

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?****What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship? - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/6/30 18:**

What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship???

(Before 300 AD)

AQUINAS "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize." (Thomas Aquinas, Bingham's Antiquities, Vol. 3, page 137)

AUGUSTINE "musical instruments were not used. The pipe, tabret, and harp here associate so intimately with the sensual heathen cults, as well as with the wild revelries and shameless performances of the degenerate theater and circus, it is easy to understand the prejudices against their use in the worship." (Augustine 354 A.D., describing the singing at Alexandria under Athanasius)

CHRYSOSTOM "David formerly sang songs, also today we sing hymns. He had a lyre with lifeless strings, the church has a lyre with living strings. Our tongues are the strings of the lyre with a different tone indeed but much more in accordance with piety. Here there is no need for the cithara, or for stretched strings, or for the plectrum, or for art, or for any instrument; but, if you like, you may yourself become a cithara, mortifying the members of the flesh and making a full harmony of mind and body. For when the flesh no longer lusts against the Spirit, but has submitted to its orders and has been led at length into the best and most admirable path, then will you create a spiritual melody." (Chrysostom, 347-407, Exposition of Psalms 41, (381-398 A.D.) Source Readings in Music History, ed. O. Strunk, W. W. Norton and Co.: New York, 1950, pg. 70.)

CLEMENT "Leave the pipe to the shepherd, the flute to the men who are in fear of gods and intent on their idol worshipping. Such musical instruments must be excluded from our wingless feasts, for they are more suited for beasts and for the class of men that is least capable of reason than for men. The Spirit, to purify the divine liturgy from any such unrestrained revelry chants: 'Praise Him with sound of trumpet,' for, in fact, at the sound of the trumpet the dead will rise again; 'praise Him with harp,' for the tongue is a harp of the Lord; 'and with the lute. praise Him.' understanding the mouth as a lute moved by the Spirit as the lute is by the plectrum; 'praise Him with timbal and choir,' that is, the Church awaiting the resurrection of the body in the flesh which is its echo; 'praise Him with strings and organ,' calling our bodies an organ and its sinews strings, for from them the body derives its Coordinated movement, and when touched by the Spirit, gives forth human sounds; 'praise Him on high-sounding cymbals,' which mean the tongue of the mouth which with the movement of the lips, produces words. Then to all mankind He calls out, 'Let every spirit praise the Lord,' because He rules over every spirit He has made. In reality, man is an instrument for peace, but these other things, if anyone concerns himself overmuch with them, become instruments of conflict, for inflame the passions. The Etruscans, for example, use the trumpet for war; the Arcadians, the horn; the Sicels, the flute; the Cretans, the lyre; the Lacedemonians, the pipe; the Thracians, the bugle; the Egyptians, the drum; and the Arabs, the cymbal. But as for us, we make use of one instrument alone: only the Word of peace by whom we a homage to God, no longer with ancient harp or trumpet or drum or flute which those trained for war employ." (Clement of Alexandria, 190AD The instructor, Fathers of the church, p. 130)

CLEMENT "Moreover, King David the harpist, whom we mentioned just above, urged us toward the truth and away from idols. So far was he from singing the praises of daemons that they were put to flight by him with the true music; and when Saul was Possessed, David healed him merely by playing the harp. The Lord fashioned man a beautiful, breathing instrument, after His own imaged and assuredly He Himself is an all-harmonious instrument of God, melodious and holy, the wisdom that is above this world, the heavenly Word." ... "He who sprang from David and yet was before him, the Word of God, scorned those lifeless instruments of lyre and cithara. By the power of the Holy Spirit He arranged in harmonious order this great world, yes, and the little world of man too, body and soul together; and on this many-voiced instruments of the universe He makes music to God, and sings to the human instrument. "For thou art my harp and my pipe and my temple"(Clement of Alexandria, 185AD, Readings p. 62)

ERASMUS "We have brought into our churches certain operatic and theatrical music; such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words as I hardly think was ever in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a

theatre, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time learning these whining tones." (Erasmus, Commentary on I Cor. 14:19)

EUSEBIUS "Of old at the time those of the circumcision were worshipping with symbols and types it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the psalterion and cithara and to do this on Sabbath days... We render our hymn with a living psalterion and a living cithara with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms." (commentary on Psalms 91:2-3)

#### VARIOUS SCHOLARS

ALZOG "St. Ambrose and St. Gregory rendered great service to church music by the introduction of what are known as the Ambrosian and Gregorian chants.... Ecclesiastical chant, departing in some instances from the simple majesty of its original character, became more artistic, and, on this account, less heavenly and more profane; and the Fathers of the Church were not slow to censure this corruption of the old and honored church song. Finally, the organ, which seemed an earthly echo of the angelic choirs in heaven, added its full, rich, and inspiring notes to the beautiful simplicity of the Gregorian chant" (Alzog, Catholic Scholar, Church Historian of the University of Freiburg and champion of instrumental music in worship, was faithful to his scholarship when he wrote, Universal Church History, Vol. 1, pp. 696, 697).

AMERICAN "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 670 but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of Franks in 755" (American Encyclopedia, Volume 12, p. 688).

BARCLAY "If God is spirit a man's gifts to God music gifts of the spirit. Animal sacrifices and all manmade things become inadequate. The only gifts that befit the nature of God are the gifts of the spirit - love, loyalty, obedience, devotion" (W. Barclay, The Gospel of John, Vol. 1, p. 161).

BARNES "Psallo ... is used, in the New Testament, only in Rom. 15:9 and 1 Cor. 14:15, where it is translated sing; in James 5:13, where it is rendered sing psalms, and in the place before us. The idea here is that of singing in the heart, or praising God from the heart" (Albert Barnes, a Presbyterian, Notes on The Testament, comment on Eph. 5:19).

BENEDICT "In my earliest intercourse among this people, congregational singing generally prevailed among them. . . . The Introduction Of The Organ Among The Baptist. This instrument, which from time immemorial has been associated with cathedral pomp and prelatical power, and has always been the peculiar favorite of great national churches, at length found its way into Baptist sanctuaries, and the first one ever employed by the denomination in this country, and probably in any other, might have been standing in the singing gallery of the Old Baptist meeting house in Pawtucket, about forty years ago, where I then officiated as pastor (1840) ... Staunch old Baptists in former times would as soon tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries, and yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them.... How far this modern organ fever will extend among our people, and whether it will on the whole work a RE-formation or DE-formation in their singing service, time will more fully develop." (Benedict, Baptist historian, Fifty Years Among Baptist, page 204-207)

BEZA "If the apostle justly prohibits the use of unknown tongues in the church, much less would he have tolerated these artificial musical performances which are addressed to the ear alone, and seldom strike the understanding even of the performers themselves." (Theodore Beza, scholar of Geneva, Girardeau's Instrumental Music, p. 166)

BINGHAM "Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so . . . The use of the instrumental, indeed, is much ancients, but not in church service. . . In the Western parts, the instrument, as not so much as known till the eighth century; for the first organ that was ever seen in France was one sent as a present to King Pepin by Constantinus Copronymus, the Greek emperor. . . . But, now, it was only, used in princes courts, and not yet brought into churches; nor was it ever received into the Greek churches, there being no mention of an organ in all their liturgies ancient or modern." (Joseph Bingham, Works, London Edition. Vol. 11, p. 482-484)

BINGHAM "Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so." (Joseph Bingham, Church of England, Works, vol. 3, page 137)

BURNEY "After the most diligent inquire concerning the time when instrumental music had admission into the

ecclesiastical service, there is reason to conclude, that, before the reign of Constantine, ;is the converts to the Christian religion were subject to frequent persecution and disturbance in their devotion, the rise of instruments could hardly have been allowed: and by all that can be collected from the writings of the primitive Christians, they seem never to have been admitted." (Charles Burney, A general history of Music, 1957, p. 426)

CALVIN "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists therefore, have foolishly borrowed, this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (I Cor. 14:16) What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound?" (John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms 33)

CATHOLIC "Although Josephus tells of the wonderful effects produced in the Temple by the use of instruments, the first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice. Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets. St. Chrysostum sharply contrasts the customs of the Christians when they had full freedom with those of the Jews of the Old Testament." (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 648-652.)

CATHOLIC "For almost a thousand years Gregorian chant, without any instrumental or harmonic addition was the only music used in connection with the liturgy. The organ, in its primitive and rude form, was the first, and for a long time the sole, instrument used to accompany the chant.... The church has never encouraged and at most only tolerated the use of instruments. She enjoins in the 'Caeremonials Episcoporum', - that permission for their use should first be obtained from the ordinary. She holds up as her ideal the unaccompanied chant, and polyphonic, a-capella style. The Sistene Chapel has not even an organ."" (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 657-688.)

CATHOLIC "We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were commonly employed in pagan worship and the rites paid to the dead. But the Church, from a very early period, took them into her service, just as she adopted many other things indifferent in themselves, which seemed proper to enhance the splendor of religious ceremony. We must not forget that most of these adjuncts to worship, like music, lights, perfumes, ablutions, floral decorations, canopies, fans, screens, bells, vestments, etc. were not identified with any idolatrous cult in particular but they were common to almost all cults." (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. III, pg. 246.)

CHAMBERS "The organ is said to have been first introduced into church music by Pop Vitalian in 666. In 757, a great organ was sent as a present to Pepin by the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine, and placed in the church St. Corneille as Compiegne." (Chambers Encyclopedia, Vol 7, p. 112)

CLARKE "But were it even evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the sacred writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason, that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No; the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this; and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires His followers to worship Him in spirit and truth, for to no such worship are these instruments friendly." (Adam Clarke (Methodist), Clarke's Commentary, Methodist, Vol. II, pp. 690-691.)

CLARKE "I am an old man, and I here declare that I never knew them to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that they are productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instrumental music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruption of the worship of the author of Christianity. The late and venerable and most eminent divine, the Rev. John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists, said in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.' I say the same." (Adam Clark, Methodist)

COLEMAN "The tendency of this (instrumental music) was to secularize the music of the church, and to encourage singing by a choir. Such musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but they can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in church until the eighth or ninth centuries. Previous to this, they had their place in the 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." (Lyman Coleman, a Presbyterian, Primitive Church, p. 376-377)

CONYBEARE "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 fullness of wine, but fullness 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 Bacchus or Venus, but of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Conybeare and Howson, Life and Times of the Apostle Paul, comment on Eph. 5:19).

DICKINSON "While the Greek and Roman songs were metrical, the Christian psalms were anitphons, prayers, responses, etc., were unmetrical; and while the pagan melodies were always sung to an instrumental accompaniment, the church chant was exclusively vocal" (Edward Dickinson, History of Music, p. 54)

DICKINSON "In view of the controversies over the use of instrumental music in worship, which have been so violent in the British and American Protestant churches, it is an interesting question whether instruments were employed by the primitive Christians. We know that instruments performed an important function in the Hebrew temple service and in the ceremonies of the Greeks. At this point, however, a break was made with all previous practice, and although the lyre and flute were sometimes employed by the Greek converts, as a general rule the use of instruments in worship was condemned." ... "Many of the fathers, speaking of religious songs, made no mention of instruments; others, like Clement of Alexandria and St. Chrysostom, refer to them only to denounce them. Clement says, "Only one instrument do we use, viz. the cord of peace wherewith we honor God, no longer the old psaltery, trumpet, drum, and flute." Chrysostom exclaims: "David formerly sang in psalms, also we sing today with him; he had a lyre with lifeless strings, the church has a lyre with living strings. Our tongues are the strongs of the lyre, with a different tone, indeed, but with a more accordant piety." St. Ambrose expresses his scorn for those who would play the lyre and psaltery instead of singing hymns and psalms; and St. Augustine adjures believers not to turn their hearts to theatrical instruments. The religious guides of the early Christian felt that there would be an incongruity, and even profanity, in the use of the sensuous nerve-exciting effects of instrumental sound in their mystical, spiritual worship. Their high religious and moral enthusiasm needed no aid from external strings; the pure vocal utterance as the more proper expression of their faith." (Edward Dickinson, Music in the History of the Western Church, p. 54, 55)

FESSENDEN "This species. which is the most natural, is to be considered to have existed before any other... Instrumental music is also of very ancient date, its invention being ascribed to Tubal, the sixth descendant from Cain. The instrumental music was not practiced by the primitive Christians, but was an aid to devotion of later times, is evident from church history. (Fessenden's Encyclopedia of Art and Music, p. 852)

FINNEY "The early Christians refused to have anything to do with the instrumental music which they might have inherited from the ancient world." (Theodore Finney, A History of Music, 1947, p. 43)

FISHER "Church music, which at the outset consisted mainly of the singing of psalms, flourished especially in Syria and at Alexandria. The music was very simple in its character. There was some sort of alternate singing in the worship of Christians, as is described by Pliny. The introduction of antiphonal singing at Antioch is ascribed by tradition to Ignatius ... The primitive church music was choral and congregational." (George Park Fisher, Yale Professor, History of the Christian Church, p. 65, 121)

FULLER "The history of the church during the first three centuries affords many instances of primitive Christians engaging in singing, but no mention, (that I recollect) is made of instruments. (If my memory does not deceive me) it originated in the dark ages of popery, when almost every other superstition was introduced. At present, it is most used and where the least regard is paid to primitive simplicity." (Andrew Fuller, Baptist, Complete works of Andre Fuller, Vol 3, P. 520, 1843)

GARRISON "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." (J.H. Garrison, Christian Church)

GIRADEAU "The church, although lapsing more and more into deflection from the truth and into a corrupting of apostolic practice, had not instrumental music for 1200 years (that is, it was not in general use before this time); The Calvinistic Reform Church ejected it from its service as an element of popery, even the church of England having come very nigh its extrusion from her worship. It is heresy in the sphere of worship." (John Giradeau, Presbyterian professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, Instrumental Music, p. 179)

HASTING If instrumental music was not part of early Christian worship, when did it become acceptable? Several reference works will help us see the progression of this practice among churches: "Pope Vitalian introduced an organ in the church in the seventh century to aid the singing but it was opposed and was removed." (James Hasting, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.)

HUMPHREYS "One of the features which distinguishes the Christian religion from almost all others is its quietness; it aims to repress the outward signs of inward feeling. Savage instinct, and the religion of Greece also, had employed the rhythmic dance and all kinds of gesticulatory notions to express the inner feelings . . . The early Christians discouraged all outward signs of excitement, and from the very beginning, in the music they used, reproduced the spirit of their religion-an inward quietude. All the music employed in their early services was vocal." (Frank Landon Humphreys, Evolution of Church Music, p. 42)

KILLEN "It is not, therefore, strange that instrumental music was not, heard in their congregational services..... In the early church the whole congregation joined in the singing, but instrumental music did not accompany the praise" (W. D. Killen, The Ancient Church, pp. 193, 423).

KNOX "a kist (chest) of whistles." (John Knox, Presbyterian, in reference to the organ)

KURTZ "At first the church music was simple, artless, recitative. But rivalry of heretics forced the orthodox church to pay greater attention to the requirements of art. Chrysostom had to declaim against the secularization of church music. More lasting was the opposition to the introduction of instrumental music." (John Kurtz, Lutheran Scholar, Church History, Vol 1, p. 376)

LANG "All our sources deal amply with vocal music of the church, but they are chary with mention of any other manifestations of musical art . . . The development of Western music was decisively influenced by the exclusion of musical instruments from the early Christian Church." (Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p. 53-54)

LEICHTENTRITT "The Biblical precept to "sing" the psalms, not merely recite, them, was obeyed literally, as is testified by many statements in the writings of the saints. Pope Leo I, who lived about 450, expressly related that "the Psalms of David are piously sung everywhere in the Church." Only singing however, and no playing of instruments, was permitted in the early Christian Church. In this respect the Jewish tradition was not continued. In the earlier Jewish temple service many instruments mentioned in the Bible had been used. But instrumental music had been thoroughly discredited in the meantime by the lascivious Greek and Roman virtuoso music of the later ages, and it appeared unfit for the divine service. The aulos was held in especial abhorrence, whereas some indulgence was granted to the lyre and cithara, permitted by some saints at least for private worship, though not in church services. It is interesting to note that the later Jewish temple service has conformed to the early Christian practice and, contrary to Biblical tradition, has banned all instruments. Orthodox Jewish synagogues now object even to the use of the organ. (Hugo Leichtentritt, Music, History and Ideas, Howard University Press: Cambridge, 1958, p 34)

LONDON (London Encyclopedia says the organ is said to have been first introduced into church music in about 658AD.)

LORENZ "Yet there was little temptation to undue elaboration of hymnody or music. The very spirituality of the new faith made ritual or liturgy superfluous and music almost unnecessary. Singing (there was no instrumental accompaniment) was little more than a means of expressing in a practicable, social way, the common faith and experience. . . . The music was purely vocal. There was no instrumental accompaniment of any kind. . . . It fell under the ban of the Christian church, as did all other instruments, because of its pagan association" (E. S. Lorenz, Church Music, pp. 217, 250, 404)

LUTHER "The organ in the worship is the insignia of Baal... The Roman Catholic borrowed it from the Jews." (Martin Luther, McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia Volume VI, page 762)

MCCLINTOCK "The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the 5th and 6th centuries; yea, even Gregory the Great, who towards the end of the 6th century added greatly to the existing church music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments. Several centuries later the introduction of the organ in sacred service gave the place to instruments as accompaniments for Christian song, and from that time to this they have been freely used with few exceptions. The first organ is believed to have been used in the Church service in the 13th century. Organs were however, in use before this in the theater. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church, and were vehemently opposed in some of the Western churches." (McClintock and Strong, Cyclopaedia of

Biblical Literature, Vol 6, p. 759)

MCCLINTOCK Sir John Hawkins, following the Romanish writers in his erudite work on the history of music, made Pope Vitalian, in A.D. 660, the first who introduced organs into the churches. But students of ecclesiastical archaeology are generally agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later date; for Thomas Aquinas has these remarkable words, 'Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may seem not to Judaize.'" (McClintock and Strong, Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. 6, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1894, pg. 762.)

MCCLINTOCK "The Greek word 'psallo' is applied among the Greeks of modern times exclusively to sacred music, which in the Eastern Church has never been any other than vocal, instrumental music being unknown in that church, as it was in the primitive church." (McClintock & Strong, Vol. 8, p. 739).

NAUMAN "There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was every where entirely of a vocal nature." (Emil Nauman, The History of Music. Vol. I, p. 177)

NEITHENINGTON (Exclusion of instrumental music from the church of England passed by only one vote in 1562, according to Neithenington's: History Of The Westminster Assembly Of Divines, p. 20)

NEWMAN "In 1699 the Baptists received an invitation from Thomas Clayton, rector of Christ Church, to unite with the Church of England. They replied in a dignified manner, declining to do so unless he could prove, "that the Church of Christ under the New Testament may consist or . . . a mixed multitude and their seed, even all the members of a nation, . . . whether they are godly or ungodly," that "lords, archbishops, etc., . . . are of divine institution and appointment," and that their vestments, liturgical services, use of mechanical instruments, infant baptism, sprinkling, "signing with the cross in baptism," etc., are warranted by Scripture." . . . "It may be interesting to note that this church (First Baptist Church of Newport, organized in 1644 cf. p. 88) was one of the first to introduce instrumental music. The instrument was a bass viol and caused considerable commotion. This occurred early in the nineteenth century.(Albert Henry Newman, A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States, American Baptist Publication Society 1915, p. 207, 255)

NICETA "It is time to turn to the New Testament to confirm what is said in the Old, and, particularly, to point out that the office of psalmody is not to be considered abolished merely because many other observances of the Old Law have fallen into disuse. Only the corporal institutions have been rejected, like circumcision, the Sabbath, sacrifices, discrimination of foods. So, too, the trumpets, harps, cymbals, and timbrels. For the sound of these we now have a better substitute in the music from the mouths of men. The daily ablutions, the new-moon observances, the careful inspection of leprosy are completely past and gone, along with whatever else was necessary only for a time - as it were, for children." (Niceta, a bishop of Remesian or Yugoslavia)

PAHLEN "These chants - and the word chant (and not music) is used advisedly, for many centuries were to pass before instruments accompanied the sung melodies." (Kurt Pahlen, Music of the World, p. 27)

PAPADOPOULOS "The execution of Byzantine church music by instruments, or even the accompaniment of sacred chanting by instruments, was ruled out by the Eastern Fathers as being incompatible with the pure, solemn, spiritual character of the religion of Christ. The Fathers of the church, in accordance with the example of psalmodizing of our Savior and the holy Apostles, established that only vocal music be used in the churches and severely forbade instrumental music as being secular and hedonic, and in general as evoking pleasure without spiritual value" (G. I. Papadopoulos, A Historical Survey of Byzantine Ecclesiastical Music (in Greek), Athens, 1904, pp. 10, 11).

POSEY "For years the Baptists fought the introduction of instrumental music into the churches...Installation of the organ brought serious difficulties in many churches" (Wm. B. Posey, Baptist, The Baptist Church In The Lower Mississippi Valley).

PRESBYTERIAN "Question 6. Is there any authority for instrumental music in the worship of God under the present dispensation? Answer. Not the least, only the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs was appointed by the apostles; not a syllable is said in the New Testament in favor of instrumental music nor was it ever introduced into the Church until after the eighth century, after the Catholics had corrupted the simplicity of the gospel by their carnal inventions. It was not allowed in the Synagogues, the parish churches of the Jews, but was confined to the Temple service and was abolished with the rites of that dispensation." (Questions on the Confession of Faith and Form of Government of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publications, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Ivania, 1842, pg. 55.)

PRATT "The, First Christian Songs. - Singing in public and private worship was a matter of course for the early Christians. For Jewish converts this was a continuance of synagogue customs, but since the Church grew mostly among non-Jews, the technical forms employed were more Greek than Hebrew. The use of instruments was long resisted, because of their association with pagan sensuality." (Waldo Selden Pratt, *The History of Music*, 1935, p. 64)

RIDDLE "In the first ages of the Christian church the psalms of David were always chanted or sung. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Book II, P. 57), we find it laid down as a rule that one of those officiating ministers should chant or sing psalms or David, and that the people should join by repeating the ends of the verses. The instruments of music were introduced into the Christians church in the ninth century. There were unknown alike to the early church and to all ancients. The large wind organ was known, however, long before it was introduced into the churches of the west. The first organ used in worship was one which was received by Charlemagne in France as a present from the Emperor Constantine.' (J.E. Riddle, *Christian Antiquities*, p. 384)

RITTER "We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. It was, however purely vocal." (Frederic Louis Ritter, *History of Music from the Christian Era to the Present Time*, p. 28)

ROBERTSON "The word (psalleteo) originally meant to play on a stringed instrument (Sir. 9:4), but it comes to be used also for singing with the voice and heart (Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15), making melody with the heart also to the Lord" (A. T. Robertson, Baptist Greek scholar, *Baptist Studies in the Nestle James*, comment on James 5:13)

SCHAFF "The use of organs in churches is ascribed to Pope Vitalian (657-672). Constantine Copronymos sent an organ with other presents to King Pepin of France in 767. Charlemagne received one as a present from the Caliph Haroun al Rashid, and had it put up in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle... The attitude of the churches toward the organ varies. It shared, to some extent, the fate of images, except that it never was an object of worship... The Greek church disapproved the use of organs. The Latin church introduced it pretty generally, but not without the protest of eminent men, so that even in the Council of Trent a motion was made, though not carried, to prohibit the organ at least in the mass." (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 4, pg. 439.)

SHAFF "The first organ certainly known to exist and be used in a church was put in the cathedral at Aix-la-chapel by the German emperor, Charlemagne, who came to the throne in 768AD. It met with great opposition among the Romanists, especially among the monks, and that it made its way but slowly into common use. So great was the opposition even as late as the 16th century that it would have been abolished by the council of Trent but for the influence of the Emperor Ferdinand.... In the Greek church the organ never came into use... The Reform church discarded it; and though the church of Basel very early introduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation." (Shaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia*, Vol 2, p. 1702)

SCHAFF "It is questionable whether, as used in the New Testament, 'psallo' means more than to sing . . . The absence of instrumental music from the church for some centuries after the apostles and the sentiment regarding it which pervades the writing, the fathers are unaccountable, if in the apostolic church such music was used" (Schaff-Herzog, Vol. 3, p. 961).

SCHAFF "In the Greek church the organ never came into use. But after the 8th century it became more and more common in the Latin church; not without opposition from the side of the monks." (Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia*, Vol 10, p. 657-658)

SHAFF (new) "The custom of organ accompaniment did not become general among Protestants until the eighteenth century." (The New Shaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia*, 1953, Vol 10, p. 257)

SPURGEON "Praise the Lord with the harp. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days when Jesus gives us spiritual food, one can make melody without strings and pipes. We do not need them. They would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto him. This is the sweetest and best music. No instrument like the human voice." (Commentary on Psalms 42:4) "David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, bellows, and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it." (Spurgeon preached to 20,000 people ev

ery Sunday for 20 years in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle and never were mechanical instruments of music used in his services. When asked why, he quoted 1st 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." (Charles H. Spurgeon, Baptist)

SPURGEON "David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, bellows, and pipes. We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it...

'Praise the Lord with harp.' Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days when Jesus gives us spiritual food, one can make melody without strings and pipes... We do not need them. That would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto him. This is the sweetest and best music. No instrument is like the human voice." (Charles Spurgeon (Baptist), Commentary on Psalm 42.)

TAPPER "Both sexes joined in singing, but instruments of every kind were prohibited for along time" (Thomas Tapper, Essentials of Music History, p. 34)

THEODORET "107. Question: If songs were invented by unbelievers to seduce men, but were allowed to those under the law on account of their childish state, why do those who have received the perfect teaching of grace in their churches still use songs, just like the children under the law? Answer: It is not simple singing that belongs to the childish state, but singing with lifeless instruments, with dancing, and with clappers. Hence the use of such instruments and the others that belong to the childish state is excluded from the singing in the churches, and simple singing is left." (Theodoret, a bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria, Questions and Answers for the Orthodox)

WELIESZ "So far as we can tell the music of the early Church was almost entirely vocal, Christian usage following in this particular the practice of the Synagogue, in part for the same reasons." (New Oxford History of Music, Vol 1, Egon Wellesz, 1957, p. 30)

WESLEY "I have no objection to instruments of music in our worship, provided they are neither seen nor heard." (John Wesley, founder of Methodism, quoted in Adam Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 685)

RESTORATION LEADERS:

CAMPBELL " was well adapted to churches founded on the Jewish pattern of things and practicing infant sprinkling. That all persons singing who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for spiritual meditation, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts should call for such an aid is but natural. So to those who have no real devotion and spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the opposition or the oppression of church service I think that instrumental music would... be an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, that to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aid would be as a cow bell in a concert." (Alexander Campbell, recorded in Robert Richardson's biography, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, Vol. 2., p366)

FRANKLIN "If any one had told us, 40 years ago, that we would live to see the day where those professing to be Christians who claim the Holy Scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice, those under the command, and who profess to appreciate the meaning of the command to 'observe whatsoever I have commanded you' would bring instruments of music into a worshipping assembly and use it there in worship, we should have repelled the idea as an idle dream. But this only shows how little we knew of what men would do; or how little we saw of the power of the adversary to subvert the purest principles, to deceive the hearts of the simple, to undermine the very foundation of all piety, and turn the very worship of God itself into an attraction for the people of the world and entertainment, or amusement." (Benjamin Franklin, Gospel Preacher, Vol 2, p. 411, 419-429)

FRANKLIN "Instrumental music is permissible for a church under the following conditions: 1. When a church never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ. 2. If a church has a preacher who never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ, who has become a dry, prosing and lifeless preacher. 3. If a church only intends being a fashionable society, a mere place of amusements and secular entertainment and abandoning the idea of religion and worship. 4. If a church has within it a large number of dishonest and corrupt men. 5. If a church has given up all idea of trying to convert the world." (Ben Franklin, editor of American Christian Review, 1860.)

LIPSCOMB "Neither he nor any other apostle, nor the Lord Jesus, nor any of the disciples for five hundred years, used instruments. This too, in the face of the fact that the Jews had used instruments in the days of their prosperity and that th

the Greeks and heathen nations all used them in their worship. They were dropped out with such emphasis that they were not taken up till the middle of the Dark Ages, and came in as part of the order of the Roman Catholic Church. It seems there cannot be doubt but that the use of instrumental music in connection with the worship of God, whether used as a part of the worship or as an attraction accompaniment, is unauthorized by God and violates the oft-repeated prohibition to add nothing to, take nothing from, the commandments of the Lord. It destroys the difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and unholy, counts the blood of the Son of God unclean, and tramples under foot the authority of the Son of God. They have not been authorized by God or sanctified with the blood of his Son." (David Lipscomb, *Queries and Answers* by David Lipscomb p. 226-227, and *Gospel Advocate*, 1899, p. 376-377)

MCGARVEY "And if any man who is a preacher believes that the apostle teaches the use of instrumental music in the church by enjoining the singing of psalms, he is one of those smatters in Greek who can believe anything that he wishes to believe. When the wish is father to the thought, correct exegesis is like water on a duck's back" (J. W. McGarvey, *Biblical Criticism*, p. 116).

MCGARVEY "We cannot, therefore, by any possibility, know that a certain element of worship is acceptable to God in the Christian dispensation, when the Scriptures which speak of that dispensation are silent in reference to it. To introduce any such element is unscriptural and presumptuous. It is will worship, if any such thing as will worship can exist. On this ground we condemn the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the wearing of priestly robes, and the reading of printed prayers. On the same ground we condemn instrumental music." (J.W. McGarvey, *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1864, pp. 511-513.)

MCGARVEY "It is manifest that we cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the obvious and only ground on which a restoration of Primitive Christianity can be accomplished, or on which the plea for it can be maintained. Such is my profound conviction, and consequently, the question with me is not one concerning the choice or rejection of an expedient, but the maintenance or abandonment of a fundamental and necessary principle." (J. W. McGarvey, *Apostolic Timer* 1881, and *What Shall We Do About the Organ?* p. 4, 10)

MILLIGAN "The tendency of instrumental music is, to divert the minds of many from the sentiment of the song to the mere sound of the organ, and in this way it often serves to promote formalism in Churches" (Robert Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption*, p. 386).

PINKERTON "So far as known to me, or I presume to you, I am the only 'preacher' in Kentucky of our brotherhood who has publicly advocated the propriety of employing instrumental music in some churches, and that the church of God in Midway is the only church that has yet made a decided effort to introduce it" (L. L. Pinkerton, *American Christian Review*, 1860, as quoted by Cecil Willis in *W. W. Otey: Contender for the Faith*).

STONE "We have just received an extraordinary account of about 30,000 Methodists in England, withdrawing from that church and connexion, because the Conference disapproved of the introduction of instrumental music to the churches. The full account shall appear in our next. To us, backwoods Americans, this conduct of those seceders appears to be the extreme of folly, and it argues that they have a greater taste for music, than they have for religion. Editor." (Barton Stone, *Christian Messenger*, vol. 3, No. 2, Dec. 1828, p. 48 in bound volume)

WEST "Apostasy in music among 19th century churches that had endeavored to restore New Testament authority in worship and work began, in the main, following the Civil War' In 1868, Ben Franklin guessed that there were ten thousand congregations and not over fifty had used an instrument in worship." (Earl West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 2, pp. 80, 81)

**Re: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship? - posted by enid, on: 2008/7/1 2:49**

tj,

Could I just ask, why have you posted this?

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/7/1 5:08**

Quote:

-----  
enid wrote:  
tj,

-----  
Could I just ask, why have you posted this?  
-----

I thought it was interesting. I believe one can gain valuable insight into our Christian forefathers perspectives by understanding why and where they stood on certain issues.

It's the kind of Christian history stuff I like to read...I thought others might as well.

**Re:, on: 2008/7/1 5:35**

The Church of Christ is, I think, the only church that teaches against instruments in the church. I think they are stretching to get there, especially since instruments were very much used in the temple, etc. God seems to be a music lover, and according to Psalms, very pleased with instrumental music.

This is a hallmark of the COC... along with the false teaching that you are not completely saved until you are baptised (baptismal regeneration).

Krispy

**Re: - posted by enid, on: 2008/7/1 6:15**

tj,  
Krispy's comment is why I asked my question.

Subjects like this can be a thorny issue, even though it's not meant to be.

I'm not going to pretend I read all the original post, but I have read about this subject some years ago.

As I can see from some of the quotes, they are based mostly on conjecture, and very little on scripture.

Some refer to the Psalms, which were accompanied by musical instruments.

Maybe people feel more spiritual with music. Maybe they feel better without.

Even so, let everything that has breath Praise the Lord, Psalm 150.

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/7/1 6:39**

As far as I can tell, there is no scriptural imperative to exclude instruments from worship, yet clearly many sound men felt strongly about this. This doesn't mean they were against Christians playing musical instruments, but only that they were opposed to them being used in congregational worship. For instance Martin Luther, despite his opposition to the organ, was skilled on the flute and the lute.

I think most of the reasoning behind this opposition to instrumentation in worship was centered around the goal of being separate from anything that smelled of the world. Today the old emphasis of separation has been replaced with a more modern emphasis on sympathy. (Sympathy is a great virtue, except when it becomes the only virtue...then it's pretty much worthless.)

Of course I don't think this explains all of their objections, nor does it explain all our reasons or motivations for having instrumental music. It's just a general hypothesis of mine. I need to note that I know many dear Christian musicians who wo

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

ouldn't play their instruments at all if they couldn't use them for worship. Their heart is as dedicated as their art.

Yet, while I don't think we can biblically construct a formal rule against instrumental music in the congregation...I can certainly appreciate some of the objections these men had against it.

Interesting topic TJ,

MC

**Re:, on: 2008/7/1 6:48**

If a congregation feels it can worship more purely without instrumentation... then I say go for it. It's really between them and the Lord. But an argument against it can not be made with scripture. I agree with Comp's assessment.

Krispy

**Re: Music and church - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/7/1 7:53**

TJ, I appreciate this article. It certainly does concern me, as my main work in the church centers around the ministry of music. My heart resonates with the burden of these writers. As MC pointed out, the concern is to avoid merging with the world. Yet, I see another concern: letting our fondness of music supersede our fondness of the Lord. Now, I admit, rarely does a church service go by without someone coming up to me and saying, "I really like the MUSIC here in this church . Someone once added: That's why I sometimes pop over here from my church..... or whatever.....

Now, I suppose I should be flattered. However, my grief is merely intensified by flattering comments about the music. I would much prefer them to say, "This really reinforced my delight in the Lord."

But, alas, most people come to church to be satisfied in a temporal way, and I can't change that easily. People have tried for centuries – and it has only turned into miserable legalism. And that CERTAINLY has not increased anyone's delight in the Lord!

In my view, the music in my church is quite plain, and has always been. However, the music ministry seems to be the platform on which God serves his much greater purposes. Thus, it's not worth fussing over it, even if at times it means compromising my preferences: like this Sunday having "Highland Cathedral" sung by the choir and played on the Bagpipes with full-stopped pipe organ. It is Scottish Sunday after all! Everyone's Scottish nostalgia will be stirred to the hilt (even if the song is written by a German only a few years ago!)

Humbug! Patriotism has an uncanny way of usurping the purpose of the church – even if it takes people back 200 years to a bygone era!!!

Our Scottish Reformers forbade bagpipes in church for that very reason. However, here we are, commemorating history by defying the spokesmen of history.

Diane

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2008/7/1 8:12**

Hello...

I think that it is silly to warn against music. Even from this article, the root of concern is NOT music -- but an unhealthy or unspiritual fascination with it. Music is simply a melodic language by which we can speak to God. In fact, we might even say that it is ordained by God:

Quote:

-----**Revelation 15:1-3**

- 1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.
- 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, an

d over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

-----  
As with everything, there can be a misapplication of a device or language that can cause corruption. Language is not sinful and can be used to express the very Word of God. However, many people today (and throughout history) have used it to spread curses or "raca" (Matthew 5:22).

I can't pretend to understand just why someone (like the men included in this article) would carry on a crusade against instrumentation. Why? Because we know that musical instrumentation is not the root of the problem (if there is, in fact, a problem). I play both the piano and the guitar. Yet these things have not mastered me. I use them as a means of worship...and nothing more. I use these instruments and the sounds that they produce as a language in which I can worship the Lord.

I might go so far as to say that music can actually be pleasing unto the Lord. Our voices, after all, are simply replicating the sounds of music. We try to sing to a certain key and melody. The Scriptures are FILLED with references to music. If this is so wrong, then why were we commanded to use instruments in the Old Testament...and why were the people in Revelation chapter 15 given harps by God?

Just a few thoughts...

:-)

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/7/1 8:46**

As a musician myself I can say that it is a constant concern for me that the instruments get in the way of real worship. I see piano players and drummers trying to steal the show as it were and they divide the worship. They exalt themselves, or so it seems, as they get louder and louder and more and more radical in their playing. Soon the attention turns off of God and onto the 'soloist' and the worship is split between the person and God. I am also concerned that this has become one of the exclusive areas youth flock to as an ongoing expression of their faith and have no real relationship with God apart from what they derive from music and no real ministry other than what they play with an instrument. Just some concerns of mine...

**Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/7/1 8:47**

I am not well versed about music in the Bible. Can someone please quote scripture that talks about music that is being made unto the Lord, with instruments, as sinful?

Thanks

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2008/7/1 8:53**

It has been said that music soothes the soul. True music in praise and worship should exalt the Lord and edify your spirit. The problem with a lot of music in the modern day church is too much singing about self.

We are supposed to be denying the self life and lift up Christ in our singing. The reason why so many, go to the churches that they do, is because the music and singing blesses them. May the Lord help our Leaders give them spiritual food in the singing ministry?

Let's quit singing so much about ourselves and how great we are which doesn't please God at all but only excites the flesh. Let's get rid of our fleshly, worldly songs.

Let's sing songs, play instruments, which glorifies the Lord so the Holy Spirit will be stirred up, instead of the flesh.

It should be all about the Lord, may leaders who love God know the difference so we want have a mixture that is displeasing to God. No flesh will ever glory in his presence, not now, not ever!!!

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/7/1 9:44**

Quote:

-----As a musician myself I can say that it is a constant concern for me that the instruments get in the way of real worship.  
-----

Jl Packer expressed a similar disposition. While he was very gracious to his charismatic friends who employed fully modern music, as well as banners and dancers, he himself admitted he simply could not concentrate on God in such a stimulating environment. He found he needed to keep his eyes shut, and his hands and body still to make sure that the words he was singing was mindful of God.

He didn't make a legal issue over this though. He emphasized that for him it wasn't an issue worth separating over.

Like Robert, I find myself more and more understanding of the prohibition against instrumentation in the worship service. Music is an art--an unreality. It is such a powerful emotional cue, or prop, that I think many churchgoers mistake its stimulation for a relationship with God.

I wouldn't go so far as saying enjoyment of worship music is idolatry, but I do think music can fill an emptiness that we sometimes want to avoid seeing in ourselves.

Sing us a song, you're the piano man  
Sing us a song tonight  
Well, were all in the mood for a melody  
And you've got us feelin' alright.  
Billy Joel

MC

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/7/1 9:57**

I believe MC, as well as others, really nailed it on the head. It seems that these folks listed above were willing to sacrifice what I believe are God-ordained instruments of praise to keep all appearances of "be ye separate" from the world.

If you have not read the original post, please take the time to do so. There are some very interesting comments.

I'm glad this topic was received as it was intended. Not to divide but to provide some insight into the days of old and what they thought.

Many relevant concerns have also been raised by several posters.

Thanks to all for sharing your insights on this topic. Perhaps there is more to think about than we sometimes realize.

MC

Your Billy Joel quote speaks volumes.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/7/1 10:19**

Quote:

-----It is such a powerful emotional cue, or prop, that I think many churchgoers mistake its stimulation for a relationship with God.  
-----

I have heard it said that folk have a hard time discerning the difference between the soulfulness and emotions of the music and the unique presence of God. Could this be why so few seem to genuinely repent in our times? We have mistaken

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

n a stimulating musical arrangement for the anointing?

What really concerns me also is how men are able to exalt themselves and steer the worship towards man. If instruments are used, which David used, it to glorify God and not the musician. I guess I just deeply resent the whole 'rock star' worship leader thing.

**Re: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship? - posted by KennLove (), on: 2008/7/**

Blessings!

Music and worship are oxymoronic when used in conjunction.

The Bible clearly states that God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Music is for praise.

At the church I currently attend, the leader of the music program is called the Worship Pastor. This is erroneous.

Worship through music is soulful, because it excites the emotions.

Zac Poonen likens the "worship" of music and the "blessing" a hearer proclaims as going to a bar to drink with friends once a week. It fulfills the same soulful wants.

The church I attend, has thirty minutes of music, the leader "inviting" us to stand and sit, stand and sit, yet for the reading of God's word, we are rarely asked to stand. We then receive thirty minutes of preaching.

If you ask why I attend this church if I'm so discerning of it, it is because the church has been a gateway to my daughter, her friend, their children and my wife to look forward to going to church on Sunday. I'm praying that they all will advance in their spirits to the point of desiring to express their love for God on a daily basis. All but my wife need deliverance, and this gateway is a start. Besides, when the pastor gets down to it, he presents the gospel well.

Worship and music are incompatible, but PRAISE and music are not.

Kenn

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/7/1 11:29**

Quote:

----- Can someone please quote scripture that talks about music that is being made unto the Lord, with instruments, as sinful?  
-----

Yes, I can! Here are some verses:

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Phil. 2:4

"Live in harmony with one another." Rom. 12:16

"But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." 1 Cor. 14:40

In the music ministry there is a need for tastefulness, submission, and consideration - and that may include a degree of abstinence regarding instrumentation. I once was told by a pastor that we musicians were to use both piano and organ all the time; because the church bought them they must be used on all occasions. It so happened that he had no taste for music, nor did he respect the wisdom of musicians. Imagine if Beethoven had written a symphony using ALL the instruments ALL the time just because they all happened to be in the orchestra.

The combination of instruments with voice should reflect good musicianship and the working of the Body together in harmony. There is a constant need to consider balance of sound, and at the same time consider and respect others. That can be tricky.

The verse, "make a joyful NOISE unto the Lord" is not a free-for-all in the name of the Lord - at the expense of maturity in the Body.

(I realize I am "preaching to the choir" here!)

Diane

Re: - posted by cchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2008/7/1 11:43

Hello...

Should we make a list of all of the verses and passages of Scripture that bid us to worship the LORD with music? This would certainly prove difficult because there are just so many! These are not confined to the Old Testament, since we know that we will one day be given harps by God (Revelation chapter 15).

I understand the apprehension with an unhealthy fixation with music. There are musicians – even in the local congregation – who are almost revered as celebrities or iconic personalities for their musical skills. This is, of course, wrong (for both the musician to allow and for the congregation to think in such a way). In addition, music often mimics the popular “tastes” of the world. Instead of striving to please God with our music, we strive to satisfy our own earthly tendencies. But is the solution to this to out-and-out reject music as a language of worship?

As I said before, the Scriptures are FILLED with instructions to worship the Lord with music. Music is a language. It is filled with an alphabet (the basic EGBDF notes – plus an array of octaves, majors, minors and augmentations of each note). I do not lead people in worship at our congregation. When I am alone, I pick up the guitar and worship the Lord in both verbal and musical song. These are personally intimate times with the Lord. I sing in English, Spanish (on occasion), and sometimes, just by playing for Him. Some of the most intimate moments with the Lord have been when I took my guitar outside and worshipped the Lord as I sat alone under the majesty of Creation – as I played beneath the stars, on the rocks by the ocean, or on a mountaintop.

I just think that we should hesitate before we go off (as some of the men in the original post supposedly did) proclaiming the insignificance and trifling nature of music. Let me be clear: I don't think that God needs music. If I could play with the skill of Beethoven, it would still be earthly and flawed. God doesn't need my music to make Him happy. I can certainly worship the Lord with my voice (and I do). But like prayer, most of my worship is done in the heart. It isn't usually accompanied by voice (or instrumental music). The same is true of my prayers. Most of my prayers are confined to the sentiment of my heart. Still, on occasion, those sentiments often find a way of escaping the confines of my heart and making their way through my lips.

Someone once said, “*God gave us music so that we could pray without having to use words.*” I'm not so certain the validity of this remark, but I understand the contemplation behind it. There is a danger in idolizing or becoming infatuated or distracted by music or musicians. But is this the fault of the music, the instruments or even musicians? The root flaw, in my opinion, goes a little deeper. Our hearts should be so conditioned that music is as insignificant as those things around us. When I go to God in prayer, the world around me fades. Why? Because all of my intent, my heart and my passion is directed at God. I want to know Him sooooo much – that everything else is insignificant in comparison. The same is true when I worship – with or without music. He is all that really matters.

Should we throw the baby with the bathwater? Even if instrumental music is utilized for the wrong reasons, should we dismiss it completely? There are quite a few people who drive cars in order to show off their wealth, their personality or to drive in luxury. Some people speed...and others have even killed with cars. Regardless of the potential vice that comes from driving a car, should we make rules that believers should not drive cars simply because there are those who drive them in sin? The same could be said with our CD players and our internet-ready computers. The internet is a cesspool of pornography, and many men and women have fallen into that pit. Should I disconnect the internet simply because so many are affected in such a terrible way? What about those of us who use the internet for communication, news, weather, work or even as a means to study the Word of God and fellowship with other believers (via online Bibles and websites like SermonIndex)?

Jesus was quick to lay the axe to the root of issues. The issue with music, in my opinion, is not the music itself – but the condition of the hearts affected by it. If someone idolizes a worship leader – then the problem probably lay with the condition of that person's heart (and quite possibly, the worship leader too). If someone has an unhealthy fixation with something as insignificant as music – then the issue is with the weakness of that person's heart rather than with the musical language and sound produced by the instruments itself.

I think that it would be helpful to consider this when we read the words of men who would proclaim (or even impose) such far reaching public restrictions on musical instruments (or instrumental music). I just can't find any Scriptural passages that would support such restriction. Yet I find many passages that promote the worship of the Lord – even in public – with musical instruments. But with everything, we should make sure that the heart is pure in regard to such things.

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

:-)

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/7/1 11:50**

Quote:

-----But with everything, we should make sure that the heart is pure in regard to such things.  
-----

I think this is true. I am concerned very much that folk have too much weight in on the music and it is a cheap 'substitute' for real worship and praise. I am not at all 'anti' instruments, but I think a great deal of attention needs to be given to the fact that God must be glorified in all we do. He will not share His glory with another.

If instruments were stripped from every church in the West next Sunday what would the attendance be?

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/7/1 11:56**

Quote:

----- But with everything, we should make sure that the heart is pure in regard to such things.  
-----

This admonishment makes me a bit nervous. Who gets to "make sure"? Who gets to judge each participant's heart? And what standards of "purity" does one go by? I was once instructed: Only invite Baptists to perform music in our church. At least then we can be safe. mmmm

Diane

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2008/7/1 12:01**

Hi Diane...

Quote:

-----  
roadsign wrote:

Quote:

----- But with everything, we should make sure that the heart is pure in regard to such things.  
-----

This admonishment makes me a bit nervous. Who gets to "make sure"? Who gets to judge each participant's heart? And what standards of "purity" does one go by? I was once instructed: Only invite Baptists to perform music in our church. At least then we can be safe. mmmm

Likewise, do we trust the instructions of mere men? I think that we should strive constantly to have a pure heart before God -- and to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." I just don't think that we should call music (or instrumental music) the problem -- when it is not identified as such by Scripture. The root, so to speak, is with the heart of man.

**Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/7/1 12:08**

roadsign wrote:

Quote:

Yes, I can! Here are some verses:

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Phil. 2:4

"Live in harmony with one another." Rom. 12:16

"But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." 1 Cor. 14:40  
-----

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

Thanks for the quotes Diane. Great verses of course, but it is a stretch to use these verses in conjunction with calling music and its instruments sinful.

A lot of what people "perceive" to be wrong about music and instruments is that, a perception. Does this mean that folks use music and instruments for wrong purposes? Sure.

But the problem doesn't lie in the music or instruments used in making that music, it lies in the person who uses it.

There is a slippery slope being applied to music in general. Do we even realize that the singing of music in church buildings today was modeled after pagan rituals brought forth from man to begin with? Does this mean that we should stop singing music in church buildings because of men? no. We sing and make music to honor the Father, not to honor man.

The problem does not rest on music, it rests on the flesh.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/7/1 12:10**

Quote:

-----The root, so to speak, is with the heart of man.  
-----

I fully agree with the thrust of your message, Chris! You are saying: If you get diagnosis wrong, you will administer the wrong antidote.

By the way, I'm not afraid to work with immature or unsaved people in the music ministry. It is a great opportunity for growth, and rarely have I ever had a problem with a diva (someone who thinks they are God's special gift to the world and thus above all authority).

Quote:

----- Great verses of course, but it is a stretch to use these verses in conjunction with calling music and its instruments sinful.  
-----

I agree, Miccah! But they do get us back to the real issue!

Diane

**Re: Something else to consider: Worship Manipulation - posted by mackaymarsh (), on: 2008/7/1 12:13**

I don't think you can manipulate worship, but we can human behaviour.

Shortly after my conversion, I was operating our Church's sound-system. One Sunday morning during 'praise and worship' I noticed the 'worship' leader was singing the same type of upbeat songs trying to get the congregation enthused and excited, but not having much success. (Keep in mind, I am a new believer.) As they were singing one up-tempo song I increased the volume to the main speakers and as I did the crowd just came alive. I upped it some more and great 'worship' was seen from the people. During the song, I gradually slid the control back down to where it was, trying not to be obvious. The crowd subdued and the 'worship' participation waned.

Then, again, I increased the volume. Again the congregation livened up and 'worshipped.' Again, I brought the amps back down slowly. I did this a few times and it was an amazing scene. No one noticed. Maybe I should have been more obvious, but being new, I wasn't about to rock the boat.

I enjoy pure worship, but then it was an eye-opener to this naive country-boy as how the amplitude affected people's behaviour. Within a couple of years, the Lord led me away from that congregation to a small house Church. The worship was sweet and most often from the hearts of the people. Usually, one 12-string guitar and some tambourines were our only instruments with an occasional piano. I cannot explain you the difference; it had to be experienced. We would get lost

in worship for hours.

Now, I also love the old worship hymns, with the large organs and such. But nothing yet has allowed me the 'pure' corporate worship of that small home church worshipping out of simple hearts. No hype or manipulation (no sound-system); just pure expressions of love and adoration.

In fact, I think I need to do that right now.  
Wayne

**Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/7/1 12:31**

Good points Wayne. Brings back some bad memories from my past. Sold out rock concerts. People worked into a frenzy with just a single thundering drum beat.

Oh well.

Thought I would just add the lyrics to Matt Redman's song Heart of Worship. I am not against instrumentation, nor do I believe is Matt Redman, but I sure do appreciate this song.

When the music fades  
And all is stripped away  
And I simply come  
Longing just to bring  
Something that's of worth  
That will bless your heart

I'll bring You more than a song  
For a song in itself  
Is not what You have required  
You search much deeper within  
Through the ways things appear  
You're looking into my heart

I'm coming back to the heart of worship  
And it's all about You  
All about You, Jesus  
I'm sorry Lord for the thing I've made it  
When it's all about You  
It's all about You Jesus

King of endless worth  
No one could express  
How much You deserve  
Though I'm weak and poor  
All I have is Yours  
Every single breath

I'll bring You more than just a song  
For a song in itself  
Is not what You have required  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear  
You're looking into my heart

I'm coming back to the heart of worship

**General Topics :: What did early Christians believe about using instrumental music in worship?**

And it's all about You  
All about You, Jesus  
I'm sorry Lord for the thing I've made it  
When it's all about You  
It's all about You Jesus

Its all about you  
Jesus

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/7/1 16:35**

Also, I think it's worth noting that many Christians who don't lift their hands or become expressive during worship can have a very valid reason for not doing so.

I myself have an (edit) enthusiasm for various kinds of music ;-) but I think this appetite needs to be curbed in some public worship settings.

I feel the same way in general about separation. There seems to be a policy today that unsaved people are always welcome into every meeting regardless of the purpose of the meeting, and as such, 'good' music becomes part of the public church menu. On one hand I realize you can take separation too far, but for goodness sake every family has to have family time. There simply are times when family time is sacred, and there is a sanctity in the home that guests fail to understand.

I think the family of God, those of his household, should guard this sanctity even more so. Just as the home is to be a little church, the church should be...well a big church, as opposed to an arena, a stage, or a theater. We don't have music blaring at all times in my house...in fact I can get downright cranky if the kid's music interferes with our family attention to one another. Why do (edit: some) think God's house needs to be an arcade of light and sound at every meeting?

MC