

From the Psalms of David to Christian Rock: Youth Musical Subculture as a Tool for Evangelization

Od Psalmów Dawidowych do chrześcijańskiego rocka. Muzyczna subkultura młodzieżowa jako narzędzie ewangelizacji

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to present in a historical perspective of the use of rock music as a tool for evangelization. In order for above-mentioned perspective to be complete and based on a solid foundation, this study first of all takes into account the biblical background of the use of music. The Second Vatican Council ushered in a new relationship between the Church community and the world of culture and art. The Church community, in response to the call to the work of the “new evangelization,” undertook unprecedented forms of apostolate, which often aroused controversy. One example here is evangelization through rock music. For some, the aesthetics of this form of music being far removed from the recommendations provided in the documents of the Catholic Church or its cultural and worldview message, unequivocally disqualifies it as a tool for evangelization. For others, on the other hand, rock music has an important evangelizing function, as the genre responds to the expectations of youth culture. Rock music, with its evangelical message, becomes a bridge allowing the Church community to get through with the Good News to the young generation who increasingly tend to live outside the Church’s structures. Consequently, the term “Christian rock” is used in the classification of the genre to indicate its distinctive values and message. The phenomenon of “Christian rock” implies two important aspects. Firstly, the radical transformation of musical forms that religious music is undergoing in order to respond to the needs of the times and, secondly, the fact that the message of the Gospel has realistically entered the world of popular music and has begun to use it to achieve its own goals. The historical framing of the problem inspires further research, e.g. in sociological and cultural dimensions.

Keywords: music, music in the Bible, church, evangelization youth, subculture, rock



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Abstrakt: Celem artykułu jest ukazanie historycznej perspektywy wykorzystania muzyki rockowej jako narzędzia ewangelizacji. Aby wspomniana perspektywa była pełna i bazowała na solidnym fundamencie, niniejsze studium w pierwszym rzędzie bierze pod uwagę przede wszystkim tło biblijne wykorzystania muzyki. Sobór Watykański II zapoczątkował nową relację środowiska kościelnego ze światem kultury i sztuki. Wspólnota Kościoła, w odpowiedzi na wezwanie do dzieła „nowej ewangelizacji”, podjęła niespotykane dotąd formy apostołstwa, które niejednokrotnie budziły kontrowersje. Jedną z nich jest ewangelizacja poprzez muzykę rockową. Dla jednych taka forma muzyki, prezentująca estetykę daleką

od zaleceń zebranych w dokumentach Kościoła Katolickiego, oraz jej ładunek kulturowo-światopoglądowy jednoznacznie dyskwalifikuje ją jako narzędzie ewangelizacji. Dla innych natomiast rock pełni ważną funkcję ewangelizacyjną, gdyż taka forma muzyki stanowi odpowiedź na oczekiwania kultury młodzieżowej. Rock z ewangelicznym przesłaniem staje się pomostem, przez który wspólnota Kościoła może dotrzeć z Dobrą Nowiną do młodego pokolenia, coraz częściej żyjącego poza jego strukturami. W konsekwencji, w ramach klasyfikacji takiej twórczości, używa się określenia „rock chrześcijański”, wskazując na odmienną wartość i przesłanie. Fenomen „rocka chrześcijańskiego” ukazuje dwa ważne aspekty. Pierwszy ukazuje, jak radykalną przemianę form muzycznych przechodzi muzyka religijna, aby odpowiedzieć na potrzeby czasu. Z drugiej, że przesłanie Ewangelii realnie wkroczyło w świat muzyki rozrywkowej i zaczęło się nią posługiwać dla osiągnięcia własnych celów. Ujęcie historyczne problemu stanowi inspirację do podjęcia kolejnych badań, np. w wymiarze socjologicznym i kulturowym.

Słowa kluczowe: muzyka, muzyka w Biblii, Kościół, ewangelizacja, młodzież, subkultura, rock

INTRODUCTION

Although it would be difficult to define the exact beginnings of music-making in the history of humanity, it is certain that music has accompanied people since prehistorical times (Fangorowa 2001, 27). Music permeates almost every sphere of human life, as it is a source of entertainment, it triggers our emotions, and at the same time allows us to express our feelings. Music plays a significant role not only in the sphere of the profane, but also in the sphere of the sacred. Instrumental music can convey what it is difficult to put into words, while singing allows us to translate the state of the soul into the language of lyrics and thus give expression to the living relationship with God.

Music naturally fits into the religious sphere of human life as it is clearly evidenced in the Holy Bible. It can be said that the Bible is endowed with music on two levels. On the one hand, it shows the importance of singing as part of God's worship. On the other hand, it becomes the source of inspiration for artists who have adapted biblical motifs over the centuries.

Subsequent generations of the Church community upheld the biblical musical traditions. Over time, new forms of singing developed, songbooks and singing schools were created, and organs were introduced for liturgical use. Legal regulations were introduced by the Church authorities to ensure its proper character and role in the life of the Church. Singing became an inseparable element of divine worship. In addition to ceremonial liturgical music, there also emerged folk and religious music rooted in the world of entertainment, and it accompanied people in everyday life.

1. MUSIC IN THE BIBLE

Music is recurrently and in various contexts mentioned in the Bible. It had its place in the worship given to God during official celebrations, and it accompanied people in everyday life situations. At the time of leisure, music was a source of entertainment, during the war, it stirred bravery in the army, and in sad moments it lifted people's spirits.

1.1. Old Testament

The books of the Old Testament do not constitute a historiographic record of the history of the Chosen People. However, by collecting all music-related threads dispersed throughout the Books, it is possible to reconstruct this important element of Jewish culture. Music was created for specific recipients and for a specific purpose, and it was intertwined with the fabric of secular and religious life, being its integrative element (Vanhoozer et al. 2005, 522).

The very first pages of the Bible, which tell the fates of the descendants of Adam and Eve, introduce, next to Cain, the farmer and Abel, the shepherd, the figure of Jubal, who was the father of all flute (רֹנֵן) and the lyre (כִּנֹּר) players (Gen 4:21). Such a juxtaposition of professions that were of fundamental importance at that time with that of the musician is a clear testimony to the great respect that music was held in in antiquity (Mathews 1992, 930).

The first account of song performance is recorded in Ex 15:1-21. Moses and the Israelites, after crossing the Red Sea, sung a “song of praise to the Lord.” Still another account relates to Miriam, Aaron’s sister, who filled with the Spirit of God, undertook to perform a song while the women who accompanied her played on tambourines (v. 20ff).

Music also accompanied ordinary events of everyday life, during ceremonial farewells (Gen 31:27) and welcomes (Judg 11:34) of travelers, which involved playing instruments, singing, and dancing. The rules of hospitality required both the visitor and the host to create an enjoyable atmosphere during the visit, which could also mean singing and playing instruments (Gen 31:47) (Mathews 1992, 931).

Singing accompanied workers during long hours of monotonous and repetitive work, thus allowing them to maintain an appropriate work rhythm. Music was played, for example, during digging wells (Num 21:17-18), gathering grapes (Jer 25:30), and pressing wine (Judg 9:27), during the harvest (Isa 9:2), or on keeping watch (Isa 21:12). In addition, joyful events such as births or marriages (1 Macc 9:37-39) as well as sorrowful moments of mourning (Jer 34:5; 2 Chr 35:25) were celebrated by singing. Kings’ coronations were announced by the sound of the horn (2 Sam 15:10), and people expressed their joy at the coronation by shouting and playing the flute (1 Kgs 1:40). War songs were sung during preparation of troops for the battle (2 Chr 20:20-21), after its victorious conclusion (Judg 5:1-31; 1 Sam 18:6-7), as well as when mourning the fallen soldiers (2 Sam 1:19-27) (Rosik 2019, 14). Unfortunately, the collections of war songs mentioned in the Old Testament that were compiled in the Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14) and the Book of the Righteous (Josh 10:13) have not been preserved to this day (Achtmeier 2004, 796).

Artistic performances were also part of the entertainment during feasts held by the rich, who indifferent to the affairs of the Lord, relished in having fun and drinking wine (Isa 5:12). It is no wonder that such an attitude met with severe criticism of the prophets. Among them, for example, was Amos, who reprimanded the wealthy for their demoralizing lifestyle (Am 6:4-6).

When discussing the musical traditions of the Old Testament, mention must be made about King David, who depending on circumstances is presented as a composer, poet, musician, dancer and inventor of musical instruments. When he was still very young, David was summoned to King Saul's court to bring relief to the king suffering from attacks of the evil spirit by playing the lyre (1 Sam 16:23). When David himself became king and decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he and all his people danced and sang to the accompaniment of instruments in praise of Yahweh (2 Sam 6:5-16).

As reported in 1 Chronicles, David also went down in history of the Chosen People as a protagonist of sacred music. He ordered the Levitical chieftains to appoint their brothers as singers (1 Chr 15:16). Players were chosen to play trumpets and other instruments. The king also appointed Levites to serve before the Ark of the Lord, to worship, thank, and glorify the God of Israel (1 Chr 16:4). Levites offered their thanks and praise to Yahweh every morning and evening, during the feasts, and offerings of sacrifices (1 Chr 23). The rules of the Temple laid down by David (1 Chr 28) as well as the organization of worship were implemented by Solomon after the completion of the Temple (Amponsah-Gyan 2018, 76).

Although broadly understood music was not the main object of interest of the biblical authors, the motif of music recurrently appears in almost all the books of the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Psalms.

Apart from formulating liturgical rules, King David also developed musical content to be used in the Temple. His works had a significant impact on the final collection of one hundred and fifty psalms, which laid the foundation for Israel's heritage of music and prayer.

As a result, liturgical life and celebrations of Jewish holidays were intrinsically linked with music which became a permanent element of life both within and outside the Temple's walls. Biblical psalms occupied a central place in the liturgy since a specific psalm, performed by the Levites, was assigned to each day of the week. And thus, Psalm 24, which had the character of a liturgical hymn, was performed on the first day of the week. On the following days, psalms 48, 82, 94, 81, 93 were used. On the Sabbath day, the Levites recited Ps 93 which was interpreted as "A psalm, a song for the time to come, for a day that will be all-Sabbath, rest for the life of the worlds..." (Trudinger 2004, 17).

Another occasion for singing were pilgrimages to sanctuaries and the Temple (1 Sam 1:3). Annual holidays such as Passover (פסח) gathered crowds of pilgrims in Jerusalem. Songs, such as, for example, the Song of the Ascending Ones (Ps 120-134) were customarily sung along the way (Mathews 1992, 933). During the Passover, the so-called Great Hallel was sung, i.e. Psalms 113-118, which were liturgical songs composed on the basis of the religious experience of the Chosen People. Psalms recalling the wandering in the desert were also sung. Another type of songs, such as One Goat (אֶת־עֵז־אֶת־עֵז), were of secular origin and they belonged to the family folklore tradition. They were probably intended to entertain children after long celebrations.

The coming of the New Year (שַׁאֲר הַיָּשׁוּׁר) was announced by playing trumpets and horns, as mentioned in Ps 81:4-5. Their sound was meant to arouse among people the desire to praise God and remind them of His rule over the world. The trumpets were also sounded during the penitential Day of Atonement (יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים). Five days after this holiday, Israelites celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles (תּוֹבֵס). Due to the joyful character of the feast, even more music was played then than during any other celebrations and people sung psalms and played harps, lyres, tambourines, flutes, and trumpets.

Around the time of the winter solstice, Israelites commemorated the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem during Hanukkah (חֲנֻכָּה). Celebration of the feast lasted eight days and it involved lighting candles and singing songs to praise Yahweh (2 Macc 10:1-9).

The richness of the Book of Psalms manifests itself not only in its liturgical purpose or religious depth, but also in the variety of its literary genres. Herman Gunkel, in his analyses, distinguished the following types musical works: 1. Hymns, songs praising the glory of God, performed on major holidays (Ps 33; 117; 145-50); 2. National lamentations, intended for days of fasting and penance, describing the suffering of the people and asking for God's merciful intervention (Ps 44; 74; 79; 80; 83) as well as individual songs, sung in personal need (Ps 13); 3. Royal Psalms, comprising various orations rooted in royal ceremonies (Ps 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132); 4. Thanksgiving songs: pilgrimage songs, sung by pilgrims coming to Jerusalem (84; 132), to Israel (Ps 67; 124); sacred legends (fragments of Ps 78; 105 and 106); 5. Wisdom songs, referring to the character of the Book of Wisdom, treating about the Torah and the Law of God (Ps 1; 37; 73; 112) (Eaton 2003, 18-19).

Other classifications include: thanksgiving songs, songs of praise for saving individual people or the nation (Ps 34; 67); psalms of confidence, expressing the certainty that God will save the psalmist (Ps 11; 125); hymns of Zion, praising the dwelling place of God (Ps 46; 48; 76; 87); liturgical songs, closely related to the Temple service (Ps 24; 50; 75; 85) (Bratcher and Reyburn 1991, 2-3).

Any research on musical works, whether it focuses on the technical, aesthetic or ethnographic aspects of music, should imply that there is a collection of sound material. In the case of music coming from biblical times such material is not available. However, the Book of Psalms contains suggestions and instructions which, at the lexical level at least, allow researchers to deduce to a certain degree how the psalms were performed (Friedmann 2013, 14).

One group of annotations referred to the types of composition. These were distinguished by several Hebrew terms. The first type of composition is רִמְזָה (TSOT, vol. 4, v.s. "רִמְזָה", 94), i.e. a composition with accompaniment. It occurs in the Book of Psalms as many as 57 times, usually in combination with a name, e.g.: הַדָּל רִמְזָה (Ps 3:1: "for David"), a title, or the noun רִשָּׁה, which is translated as "song" in general (Ps 65:1). Ps 120-134 is a collection of psalms called the "psalms of steps" or "psalms of Ascents" (תּוֹלְעָה רִשָּׁה) (Ps 120:1). They are considered to be pilgrimage songs performed on the way to Jerusalem (Bratche and Reyburn 1991, 210). Thirteen psalms (e.g. 32; 74; 78) are described as לִקְשָׁה. The meaning of this word is unclear. However, when its etymology

is derived from the root *לכש* in the form of *hifil* *לִיכְשֶׁה*, it is possible to distinguish three interpretations: 1. In the meaning of “have insight”, the verb *לִיכְשֶׁם* can be understood as carefully composed in a specific style; 2. In the meaning of “make insightful”, it means a song that gives someone an insight, understanding of their own interior thanks to, for example, wisdom derived from the text; 3. *לִיכְשֶׁה* may refer to the consequences of an action, i.e. achieving success. In this case, *לִיכְשֶׁם* would mean a psalm that was popular.

Psalms 7 is described by the term *וְיִגְּזֶה* (TSOT, vol. 14, v.s. “וְיִגְּזֶה”, 406), the meaning of which is also unclear. 1 Kgs 18:46 and 2 Kgs 9:20 provides a description of frenzied behavior under the influence of *וְיִגְּזֶה*. In the context of the psalm, the term could mean an energetic piece of music characterized by a quick change of rhythm (Brown, and Driver and Briggs 1907, 993). Some believe that *וְיִגְּזֶה* referred to a funeral song or a cry for help (Terrien 2003, 30).

Psalms 17; 86; 90; 102; 142; 145 is titled *הַלְלֵת* (TSOT, vol. 3, v.s. “הַלְלֵת”, 410), which in the musical context would mean a “song of praise” to Yahweh.

The Book of Psalms is also provided with organizational guidelines. The annotation *לְחַנְּנֵל* “to choir master” appears 55 times. In two cases, the choir master remains anonymous (Ps 66; 67), while in the remaining cases the Hebrew addition *דָּוִד* (e.g. Ps 57:1: “of David”, or “to David”) allows refer the work to King David. Most likely, the information referred to the Temple choir master, who was the recipient of the work. Another hypothesis is that the work was part of an earlier collection of psalms known as the Choirmaster’s Collection (Bratcher and Reyburn 1991, 10).

Other annotations regarding the performance of music concerned, among others, the accompanying instruments. For example, the term *תְּנִינִיָּה* indicates string instruments (Ps 4; 6; 54; 55; 67; 76). The word *הַלְיָהֵן* is most probably associated with the flute (Ps 5), or with the melody to which a given psalm was to be sung: *תִּלְחָמֶם* (Ps 53), or with the voice in the choir that was to sing it, as in Ps 9:1, where *לְחַנְּנֵל תְּנִינִיָּה* could indicate the use of a male soprano, the key of the song defined by an ambiguous term *תְּנִינִיָּה*. The above-discussed annotations appeared in the headings of the psalms, while the *הַלֵּל* annotation appeared in their content. The term cannot be clearly explained. It could mark a pause, a place to take a breath or it could be an annotation indicating when the next voice was joining in (Matthews 1992, 933).

Undoubtedly, it can be stated that music was very important for the Chosen People as it constituted an intrinsic element of their life in its vertical dimension, adding to the incredible beauty of the cult of Yahweh, as well as in the horizontal dimension, due to its established presence in non-musical activities of everyday life. The books of the Old Testament, and especially, the Book of Psalms, provide a picture of a society that built a music-oriented civilization, a civilization whose quality and perseverance were confirmed by subsequent generations.

1.2. New Testament

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 BC, which put an end to the Levitical ministry, compelled the Jewish community to develop new forms of musical

expression as regards religious worship. According to the rules of the time, dancing and public performance of music on the Sabbath were forbidden. Aversion to this type of entertainment was intensified by the hostile attitude towards the surrounding influences of Greek and Roman culture. Despite the new circumstances, music continued to pervade both religious and social life of the Chosen People, serving them as a factor maintaining their own identity (Matthews 1992, 931).

Jesus and His disciples took an active part in the life of the Synagogue, praying and singing psalms (Luke 4:16). According to the tradition, when Jesus entered the house of the synagogue ruler, whose daughter had died, "he saw flute players" playing mournful songs (Matt 9:23). Two other passages from the Gospel point, moreover, to the folk character of music. The first of them refers to the scene of playing children, who did not want to dance despite the music being played (Luke 7:32). The second passage comes from the parable of the prodigal son. The older son, returning from the field, heard "music and dancing" accompanying a feast held at home (Luke 15:25).

The content of the New Testament scriptures clearly evidences that songs and music deriving from the synagogue tradition were adopted by the community of the emerging Church. From the Gospel (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26) we learn that during the Last Supper those gathered sang hymns: the final part of "Little Hallel" (Ps 113-118) and the so-called "Great Hallel" (Ps 135) marking the end of the Passover (Pietkiewicz 2009, 83).

The New Testament contains songs the words of which are well-known, and which played a special role in the tradition of the Church. However, in some cases, it is difficult to indicate their exact content or the liturgical circumstances of their performance (Behera 1997, 63).

Probably the singing during the services had a relatively informal character and it involved all the gathered people. It included intonation of both psalms and hymns known from the synagogue as well as of new, Christocentric compositions, which is particularly evident in the Apocalypse of St. John. The twenty-four elders sing a song of praise to the Lamb (Rev 5:6-10). Only "one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads" could learn the "new song" (Rev 14:1-3). The seven angels, seeing God's wrath coming, sang "the song of Moses, the bondservant of God and the song of the Lamb" (Rev 15:1-4). (Vanhoozer et al. 2005, 523).

Special attention in the context of the discussed topic is due to St. Paul. As the Acts of the Apostles report, "Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God" (Acts 16:25). As indicated, among others, by his letters, St. Paul encouraged the communities founded by him to follow his example.

In the history of research on the musical tradition of the early Churches, an important source are two similarly sounding fragments of letters: Eph 5:19-20 and Col 3:16-17. The letters provide the context of music performed during the joint liturgy. St. Paul recorded: "λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ" (Eph 5:19). The quoted verse indicates that the author distinguished three categories of musical

works: ψαλμός (psalm), ὕμνος (hymn), ᾠδή (song) and, contrary to the LXX in the Book of Psalms, he did not identify them as a single type of song (Lincoln 2002, 346).

Biblical scholars who emphasized the differences between them indicated that St. Paul, when using the term ψαλμοῖς, had in mind the psalms from the Book of Psalms. This opinion was confirmed by the use of the term ψαλμοῖς as translation of the Hebrew term *תְּהִלָּה* in the LXX (Bichel 1992, 350) as well as its use in other places in the New Testament with reference to *תְּהִלָּה* (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33) (Lincoln 2002, 345). Another category mentioned was ᾠδαῖς, defined more precisely as πνευματικαῖς, in order to distinguish songs sung by Christians from pagan ones, which were sung, for example, during Greek tragedies. The use of the adjective could be motivated by a wish to indicate the source of the songs, i.e. the Holy Spirit. This would mean that ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς referred to the singing of songs under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Thielman 2010, 361), (Aniol 2018, 15-16). The Apostle to the Nations encouraged the communities of Ephesus and Colossians to praise God by singing ὕμνοις, known in the Hellenistic world as sublime songs that tell of God or of the heroic deeds of past heroes (Vilijoen 2001, 438).

St. Paul did not only encourage singing, but he also authored hymns to Christ (Phil 2:6-11, Col 1:15-20, 1 Tim 3:16, Eph 2:14-17), showing His unique place in God's saving plan. The Christological hymns had a soteriological purpose. They presented the person of Jesus, who did what only God could do, i.e., triumph over the powers of evil. For the work He accomplished, He was exalted and became the ruler of the universe and judge of history (Martin 1993, 421-422). The hymns showed Christ as the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), "the Son of God with power" (Rom 1:4), "who, although He existed in the form of God (...) emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant," (Phil 2:6-7). His is "God highly exalted Him" (...) "that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:9, 11).

In order to fully understand St. Paul's thought addressed to both communities, it is necessary to refer to the entire teaching of the cited fragments and the context in which they were written. The disciples of Christ are not to be drunk with wine ("μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ") (Eph 5:18), but to be filled with the Spirit ("πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι") (Eph 5:18) or with the word of Christ ("ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως") (Col 3:16), so that by praying and singing together they could give thanks to the Lord "ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ" (Eph 5:20).

The thought from Eph 5:18 refers to the festivities organized as part of the cult of the Greek god of wine Dionysus or the Roman god Bacchus, during which large quantities of wine were consumed, intended to lead to drunkenness and to mass, joyful ecstasy, which was an expression of closeness to the god. The liturgy involved playing instruments, dancing, and singing hymns to the gods as well as improvised songs originating from divine inspiration.

In view of the above, it is clear that St. Paul contrasts pagan worship with adoration of Christ. This teaching provided for the Ephesians and Colossians is understandable. People "filled" with wine have no room for the Spirit and the Word of God, which can lead them to idolatry. The disciples of Christ were to be filled with

the Holy Spirit in order to be open to the will of the Lord. Singing, on the other hand, provided a form of instruction that allowed one to discover the truth about God and adapt one's life to it (Vilijoen 2001, 437-438).

St. Paul, who came from Tarsus, despite his Jewish roots and education under the watchful eye of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), spent most of his life in a Hellenistic environment. He was familiar with its traditions, including religious ones, and lived among its representatives, such as Barnabas, Timothy, and Titus. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that St. Paul was influenced by Hellenistic thought, which he later, after theological adaptation, incorporated into Christianity (Prokulski 1953, 42). The Apostle to the Nations, not indifferent to the past religious experience of his listeners, used the sacred language that they were familiar with, only giving it a new meaning (Dąbrowski 2013, 543). Such an approach was not intended to add elements of Hellenism to his teachings, but it allowed to reveal to the pagans the truth about Christ in a language that was well-known to them (Prokulski 1953, 50).

Such an adaptation of the Hellenistic thought also took place with respect to liturgical music. St. Paul showed that separating musical form from its spiritual or ideological content allowed the Holy Spirit to speak to the listeners in a new language of music, coming from spiritually alien cultures, for the sake of building the community of the Church, and that musical culture can respond to Christ in its own way. Therefore, in every culture one can find the wisdom of God, which can become a carrier of the Gospel. And this wisdom, proclaimed to people through their own musical forms and prayers derived from their own tradition, will help them to imbibe God's message and grasp its depth even more fully (Behera 1997, 67). In view of the above, the question arises: Are we not, as the Church, indebted to the communities of Ephesus and Colossians? It is, after all, their cultural deposit that St. Paul drew from in order to build, through his teaching, the foundations of what the Church would later refer to as a form of "new evangelization".

2. MUSICAL TRADITION IN THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

The first centuries of activity consolidated the position of music in the structures of the Church community. Due to the spread of Christianity beyond the borders of Palestine the liturgy and songs accompanying it began to develop and modify.

2.1. Church documents on sacred music

The first Christians initially adapted the singing of psalms and other Old Testament texts from the synagogue liturgy. After the community separated from the Synagogue and the influx of believers who did not know Jewish traditions, the number of songs was reduced (Pawlak 2001, 49).

The first musical forms intended for liturgical use, such as psalmodies and acclamations of the faithful, most often performed in the responsorial form, emerged in Rome already in the 2nd century. The period of persecution hindered the development

of liturgical singing. The regaining of religious freedom¹ gave impetus to the further development of the liturgy and new forms of singing (Pawlak 2001, 50-51). For example, “cantus directaneus”², i.e., uninterrupted singing of all the faithful developed and a division into two choirs was introduced (4th century) (Nieczarkowska 2020, 18). In the following centuries, Gregorian chant³ appeared, then polyphony was introduced in its manifold varieties. Initially, no musical instruments were used in churches as they were associated with pagan worship. Therefore, a pivotal moment was the introduction of the organ into use during the liturgy (7th or 8th century) (Pawlak 2001, 51).

Music became an organic part of the liturgy. Therefore, over the centuries, the Church developed a number of legal solutions regulating its place and role in celebrations⁴.

The Second Vatican Council, initiating the restoration of the liturgy, claimed “that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations” which is “their right and duty by reason of their baptism” (Second Vatican Council 1963, 14). This appreciation of the faithful’s participation in the liturgy also demanded a reform of church music⁵.

Introduction of national languages and opening up to local traditions, as well as enabling the Episcopates to manage liturgical matters, gave an impetus to the development of music that did not fit the definition of liturgical music. This required taking a second look at the terminology used and the categories of music related to the broadly understood sphere of religion.

Instruction of the Polish Episcopate on liturgical music after the Second Vatican Council notes: “Religious music is a highly effective means of reviving the piety of the faithful” (Polish Episcopate 1979, 44)⁶. As a proposal for promoting religiosity outside the liturgy, this document indicates, among others: religious music concerts. This field of activity is also in line with the idea of apostolate and pastoral renewal propagated by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

¹ The so-called Edict of Milan.

² Also referred to as “psalmodia in directum”.

³ Its name originates from the name of its creator, Pope Gregory the Great. Today, some scholars subvert this thesis, pointing out that Gregorian chant originated later in France. (Tyrała 2001).

⁴ The oldest known document on church music is *Docta sanctorum Patrum* (1324) by John XXII. Other legal norms were included in: the documents of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) (Karnas and Maniecka 2004, 651), in the encyclical of Benedict XV *Annus qui* (1749), in the motu proprio of Pius X *Inter pastoralis officii sollicitudines* (Pius X 1903, 2). The encyclical of Pius XII *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (Sawa 2016, 90-91) published in 1955 can be treated as a conclusion of the current Church guidelines (Nieczarkowska 2020, 27-40).

⁵ This was confirmed by the Council’s Constitution on the Holy Liturgy “Sacrosanctum Concilium” (Second Vatican Council 1963, 112-121). Further legislation of the Universal and local Church was developed in the following documents: *Instrukcja o muzyce w świętej liturgii Musicam sacram* (1967), *Instrukcja Episkopatu Polski o muzyce liturgicznej po Soborze Watykańskim II*, *Instrukcja Kongregacji Kultu Bożego o koncertach w kościołach* (1987), *Instrukcja Konferencji Episkopatu Polski o muzyce kościelnej* (2017) and other.

⁶ A similar provision is included in the updated version of the cited instruction from 2017, *Instrukcja Konferencji Episkopatu Polski o muzyce kościelnej*, No. 44.

2.2. Music as a form of evangelization

The post-conciliar openness to the world of culture and art as well as the involvement of lay people in the life of the Church gave rise to new forms of apostolate. One of them was Christian pop music (Niegowski and Wiśniewski 2014, 454). In the late 1970s, “Contemporary Christian Music” emerged in America (CCM). This musical trend began to appear in Poland after 1989 and it led to a dynamic development of professional bands promoting Christian values (Warmijak 2007, 140). CCM provided a sphere where both those who actively participated in the life of the Church community, and those who were experiencing a crisis of faith, could find their place. It also allowed to spread the Christian message in a less formalized form to non-believers or those distanced from the institutional activity of the Church who sought to satisfy their spiritual needs through culture.

John Paul II’s encyclical *Redemptoris mission* (1990) called on the faithful to renew the Church’s missionary zeal. As the Pope writes, the “new spring” of Christianity is to come thanks to the “new evangelization.” “The moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*” (Jan Paweł II 1990, 3). According to the Pope, the “new evangelization” is the proclamation of “the Gospel which is always new and always the bearer of new things, an evangelization which must be ‘new in its ardour, methods and expression’” (Jan Paweł II 1993, 106). Therefore, the introduction of religious music into new spheres, such as recording studios, festivals, television and radio stations, has become a form of proclaiming the Good News, aptly responding to the papal call.

The fact that music exerts its influence on humans is beyond doubt (Stachyra 2022). It is a link between an individual and the surrounding reality, culture and living environment. It appeals to the human heart, emotions, feelings, memories, experiences. Music can spur people into action, but it can also calm them down and bring relief. It affects the body, mind and spirit, and therefore the entirety of human existence (Stachyra 2022). Music has an impact on human behaviour and beliefs, and it is a means of propagating values. This is especially the case when it comes to young people who are building their worldview and identity (Rusaczyk 2021). Religious music therefore promotes the spiritual development of young listeners, opens them to the presence of God, encourages them to pray and contemplate, brings them closer to the sphere of the sacred and influences their social and moral life.

It should be emphasized that such an impact is exerted not only by calm, meditative music, but also by more dynamic music. The inculturation of the Good News in the sphere of music means that the Christian message can be found in many musical styles, including those that are in no way associated with the religious world (Sawa 2016, 102). An additional advantage of contemporary Christian music is the fact that it constitutes a counterweight to the values and destructive attitudes promoted among young people by contemporary artists, such as alcohol consumption, drug use, promiscuity, consumerism, hedonism, occultism, etc.

3. ROCK MUSIC AND ITS SUBCULTURES – HISTORICAL PANORAMA

Christian music has entered into all the most popular genres, forms and styles of music. In some cases, this gave rise to much controversy as to the appropriateness of combining religious content with a particular musical style, which in its foundations represented opposing ideas.

Rock, as well as its manifold subgenre, has been an object of such a long-standing dispute due to its being a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon that cannot be perceived only in terms of its artistic aspects. For decades, rock has been recognized as a cultural and sociological factor promoting a specific lifestyle, attitudes, values and even clothing.

3.1. Origin of the genre and subculture

An attempt to provide an overview of the origins of this genre for the purposes of this article poses many difficulties. This is due to the fact, that the development of rock music covers the span of many decades and has already been an object of numerous studies⁷. The history of rock begins in the 1950s. This genre is a mixture of blues and country, it created its own sound, based on guitar riffs, dynamic rhythm and expressive vocals. Its first performers included, among others, Bill Halley, Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Little Richard (Wiak 2024). The dominating genre in the 1960s was psychedelic rock, which derived its origin mostly due to the state of consciousness induced by taking drugs or hallucinogenic substances (James 2023). The 1970s were the heyday of hard rock and progressive rock. The leading bands included, among others, Led Zeppelin, Queen and Pink Floyd (Wiak 2024). In the middle of this decade, there emerged a more dynamic modification of hard rock, i.e., heavy metal. In the most general sense, it was characterized by heavily distorted guitars and a fast tempo (Gać 2022). At this point, it is necessary to mention the appearance of punk rock, which was supposed to be a return “to the roots”. Its characteristic feature was a combination of simplicity and aggressiveness. It was often played without precision, based on just a few chords (Mikzińska 2020). The following decades (1980s and 1990s) brought new influences and changes. The driving force behind the modification of styles was the development of electronics and production of, for example, synthesizers and keyboards (Piasta 1999, 135).

Rock is a genre characterized by dynamic development as well as by its propensity to adapt to the changes induced by the passage of time and to renew itself in a new form. In the history of music, rock is a phenomenon that cannot be easily grasped just on a single plane. It is a complex phenomenon that can be illustratively likened to a lush tree crown stemming from one trunk.

⁷ Detailed descriptions of the history of rock can be found in foreign publications, e.g.: Paytress 2011; Covach 2012; Weiss 1999; Weiss 2007. According to the information provided by the author, the third volume will not be published.

Rock music is more than just musical instruments, new bands, or a form of entertainment. When describing the history of rock, attention should be paid to the social and cultural context. Rock provided a means of expressing young people's rebellion against the orderly world of adults. The possibility to emphasize common values allowed to create a "new" community that rejected the surrounding culture, values and authorities. Rock idols portrayed themselves as rebels, by breaking taboos and making their fans to follow in their footsteps (Kuligowski 2004). Elvis Presley may serve as an example here. The King's concerts gathered crowds of young people (Litwora 1999, 11). Presley was an artist propagating sexual freedom and rebellion against parents and authorities. His performances induced riots and uncontrollable crowd behaviour (Piasta 1999, 125).

One effect of evoking countercultural sentiments among young people was the formation of subcultures⁸, each characterised by their own distinct rules, values and clothing. Some of them were short-lived or did not attract larger number of followers, but there were also some that managed to influence the young society for decades. The latter included, among others, punk rockers and metalheads.

The punk subculture emerged in the 1970s in the USA and Great Britain. Its view of the world was expressed by the slogans: "no future", "no rules", "anarchy". Punks opposed all institutions, be it political, social and religious, that limited freedom and they expressed those sentiments in their lyrics (Bittner 2011, 133). Punks invariably subverted everything that was dominant and accepted as truth by society. This was done to the purpose of discovering a new, authentic world (Errickson 1999). The aggressive and provocative style of punk music was reflected in clothes and appearance of its fans which included a black leather jacket decorated with studs, bovver boots (military style boots), studded leather wristbands, and a mohawk hairstyle (Bittner 2011, 133).

Punk rockers often lived on the streets or formed groups in abandoned buildings. They refused to take up paid work perceiving it as a form of social oppression. In order to emphasize their anti-system attitude, they took drugs, tattooed and self-harmed themselves (Errickson 1999).

The metalhead subculture took its final shape in the 1980s. Metalheads wanted to distance themselves from the hypocrisy of the world. This was manifested by their ignoring social and political pressures. It allowed the young generation to build a sense of superiority and otherness. The character of the music they listened to, enhanced the intensity of experiences in their everyday lives (Pluta 2018, 24). Many young people who felt oppressed or rejected joined the metalhead society to express their rebellion. As with punks, the heavily male community demanded authenticity and commitment. Characteristic features of their appearance were leather jackets⁹, jeans, band T-shirts, piercings or tattoos, and long hair (Głanek 2018). The symbols they used included

⁸ I.e. social groups living according to specific customs different from the ones commonly adopted in society (*Słownik języka polskiego* PWN 2024).

⁹ One of the typical elements of heavy metal fans' clothing was a "battle jacket" (sometimes sleeveless), with patches referring to bands or symbols related to the subculture. (O'Hagan 2021, 37-38).

a pentagram, 666 (the number of the Beast from Rev 13:18), Baphomet (a five-pointed star as a goat's head inscribed in a circle), an inverted cross and fingers arranged in the shape of horns¹⁰ (Piasta 1999, 168-179). The recurrent themes in song lyrics can be divided into two categories: "Dionysian" and "chaotic". The former emphasized the joy of life and the affirmation of sex and drugs, while the latter focused on such themes as chaos, hell, Satan, and death (Weinstein 2000, 31-43). The heavy metal community was criticized for promoting suicidal behaviour, aggression, sexual perversion, and Satanism among youth (Weinstein 2000, 250-259).

The described subcultural revolution reached Poland in the 1950s, when the first sounds from behind the Iron Curtain began to get through to the country. The development of Polish rock coincided with the times of the Polish People's Republic, when the authorities claimed their supreme right to create culture. Consequently, "rock and roll" is a history of the intricate interaction of the two forces that significantly influenced each other (Idzikowska-Czubaj 2012, 7-8). The precursors of Polish rock and roll were jazz bands: "Niebiesko-Czarni" and "Czerwono-Czarni", which began to compose slightly harder, dance sounds. Typical rock bands also appeared on the Polish scene, such as "Rhythm and Blues", "Rytmy", "Czerwone Gitary" and "Trubadurzy" (Wójcik 2023). Polish rock of the 1960s was characterized by a dynamic, strong rhythm built thanks to drums, guitar riffs and double bass, kept in the Western style and keyboard instruments were a common addition. Although the bands took cues from the West, they did not copy the originals. An example were the lyrics of songs, which had to be held in the "right tone" due to, among other things, state censorship (Ostrowska 2023). In the following decades, more bands began to appear, including: "Maanam", "Kombi", "Exodus", "Perfect", "Budka Suflera", "Republika", "Lombard", "Lady Pank". The driving force behind the development of the Polish music scene were festivals (Jarocin, Opole, Sopot)¹¹.

The mid-1970s brought a kind of crisis to rock, which lost its dominant position as a means of expression for youth. Disco culture took hold and discos were supposed to provide compensation for the shortcomings resulting from the state's isolation policy. Discos were a kind of ghetto spaces where young people could take a breather from the surrounding grey reality.

The decade of the 1980s, was the time of political changes (including the introduction of martial law) as well as of an economic crisis, which released new layers of rebellion and rejection of reality by the young generation. Rock began to return to the pedestal. Cassettes and fan magazines (fanzines) were published in the so-called "third circulation", bypassing ministerial censorship. The young generation tried to develop a system of thinking independent of the state apparatus. The great power of this movement is evidenced by the fact that at that time the number of emerging subcultures (punk rockers, metalheads, Satanists, Rastamans) increased significantly.

¹⁰ For more on the history of the gesture and its adaptation by subculture: Trela 2021.

¹¹ In the context of power in the Polish People's Republic and the possibility of organizing festivals, there emerged a theory of the so-called "safety valve" (Spalek 2021).

The time marked by a sense of uncertainty, the leading role of the party and the economic crisis aroused frustration and a desire for change in the young generation. One effect was the emergence from the underground of punk rock bands that had been developing since the mid-1970s. Punk rock as the music of protest became a form of free expression, a contestation of the reality saturated with propaganda, lies and restrictions on freedom. Apart from the festival in Jarocin, another important place for the punk family was the “Post Remont” gallery in Warsaw (Bittner 2011, 134-135).

At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, heavy metal music and its later subgenres became fashionable in Poland. The band KAT, founded in 1979, was considered one of the precursors of Polish heavy metal (Gać 2022). The typical image of the Polish metalhead did not differ from the Western one. Due to symbols that they wore and their critical attitude to the Church, they were often identified with Satanists (Majewski 2013). The common stereotype of metalheads maintained that they were aggressive¹², not very intelligent, and antisocial. However, recent research proves to the contrary (Kaltwasser et al. 2018; Chojnacka 2019).

The brevity of this article prevents a more comprehensive presentation of rock music that would include all its genres and the accompanying socio-cultural phenomena. Rock marked its place in the history of Polish culture as an important worldview-shaping factor and it cannot be categorised simply as a trend of past decades, since today's adult society is the “young generation” of that time.

3.2. The world of rock music and the Church

For the purposes of this article, I would also like to touch on the Church's attitude towards the “the world of rock”. The Church repeatedly faced dilemmas appearing in the field of music. After the Second Vatican Council, one of the challenges was the emerging phenomenon of rock and roll. The problem was related not so much to the musical style as such, but to the associated ideology. The Church, which upholds such values as tradition, morality, intergenerationality, family, respect for the elderly, social order, good manners and upbringing, could not but reject the cultural revolution that consisted in young people's subversion of any authorities, the importance of family ties, traditions and other values derived from the Gospel as well as propagation of destructive behaviours. The gap between these two worlds was even widened by accusations of anti-Christian, occult inspirations, the cult of personality (musical idols), sexual promiscuity, promotion of stimulants and violence, and manipulation of listeners' subconscious. Additionally, the concert setting, public statements made by music stars and even the graphic design of album or cassette covers also aroused much controversy.

To illustrate it, it suffices to mention the publications that are still popular in Church circles, such as *Diabelskie bębny* (Devil's drums) or *Rock: rytmiczne spędanie*

¹² Group “pogo” and “mosh” dances taking place during concerts are not an expression of aggression by the participants (Matras 2012, 154).

ducha (Rock: the rhythmic binding of the soul) (Rockwell 1997; Zwoliński 1995). In view of the above, the words of Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and later Pope Benedict XVI, will not come as a surprise: "... this type of music (rock) destroys individualism and personality - man frees himself from his conscious being. (...) Nowadays, there are more and more numerous manifestations of Satanism in music, and not everyone is aware of its dangerous influence yet" (Zwoliński 1995, 62-63).

3.3. "Christian Rock"

In an attempt to define the concept of "Christian rock" it is necessary to include two dimensions: horizontal and vertical. The first is the musical genre used as a form of artistic expression. The second dimension refers to the content that is presented within a given musical arrangement. Its verticality results from the fact that it refers to the spiritual sphere, the relationship between God and man. Song lyrics which incorporate passages from the Bible (especially Psalms) constitute an encouragement to give due worship to God and are intended to provide an incentive for listeners to live their lives in accordance with God's will or to do penance (Piasta 1999, 185).

It is obvious that such a definition does not exhaust the doubts whether rock music with its revolutionary ideological charge should be combined with religious content. However, in practice, this has already taken place for years. With the development of contemporary Christian music, there emerged bands offering a "heavy sound", devoid of any ideological basis and incorporating the Gospel message.

The first band to propose the "new Church music" in 1967 was "The Mind Garage" from Virginia (USA). The band offering its rock repertoire invited everyone to "The Electric Liturgy" held in St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery in Manhattan. The liturgy of April 13, 1969 was recorded by NBC¹³ arousing great interest among viewers (Martinez 2019).

Historians associate the emergence of Christian rock with Larry Norman and his album *Upon This Rock* (1969). In his works, the artist wanted to get through to the contemporary world and point to Jesus and Christian values. In order to promote his music, Larry Norman established the "Solid Rock Records" label. Other rock musicians followed in his footsteps and began to spread the Christian message. Those included such artists as Keith Green, Carman, or Steven Curtis Chapman (Trzciński 2016). Some of the bands, such as the "Resurrection Band", apart from musical activity, undertook charitable work supporting the homeless and the poor (Trzciński 2019).

Nowadays, "heavy riff" artists also include those who have made an international career and wanted to share their own experience of faith, e.g. "P.O.D." (Payable on Death) or "Skillet", whose album "Rise" sold 345,000 copies (Payne 2015).

The Polish rock scene did not remain passive. Bands began to appear that

¹³ Fragment of the recording is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sESGpXDviR0> (Accessed: 3.05.2005).

were more and more willing to weave Christian values into their work. It is worth mentioning the punk rock band “Armia”, founded in 1984, which underwent a textual transformation from Gnosticism to Christian values (Jakimowicz 1997b, 21-27).

Another example is the band “Houk”, whose album, “Soul ammunition” (1992), helped them achieve critical acclaim and start an international concert tour, while their songs were broadcast on radio stations and MTV (Wołodźko 1999).

An important event for Christian music was the “Song of Songs” festival in Toruń, where many bands, including those from the rock environment, were promoted. Proof of this is the metal band “Pneuma”, which in 1998 took first place in the so-called “small stage” of the festival for their debut album *Wiatr wieje tam, gdzie chce* (The wind blows where it wishes). The second album *Berakha* includes a song containing the words of the Lord’s Prayer (Sękowski 2012).

In 1991, Robert Friedrich started a band named “Creation of Death”, which was supposed to be an alternative to the Satanism prevalent at that time. The lyrics of the songs related to faith, religion and catechism truths. However, the band suspended its activities after releasing one album (Szubrycht 2022).

Further attempts to sing about God and faith resulted in a breakthrough event in the Christian rock scene. In 1996, a project called “2 Tm 2,3” was initiated¹⁴. Its members included the following artists: Tomasz Budzyński, Robert Friedrich and Dariusz Malejonek. The path of their conversion was described in the book by Marcin Jakimowicz entitled “Radykalni”. The musicians decided that they would create together “something” new, something evangelistic in nature, where they would be able to sing directly about faith (Chmiel 1996). The artists did not abandon their current style of music. The novelty of 2 Tm 2,3 was the complete abandonment of original texts in favour of quotations from the Holy Scripture, which was a revolutionary combination of rock with the content of the Bible. The founders of “Tymoteusz” spoke the Word of God in a form understandable to the young generation (Koziczyński 1997, 52)¹⁵.

Christian rock originates from a “spiritual need”. On the one hand, it were believing rock fans themselves who looked for music conveying a positive message and matching their taste (Perfuński 1997, 28-29). On the other hand, this need came from the artists, who wanted to share their personal experience of God, strengthening their journey of faith for young listeners (Kowalczyk 1997, 17). An interesting fact here is that some artists avoided the Christian “label” in conviction that it may close off a certain group of listeners to their music (Jakimowicz 1997b, 35).

Christian rock was part of the “new evangelization” and made it possible to convey religious content to young people who prefer this type of music. It created a space promoting an alternative system of values and moral attitudes towards the “traditional” world of rock. There are many examples of clergy supporting this

¹⁴ The name of the band, also called “Tymoteusz”, refers to a passage from the 2nd Letter of St. Paul to Timothy.

¹⁵ Other bands that marked their presence on the “Christian rock” scene include: “Illuminandi”, “Anastasis” and “Malchus”.

type of evangelization. They organize concerts or play in such bands (e.g. "Fratello Metallo") (Matera 1999).

Christian rock bands brought the Good News to those spheres where there was no place for the traditional message of faith. Music festivals¹⁶ have become a special opportunity for evangelization during which the audience could encounter the message of the Good News (Jakimowicz 2006).

Analysis of the presented content may raise further questions about the so-called "Christian rock". Can it serve as an effective tool for evangelization?

An answer to this question, would require conducting a survey among those immediately concerned. Research on this issue would help justify or deny the validity of artistic creativity within a genre which maintains to give rise to much controversy in source literature that, in turn, fails to provide a definite answer here.

CONCLUSION

The presented historical outline generally shows the changes that have occurred in music thematically related to God. Although the forms changed, the intention remained the same. People have always created art and used art to worship and praise God. Religious music has undergone a complex path of transformation.

The Books of the Old Testament in which music was intrinsically linked with the various aspects of everyday life as well as with celebration of religious holidays during the calendar year are an important witness to the above-mentioned processes. Cult music reached its peak of development thanks to its connection with the Temple liturgy due to King David's reform, thus becoming a fundamental form of worshipping Yahweh.

The emerging Christianity, initially rooted in Judaism and its cultural legacy, naturally adopted the traditions of its environment. However, dynamic development of communities originating from outside the Jewish cultural circle compelled Christians to adopt a position of openness to new musical trends which were more intelligible to believers from pagan circles.

St. Paul, who provided an impulse for further development played a groundbreaking role in this respect. Based on his knowledge of the Hellenistic culture, he borrowed from it the pagan ὕμνοις, which he then stripped of its original pagan load adapting it in terms of content and theology to the needs of the emerging Church. This allowed for a more accessible form of worship and evangelization of Christians coming from paganism.

A similar analogy with biblical times could be seen in the context of the post-conciliar opening to culture, within which the Church community began to seek new ways of proclaiming the Gospel in forms adapted to contemporary recipients.

What the introduction of songs in their form borrowed from paganism was for early Christianity, evangelization through rock music, rejected by the Church circles as a demoralizing phenomenon, was for modern times.

¹⁶ In Poland, for example, it was the former "Przystanek Woodstock", today called "Poland Rock".

Broadly understood rock music so appealing to young people may serve as an example here. This type of music allowed to get through to a wide group of young people with the message of the Gospel in a form that was understandable and acceptable to them.

Many found the very idea of “Christian rock” outrageous, perceiving attempts to match gospel themes with such a style of music as a transgression of the boundaries of propriety as it meant evangelizing young people with something inherently “anti-evangelical”. Others, however, accepted it because they saw it as the voice of the Church fitting into the world of youth culture.

“Christian rock” was, is and, for many years to come, will provoke discussion. After all, does a long-haired boy wearing boots and a black jacket necessarily have to be identified with the “666” sign? A common saying goes, “you can’t judge a book by its cover.” It is similar in this case. God created the human heart, and He knows how to speak to it most effectively. Therefore, the best conclusion here will be the words of Jesus: “So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matt 7:20).

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