

WHY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP MATTERS #1

Clearly today, a cavalier, even flippant approach, to the worship of God is prevalent in society. The church of Christ has not been immune from this spiritual plague, as informed people are aware. At least in the interest of younger people who have never had the opportunity to learn the Bible doctrine of worship because it is discussed less and less from the pulpit and the classroom, “why instrumental music in worship matters” ought to be presented to well balanced, open minded people who wish to learn, retain, and uphold the doctrine of Christ.

The use of instrumental music in worship violates four divine laws.

One, The Law Of Faith. A spirit that is against law dominates the religious landscape. It is known as *antinomianism* meaning “against law.” Lest the reader think reference to this word and the concept behind it represents some deep, esoteric, theological concept unassociated with everyday, ordinary life, please take note of the dictionary definition of the word “antinomian”: “one who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace, the moral law is of no use or obligation because ‘faith alone’ is necessary to salvation” [*Webster’s Dictionary*, p.49].

Sometimes we have to start with the dictionary before we can get to what the Bible teaches. The law of faith includes both God’s moral and spiritual law. Not only does the law of faith guide the practices of clean, wholesome, godly living morally and overt expressions of worship and service spiritually, but it

even trains the conscience in matters that are optional as discussed in Romans 14:23b where Paul wrote, “*For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*”

The New Testament both makes and sustains the claim to be God’s complete law of faith for people living throughout the world. A sampling of verses from one New Testament letter will demonstrate the high regard in which everyone should hold the Bible. Second Corinthians 2:14, “*...thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*” Second Corinthians 3:6, “*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*” And, 2 Cor. 4:7, “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*” But, since people are so difficult to convince because of the prevalence of the spirit of antinomianism by non-religious and religious people alike, please note the following as proof of the point: In the parenthetical statement Paul made to the Corinthians, he said, “*Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ*” (1 Cor. 9:21). And, in highly complimentary fashion James wrote of the law and its attendant blessings when he said, “*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed*” (James 1:25).

Now, in view of the fact that the New

Testament is the law of faith for everyone living today, here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. It is unauthorized by the law of faith, and, resultantly, it is impossible to sustain its use in worship as being some-

thing that God wants or with which he is pleased. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to give God what he wants and what pleases him.

1st of 2 parts

— *Gary McDade*

WHY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP MATTERS #2

The use of instrumental music in worship violates four divine laws. (See part #1 in last week bulletin)

Two, the law of worship. Bear in mind “*there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy*” (James 4:12), and this lawgiver is Jesus Christ (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22-26). The lawgiver said, “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). The imperative of the command is formulated into the word “must,” and the two-letter preposition “in” forming the parameters of authorized actions in the phrase “in truth,” shows that the lawgiver, Jesus Christ, commands that actions and activities in worship to God are confined to that which is presented or legislated in the New Testament because that which is “in truth” is in “the word of God” (John 17:17).

Now, in view of the fact that Jesus Christ is the lawgiver today, and he has placed everything he requires of those who approach God in worship to be done “in truth,” here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. The law of Christ does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church today. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Three, The Law Of Unity. The Bible says, “*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Eph. 4:3). The law of unity is the word of God, for Jesus said, “*Neither pray I*

for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21). The word of God is both the basis of belief in Christ and the basis of unity in Christ.

Now, in view of the fact that the New Testament is the law of unity for everyone living today, here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. It is unauthorized by the law of unity, and it divides those who are obeying the word of God from those who have added to it, and, resultantly, it is impossible to sustain its use in worship as being something that God wants or with which he is pleased. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to “*keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,*” and to give God what he wants in worship and what pleases him in worship.

Four, The Law Of Love. A funny thing about love is the more it is given away the more you get. The urging of the scriptures is “*let brotherly love continue*” (Heb. 13:1). Since some do not think of love as partaking in the concept of law, think again from the following statements: John 14:15, “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” First John 4:20-21, “*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this command-*

ment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” Revelation 22:14, “*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*” Notice, this verse makes honoring the law of God essential to entering into heaven.

Now, in view of the fact that the New Testament is the law of love for everyone living today, here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. Its use in worship cannot be found in the New Testament and, therefore, it is unauthorized by the law of love, and, resultantly, it is impossible to sustain its use in worship as being something that

God wants or with which he is pleased. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to love God and to give God what he wants in worship and what pleases him in worship.

Summary

Instrumental music in worship matters because it violates: 1) the law of faith, 2) the law of worship, 3) the law of unity, and 4) the law of love. Christians must ever remain content in the worship of God to be “*speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Eph. 5:19).

2nd of 2 parts

— Gary McDade

IS THERE A PATTERN FOR THE KIND OF MUSIC TO BE USED IN WORSHIP? #1

A “pattern” is a blueprint, a guide, a model. When followed, it will produce an exact replica of the original. So yes, there is a pattern for the “kind of music” to be used in worship. It is heaven’s pattern and therefore not subject to man’s whims.

Though many try to make it out to be very difficult, even to the extent of claiming there is no pattern, the Bible tells us plainly what God requires. But many refuse to accept it and go to great lengths to circumvent plain passages of Scripture. These people are not always far away from where we live, nor are they all members of denominations. Some are members of the church of Christ and live right here in our community. They are apostates, having betrayed and abandoned “*the faith that was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3). The use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is not a matter of opinion and of no consequence. It is a matter of right and wrong, sin and error, heaven and hell.

All one has to do is simply read the New Testament to see what Christians did in the first century. Every verse that mentions worship in song was ALWAYS VOCAL. Their singing was a cappella (sung without instrumental accompaniment). There is totally an absence of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the first century church.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms

and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col. 3:16). See also 1 Corinthians 14:15, Hebrews 2:12 and James 5:13.

What is the Lord’s pattern concerning the KIND OF MUSIC He desires in worship? It is VOCAL MUSIC. Jesus never authorized mechanical instruments of music to be used in worship. The Holy Spirit never sanctioned their use. The apostles never commanded them and the first century church never used them. They were not introduced until centuries after the time of the apostles. There is no command or example, nor is there anything implied that would permit their use! Mechanical instruments of music used in worship are the invention and introduction of man, not God. They are an addition to the Bible. Additions are condemned in Revelation 22:18.

The Lord’s pattern of music is SINGING PSALMS, HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS with the fruit of our lips from the heart (Heb. 13:15)!

Are you following the New Testament pattern or are you following man’s tradition and doctrine? Had you not rather follow God instead of man?

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #2

There is only one reason and one reason alone why churches of Christ (the church we read about in the New Testament) do not use any kind of mechanical instruments of music in worship. THERE IS NO SCRIPTURE FOR IT! There is no man alive or dead that can point to a passage that authorizes their use.

The burden of proof falls upon those who use them. So, we ask, where is the book, chapter and verse that authorizes their use? Surely you will agree that no man has a right to make a law that God did not make, nor to ignore a law that God did make. Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6, and Revelation 22:18-19, all forbid adding to or subtracting from the Bible.

There is Bible authority to “SING” in worship, but no authority to “PLAY” in worship. “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” [Eph. 5:19]. “...*Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*” [Col. 3:16]. In EVERY instance we read of music in the worship of the church of the New Testament, it is always singing, not playing — vocal, not mechanical.

There are many New Testament principles that prohibit the addition of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God.

First Peter 4:11 says that “*If any man speak, let him speak as the*

oracles of God.” The use of man-made instruments of music in worship are not found in the “oracles of God.” Therefore, when they are used, it is not speaking as the oracles (word) of God.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 says the scriptures furnish us unto “*all good works.*” But nowhere do the scriptures furnish us with authority to use man-made instruments of music in the worship of the church. Therefore, they do not constitute “good works.”

Second Peter 1:3 says we have been given “*all things that pertain to life and godliness.*” Yet the scriptures do not give us man-made instruments of music to be used in the worship of the church. Therefore, their use does not pertain to “life and godliness.”

Colossians 3:17 says that whatever is done “*in word or deed*” is to be done “*in the name of the Lord*” (i.e., by his authority — acting on his authority). But the Bible does not mention man-made instruments of music in the worship of the church. Therefore, they cannot be used “in his name.” They are not employed by his authority, his approval, his sanction, his endorsement, his consent, nor his blessing.

No matter what argument is used to support them, the question remains: Are mechanical instruments of music authorized in the worship of the church? The answer is a resounding No, NO! You will search in vain to find them!
—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #3

Why does the church of Christ not use any kind of mechanical instruments of music? THERE IS NO SCRIPTURE FOR IT!

Notice these passages which prohibit the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church.

Galatians 1:6-9 places a curse upon any who “pervert the gospel” by preaching “another gospel.” “But though we or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, **let him be accursed.**” Man-made instruments of music in the worship of the church cannot be found in the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, their use in worship is “another gospel.” All who use them are accursed of God! This is very strong language! But God said it and that makes it clear that no man has a right to change it.

Romans 14:23 says, “...*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” Faith comes by hearing the “word of God” (Rom. 10:17) and without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). But the word of God does not authorize the use of man made instruments in the worship of the church. Therefore, they cannot be used “by faith.” To use them is SIN.

Second John 9-11 says, “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.*” Nowhere does the doctrine of Christ authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. Therefore, to use them is to 1) Transgress God’s

word, 2) No longer abide in the doctrine of Christ, and consequently, 3) To use them makes us to be without God.

God has said what he wants in worship and no man or organization has any right to change it on any point. Here is every passage in the New Testament on the subject: Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26, Acts 16:25, Romans 15:9, 1 Corinthians 14:15, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 2:12, Hebrews 13:15, James 5:13, Revelation 5:8-9, Revelation 14:2-3, Revelation 15:2-3. Read these for yourself. See what God requires in the **worship of the church.** You will find the only music authorized is **SINGING**, not **PLAYING**.

What **MUST** those who use them do? **REPENT** is the only option. They can’t make excuses to justify it. Accept the truth and **REPENT**.

Also, some say they don’t use them and will never use them. But, they also say they will not condemn those who do. As a result, they end up defending those who use them by refusing to teach what the Bible says on the subject. That puts them in fellowship with those who do not hold the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). They bid godspeed to those who practice error. That makes them a partaker of their evil deeds. What does God tell them to do? **REPENT** or else!

By the way, “we” don’t condemn anyone. God is the one who condemns. To be faithful, we must not accept what God condemns (John 12:48).

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #4

Some say the church of Christ does not believe in MUSIC. But, regardless of what men say, nothing could be further from the truth! We believe: what God says, “rightly dividing” what God says (2 Tim. 2:15), and doing what God says.

There are two kinds of music: **vocal** and **mechanical**. Vocal music is “God-made” and uses the human voice. Mechanical music is “man-made” and uses mechanical instruments outside the human voice. Both kinds of music can be used independently of the other or in combination with the other. The question is, **what does God require in the worship of the church?** Does it matter with God what we do? YES!

The Bible is specific concerning the KIND of music God wants. Every passage concerning music in the New Testament church can only be obeyed by using the human voice, not a man-made instrument. The chart illustrates this point well.

The evidence is overwhelming as to what God wants us to do in worship. Book, chapter and verse can be given for vocal music. But no verses can be shown for mechanical instruments of music.

Man-made instruments in worship are SINFUL because they: 1) Reject New Testament authority (Col. 3:17), 2) Go beyond that which is written (2 John 9-11), 3) Violate scriptural worship (Col. 3:16), 4) Cause division (Prov. 6:19).

The Bible is either the word of men or the word of God. If it the word of men, then it carries no more authority than any other book written by man. However, if it is the WORD OF GOD, it carries all the authority that heaven demands (cf. Matt. 24:35; Col. 3:17).

The Bible is from God and claims ALL AUTHORITY. Jesus said, “All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). Christ’s words have ALL AUTHORITY and will judge all humanity at the end of the world (John 12:48). Therefore, what we do must be by his authority (Col. 3:17). Are YOU ready for the judgment?

—Garland M. Robinson

The Bible Commands to:	The Voice	The Instrument
Sing unto God (Romans 15:9)	Can	Cannot
Speak in song (Ephesians 5:19)	Can	Cannot
Make melody in the heart (Eph. 5:19)	Can	Cannot
Teach in song (Col. 3:16)	Can	Cannot
Admonish in song (Col. 3:16)	Can	Cannot
Sing with the spirit (I Cor. 14:15)	Can	Cannot
Sing with understanding (I Cor 14:15)	Can	Cannot
Praise God (Hebrews 2:12)	Can	Cannot
Give thanks (Hebrews 13:15)	Can	Cannot
Sing psalms (James 5:13)	Can	Cannot

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #5

WHAT ABOUT PSALM 150?

Some argue that the use of man-made instruments of music in worship are supported in Psalm 150. They tell us that since David used them, then we can also.

There are two things worthy of note in such a statement. It is admitted **1) that authority is necessary**, and **2) there is no authority in the New Testament**. This is extremely important because if authority could be found in the New Testament for their use, then such authority would be given. But, no Scriptures can be supplied to support it. Therefore, no New Testament authority exists for their use in the worship of the church today!

To turn to the Old Testament to justify any practice makes it necessary to practice ALL the Old Testament teaches, not just a part of it. This was made clear to the churches of Galatia as they sought to justify circumcision by the Old Law. In Galatians 5:3 we read, *“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”* The “whole law” includes animal sacrifices and burning incense in worship. Are proponents of instrumental music ready to practice these things? To practice any part of the Old Testament, even in one particular, is to be severed (cut off) from Christ (Gal. 5:4)! This is the point of the book of Galatians.

When Jesus died on the cross He *“blotted out the handwriting of ordinances (the Old Testament Law) that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”* (Col. 2:14). A multitude of passages describe that the Old Testament has been superseded by the New Testament (Jer. 31:31; 2 Cor. 3; Heb. 7:12,18; 8:7-13; 10:1,9).

The question is not what may have been allowed under a previous dispensation (age), but “What does God desire in the PRESENT dispensation?” “What does God want for the church today?” A person may have once lived in another country and lived under their laws, but now lives in this country and must abide by its laws. Can it be argued that since the speed limit was 80mph there, then he should be able to drive 80mph here? Even a child knows better than that!

In the history of the world, everyone will be judged according to the law under which they lived. All men today live under a different law than those who lived before the time of Christ. We live under the authority of the New Testament, not the Old Testament. We will be judged by the New Testament, not the Old Testament (John 12:48).

Where is the New Testament Scripture that authorizes mechanical instruments of music to be used in the worship of the church today?? Not one!

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #6

WHAT ABOUT THE GREEK WORD "PSALLO?"

The Greek word "psallo" is one of the arguments made in support of mechanical instruments of music in worship. The root meaning of *psallo* was to "pluck, touch, rub, pull, or strike." Advocates argue that since this is the root meaning of the word, it authorizes the plucking of instruments of music in worship. BUT, Lexicons agree that its use **IN THE NEW TESTAMENT** means "to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p.675). It is, therefore, translated this way the five times it appears in the New Testament: Romans 15:9 "**sing,**" 1 Corinthians 14:15 twice "**sing,**" James 5:13 "**sing psalms,**" Ephesians 5:19 "**making melody.**" Greek scholars have given their verdict! Will you accept it?

The word *psallo* does not authorize the use of man-made music in the worship of the church. The meaning and tense of the word "*yourselves*" in Ephesians 5:19 requires that everyone in the assembly *psallo*. If it is the case that *psallo*, in the New Testament, means to pluck the strings of a musical instrument, then EVERY Christian in the assembly is obligated to play an instrument! No one will accept that.

Even if the argument is granted that the New Testament usage of the word *psallo* means to *pluck* or *strike*, the object that is to be "plucked" is not

found in the word itself, it must be specified by the context. The instrument that is specified in Ephesians 5:19 is the **human heart**. Therefore, every Christian must *psallo*, "sing," "make melody," IN THE HEART, not on a man-made instrument of music.

The apostles were guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to SING. They were never directed to PLAY instruments. The church, likewise, never employed their use for they were, and are, without authority. This was so commonly known and understood by the early church that they were not introduced until 600 years after the establishment of the church, and even then, they were met with much opposition. It was not until the 13th century that they were gradually and generally accepted. They are of more recent origin than the Bible!

If mechanical instruments of music are authorized by the Greek word *psallo*, why didn't the apostles know it and teach it? And, why didn't the early church use them? Why? WHY?

They are an addition of man centuries after God's ordained establishment of his everlasting kingdom, bought and paid for with the Lord's own blood, his precious church.

Any way you go, man-made instruments are not authorized! You can't get them out of a verse where God did not put them in the verse. Try as you may, they are just not there!

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #7

MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC ARE NOT SIMPLY AN “AID” TO THE SINGING

The argument is often made that mechanical instruments of music are simply AIDS to the singing. It is asserted that they are to “singing” what “glasses” are to seeing, what “shoes” are to walking, or what “gloves” are to working. Therefore, it is contended that they are approved and permitted in worship to God. However, it has been shown in previous articles in this series that there is absolutely NO AUTHORITY in the Bible for their use. Not one single verse can be shown to support and defend them. If so, where is that verse?

Are mechanical instruments of music simply an AID which helps to carry out the command to SING?

There is a vast difference between an AID and an ADDITION. When one wears glasses he is still simply seeing. There’s not a different “kind” or “mode” of vision. He is not seeing in addition to something else. When shoes are worn, they aid our walking, there’s not a different “type” or “mode” of traveling being done. We are not both “walking” and “flying” when we wear shoes. When one wears gloves he is still working. There’s not a different “kind” of work being done.

When mechanical instruments of music are used in worship, they do far

more than aid the singing, they **add to** the singing. They are a different kind of music entirely. They are used to make music independently of singing. When they are used, there is both “singing” and “playing.” They accompany the singing for which there is no authority in God’s inspired Word.

It is also argued that if mechanical instruments of music add to the singing, then “tuning forks” and “pitch pipes” also add to the singing. But it is not the case that tuning forks and pitch pipes add to the singing. When either one is used, it simply sets the pitch for which a song is to be sung. By the time the singing starts, they are silent. They are not played in accompaniment with, or in addition to, the singing. Both produce only a single note! Try “playing” them and singing “Rock of Ages.” They are true aids, not additions. They fit into the same category as song books. When song books are used, only vocal music is present, not another “kind” of music.

God’s authority still reads, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord***” [Eph. 5:19]. “...**Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord**” [Col. 3:16]. These verses cannot be obeyed by using a man-made mechanical instrument of music. Only the voice can do that!

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #8

AREN'T MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC FOUND IN HEAVEN?

The argument is often made that since mechanical instruments of music are found in heaven, they may also be used in the church today.

The text referred to is Revelation 14:2 where we read, “*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.*”

There are two major problems with this argument:

1) The book of Revelation is written in figurative language — signs and symbols (Rev. 1:1). Chapter 5 verse 8 mentions harps and bowls full of incense (prayers). If the harps are literal/material, then why not the bowls of prayers? By what reasoning or logic can you make harps literal and bowls figurative? Chapter 14 verse 2 mentions “*many waters,*” “*great thunder*” and “*harpers harping with their harps.*” Will there be “*many waters*” and “*great thunder*” in heaven? These things are properly understood to be figurative and not literal. By what reasoning then, can you make the waters and thunder figurative but the harps literal?

Notice that the verse says a VOICE was heard from heaven. The VOICE (or sound) was AS the voice of many

waters and AS the voice of great thunder and AS the voice of harpers (*American Standard Version*). Literal waters, thunder and harpers were not heard, but a SOUND AS or LIKE many waters, thunder and harpers.

According to First Corinthians 15:50, flesh and blood cannot enter heaven. Since that’s the case, what possible use do spiritual beings have with literal/material harps? The point of the passage is that John heard a sound — a new song (verse 3). The rhythm of the song was AS if it were many waters. The volume of the song was AS if it were great thunder. The melody of it was AS if it were harpers harping with their harps.

This passage, upon investigation, does not place instruments in heaven.

2) Even if it could be proved there will be literal/material mechanical instruments of music in heaven, what does that have to do with worship in the church today? The fact is, what God may have allowed in the Old Testament or what God may allow in heaven does not authorize what is to be done in the church now. If so, how? To run to the “Old Testament” or to run to “heaven,” simply proves there is no authority for their use or practice in the New Testament church!

Why not study these things carefully and respect God’s Word.

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #9

I LIKE MUSIC, IT MAKES ME FEEL CLOSER TO GOD

The number one reason why instruments of music are used is because people like them; never mind what the Bible says. They can pretend to point to scriptures to justify their use, but the bottom line is, “I like them, and I’m going to use them!”

The major thing wrong with this statement is the word “I.” Since they enjoy them, they expect God to enjoy them as well. The only way to be acceptable in God’s sight regarding worship is to do that which God has authorized. That’s how we feel “close” to God. Worship is not about me (us), it’s about God. The church in the New Testament never used them.

Second Corinthians 5:7 says, “*we walk by **faith**, not by **sight**.*” Doing what “I want” and what “I like” is walking by sight, not faith. Romans 10:17 says “*...faith cometh by hearing...the word of God.*” Therefore, to walk “by faith” is to walk (live) according to God’s Word. But, since God’s Word does not authorize instruments of music in worship, then they cannot be used “by faith.” To use them is to walk by human “sight” (what pleases us) instead of the word of “faith.”

Just because something feels right does not make it right! Proverbs 14:12 says, “*There is a way which **seemeth right** unto a man, but the end thereof*

are the ways of death.” The Israelites felt right when they worshiped the golden calf, but it was a grievous sin (Exodus 32). Saul felt right when he persecuted the church, but he was wrong (Acts 26:9). We can’t go by our feelings!

The truth is, one is only close to God when God is close to him. It doesn’t matter what “I think” or how “I feel.” The question is, “What does God think, how does God feel?” When I do things “God’s way” with a sincere heart, then and only then, can I be close to God. “*And hereby we do know that we know him, **if we keep his commandments***” (1 John 2:3).

Acceptable worship is not only “*in spirit,*” it’s also “*in truth*” (John 4:24). “*The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him...in truth*” (Psalm 145:18). God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). Therefore, we must worship according to God’s Word, the Truth, not what we like or enjoy.

Jesus asked, “*...why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*” (Luke 6:46)? He also said, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven*” (Matt. 7:21).

Are you following God’s will or your own will? God’s will does not authorize man-made instruments of music!

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #10

SINCE THEY ARE USED IN THE HOME, THEY CAN ALSO BE USED IN THE CHURCH

This argument is used in an effort to prove that those who use instruments in their home (outside of worship) are inconsistent when they refuse to use them in the church. But, to show someone inconsistent does not prove instruments can be used in church. If so, how? At best, they've proven someone to be inconsistent, but they still haven't given Bible authority for them in the church!

Seems there is no end how far proponents of mechanical instruments of music will go in an effort to include them in worship. They might as well say, "*It doesn't matter what God wants, we're going to have what we want, one way or another!*"

The answer to the question of instruments of music in the church is plain and simple when the Bible is consulted. What does the Bible say about it? That's the question.

The Bible reveals the KIND of songs to be used in worship: "*psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Other types of songs, non-religious songs, are not authorized. For someone to play non-religious songs on an instrument outside of worship is irrelevant. It has no bearing or connection with the subject whatsoever. How could it?

What does God say regarding HOW "*psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*" are to be used? They are to be SUNG, **not** PLAYED — "*SINGING and MAKING MELODY in your HEART to the Lord*" (Eph. 5:19). "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING with grace in your HEARTS to the Lord*" (Col. 3:16). There IS authority to SING. There is NO authority to PLAY!

Even if it were permissible to sing "*psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*" with an instrument in one's home, it would not prove it could be done in worship. There are many things done in the home that are not authorized to be done in worship. Apple pie and ice cream are authorized in the home but NOT IN WORSHIP! How does this argument prove anything? By what reasoning or logic would using instruments outside the church authorize them in the church?

Why not just accept the plain simple teaching of the Bible? Why not simply do what God has commanded, what the apostles taught, and what the New Testament church practiced? Why would anyone want to do anything else? It is the way that is right and cannot be wrong!

Whatever we do can only be done with Bible authority (Col. 3:17).

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #11

SINCE GOD COMMANDS US TO USE OUR TALENTS, WE CAN USE THEM IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

Some think this sounds reasonable enough. How could it possibly be wrong to give God praise by using the talents He has given us? Since some have a talent to play an instrument, they should be able to use it in worship — so goes the argument.

This so-called “reasoning” is really absurd when followed to its logical conclusion. For example, some have a talent to cook like those in Acts 6:1. If God desires we use our talents in worship, could these people bring their pots and pans and display their cooking skills in worship? A man may have the talent to make tents like Paul (Acts 18:3). Should he bring his cloth of goat’s hair or linen and use his talent in worship? One may be an excellent seamstress and make coats and garments like Dorcas (Acts 9:36-39). But worship is not the time for having a sewing class or quilting party.

The worship of the church is not a marketplace to demonstrate or display our talents and wares.

The Bible certainly teaches we are to use our talents (Matt. 25:14-30). But we must only do “in worship” what the Bible authorizes to be done in worship. There is authority to **preach** the word of God (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2), **pray** to the Father in Jesus’ name (Matt. 6:9; John 16:23), **give an offering** of our earnings

(1 Cor. 16:1-2), observe the **Lord’s supper** on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and **sing** psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). We ought to use whatever abilities we have in all these areas in Scriptural worship.

According to Revelation 22:18-19, we cannot “add to” or “take from” God’s Word in anything — including worship. To add mechanical instruments of music to the worship of the church is adding to God’s word, no matter how talented we are or the best intentions we may have.

The proper place to use our talents is in “Christian service.” A good cook may use their talent by preparing food for those who are unable to prepare it for themselves. A “tentmaker” (builder) can use their talent in helping elderly members and others with repairs and work around the home. A seamstress could make clothes for the needy.

Second Timothy 2:15 demands we “*rightly divide the word of truth.*” That is, we are to dig deep to understand the sacred Scriptures and not twist them around to suit ourselves to do what we want (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). To misapply one’s talent of playing an instrument of music to accompany the singing of “*psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*” is to do so without any Bible authority — whether in worship or not.

Let’s follow what God authorizes in the Bible and do what He commands — nothing more and nothing less — pointing to book, chapter and verse.

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #12

WHERE IN THE BIBLE ARE INSTRUMENTS CONDEMNED?

There is no end to the attempts made to defend and support the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. But this is the wrong question. They should be asking: “what does the Bible authorize?”

While there is no passage of scripture that specifically says, “*Thou shalt not use mechanical instruments of music in worship;*” the fact is, the Bible doesn’t have too because God specifically states what He wants (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). We are to “speak,” “sing,” “teach” and “admonish” with our heart. The human voice can do all these things but instruments cannot do any of them.

By God specifying what he DOES want, he eliminates having to specify what he DOES NOT want. For example, God instructed Noah to build an ark of gopher wood with one door, one window and three floors (Gen. 6:14-16), but nowhere did God say “thou shalt not use oak or have two doors or two windows or four floors.” It was not up to Noah to use the wood of his choice “in place of” or “along with” gopher wood. He could have made two doors or more windows and floors. But not with a “thus saith the Lord” (cf. Col. 3:17). Had Noah not done what God said, the ark would not have floated the first minute!

Most people would be horrified if the church they attended substituted cake

and coffee in the communion. But why? The answer is, “the Bible tells us what is to be used in the observance of the Lord’s supper: unleavened bread and fruit of the vine.” It is understood, and rightly so, that by showing what was used in the Lord’s supper in the early church, it shows that everything else, any substitution or addition, is not authorized. It is condemned.

God does not have to tell us in his word that you can’t do this or you can’t do that because he has told us what to do, therefore eliminating everything else. Since this principle of understanding the Bible is seen in Noah building the ark and regarding the Lord’s supper, why can’t people see it regarding the kind of music God has specified? Why? When God says “sing,” he does not have to say you can’t play or hum or whistle.

The Bible is not altogether a book of “*thou shalt not*.” This type reasoning would make the Bible so large that it could hardly be read in a lifetime. The Bible is a book of “thou shalt,” a book of instructions so man can know what to do in order to obey God.

Every passage that speaks of music in the church specifies “singing.” None speak of “instruments,” either alone or in accompaniment with singing. Second Timothy 2:15 tells us to “*rightly divide the word of truth.*” This cannot be done when men “add to” and/or “take from” God’s word.

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #13

I DON'T SEE ANY HARM IN IT. EVERYBODY USES THEM

Often in frustration, when every possible argument has been used and shown to be false, proponents of mechanical instruments of music will say, "I just don't see any harm in it, everybody else is using them."

Such attempts to assure one's use of instruments in worship shows their total disregard for Bible authority! They might as well say, "I don't care what the Bible says, I'm going to do it anyway!"

No one has a choice to do what they want to do when it comes to worshiping and serving God. Acceptable worship is according to **God's will**, not man's will.

Jesus taught the woman at Jacob's well that TRUE worship is offered "**in spirit and in truth**" (John 4:24). One may worship with the proper "spirit" (the right attitude, thought, disposition of heart, sincerity) and their worship be in vain because it is not "in truth." Likewise, one may worship "in truth" (according to God's instructions, his Word) and their worship be in vain because it is not "in spirit" (from the heart). Acceptable worship therefore involves BOTH man's "spirit" and God's "truth." The tragedy is that so many believe and practice that as long as you have a sincere heart, God will accept "anything" offered to him in worship. That is just not so!

Nadab and Abihu did not see any

harm in offering "strange fire" when they worshiped God in burning incense, but God sent down fire from heaven and killed them where they stood (Lev. 10:1-2). The fire they used was different (strange) from what God had commanded to be used. King Saul did not see any harm in bringing the king of Amalek and many of the best animals back from battle even though God had commanded them to be killed. As a result, God rejected him from being king over Israel and tells the whole world that it is better to obey God than to have the best of intentions (1 Sam. 15). Uzzah did not see any harm in touching the ark to keep it from falling, but God killed him for touching it (2 Sam. 6:6-7).

It does not matter if the majority of people use instruments of music. Jesus said the majority are lost (Matt. 7:13-14). God warns us all, "*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*" (Exod. 23:2). One's belief, teaching and practice are not determined by popular vote or how one feels. We must look to God and his word, not men and their practice.

There is great spiritual harm in going against God's Word. God has the power to punish in hell (Matt. 10:28). We better do what he says. Why would anyone fight so desperately to do those things THEY desire and care not at all what GOD desires? Why?

One more time, let us ask, WHERE'S THE SCRIPTURE FOR IT?

—Garland M. Robinson

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #14

MECHANICAL PRAISE FOR GOD!

Is Mechanical Music Justified?	The Scriptures teach us to SING in worship!	Mechanical Music is Sinful
A command? No	Matthew 26:30 “SUNG an hymn”	Violates the principle of faith
An example? No	Acts 16:25 “SANG praises”	Romans 14:3
An Inference? No	Romans 15:9 “SING unto thy name”	Makes void the word of God
Is it scriptural? No	1 Corinthians 14:15 “SING with the spirit and understanding”	Matt. 15:3-9 Mark 7:13
A good work? No	Ephesians 5:19 “SINGING psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”	Violates God’s specific command
Pertain to life? No	Colossians 3:16 “SINGING with grace in your hearts”	Colossians 3:16 Galatians 5:19
Anti-scriptural? Yes	Hebrews 2:12 “In the midst of the church will I SING praise”	Rejects Christ’s authority!
	James 5:13 “Is any merry? Let him SING psalms”	Matthew 7:29 Matthew 28:18 John 12:48-50

Since mechanical instruments of music cannot be justified (supported) by God’s Holy Scriptures to accompany the singing of *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*, they are therefore **wrong** and **sinful** to use them in worship to God! It violates every principle of faith, makes void the Word of God, violates God’s specific command, and rejects the authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! What more could be said? If there’s no scripture for them, there’s no authority for them! How will you answer when you stand before Christ to be judged? Will you say you enjoyed them so much? Will you say you didn’t see any harm in them? Will you say you did not know? Nothing we say will make any difference — we can’t point to a scripture that authorizes them.

— Garland M. Robinson

