



"I can't run somebody's salvation for them," he says, "but if those kids want to keep listening after my show, they're going to be receiving ideas that are very ungodly. I just hope what they hear on the Christian rock show is enough for them."

Wells, who still professes to being a Journey and Bruce Springsteen fan, acts on his concern with modern music by giving a two and a half hour presentation on "the satanic element in sectarian rock" to local high schools and anyone interested. He sees rock and roll as another battleground between the ultimate powers of good and evil in the universe.

"Gospel music was way ahead of its time," he says slowly, making sure his ideas are given the weight they deserve. "That rock and roll sound came from the gospel roots. Then when it became rock and roll the devil took it — he knew the power in the music."

"Music has changed to the point where it's promoting things that will put you in the pit of hell..."  
—Keith Wells

"Music has changed to the point where it's promoting things that will put you in the pit of hell — about 70 per cent of modern records are like that. So, obviously, you have some kind of conspiracy in the music. People don't like to hear that, but..." Wells' voice trails off as he searches for words to describe the situation.

"What bugs me is if you say one thing against it (modern music), all hell breaks loose — so to speak."

Christine Boychuck agrees there is a problem, but describes it in terms less harsh; "It's not the music that's at fault, it's the singer's motivation. It's the lyrics," she says.

Others are less charitable. Citing a satanic conspiracy which runs through all rock music, some born-again Christians would consign all rock music to the fire, with a specially hot place reserved for Christian rock. "One of the greatest victories of the occult world was to penetrate the Christian music with their satanic beat...The words appear to be God's, but the beat belongs to Satan!" charges one evangelical comic book tract.

The theory is that all rock songs are updated versions of druid music used to call up the devils. "The drum beat is the key to addict the listener," the book cautions.

Accusations of satanic possession aren't new to religious groups of any stripe, but the bigger question is: can the music avoid drowning in its own contradictions? It's hard to tell boys and girls to "renounce the world" when you're buying into that same world's music in order to get their attention. And lyrics such as "Don't you know/ the world will tease you/ squeeze you/ into its mold" are less radical when they come from a Christian trying to make his music sound like everyone else's.

Or as Molly Austin says, laughing and leaning conspiratorially forward in her Canadian Bible Society office, "Frankly, I don't see how anyone can get the message. I can't hear a thing they say."