
DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

Volume 19, Number 2

March/April 2008

DRUMMING UP DECEPTION

In celebration or contemplation—feeling the beat!

By Pastor Larry DeBruyn

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils . . .
(Emphasis Mine, 1 Timothy 4:1, KJV).

INTRODUCTION

Some time ago, *The Christian Science Monitor* ran an article titled, “**From US churches that are growing, a sound of drums.**” The article notes that growing churches are “drumming” churches. Citing a survey conducted by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, a nonprofit research group at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, reporter G. Jeffrey MacDonald wrote, “Churches with rising attendance numbers have a lot in common with one another—a lot more than denomination, location, or even theological approach.” According to the survey, “success stories” of growing churches “often involve men, drums, a joyful environment, and a concerted effort not to be too ‘reverent.’” The report listed four characteristics of growing churches, of which the last two are: “. . . worship [is] ‘slightly to not at all’ reverent”; and “Drums or percussion are always used in worship.” Kirk Hadaway, the survey-report’s author, states, “Such innovations make churches exciting places to be.”¹

In the context of the “new spirituality” sweeping over America’s religious landscape, believers can only ask, “What’s really happening in these drumming churches?” As dictated by a drumming beat, religious rock-‘n’-roll has become the centerpiece of worship in many churches.

Apostasy—A Sign of the Times. Apostasy always threatens the church. Jesus, Peter, Paul, John, and other New Testament writers forewarned it (Matthew 24:4, 11, 24; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 4:1; Jude 4). But in spite of the alert, it’s easy for Christians to dismiss issues which seem peripheral to the faith. It was so for King Ahab, who thought it was, “a light (or ‘trivial,’ NASB) thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1 Kings 16:31, KJV; Compare 2 Kings 14:24). Specifically, Jeroboam’s sin involved establishing idolatrous centers of Baal worship throughout northern Israel.² And Ahab, and other kings, treated the worship at the high places as “idolatry lite.” Similarly, some may dismiss this essay concerning drumming worship. But from Ahab’s example, we should learn not treat casually practices God takes seriously. Just because a majority of contemporary churches

worship God with a drumming beat does not mean the Lord accepts their “sacrifices of praise” (Amos 5:23).

Test the Spirits. In this context, the apostle John calls upon Christians to be discerning. He wrote: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1a). So just what spirit, or spirits, might a drumming beat invoke? There is evidence linking drumming worship to shamanist and voodooist religion (i.e., that holy men, or priests, can influence powerful spirits), and to a pantheist belief system (i.e., that the material universe is divine). But before attending to these spiritualities, some background of what the Bible teaches about the transcendent world of spirits, and their relationship to occultism (i.e., a belief that human beings can communicate with supernatural spirit-entities), needs to be understood.

Principalities and Powers. An invisible spiritual war rages around us. This planet, and the minds of its inhabitants, is the “turf” over which the war is being fought. Satan is contesting God for control of His creation and His creatures. Against God and His angels, Satan and his demons (i.e., fallen angels) stake their claims (See Daniel 10:12-13, 20.). As the Scripture says, “[O]ur struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

The Forbidden Cult of the Occult. The Bible depicts Satan and his minions to be real and powerful spirit beings who inhabit the occult world (i.e., the supernatural and secret world of mystery, magic and unseen spiritual entities and forces). It is a world that Christians are forbidden to have intentional involvement with. As Deuteronomy states:

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord . . . (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, NASB).

Believers are *not to be involved* with the occult world, but neither are they *to be ignorant of it* (See 2 Corinthians 2:12.). This world of the spirits is both anti-God and anti-Christ. As regards its religious context, the relevant question for Christians is, “Whose side is drumming on, Satan’s or God’s?” To answer the question, we must survey evidence

which exposes the spiritual darkness surrounding religious drumming.

The Distant Sound of Drums. Drumming is as old as civilization. As the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia* states, “Drums are the world’s oldest and most ubiquitous musical instruments . . . The oldest known drums are from 6000 BC.”³ For thousands of years, the basic design of drums has remained unchanged. Drumming was known in most ancient civilizations, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Canaanite, to name some. As Mickey Hart, drummer for the former rock group *Grateful Dead*, observes, “Many cultures have used percussion as a central part of their ritual and religious life.”⁴ The instruments were, and are, used for communication purposes, establishing marching cadences, enhancing spiritual activities, and so forth. Obviously, drumming can serve innocent musical, necessary communicative and leisurely recreational purposes. The issue concerning this essay regards the use of drumming by churches to praise and worship Holy God.

An Ominous Silence. Having stated this, it should be noted that, contrasting to its surrounding cultures and civilizations and while referring to other percussive instruments, the Bible does not mention the word “drum,” or refer to the practice of drumming.⁵ In light of this, drumming becomes a questionable “spiritual” activity. To any argument against drumming worship based upon the Scriptures’ failure to mention the word “drum,” some might retort that such argues from silence. Surely, one cannot oppose religious drumming for reason that the Bible does not mention the word “drum.” However, in light of the popularity of drumming amongst the civilizations and cultures which surrounded ancient Israel and the early church, the silence is deafening! We proceed to address the relationship of drumming to alterative spiritualities.

DRUMMING AND “NATURE” RELIGION

Shamanism. This prehistoric and Asian religion dates back thousands of years. According to one source, Shamanism refers to, “Magico-spiritual systems in which an adept enters an altered state of consciousness and travels to nonworldly realities in order to heal, divine, communicate with the spirits of the dead, and perform other supernatural feats.”⁶ The climax of the shamanistic experience is “the trance,” a state of soul when the spirits are contacted. A supernatural entity may even enter and “possess” the priest.

In addition to singing, dancing, taking drugs, and meditating to induce states of trance, or possession, shamanism employs drumming. As one source states, “Drumming is said to help put your consciousness into a meditative state, opening you up to the spirit world.”⁷ A dictionary of alternative spiritualities states, “The ability to enter the shamanic state at will is essential to shamanism. Techniques for doing so include drumming, rattling, chanting, dancing . . . Some societies employ psychedelic

drugs for this purpose . . .”⁸ Mickey Hart too views that there is a shamanistic-like purpose for drumming. He writes:

*The drummer is an inspirer, a leader, and a prophet. The blow of the drumstick translates itself not merely into sound, but into a spiritual reverberation. The excitement we feel when we hear the drumbeat tells us this is the skeleton key that opens the door into the realm of the spirit.*⁹

Can it be asked whether, or not, drumming-worship in churches might be, or become, a “skeleton key opening the door to the spirits”?

Voodoo. Though sharing similarities with Shamanism, slaves transported this African-animistic religion to our hemisphere during the infamous slaving era. From Haiti, and other Caribbean islands, Voodoo leapfrogged via Cuba to the American mainland, finding entry at the seaport of New Orleans. Voodoo religion continues to flourish in that city, and has spread to other major metropolitan areas within the United States as well. But just what is Voodoo?

Mention Voodoo to the average westerner, and images of creepy looking dolls, with pins sticking into them, come to mind. According to this stereotype, Voodoo is primarily engaged in for the purpose of harnessing malevolent spirit-powers by which devotees can curse and harm their enemies. But this impression of Voodoo is mistaken. Voodoo is more sophisticated than painted dolls with pins sticking in them.

As a religion, Voodoo is known as a, “syncretic religion based on ancient African rites and Catholicism.”¹⁰ Voodoo spirituality readily adapted to the Haitian brand of Roman Catholicism because, “Despite their difference, Voodoo and its African derived sister religions share a core of tolerance, for they do not believe that theirs is the only true faith.”¹¹ Central to Voodoo are the twin religious values of pluralism and syncretism. But Voodoo possesses more than a tendency to accommodate and absorb other religious practices and faiths.

Voodoo comes from the African word “vodu,” meaning spirit. Dr. Wade Davis, author of a definitive study of Voodoo, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, relates that spirit possession, the mystical moment when devotees directly receive spirits into their bodies, is the defining tenet of voodooist belief. Dr. Davis quotes a Haitian saying, “You white people go to church and speak about God. We dance in the temple and become god.”¹² At the moment when the spirit takes over the voice and body of a person, then other members of the congregation, when they talk to that person, believe they are conversing directly with the spirit. Both Voodoo and Shamanism share something in common: both religions seek contact with and possession by alien spirits. The question becomes, what means can be employed to invite those spirits?

Besides drugs, extracted from natural plants indigenous to Haiti and other of the Caribbean islands, Voodoo

worshippers employ dancing and drumming to invoke spirits.¹³ “In each Voodoo ceremony” states the narrator of *Voodoo Secrets*, “drums serve as a potent force to attract the deities.”¹⁴ About Voodoo drumming, Davis observes: “There is always a battery of drums. . . . It’s almost like a spiritual telegraph to the spirits and calling them forth to bless us with their presence.”¹⁵ The narrator of *Voodoo Secrets* concludes, “Voodoo drums are considered by believers to be sacred objects possessing such enormous power that only the initiated are permitted to touch them. As the drums cast their rhythmic spell on the dancers, they summon the gods.”¹⁶ But drumming music can come in a more sophisticated disguise.

The “New” Spirituality. The “Hippie” culture’s New Age beliefs of the 1960s and 1970s, have not died, but are now being openly peddled as the New Spirituality. In order to understand the relationship of this “new religious synthesis” to drumming, we should note that like Voodoo, this spirituality’s beliefs and practices are eclectic and syncretic.

Behind this new spirituality lays a belief that God and the universe are one, which is pantheism. Pantheism is a term meaning “God is all.” To pantheists, the universe and God are the same. God minus the universe equals nothing. If the material universe did not exist, god would not exist.

But the Judeo-Christian faith teaches that God minus the universe equals God! The Holy and Personal God is separate from His creation. As Creator, He existed before time. As the Holy One, He is separate from matter and space. God is not identical to His creation (See Genesis 1:1-31.). God is not the mosquito that bites me on a camping trip. God is not in the landscape rock that decorates my neighbor’s front yard. For Christians to remain Christian, it must never be said of them, “[T]hey exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature [or, creation] rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever” (Romans 1:25).

But at some point after the 1960s, the “Good Vibrations” of the Beach Boys became the “god-vibrations” of New Age religion. Though there are various tenets of the New Spirituality of the New Age, one pantheistic assumption views energy to be divinity. Such pantheism holds that everything derives from a single energy “Source.” *Star Wars* fans understand this New Age divinity to be “The Force.” As a New Age believer states, “Modern science has proven what the Eastern mystics knew all along that everything is energy at varying rates of vibration.”¹⁷ Note this religious concept: at the heart of the pantheistic worldview is a belief that the essence of the universe is vibrating energy, a sacred animation that is to be worshipped. This pulse exhibits itself in everything from a beating human heart to electrons bouncing off of atoms.

Because the new spiritualists suppose that energy is divinity, a goal of spirituality becomes that of becoming conscious of and synchronized with the cadence of the cosmos. This may explain why novelist D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) stated, “My great religion is a belief in the

blood, as the flesh being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds, but what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true.”¹⁸ The New Spirituality suggests that, “On a practical, mundane level, spirituality is an awareness and appreciation of the energy or life force which moves us—yes, spirit!”¹⁹ An advocate of the New Spirituality recommends that, “We can consciously become sensitive to our own energy fields, and we can manipulate this energy to increase our sense of pleasure and enhance our spirituality.”²⁰ Thus, a question becomes, how can people manipulate this energy-divinity, this god, to work in their favor?

One of the mechanisms (some others being meditating, chanting, dancing, taking drugs, etc.) by which it is believed that energies can be manipulated is drumming. In a parody referring to the *Genesis* creation account, Hart offers his explanation about how drumming music can get in touch with energy:

*. . . fifteen or twenty billion years ago the blank page of the universe explodes and the beat began, since what emerged from that thick soup of neutrinos and photons were rhythmic pulses vibrating through empty space, keying the formation of galaxies, solar systems, planets, us. It is possible, however, that in the . . . concept of the big bang we are unwittingly brushing against a larger truth. Hindus believe there is a seed sound at the heart of creation, the Nada; a passage in the Tibetan Book of the Dead describes the essence of reality as ‘reverberating like a thousand distant thunders.’ In the beginning was noise. And noise begat rhythm. And rhythm begat everything else. This is the kind of cosmology a drummer can live with.*²¹

Derived from mystical-eastern religion, pantheistic spirituality is asserting itself in the American culture, and also among Christians. In conjunction with other meditative practices, one means by which this new spirituality is establishing itself, whether in celebration or in contemplation, is through the ancient religious rite of drumming. The new spiritualists attempt to stimulate their consciousness of the pulsating god within via a sacrament of drumming. Drumming, it is believed, will facilitate an experience of people feeling oneness with nature, of getting into sync with vibrations within them and around them.

To experience this “synergy of energy,” devotees employ drum circles (i.e., while holding drums, people form a circle and beat them together). As Mickey Hart describes the purpose of drum circles,

*The main objective is to share rhythm and get in tune with each other and themselves. To form a group consciousness. To entrain and resonate. By entrainment, I mean that a new voice, a collective voice, emerges from the group as they drum together.*²²

Elsewhere, Hart remarks, "Everywhere you look on the planet people are using drums to alter consciousness."²³

Members of an Episcopalian church describe the new consciousness they experienced by from drum circles:

*It's a contemplative tradition. It speaks directly to the intelligence of the body. / It's really a very ancient form of expression. / You move out of your head. / Your inhibition moves away. / One person said it was a spiritual experience. / There's an interesting meditative quality. / The idea . . . is learning to find yourself in the music. People talk about altered states. I think the one we walk around in is altered.*²⁴

Drum circles can be linked to shamanistic worship. One leader says that a circle can take "discordant pieces" and lead" the group into an amazingly alluring beat. Listen for a few minutes" she goes on to state, "and you understand why shamans use drums to lure themselves into trances."²⁵ To compliment the "good vibrations" of drumming, worshippers may chant and dance.

Warren Smith, a former seeker and practitioner of New Age eastern-mysticism, graphically describes his experience with drumming:

The lights went out. The blindfolds went on. Suddenly I was moving and shaking to the staccato beat of Indian drums. I twisted and turned and gyrated amidst the grunts and groans of the others in the room. For a moment the apparent insanity of what I was doing hit me head-on. . . . It seemed utterly absurd.

*But those thoughts quickly subsided as my body seemed to take off on its own, rocking and reverberating and responding to the chaotic rhythms. I could feel myself fully entering into the meditation . . . I was so completely relaxed that the line separating me from the meditation was gone. In that moment, I realized that the meditation and I had become mysteriously one. . . . my divine connection was really present."*²⁶

Upon completing the meditation, Smith relates, "I had to smile as I thought about the evening . . . but I knew that what I was doing was helping me. And besides, no one had told me that spiritual life could be so exciting and fun."²⁷

By their own exertion, and assisted by the mechanism of drumming, the new spiritualists attempt to experience the energy within them coalesce with the energy around them (i.e., with other persons, the immediate environment, and, ultimately, the universe). If attained, this felt union with nature is considered to be an enlightened state of "at-onement," in which the new spiritualists suppose themselves to be absorbed into God. Facilitated by drumming, this union is the goal of mystical-religious experience.

The contest between the nature spiritualities and the spirituality that comes from God, is between opposite and contradictory systems of faith that are literally, worlds apart.

Should I believe in my senses, of what my blood feels, or in God's revealed truth, in what comes from above, and in what stands written. This contest between man's sensuality (i.e., human *gnosis*) and God's revelation (i.e., divine *Logos*) is currently being played out not only in our media oriented culture, but also in and among professing Christians and churches. One of the titillating toys being employed to worship God is sensual music "possessed" by an overriding rhythm and drumming beat (Compare 2 Peter 2:18-19; See Ezekiel 33:32). We note that music invented by men and for men comes to Yahweh's ears as so much noise! (See Amos 5:21-23).

CAN MUSIC BECOME A "MEDIUM"?

Mediums serve as conduits to the spirit world. In the previous generation, Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) and Jeane Dixon (1918-1997) were two of the more popular psychic-spiritualists. Today, Sylvia Browne (1936-) and John Edward (1969-) are well-known mediums. Can rock music also serve as a mechanism by which to inspire altered states of consciousness? From observing the average rock concert, and some church worship services, one might conclude, as they see participants behaving "out-of-themselves," that certain music can, and does, stimulate loss of inhibition. Whether such loss qualifies as an altered state of consciousness . . . well, you be the judge.

Consider the following testimony of drummer Mickey Hart regarding the method of the music by *Grateful Dead*:

*I think of the musician's job as that of a psychopomp, someone who conducts spirits or souls to the other world. . . . Grateful Dead was a ferryman, a conduit, a bridge to the spirit world, and the band provided a musical experience that offered safe passage to the other side. . . . Acoustic alchemy was necessary for the successful completion of the round trip.*²⁸

Suffice it to say, the Christian believer is to have no intentional contact with the occult world of the spirits (Deuteronomy 18:9-13). James calls upon believers to, "Submit . . . to God," and "Resist the devil . . ." (James 4:7). Peter orders believers, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith . . ." (1 Peter 5:8-9a). Paul exhorts believers to, "to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Could drumming rock-'n'-roll music be one of the devil's tricks, or "schemes," by which he introduces deception into the church?

As the current culture plays itself out in the church, there is evidence that rock-'n'-roll music is one medium the devil can use to introduce spiritual deception into the church. On the DVD *Voodoo Secrets*, the narrator comments: "Surprisingly, scholars suggest that Voodoo has sparked another distinctive form of musical expression, which has

flourished in the United States.”²⁹ Then Dr. Wade Davis asks:

*Where do you think rock-‘n’-roll comes from? You mean it comes from the Puritans? Forget it. Rock-‘n’-roll came out of Voodoo. It came out of a movement. It came out of the great serpent gods slithering across the stones. That’s where rock-‘n’-roll comes from. And that’s one of the great expressions of American culture.*³⁰

There we have it. According to Dr. Davis, the dominant-drumming musical expression in our culture, an expression that has gained entry into naïve and undiscerning contemporary churches, originated out of Voodoo! For reason of its association with Voodoo religion, it appears rock music has become a “ferryman” for spiritual deception in the church. But, you might ask, how?

If only fleetingly, music possesses power to soothe the soul. Although David’s music did not drive the haunting spirit away from Saul, it temporarily relieved the king from its affliction (1 Samuel 16:14-23; 18:10; 19:9).

Because of its intrinsic emotional appeal, music delivers feel to the human body and soul. But *feeling* can easily distract people from *thinking*. As Professor Alan Bloom observed, music is *alogon*, “without articulate speech or reason.”³¹ If Christians are distracted from *thinking*, they will be distracted from *teaching* (i.e., the doctrines of the Bible). If in our personal lives and corporate worship we give a disproportionate amount of time to music, especially to the wrong kind of music, we become “feelers” rather than “learners,” and such imbalance could prove idolatrous, for as Professor Bloom stated, “Out of the music emerge the gods that suit it . . .”³²

Our culture has become “touchy-touchy” and “feely-feely.” Rational souls must sit back and ask: Why have the culture and the church morphed into such an emotional state? Is it because of the overwhelming status and disproportionate role that music occupies as people come to church demanding music to tweak their emotions?

Relevant to Bloom’s observation, and my question, one should note the disproportionate emphasis contemporary evangelical churches place upon music, and their corresponding failure to engage their parishioners’ intellect. Survey after survey indicates that increasing numbers of professing born-again Christians do not know what they believe, or why they believe it. Could this be because, as a “medium,” the music has eclipsed the message? If the contemporary church’s emphasis upon music has contributed to the decline of the knowledge of truth and morals among the “E-crowd,” then this distraction has opened the church up to deception, “to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). If people do not believe in something, they will believe in anything. Whenever they believe “whatever,” Christians will have succumbed to Satan’s scheme to deceive.

From CD displays, to listening stations, to sounds of it being “piped” in over loud speakers, one cannot walk into Christian book stores these days without observing how music has superseded almost every other product for sale. As to this eclipsing effect upon the church, we must note the ignorance of contemporary Christians about what they believe. To understand this predicament—declining interest in a cognitive faith on the one hand and a fledging interest alternative spiritualities on the other—an analogy may be helpful.

Bored Americans, and unfortunately we evangelical Christians, are possessed by many gluttonous addictions—food, pleasure, sports, parties, alcohol, drugs, and so forth. And do we dare add music to this mix? In the addictive process of *spiritual feeding by feeling*, we might look at the contemporary church’s infatuation with drumming music and ask these questions: Does drumming music serve as an “entry level” narcotic which then entices people to seek greater mystical-spiritual experiences? Can such music lead Christians to crave experiences to provide them with greater experiential euphoria and emotional catharsis? Have certain types of church music stimulated an emotional habit that some religious souls have become desperate to feed? Did the “E-crowd” just get up one morning and determine, “I’ll think I’ll snort mystical cocaine”? I don’t think so.

First, the church has become addicted to spiritual “highs” manufactured by drumming music, feeling the beat, so to speak. Like the surrounding culture, the church has become spiritually mesmerized, even anesthetized, by its addiction to religious rock-‘n’-roll, to deception’s drumming beat. But now spiritual feelings, artificially generated by such music, no longer satisfy. So to feed their habit, evangelicals hotly pursue the mystical practices of medieval-Catholicism and Hinduism-Buddhism. Spiritual disciplines are added to a growing bag of religious tricks.

Looking at the present demise of the Christian mind from a cause-effect perspective, the church has, I believe, entered a spiritual stupor of contemplative mysticism by smoking “the pot” of drumming music. Continued smoking has messed with the evangelical brain. Generally, I find it ironic that some discerning believers are attacking the heroine trade (i.e., the contemplative spirituality of emergent Christianity), but have paid no attention the musical marijuana that has caused naive Christians to crave greater spiritual experiences. Because they are not content, nor do they feel complete in Christ, emergent evangelicals are desperately grasping for spiritual straws.

Dr. Alfred Tomatis (1920-2001), a French ears-nose-throat specialist, theorized that certain types of music, most notably the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), help the brain to attain its optimal function and can help to heal mental problems such as depression, autism, dyslexia, and attention deficit disorder (ADD).³³ In general, the theory postulates that good music, like that of Mozart, assists in “brain gain,” an increase in one’s overall mental faculties, while bad music, like rock and rap, leads to “brain

drain,” a decrease in one’s overall mental functioning. Though this connection between music and intellect is presently theoretical and being researched, one can only wonder whether, or not, the entertaining music employed by a majority of contemporary churches has contributed to the doctrinal malaise in evangelicalism, a state we might refer to as doctrinal deficit disorder (DDD). At this juncture, the linkage can only be postulated. But the rise of certain types of music and the corresponding decline of doctrinal preaching and understanding in contemporary evangelicalism should be noted.

CONCLUSION

As the title of Mickey Hart’s book indicates, there is a relation between *sound and spirit*. Animist and pantheist religions employ drumming to call spirits and inspire consciousness of oneness with nature. A drummer himself, Hart comments that his musical research led him to various “epiphanies,” or truths, which he calls a sort of musical “grail,” or key to unlock the mystery of music’s effect upon the human soul. This “grail,” or series of explanations about the influence of music upon the human spirit, reveals “the connection of music and trance.”³⁴

Upon visiting churches married to the contemporary way of doing worship, one can observe that the drum set occupies center-stage. But as documented in this study, non-Christian sources connect religious drumming to spiritist-pantheist religion. In addition to drugs and dancing, Shamanism, Voodooism, and the “new spiritualists” use drumming as a means to induce trance and invoke spirits. A great issue before churches today is whether or not drumming, an activity connected to the occult world, should be turned dark side-up to celebrate God.

To this issue, the Apostle Paul clearly spoke. Among sects of Jews before and during the New Testament era, the name Belial, or “Beliar” stood for the ruling spirit of the netherworld, Satan. So Paul asked the Corinthians,

[W]hat communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? . . . And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. (2 Corinthians 6:14b-17a, KJV).

Unclean! Based upon this text of Scripture, and for reason of the association of drumming with Shamanism and Voodoo, an apostolic prohibition against religious drumming can be constructed as follows: First, Paul links spirits to “darkness” (Ephesians 6:12). Therefore, asks the apostle, “[W]hat communion hath light with darkness?” Second, according to Jewish inter-testamental literature, the name “Belial” (i.e., “worthless”) stands for the devil. “*And what*

concord hath Christ with Belial?” Third, in the Gospels, the word “unclean” describes spirits like those Jesus exorcised out of people (Matthew 12:43). Thus, the word (Greek, *akathartos*) is “possessed” by a connection to spirit world, and as Paul commands us, “*touch not the unclean thing.*” For reason of being connected to demons, the devil, and spiritual darkness, and when exposed to this light, drumming worship becomes a very “shady” spiritual activity.

To “play” it safe, and so as not take any chance of inviting foreign spirits into their midst, churches ought to separate themselves from the dark spirituality of religious drumming. Remember Lucifer. When he was cast out of heaven for his *I willing*, “the pomp and music of [his] harps” were thrown out with him (Isaiah 14:11). Because of it being cast out with him, can it not be legitimately assumed that one means the devil will use to initiate and perpetuate his deception is “his” music? With its connection to Voodoo and Shamanism, and when practiced in a religious-spiritual context, drumming music is Belial’s music.

For reason of its association with spiritist religion, drumming worship is “unclean,” and therefore unacceptable for the worship and praise of God (See “unclean” in Zechariah 13:1-5a; Mark 1:23; Luke 9:42; etc.). Congregations that employ drumming worship may discover that one unintended consequence of using such music might be the invocation of evil spirits. If there is a certain type of music that *distracts evil spirits from people*, as when David’s music drove the “evil spirit” away from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14-23), then might there not also be a type of sound that *attracts evil spirits to people*? Seemingly, there is, and according to Shamans and Voodooists, it’s the sound of drumming. If there is a religious connection between drumming and spiritualism, and according to unbiased and knowledgeable testimony there is, then as they employ drumming rock-‘n’-roll in their worship services, Christian churches may not only be making their celebrations more entertaining and exciting (i.e., catering to the flesh), but also creating an ambience of sound which invites visitation by spiritual entities. And those spirits, which come among them, will deceive them, and could eventually dwell in them.

Because of its association with spiritist and pantheist religion, drumming music should not be employed to worship God. Sensations of sound like those Shamans and Voodooists use to invite spirits, should not be used to praise God. Contrarily, believers are to “be filled with the Spirit” in their worship (Ephesians 5:18-19). Christians should not therefore, engage drumming sounds that *excite* their flesh and *invite* the spirits (Galatians 5:16, 24). As Paul ordered, “But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). As John counseled, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good” (3 John 11).

ENDNOTES

¹ G. Jeffrey MacDonald, “From US churches that are growing, a sound of drums,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 3,

2007 (<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0103/p01s01-ussc.html>).

² Yahweh commanded the people to worship Him in one place, the place of His choice, not theirs. The Lord commanded, “[I]t shall come about that the place in which the Lord your God shall choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices” (Deuteronomy 12:11, NASB; See Deuteronomy 12:5; 15:20; 16:2.). On the occasion of Solomon’s dedication of the temple hundreds of years later, the Lord told the king, “I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice” (2 Chronicles 7:12).

Mount Zion was the place God chose. But to consolidate his power in the north, for Israel’s convenience, and mimicking the surrounding Canaanite religion, Jeroboam constructed high places. In a scene reminiscent of the Exodus, he made two golden calves and told the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt” (1 Kings 12:28). Thus, throughout his kingdom, Jeroboam constructed places of worship to compete with Jerusalem, the Lord’s chosen place. Jeroboam’s sin fits the worldly paradigm of evangelical ministry being employed today; that of being user-friendly, audience-driven, seeker-sensitive, and politically-expedient.

³ “Drum,” *Wikipedia* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drum>).

⁴ Mickey Hart with Jay Stevens, *Drumming at the Edge of Magic, A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990) 30.

⁵ From the Hebrew word “toph” which assumedly means “drum,” some hold that the Valley of Topheth (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:31-32) was the valley of “drumming.” For reason of syncretism, apostate Israelites sacrificed their children to the Canaanite god Molech. Associating Topheth with human sacrifice, Francis Schaeffer, along with older commentators like Matthew Henry, held that “According to one tradition there was an opening at the back of the brazen idol, and after a fire was made within it, each parent had to come and with his own hands place his firstborn child in the white-hot, outstretched arms of Molech. According to this tradition, the parent was not allowed to show emotion, and drums were beaten so that the baby’s cries could not be heard as the baby died in the arms of Molech.” See Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian View of the Church, The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*, Volume 4 (Westchester, Illinois, Crossway Books, 1982) 145.

Though it can refer to a percussive instrument like the timbrel or tabret, my research does not indicate that “toph” refers to drums. The Hebrew word “toph” is always associated with merriment and gladness. A remote meaning is “to spit.” It may therefore be too great an etymological stretch to relate Topheth to drumming meant to muffle the sound of screaming children as they were being thrown into the molten-hot arms of Molech. As such, the word “drum” does not appear in the Bible.

⁶ Rosemary Ellen Guiley, “Shamanism,” *Harper’s Encyclopedia of Mystical & Paranormal Experience* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991) 540.

⁷ “How to Contact Spirits Through Shamanism” (http://www.ehow.com/how_2033190_contact-spirits-through.html).

⁸ Guiley, “Shamanism,” 542-543.

⁹ Mickey Hart and Fredric Lieberman, *Spirit into Sound, The Magic of Music* (Petaluma, California: Acid Test Productions, 1999) 145.

¹⁰ Guiley, “Voodoo,” 635.

¹¹ David Ackroyd, Narrator, DVD “Voodoo Secrets,” *In Search of History* (Produced for the History Channel by Paul Boorstin, © A & E Television Networks, 1998).

¹² “Voodoo Secrets,” Dr. Wade Davis, Commentator.

¹³ Some drugs are known as “entheogens.” The word *entheogen* derives from three Greek words: a preposition “en”; the noun “God”; and a verb “to generate.” The resultant meaning of *entheogen* is “that which generates god or divine inspiration in a person.” To achieve consciousness of one’s own divinity, *entheogens* (i.e., psychedelic drugs) are employed.

In his list of the lusts of the flesh, biblical believers should note Paul’s juxtaposition of “idolatry” to “sorcery” (Galatians 5:20, NASB; “witchcraft” KJV, NIV, etc). Our adjective “pharmaceutical” derives from the Greek word for “sorcery.” Together, drug use and idolatry are twin sins. It’s idolatry to ingest substances, whether ecologically derived or synthetically produced, for the purpose of generating divine consciousness. Religious drug use (i.e., in Shamanism, Voodoo, New Age, etc.) stimulates worshipping the creation (What is below) rather than the Creator (Who is above; See Romans 1:18-23.).

¹⁴ Ackroyd, “Voodoo Secrets.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Davis.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Ackroyd.

¹⁷ Donni Hakanson, “Enhancing Your Spirituality” (<http://www.alternativeculture.com/spirit/enhance.htm>).

¹⁸ *Blurtit.com*, “What is D.H.Lawrence’s Blood Philosophy?” (<http://www.blurtit.com/q648808.html>).

¹⁹ Hakanson, “Enhancing Your Spirituality.”

²⁰ Hart and Lieberman, *Spirit into Sound*, 148.

²¹ Hakanson, “Enhancing Your Spirituality.”

²² “Drum circle,” *Wikipedia* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drum_circle#_note-0).

²³ Hart with Stevens, *Edge of Magic*, 28.

²⁴ Zachary Reid, “Feeling the beat / The spiritual side of drum circles / When drummers gather at an Episcopal church, experience is optional,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 10, 2007, B1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Warren Smith, *The Light that Was Dark, From the New Age to Amazing Grace* (Magalia, California: Mountain Stream Press, 2005) 35-36. Used with the author’s permission.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 36.

²⁸ Hart and Lieberman, *Spirit into Sound*, 147.

²⁹ Ackroyd, “Voodoo Secrets.”

³⁰ *Ibid.* Davis.

³¹ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) 71.

³² *Ibid.* 72.

³³ “Alfred A. Tomatis,” *Wikipedia* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Tomatis) and “Mozart effect” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mozart_effect) and (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

³⁴ Hart and Lieberman, *Spirit into Sound*, 5.