

Circle of Drums

Assemble about twenty to fifty percussionists with tambourines, kettles, bongos, snares, bass drums, and the like and then set a carefully chosen beat and maintain the same rhythm non-stop. You will create a unique sound that is in its own way beautiful and deeply satisfying. And, you will attract a lot of attention. It's called a, "Circle of Drums."

The use of pure rhythm has been used since ancient times in ritualistic spiritual worship. Further, it has a long and frightening history associated with sexual ritualism. In its spiritual context, drumming and pure rhythm is used as a means of obtaining an altered state of consciousness, and/or emotional transformation. It has not gone out of use. In fact, it is gaining new and broad acceptance as a form of evangelism and worship among certain, "emerging churches", and neo-charismatic groups.

You almost have to see it to believe it. Recently, I was drawn into observation of a, "Christian Circle of Drums." It happened quite by accident. Hearing the sound of pounding drums perhaps 300 to 400 yards from a small coffee shop where I was sitting, I finally ask my waiter, "What's that about?" 'It's a call to worship', he said. I could not have resisted even if I had tried.

This was no gentle ringing of a church bell, as in someone's, romanticized childhood memory. Think more of an ancient primitive tribal ritual. Forty or fifty instruments were pounding away while a circle of people gathered around. Hundreds of people were drawn to the beating of the drums. They were men and women of various cultures, races, and ages. Some would move into the circle and start dancing, staggering about, occasionally slightly touching. For the most part it was not overtly sensual however, nothing appeared to be off-limits or unacceptable. The idea was, "let's get spiritual,". One could hear a rare shout., "Get free!" "Let go of you mind!". The incessant continued and more and more were drawn into the circle. Some would stop, step out of the circle, fall, and cry. Others became trance-like zombies. People were searching as it were, for an epiphany. There did not appear to be a leader. It was open, karaoke-type dancing, spinning, groaning, nonsensical singing.

By the two-hour mark of continuous rhythm things were happening. People were emotionally unraveling, opening up. A young man explained to me that people could experience a powerful awaking at these events. I asked him if it was a Christian event? To which he answered, "It is anything, I guess."

I have since learned that all across America such events are taking place. Some are Christian others non-Christian, but they are all about spirituality. There is a new searching for God in today's world, and when a generation gets hungry for God they become easy targets for the extortionists. Many deceivers unwittingly emerge just filling the vacuum that is created in the loss of certitude and conviction. The "Circle of Drums," is a dangerous regression into darkness. Don't be lulled into thinking it can't happen at a church near you.

Providing a spiritual experience without offering the solution that addresses the cause of human despair (sin) is like feeding a child nothing but candy. What I described to you was not of God. There was no Bible in it. Truly, it is as the young man said, "It's anything, I guess." When you have lost your connection with the Word of God that is what you end up with. Just about anything.

Satan has got us right where he wants us: ignorant of the word, without the gift of discernment, and devoid of long-range perspective about the consequences our mindless activities. On what Biblical example could someone justify a revival of Godless rituals that induce altered states of consciousness? As I see it, the use of beat, music, dance, chanting, and repetitive phrases as a tool to emotionalism or spiritual experience is an effort to avoid repentance, the authoritative Word, and the cleansing pure move of the Holy Spirit.

While searching for shortcuts many lose the way altogether. The "Circle of Drums" and the other pounding and alluring rhythms of our world are ensnaring and holding captive a generation that has a dying relationship with God's Holy Word. There is a mortal fear today of trusting the fullness of God's Word. For some, the message of repentance and the call to holiness seem too old school, quaint but unworkable, clumsy, and not cool enough to reach today's modern crowd. But, God defends His Word, honors His Word, blesses His Word, accomplishes His will by His Word, and He cannot lie.