

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Christians live in the world, but are not of the world. The Bible tells us again and again that we must be on our guard against allowing the world to set our standards. The desire to be like others and to be thought well of by others can be an insidious force. Not that we should ever be indifferent to the impact we have on others, but we cannot sacrifice truth and the pursuit of truth on the altar of conformity. It seems that the significant problems that face the church today have a lot to do with being conformed to the standards of the world in issues related to the role of man and women, to sexual license and to homosexuality, to divorce for any reason, to the denial of the very clear teaching concerning baptism and its meaning, to instrumental music in the worship, and to thinking "I'm O.K. and you're O.K. regardless of what you we believe as long as we are both sincere and loving. **(SOME ARE NOW INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE RELIGIONS NOT RELATED IN ANY WAY TO CHRIST).**

This particular study has to do with the question of adding instruments to the worship of the church. I would not rank it near the top in terms of how it compares to weightier matters. However, it seems self-evident that corporate acts (things we do together) as compared to individual acts, by their very nature are more likely to become matters of fellowship. Not because they are more important, but because they require group participation. The Bible teaches we are not to fellowship a covetous person, however it is probable that few of such persons will ever be withdrawn from our fellowship because they are difficult to identify. On the other hand, we either take the Lord's Supper each Lord's day, or we do not. We either sing with instruments or we do not.

God commanded the use of instruments in the Old Testament, but not in the New Testament. We do not know why. It may have been part of the shifting from a lot of emphasis on externals (temple, a special priestly cast, trumpets, holy places, bloody sacrifices, etc.), to center upon the inner person. People have become the temple, all Christians are now part of the priesthood, hearts have become the instruments that we pluck, grace has replaced law, and all of us equally have access to God through Christ.

It has also been suggested that the Synagogue and not the Temple served as the model for the church. The organizational format of the Synagogue and the worship pursued have much in common with the

way the church functions. In addition, the Synagogue had singing without instrumental accompaniment.

A final note - we worship God! Worship is primarily directed to Him (as the term means). It is not about us. While we invite outsiders to attend hoping they will stay to study and obey, the worship is not for them. It is about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We know Jesus said that those who love Him will keep His words. That is what is important, keeping the words of Christ to the best of our ability. We benefit by worship, but we worship God. We try to please Him in the things that we do. We know there was a body of truth consigned to the Apostles which they were in turn to pass on to others. When someone strayed from that body of truth, the original teaching was brought again to their attention as in the case of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17- 19). In what are called the "pastorals" Paul repeatedly exhorts Timothy and Titus to be true to "sound doctrine" and to oppose and correct those who are not. We see the Restoration movement as a "dynamic" process, and not a finished product. We are to continue the process as we drive deeper into truth. If we are inconsistent in the application of the above principle, we do not believe that invalidates the principle. We need to study more about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need to study more about what God requires of us in our priesthood. We need to be more active in sharing our faith with the world. We need to love more as we have been loved. We need to go beyond the structures of the church to the life of the church. We need to distinguish better the difference in salvation by law and salvation by grace. We need to emphasize personal holiness just as God is holy. May God help us to do so!

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