions. With simple answers we tend to proceed on our own power. With more complex questions we learn to live in closer reliance on God's help. Christian schools must be willing to take on the more difficult questions regarding choice of music, showing what Christianity has to say about every area. How the music is used deserves far more attention than what music is used."

Topp's thinking about dance is also worthy of our prayerful study and careful consideration. On pps. 136, 137 he writes:

"Most teen-agers want to dance. However, many segments of the Christian community distrust dance as a physical and social activity. Perhaps this distrust arises from a fear that dance may promote too much social and physical interaction among youths during the difficult time of dating. Some Christians reject dance because they fear that it may promote sexual immorality: movements to music may readily be sexually suggestive to some impressionable youth. However, the principles of certain segments of the Christian community with regard to dance contain many inconsistencies.

They reject dance, but since 'Ring Around a Rosy' seems so innocent, they call it a game rather than a dance. They reject dance, but accept the dance-like movements of cheerleaders and drum majorettes who are often dressed in tight or scanty outfits. They reject dance but accept the same physical interactions and closeness if the participants wear roller skates or ice skates. They reject dance but accept similar movements to music in the name of physical conditioning. They accept biblical standards for living but completely overlook the important role of dance in Old Testament worship. And their rejection of dance may overlook its importance in therapy. An outright rejection of all dance is simply irresponsible, for dance can achieve important kinds of service in the body of Christ.

A more responsible approach to dance may be to recognize the problems specifically. If we fear the moral problems involved in dancing, we should label those problems precisely. Our teen-age children may well object to a 'Christian principle' that prompts parents to forbid attendance at a social function merely because it is a dance. A well-lit, well-chaperoned party that includes such folk dances as singing games, play-party songs, and square dances may be a completely appropriate social event for teen-agers. On the other hand, ballroom dancing, in which couples engage in close and continual physical contact, may be inappropriate for impressionable teen-agers. Dancing may be associated with certain problems, but let us learn to label those problems specifically and not blame all

problems on physical movement in time to music. Dance can achieve Christian service. It can promote emotional, physical, social, and even spiritual health. We need to learn how to claim that service without abandoning important Christian standards of conduct."

I believe there is a crying need in our schools and churches for more music with contemporary, lively melodies which also offer the soundly Scriptural lyrics we must insist upon. If we came up with that kind of music, with melodies that our youngsters can easily identify with, without any sacrifice or compromise as far as the words are concerned, I'm confident we would be better able to meet the problem of our upper graders clamming up or barely opening their mouths when they're called upon to sing, so much in contrast to the joyous hearty singing that comes from the primary graders. A few years ago some children from St. Philip's Lutheran School visited and sang in our church. Their songs, so often identified with "black" music, had a heavy simple beat and nearly raised the rafters of our church. Our people were not offended or displeased by that contemporary type of music. Many of them expressed their appreciation for the enthusiastic singing of our visitors. Though there is much about modern rock music we must caution about and condemn, we surely can and should use some of it with discretion and not give our children the impression that being a faithful Lutheran Christian in WELS sentences them to a lifetime of hearing and singing nothing more stirring than "Isaiah, Mighty Seer, in Days of Old," which was rip-roaring music in Luther's day, but, let's face it, it just doesn't make it with most of our youth, or adults either for that matter, in the 1970's.

CONCLUSION

As far as I'm concerned, music can hurt us Christians, especially our young Christians who drink in a day-long diet of raunchy reprehensible rock. However, let us not forget that also modern forms of music can be rehabilitated and transformed to help us carry out our calling as Christians who eagerly sing the praises of our precious Savior.

I can think of no better way to close out this paper on the possible harm that can come from music than by using the words of the great Reformer who repeatedly

stressed the help, joy and comfort he received from music. In a 3-volume anthology by Ewald Plass "What Luther Says", under the category of music, I found the following statements:

"When sadness comes to you and threatens to gain the upper hand, then say: Come, I must play our Lord Christ a song on the organ (be it the Te Deum Laudamus or the Benedictus); for Scripture teaches me that He loves to hear joyful song and stringed instruments. And strike the keys with a will, and sing out until the thoughts disappear, as David and Elisha (1 Sam. 16:23; 2 Kings 3:15) did. If the devil returns and suggests cares or sad thoughts, then defend yourself with a will and say: Get out, devil, I must now sing and play to my Lord Christ.

You must really learn to oppose him in this way, and you must not allow him to worry you. For if you admit him and listen to him, he will follow up his attack with ten more thoughts until he has overpowered you. Therefore nothing is better than to deal him a telling blow at the very beginning. Do what that husband did. When his wife began to nag and snap, he took his flute from under his belt and began contentedly to blow it until she finally became so tired that she left him alone. You, too should hit the keys of the organ like that, or take some good fellows and sing the devil down until you learn to despise him."

"... Music is an outstanding gift of God and next to theology. I would not want to give up my slight knowledge of music for a great consideration. And youth should be taught this art; for it makes fine, skillful people."

"... I am not satisfied with him who despises music, as all fanatics do; for music is an endowment and a gift of God, not a gift of men. It also drives away the devil and makes people cheerful; one forgets all anger, unchasteness, pride, and other vices. I place music next to theology and give it the highest praise. And we see how David and all saints put their pious thoughts into verse, rhyme, and songs, because music reigns in times of peace."

"... About the praise and power of music, which I have been sufficiently treated by others, I am silent except for the remark that here it appears that of old the use of music was sacred and was adapted to divine matters but that in the course of time it was (as everything else) pressed into the service of luxury and lust. For by it also the evil spirit of Saul was driven off (1 Sam. 16:23), and the prophetic spirit was given to Elisha (2 Kings 3:15)."

"... That it is good and pleasing to God to sing spiritual songs is, I think, not hidden to any Christian. Everyone is acquainted not only with the example of the kings and prophets of the Old Testament (who praised God with singing and playing, with poetry and all kinds of string music) but also with the common use of music, especially the singing of psalms, in Christendom from the very beginning. St. Paul too, instituted this in 1 Cor. 14:15 and bids the Colossians (3:16) heartily to sing spiritual songs and psalms unto the Lord in order that thereby God's Word and Christian doctrine might be used and practiced in diverse ways. . . .

I greatly desire that youth, which after all, should and must be trained in music and other proper arts, might have something whereby it might be weaned from the love ballads and the sex songs and, instead of these, learn something beneficial and take up the good with relish, as befits youth. Nor am I at all of the opinion that all the arts are to be overthrown and cast aside by the Gospel, as some superspiritual people protest; but I would gladly see all the arts, especially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them."

"... Music I have always loved. He who knows music has a good nature. Necessity demands that music be kept in the schools. A schoolmaster must know how to sing; otherwise I do not look at him. And before a youth is ordained into the ministry, he should practice music in school."

If we have a Luther-like love and appreciation for music in all its varied forms and for the precious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we surely should be able to distinguish between spiritually helpful and harmful varieties of music and we should fervently pray that the Lord would enable us to develop that same sensitivity and sound judgment, on the basis of God's Word, in the children whom we are privileged to teach.

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