

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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A BRIEF ABSTRACT ON WORSHIP

Wayne Coats

It would be difficult to hear of a more complete absurdity than the modern palaver that there is no divinely authorized order, principle, or pattern set forth in the New Testament for Christians to adhere to in worshipping God. I will state the case thusly: "There is a stated form of worship set forth in the inspired word to govern me as I worship God, or there are no principles to which I must subscribe as I worship Almighty God."

By the foregoing statement, I do not mean to convey the idea that there are no rules to govern our worship as to *HOW*, *WHO*, *WHEN*, and *WHICH* activities to be engaged in by the worshipper. There are some incidentals to be sure as we think about worship.

There is no mandate for every congregation to meet for worship at the same time each Lord's Day. We do not subscribe to the idea that each action of worship must be followed by the same acts of worship in each congregation. Different acts of worship can be participated in as the first acts of worship in some congregations whereas the same acts can be seen engaged in as the last activities of worship in other congregations. Insofar as I know, the Bible does not mandate that we are to follow the same procedures in our worship each Lord's Day. On one Sunday we might begin our worship services with the singing of some good scriptural songs. On another Sunday we might begin the worship period by having a good brother to lead the congregation

in prayer. Who can say that such is unscriptural?

Every child of God will admit that there is a command as well as a privilege set forth to worship or there is *not* any mandate stated for man to worship God.

Suppose we contend that there is not any Bible instruction given for man to consider as he contemplates worship. In other words, we do not have any information relative to worship which might guide us along the way. If there is no information regarding worship, can there be any such thing as disorder or error when we worship? Can there be innovations in worship if there are no instructions pertaining to worship? We insist that there can be no transgressions concerning worship, if there is no rule or law regarding worship. What is *disorder*, but acting contrary to order? What is *transgression*, but allowing self to go across the line, rule or realm of authority? We engage in error when we stray away from the scriptural standard.

A very pertinent question would be, "Why do children of God assemble together to worship on the first day of the week?" If there is no pattern or information regarding Lord's Day worship, may all Christians refuse to meet together for worship on the first day of the week?

People tell me that I am supposed to meet with the saints of like precious faith on Sunday (Heb. 10:25). Since there is no pattern for worship as some say, can I willfully refuse to assemble and fail to partic-

ipate in any activities of worship?

One fellow in our area, who appears to be real smart according to some people, seems to be happy saying, "I reject pattern theology." If there is no pattern for worship, will it suffice for a few people to assemble some morning and sing for two hours and then go home? Would it suffice for a group of brethren to meet together and read for two hours, and then adjourn to their home? The Christian Scientists will tell you *HOW* to read. Is there any specific law which regulates how we spend our time in worship on the Lord's Day? How can Christians violate a rule that does not exist?

The Bible teaches that there are specific acts of worship which the early church engaged in. Those acts comprise the actions of worship today. We are not at liberty to dispense with them. If the acts of worship are divinely taught in one congregation, then such acts are uniformly found in all other congregations where faithful saints are found.

If no established rule or standard is given for men to assemble and worship God, then it would follow that all sorts of mundane activities could be followed as the whims of men dictate. A worship service without rule or reason is irrational and foolish.

How completely unreasonable do men become when they declare that God must be worshipped but He has not told us *HOW* to worship Him. We

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A Brief Abstract on Worship...



Editorial...

WHAT SOME DENOMINATIONAL PEOPLE HAVE SAID REGARDING MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC

Garland M. Robinson

The vast majority of denominational churches today use instrumental music in worship. However, the church of Christ does not use it. The Lord's people are content with the original New Testament practice of congregational singing.

As far as history records, mechanical instruments of music did not have their introduction into any type of Christian worship until about 670 A.D. And even then, it was met with violent opposition. That means for well over 600 years, instrumental music was not used in worship. It was man who introduced it, not God. It did not gain widespread acceptance for 1,000 years after the church was established in the first century.

There is not one shred of evidence in the Bible from Matthew 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, that it was ever *commanded* or that it was ever *practiced*, nor is it even *implied*! God specifies the kind of music he wants and in every passage it is always SINGING, never playing!

Since its first introduction in the 7th century, many since then have opposed its introduction and use in worship. It is interesting to note what some of these well-known religious reformers in centuries past have said on the subject. And, even though their words are quoted here, it is to be understood that mechanical instruments are wrong and sinful because the Bible gives no authority for them, not because these men opposed them. However, to show that members of the church of Christ are not alone in recognizing this basic Bible truth, note what many others have said concerning the use of instruments of music in worship.

Adam Clarke, recognized by many to be a distinguished Methodist scholar, made these comments concerning Amos 6:5 (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p.684): "...The use of such instruments of music, in the Christian Church, is *without the sanction and*

against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are sinful." ... "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that *I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil.* Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but *instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor.* This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity."

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church said: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither *heard nor seen.*"

John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church (John Calvin's Commentary, 23rd Psalm): "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews."

Charles H. Spurgeon preached to 20,000 people every Sunday for 20 years in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London in the 1800s and never were mechanical instruments of music used in these services. When asked why, he quoted I Corinthians 14:15, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." He then declared: "*I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery.*"

Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran Church, opposed the use of the instrument in worship (McClintock & Strong, Vol. VI, p.762). He called the organ "*an ensign of Baal.*" An ensign is a flag, banner, sign, signal or badge. Luther called the organ a banner of

idolatry, a sign or signal of sin.

John Knox, a Presbyterian preacher called the organ "*a kist (chest) of whistles.*" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. VI, p.762).

W. J. Conybeare and **J. S. Howson**, both of the Church of England commented on Ephesians 5:19 by saying (Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. II, p.408): "Throughout the whole passage there is a contrast implied between the Heathen and the Christian practice. ...When you meet, let your enjoyment consist not in fulness of wine, but fulness of the Spirit; let your songs be, not the drinking songs of heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment, not the music of the lyre, but the melody of the heart; while you sing them to the praise not of Baccus or Venus, but of the Lord Jesus Christ."

J. H. Garrison from the Christian Church said: "There is no command in the New Testament, Greek or English, commanding the use of the instrument. Such a command would be entirely out of harmony with the New Testament."

Lyman Coleman, a Presbyterian scholar commented: "*It is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their Christian worship.* Neither Ambrose, nor Basil, nor Chrysostom, in the noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon music, make any mention of instrumental music. Basil condemns it as ministering only to the depraved passion of men. Musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth or sixth centuries. *Organs were unknown in the church until the eighth or ninth century.* Previous to this they had their place in theater rather than in the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West."

Joseph Bingham, who was of the Church of England: "*...music in the church is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music is not.*"

John Girardeau, a Presbyterian professor wrote that the Church, "although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into corruption of apostolic practice, *had no instrumental music for twelve hundred years.*"

The **Jews** did not use mechanical

instruments of music in the tabernacle and the synagogue — although it was used in the temple. Winford C. Douglas, in *Church Music History and Practice*, p.15, states: “*The synagogue music was an adoption without musical instruments of the temple music.*” It wasn’t until 1815, in Berlin, that the first instrument was introduced in the **Jewish Synagogue** under violent opposition by many of its members. The first use of it in America by Jews was in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1840. There was bitter opposition to it resulting in a court trial with the ultimate victory given to the instrument.

Alexander Campbell wrote: “*I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians such...would be as a cowbell in a concert.*”

David Lipscomb wrote: “*The church that adopts instrumental music goes into apostasy.*”

People today may quibble and bicker over the use of instruments of music in worship and say that the practice must be acceptable to God if it comes from the heart, but the silence of a “thus saith the Lord” cannot be ignored.

It must be remembered that the apostles were inspired. They were guided infallibly by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in teaching the Will of God and showing the church how to worship. Bible history and secular history both bear out the fact that mechanical instruments of music were not used in the worship of God in the church. This point is insurmountable and overwhelming. Regardless of what men may say about “this verse” or “that verse” or “this argument” or “that argument,” the apostles were guided into “all truth” (John 16:13). However, they were not guided to use mechanical instruments of music. Therefore, their use is sinful since it stands without any inspired authority.

They stand on nothing more than man’s whim. They are plants that our heavenly Father did not plant and in the end, they shall be rooted up and cast into a furnace of fire along with those who use, endorse, propagate and defend them (Matt. 15:13)!

Jesus clearly taught about the danger of manmade doctrine when he spoke to the religious leaders of His time. He said: “But in vain they do worship me [God], teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9).



WHAT DOES COLOSSIANS 3:17 HAVE TO DO WITH THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC?

Garland M. Robinson

Colossians 3:17 states a principle: “*And whatsoever ye DO in WORD or DEED, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*” To do something in the “name of” means “by his authority.” When you send someone to the bank to do some business for you, they act in “your name” or upon “your authority.” When the police go to someone’s door, they can say, “open in the name of the law.” That means, they have the authority to command you to open your door.

Colossians 3:17 demands that we have a “thus saith the Lord” for all we SAY and DO. Since singing is something we do, we must have a “thus saith the Lord” for it. So, the question is, where does God tell us to use mechanical instruments of music in worship? The answer is NOWHERE. If we use them, we do so without his authority because we can’t point to any place in his word to authorize (prove) it.

Some say, “God didn’t say not to use them.” But, consider this, if you take a prescription to the pharmacist and he returns it to you with two or three other medicines, you will certainly ask “why” did you include these other drugs? He may reply by saying, “the doctor didn’t say I couldn’t add them.” He would be in big trouble because he acted on his own. He did not have authority from the doctor to make additions. Why isn’t it the same way with God? Who are we to “act on our own” and add to what God has authorized?

The following verses condemn acting on our own.

Rev. 22:18-19, “*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall **add** unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall **take away** from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*”

II John 9, “*Whosoever transgresseth, and **abideth not** in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*”

Some contend that since we are to use psalms in our singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and psalms are found in the Old Testament, then we can use anything else out of the Old Testament, including instrumental music. However, psalms can be used to sing praises to God because Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 tell us to “sing” them. These passages do not tell us to “play” them. What men “like” or what sounds good to “us” is not the point. The question is, what does God tell us to do? Also, consider this, for one to appeal to the Old Testament to support playing instruments of music, shows that nothing can be found in the New Testament to authorize their use, for if it could, they would point to it.

Some also contend that mechanical instruments are used in heaven; therefore, we can use them now. However, the question is not what “may” or “may not” have been done in the Old Testament or what “may” or “may not” be done in heaven. The question is, what does God tell us to do NOW, “in the church?” I dare not take it upon myself to add to God’s word nor take from it. If God wanted us to use mechanical instruments of music, he certainly would have told us to.

Those who contend for a thing have the “burden of proof” upon them to support their action. So, if you support instruments of music being used today, we challenge you to simply point to a passage that authorizes their use. But, we’ll tell you up front, IT CAN’T BE DONE.

A Brief Abstract on Worship...

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must never become disposed to tell God *HOW* He should be worshipped. Such amounts to sheer mockery of the truth which declares, “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Thank God for the truth which tells us *WHO* is to be worshipped and *HOW* He is to be worshipped.

It is truly sad that a few men will presume to cast the truth aside, and tragically, they can always find any number of supporters to encourage them. Try to imagine the Bible being silent on *WHO* and *HOW* to worship.

If we are not instructed by the Bible regarding our worship, then we are no better off than those who read the Book of Mormon, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures and the Koran.

God is the object and the Truth is our guide in worship. Which can we cast aside?

In order to make the worship of God of no value and without merit, Satan has convinced many people to continue to observe the old Jewish law regarding the Sabbath day.

The Lord’s Day or first day of the week is completely rejected by Sab-batarians. What would some liberal brother say to people who insist on keeping the Sabbath Day? If one would object to the Sabbath keepers, why would objections be made?

Sabbath Day keepers kindle fires in violation of the law (Exodus 33:3). They refuse to abide in their houses on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:29). They bear all kinds of burdens as needs arise. All kinds of work is performed on the Sabbath Day or Saturday. It is a fact that all normal persons violate the Sabbath laws of the Old Testament.

The Sabbath Day was given only to the Jews. Moses wrote, “*And remember that thou was a servant in the land of Egypt and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day*” (Deut. 5:15). The writer also said, “*Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout*

their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever” (Exodus 31:16-17).

The Gentiles were not brought out of Egypt and the Sabbath was never given to them as a sign. Moreover, the Gentiles were charged in the New Testament with committing numerous sins but not one time were they ever charged with violating the Sabbath. The Sabbath Day sustained the same relationship to the Jew as circumcision. Neither was a part of the new covenant.

The Sabbath was one of many Holy Days to be observed by those under the old law. Christians were never instructed to observe a single one of those holy days. May we ask why? Early Christians were careful to meet on the first day of the week to worship. They did not do so by any principle contained in Moses’ law. It seems strange that God would set forth laws and regulations for the people to worship Him under the Old Covenant but keep completely silent about the manner of worship under the New Covenant.

When Peter preached on Solomon’s porch, he quoted Moses who wrote, “*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people*” (Acts 3:22-23).

Under the new covenant, there was a new table for Christians to gather around. The apostle wrote, “*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s Table and the table of devils*” (I Cor. 10:21).

I would make a strong appeal for each child of God to make every effort to worship God in an orderly manner (I Cor. 14:40). We need to be overly cautious as we plan and prepare for worship.

We know the apostles did not sit by and allow the Christians to worship in a wrongful manner. Luke records, “*Upon the first day of the week, the disciples met together to break bread and Paul preached unto them*” (Acts 20:7). The purpose of meeting together was to break bread.

Of course Luke did not say, “each and every first day of each and every week.” It happened that on the first day of the week, Paul was present to break bread with the disciples. Luke did not need to spell out *EVERY* first day of every week. Among those who object to members of the church of Christ breaking bread each Lord’s Day, the same can be said about meeting on the first day. The hue and cry is made that we must assemble together. Sincere people say, “If we do not habitually meet together, the preacher cannot receive his weekly check, but we do not have to keep the communion service.” Nonsense!

If assembling together was a mere matter of opinion, so was the communion and vice-versa. By what authority do people gather together on Sunday? If the disciples did not break bread each first day, they did not meet together each first day. If they met together each first day, they broke bread each first day of the week. The two stand or fall together.

Please consider that the inspired apostle used the definite article — *the* — which denotes a stated time. Luke did not say, “Upon a first day of a week some disciples met together.” *The* disciples who met together were in Troas. They were not in Corinth, Laodicea or Rome. A stated time was given by the use of a definite article. The purpose of the assembly in Troas was to break bread. The time of the assembling was upon the first day of the week.

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he attempted to help the congregation which was having trouble concerning the communion (I Cor. 9:2). It is actually declared that some will say, when the apostle declared, “As oft as ye eat,” he meant that the apostle gave brethren the liberty to eat when they wanted to.

Again there are those who say that the frequent observance of the Lord’s supper on each Lord’s Day, will cause the great event to lose its solemnity and it becomes rather commonplace. According to the idea of some folks, the utterance means, “the more frequent, the less solemn.” The opposite would be, the less frequent, the more solemn. Such a consideration is not worthy of one’s time or attention. Does it really follow that the less we pray, the more precious prayer becomes? Does the

preacher who palavers against the weekly communion observance try to get serious about the weekly collection? Sometimes we wonder whatever became of common sense.

In my library are several different creed books. Each one is different from all others. Also, each one attempts to present a plan for man to worship God.

It is still true as was taught by our Lord hundreds of years ago, and we need to give heed thereto. Jesus declared, *“But in vain they do worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matt. 15:9).

705 Hillview Dr.
Mt. Juliet, TN 37122

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Jimmy Scott	\$25
M/M M. S. Rooker, Jr.	\$100
Brenda Chouinard.....	\$15
Jamal & Judith Abyad.....	\$100
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"SECOND GLANCE"

Marvin L. Weir

The above title is from an article by **Rick Atchley** that is proudly posted on **Abilene Christian University's** website (www.acu.edu/acutoday/summer2006.html). ACU honored Rick with a "Distinguished Alumni Citation" in 2006, and the article contains his comments upon receiving the award. Rick credits ACU with influencing him until his graduation in 1978, and then continuing to influence him through Bible Lectureships, relationships with professors, "and insight from the books they have authored." He states that there are "five themes in [his] ministry — big thoughts — and the seeds for them were planted through my relationship to the university." I want to put at least three of Rick's "big thoughts" that he and ACU are so very proud of, under the microscope of God's Word.

1) *“First, the gospel of Christ is bigger than all other doctrines. I didn't know that when I first enrolled at ACU. I used to think that all biblical interpretations were equal in importance and in relation to salvation. My view was quickly challenged by the diversity of views I encountered in my fellow students.”*

It is obvious that Rick was better off before enrolling in ACU than after enrolling! Does the Bible say "the gospel of Christ is bigger than all other doctrines?" No, but Atchley does! Both *gospel* and *doctrine* refer to the same thing — God's truth that saves! What is truth? God's Word is truth (John 17:17). The Gospel is God's revelation to man. It is "a reference to the way, the plan, the system, the scheme God has designed, devised and delivered to make man righteous" (*System of Salvation*, James Boyd, p.8). Is one part of the Gospel that God has devised to make man righteous bigger than another part? I think not!

John says, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring*

not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (II John 9-11). The "doctrine" (KJV) or "teaching" (ASV) is the teaching Christ did personally through Himself and His apostles. Regardless of what Atchley would have one to believe, there is no "big" or "little" teaching or doctrine of Christ! One who will not abide in all the teaching or doctrine of Christ is not to be fellowshiped.

Atchley quips that when Jesus was asked about the most important law, He did not reply, "Well, they're all equal." Instead, Atchley rightly notes that Jesus answers the scribe, saying, *“The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these”* (Mark 12:29-31). Is it not obvious that Jesus is teaching that this is the foundation for all other matters? Proper love for God will motivate one to do all that God would have him to do. As Jesus said, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* [not just the big one] (John 14:15).

Atchley has decided *“that the emphasis a subject deserves in [his] sermons is based on its proximity to the cross. The closer it is to the cross, the more I must talk about it. The gospel of Christ is bigger than all other doctrines.”*

It is obvious that for Atchley and his followers the Gospel is believing in Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection. Atchley has decided he and his brothers *“are not going to agree on everything. We are going to be wrong on some things, but he's my brother if he's right on Jesus.”* Atchley is famous for quoting himself and absolutely no Scripture! One cannot be "right on Jesus" and not abide in "the doctrine [teaching, ASV] of Christ" (II John 9)!

2) *“Second, the grace of God is*

bigger than any sin or mistake.” Atchley credits Lynn Anderson for helping him understand that his *“salvation didn’t depend on [his] moral or doctrinal perfection, but on [his] faith in the perfect Son of God.”* Atchley then says, *“Before I knew that, I would have had no good news for the woman who was married five times.”*

The liberals teach that God’s grace covers sins of which sinners refuse to repent. Christ did not say to the woman to whom Atchley refers, *“I have good news for you. You may because of my grace remain with the one you now call your husband.”* Christ did say, *“Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly (John 4:16-18).* The Bible teaches it

is *“repent or perish”* (Luke 13:3), not remain in adultery and be covered by God’s grace!

3) *“Then finally, at ACU, I began to understand that the kingdom of God is bigger than we realize.”* Atchley then refers to the incident in Mark 9:38-40 and declares, *“It took me a while, but I finally understood that just because someone is not ‘one of us’ doesn’t mean they are not one of Christ’s. It will never again be my agenda to oppose anybody who is doing good in the name of Jesus.”*

The one who did not follow the apostles was simply not one of them. It is obvious he was not a false teacher or member of a denomination. First, he cast out demons, a power given to the apostles (Mark 3:15) and seventy others (Luke 10:1ff). Second, Jesus commended his work, thus, he could not have been a false teacher.

Atchley and ACU believe the

kingdom of God is bigger than the Lord’s church! Obviously, Atchley and his followers desire to fellowship those who *“abideth not in the doctrine/teaching of Christ.”* The faithful will not partake of his *“evil works”* (II John 10-11). Atchley should study instead of *“glance”* at the Holy Scriptures!

*1272 Bonham St.
Paris, TX 75460*

NOTE: Rick Atchley and the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Richland Hills, Texas, has introduced mechanical instruments of music into their worship and have also included a worship service wherein they observe the Lord’s supper on Saturday. Please pray that Rick, the elders and the whole church will see the error of their ways and repent before it’s too late. — editor

THE FIGHT IS ON

Tom Wacaster

The battle rages, and the Captain of our army encourages us to stand in the gap, to *“put on the whole armor of God...and having done all, to stand.”*

A recent bulletin reported that the **Episcopal Church** is on the verge of allowing homosexuals into their pulpits. Another bulletin reports that the **Catholic Church** is about to capitulate on this same moral issue. Meanwhile, toleration is in, opposition is out, and it is apparent that our brethren are about to succumb to the same kind of *“pluralistic”* thinking that is sweeping our society.

“Judge not that ye be not judged” has become the battle cry for those weak of spirit. Controversy is no longer politically correct, whether it be in the political or the religious realm. I, for one, am grateful that neither Jesus, nor His apostles, ever adopted such a philosophy in order to promote and promulgate the *“faith once for all delivered to the saints”* (Jude 3). Had the restorationist pioneers held to the same attitude toward religious division and error as

some of our brethren do today, they would never have gotten to first base in bringing about a restoration of the ancient order of things.

J. S. Lamar wrote the following approximately 30 years after the death of Alexander Campbell. I share it for no other reason than to show that firm conviction and a stalwart stand for the truth is the only way by which the citadels of error will ever be torn down and the truth of God exalted. Here is what brother Lamar wrote:

“Every party had made its own creed, and set forth its conception of Christianity in a form chosen by itself. Every builder had erected a structure in accordance with his own architectural ideas and designs; and the results were satisfactory to the builders and really, for human structures, very good. It was while resting in fancied security in these corrupted and beautiful temples, the product of their skill and the pride of their hearts, that Alexander Campbell, as with the voice of God’s thunder and the sword of God’s Spirit, broke upon them, and aroused them to a sense of

their danger. Now, if instead of thus assaulting them, he had been content to accept their gauge, and to meet them on their own chosen ground, both the conflict and the result had been different. They were fully prepared to contest the question of comparative merit; and if the issue had been, for example, whether the English church was better or worse than the German; whether the Methodist had more or less truth than the Presbyterian; whether the creed, the doctrines, the practices, of any given sect, approximated in more respects than those of some others to the apostolic model and teaching — in such case the conflict would have been most welcome. But Mr. Campbell did not condescend to engage in any such useless strife. The peculiarities of sects and their varying degrees of excellency were treated only as side-issues and incidents, while with ponderous and pounding logic he battered upon the very basis of sectarianism — contending that, whether they had more of the truth or less, they were still wrong, fundamentally wrong, wrong

in being sects, wrong in not being what Christ had founded, while yet assuming to occupy the place, to command respect, and to wield the authority of the divine institution. And now the fight was on. It was Alexander Campbell against the whole sectarian world — and all this world combining to resist him.”

Thank God for such men as Mr. Campbell, “Racoon” John Smith, Barton W. Stone, and a host of courageous men who refused to bow to the “pluralistic” mind-set that so domi-

nates our world, yea even our own brotherhood at this very hour.

It is readily admitted that when we take a stand on the side of truth, we will be criticized. But at least we know we stand with good company, “for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you” (Matt. 5:12b). And, should it be our lot to stand alone, or at best with the minority, and should the host of the armies of darkness assail us, we can be assured that in the final analysis, when all has been said and done, and

we stand before the Captain of our army, we will hear the sweet words, “Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.” It will have been a well fought battle, and the victory shall be ours to enjoy for all eternity.

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58).

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP IS SINFUL

Kenneth E. Thomas

Mechanical instrumental music in worship is wrong (SINFUL) because of at least the following reasons:

1. Its Use Does Not Respect The “Silence” of the Scriptures (I Peter 4:11). The oracles of God have been revealed, i.e. His Word (Jude 3; Heb. 1:1-2; II John 9; Eph. 3:1-6; I Cor. 2:1-13). The New Testament is called the “Perfect Law of Liberty” (James 1:25).

In the New Testament we find no mention of mechanical instruments, so, they cannot be used and still “speak as the oracles of God.” Likewise, we cannot claim to believe in the “perfect law of Christ” while using something unauthorized therein (Luke 6:46)! See II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:3.

Mechanical instruments in worship cannot be defended as a part of the revelation Jesus called “all truth” (John 16:12-13) because they are not mentioned therein!

The will of Christ is based on what it says, not on what it does not say (Heb. 7:14)! Why were there no priests from the tribe of Judah under the Old Testament? Because Moses spake nothing about such, that’s why! Men must learn to respect the silence of God as well as “when” and “what” He says.

2. Its Use Violates The Principle of “Walking by Faith” (II Cor. 5:7).

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17; John 6:44-45; Matt. 28:19-20;

Rom. 10:14-15).

Since not one passage of Scripture authorizes the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, it cannot be an act of faith. Paul says “*whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” (Rom. 14:23). No act can possibly be an act of faith without any Scriptural instruction. See II John 9.

The New Testament authorizes singing (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Heb. 13:14; James 5:13). Singing is vocal music. Playing is mechanical instrumental music. That is adding another “kind” of music. It is impossible to obey the Lord’s commands in these passages by playing a mechanical instrument! One must sing to do what is commanded in them. Don’t forget Cain as well as Nadab and Abihu as you consider your actions in this matter. See Revelation 22:18-19 and Leviticus 10:1-4.

3. Mechanical Instruments Violate the Principle of Promoting Unity Among Followers of Christ.

All Christians are encouraged to “have the mind of Christ” (Phil. 2:5). If in fact we do, we will desire and work for unity among His followers based on His apostle’s words just as He prayed we should (John 17:17,20-21). We will be content to “abide in the apostle’s doctrine” as did early disciples (Acts 2:42). Paul, an inspired apostle, admonishes us to “all speak the same thing and have no divisions among us” (I Cor. 1:10).

He calls man-made divisions a sign of “carnality,” not of spirituality in (I Cor. 3:1-3).

Wherever the instrument has been introduced into assemblies among brethren, it has caused division. Those who opt for its use admit that the Scriptures are silent about its use. They also admit that it is scriptural not to use it. They still, however, attempt to justify its use as an expedient. Some equate it with a song leader, lights, notes, the parts such as bass, alto, tenor or soprano. The fact is that when we use all of those things which are indeed aids to singing, all we have done is to SING! When an instrument is added, you have another kind of music. See?

There are three rules by which we may determine an expedient: It must be lawful (II John 9; Col. 3:17). It must not destroy the faith of brethren (I Cor. 1:8-13; 10:32-33). It must not cause division (John 17:20-21; Eph. 4:1-2; I Cor. 1:10).

4. Mechanical Instruments Destroy The Fundamental Principle of Worship. We Must Worship in Truth! (John 4:24)

The standard of truth is God’s word (John 8:31-32; 17:17).

The truth only authorizes singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Instrumental music in worship belongs to the doctrines and commandments of men which Christ Jesus says renders one’s worship vain (Matt. 15:9).



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In the March 2007 issue of the Mailbag, I printed a letter from Dee Brown where he requested that I remove from the mailing list the Bayside congregation located at 1682 Weeksville Road, Elizabeth City, North Carolina. I should not have printed the entirety of his comments and apologize to the church there for doing

so. None of the brethren from the church there has requested that they be removed from the mailing list.) "I love *Seek The Old Paths*. I'm thankful that some preachers want to preach the truth. I'm sending a little money to help with postage. Please keep up the good work" ...**Bobbie Wheeler**. "Thank you so much for sending the STOP bulletin to me. Thank you too for your stand for the truth. Enclosed, you will find a check. Please use it where ever its needed to continue this good work" ...**Margaret L. Wittig**. "We receive your publication and always look forward to every issue!" ...**Glenis Mayo, Watertown, TN**. "I just recently was given your great publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. I just read the February issue. I am very much interested in receiving your future issues, hopefully starting with your March issue. I have many friends that attend Richland Hills congregation. It makes my heart sick to read about what is going on there. God bless your efforts to let the brotherhood know what is going on. We need to be strong and bold in our refusing to follow men rather than our Lord. Enclosed is a check to help spread the word. God bless" ...**Oleta Trigg, Big Sandy, TX**. "I am most interested in receiving your publication. I truly believe the material in your publication will strengthen me spiritually. I have been very troubled about Richland Hills. I would like to learn more about what happened there. I love the Lord and his church. I have heard wonderful things about your congregation. Your help would be appreciated" ...**Loyd Pribble, Oklahoma City, OK**. "Please send me your monthly publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. I have read many of your publications and I have found them to be according to the Word of God. Please add me to your mailing list and I will send donations on an on-going basis when I am able to. Keep up the good work and may God bless you" ...**Scherry Larranaga, Clarinda, IA**. "My mother received a copy of the Feb/07 publication on the topic of Instrumental Music. It was excellent, and I am hoping that you may be able to provide me with a copy. Congregations in my daughter's area are grabbing with this issue, and your publication is a well organized, thoughtful discussion on the topic which I know that she would find very helpful" ...**M. J. Kolar, San Jose, CA**. "We receive STOP and enjoy it very much. Thank you" ...**Joshua & Kristie Dement, Pochontas, AR**. "Greetings. I've been receiving your literature for years now and I don't like to miss any issue of it. Thank you very much and God bless you always. I would like to request for a change of address to send your *Seek The Old Paths*. I'll be moving in a few days" ...**James Quitariano, San Francisco, CA**. "I would like to be removed from your mailing list, but I ask this because I can read it online, thanks to the website you have. I really like your publication, and am grateful for your hard work and dedication to telling the truth. I hope you continue in this work" ...**TN**. "Brother Robinson, thanks again for your foresight and wisdom in the selection of material(s) published in STOP. We need more fundamental teaching in our pulpits, as well as through other sources of distribution. Having recently moved from Pennsylvania to my home state of Mississippi, I would really appreciate getting a bundle of *Seek The Old Paths* to distribute to the membership at Oak Ridge. If possible, please send 30 to 40 current issues in each bundle" ...**William J. Coats, Baldwin, MS**. "Please change my mailing address. Thank you very much. STOP is a great Gospel Paper. Your articles are always well written and pointed" ...**Donald R. Fox, Saltillo, MS**. "Thank you so much for shedding light on some of the devil's most vigilant supporters and their activities, particularly as was evidenced by the recent incidence in Texas regarding instrumental music in worshipping the Lord, etc." ...**T. Long, Newport, AR**. "Thank you! We really appreciate the good work you are doing" ...**Melinda Kolar**. "You had in your mail bag that John Trotter refused STOP. He did not refuse it. He and his wife have passed away. Someone else must have requested that he be removed from the mailing list" ...**Birdwell, OH**. "Keep up the good work. We enjoy your publication" ...**Cecil Adams, Searcy, AR**. "I just finished reading the February issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. I found it to be very sound in teaching God's Word" ...**Brenda Chouinard, Bonifay, FL**. "Please accept

our contribution to help with expenses of publishing *Seek The Old Paths*. We look forward to each new issue" ...**Jamal & Judith Abyad, Pineville, LA**. "I would like a monthly publication from East End. I was told about the publication from my sister of Aberdeen, Mississippi" ...**Earline Boyd, Chicago, IL**. "We would love to get the paper. My husband is a retired Gospel preacher and he would really enjoy getting this. Thank you so much" ...**Mrs. C. L. Newcomb, Tyler, TX**. "I enjoy so very much the website of www.pioneerpreachers.com. What a great service and I'm privileged to tell others of the site everywhere I preach meetings. Again, thank you and God bless. III John 2" ...**Robert Rawson, Batesville, MS**. "We here at the Deer church of Christ really enjoy and appreciate *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work and keep standing for the truth as it is all that will save. May God continue to bless your work. Thank you" ...**Deer church of Christ, Deer, AR**. "Appreciate the fine efforts of your congregation and all concerned for the excellent publication. Please keep on keeping on publishing the Truth" ...**Harold Blevins, North Augusta, SC**. "I've been off your mailing list long enough. So please add me. It's a good paper" ...**Thelma Clark, Mobile, AL**. "We appreciate your stand for the truth" ...**Bobby & Reba Dunlap, Dresden, TN**. "I pray and hope that you may send a brother your excellent publication of *Seek The Old Paths* which has been a blessing to me in every one sent. I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed and learned in reading them. Thank you so much and God's continued blessing be upon each of you" ...**Salvatore Scarpitti, Lombard, IL**. "We receive STOP, good paper, keep up the great work" ...**Clarence Lavender, Christiansburg, VA**. "Recently read your issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. Couldn't believe the Richland Hills 'Church of Christ' article! Our church of Christ has written a letter to the Richland Hills church of Christ. I hope that they will see the error of their way. Thank you" ...**Catherine Skelton, Seligman, MO**.

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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