

# **FACTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN CONSIDERING USE OF INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP OF GOD**

1) In the Old Testament, both vocal music and instrumental music were ordained by God (Psl. 33:1-4).

2) In the New Testament only vocal music is taught (Eph. 5:18-20, Col. 3:15-17).

3) No one has yet been able to present clear New Testament teaching that would indicate the use of instruments in the corporate worship is ordained by God.

4) No one has yet been able to prove that the church of the first century, as it was formed and initiated by the Apostles, used instruments of music in the worship.

5) In the early centuries of the life of the church, the term "a cappella" was used to explain the musical form that characterized Christian worship. Modern dictionaries define this term as singing "without instrumental accompaniment. A cappella, a Latin term, means literally to sing "as in chapel (church)."

6) It is difficult to pinpoint the exact date when an instrument was first introduced in church worship. Various sources say it occurred in 670 AD during the reign of Pope Vitalian I. However, Thomas Aquinas, a Roman Catholic scholar of the thirteenth century claimed, "Our Church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize" (Bingham's Antiquities, Vol. H, p. 483, London Edition, quoted in Kurfees, Instrumental Music in the Worship, p. 176).

7) While eventually the Western Church (Roman Catholic), accepted the use of instruments in many (but not all) of its worship services, such has never occurred in the Eastern Church (Orthodox). To this day 300,000,000 Orthodox worshippers still follow the original practice of "a cappella" singing. While this writer was in Athens on a teaching assignment, there was some interesting news presented in the Athens paper. It seems that a film company rented a deconsecrated Orthodox building in which to film a sequence. In the process, they moved a piano into the building. When local priest learned of this, they broke into the building and destroyed the piano.

8) At the time of the Reformation the Roman Catholic custom of using musical instruments in worship to God was followed by the Anglicans and the Lutherans. Other branches of the Reformation movement such as the Anabaptists and the Reformed churches rejected the instrument as an unauthorized Roman Catholic addition to Christ's plan for the church. John Calvin was a strong proponent of a-cappella singing which continued to be the practice in these churches for centuries. When in later times the decision was made by many of Reformation churches (but not all), to introduce the instrument in Christian worship, the decision proved to be divisive and disruptive (see Ferguson, E., *A Cappella Music*, Biblical Research Press, 1972, pp. 82-83).

9) While instrumental music is considered unauthorized in worship to God by hundreds of millions, no one claims that a-cappella singing is contrary to the New Testament teachings.

10) Christ ordered his Apostles to teach all people all the things He had taught them (Matt.28:18-20 a similar statement is made by Paul in 2 Tim. 2:2), and promised the Holy Spirit would give them perfect memory so they would not make a mistake (John 14:26, 16: 13). The New Testament claims Scriptures inspired of God teach all the things needed to be pleasing to God (2. Tim. 3:15-17). Since instruments in the corporate worship are not part of New Testament teaching, we must conclude this teaching did not come from Christ.

11) We are not under the Old Covenant, but the New Covenant (Hebrews chapters 7-10). Many Old Covenant principles are also included in the New Covenant, but not all. The new Covenant does not include Old Testament practices such as the burning of incense (Lev. 16:12-13, although the prayers of Christians are symbolically called "incense", Rev. 5:8. 3-4), offerings involving oil, flour, wine, or first fruits of the harvest (Ex. 23:19, 29:40, Lev. 2:14), water of purification before going into the tabernacle (Ex. 20:17-21) burning of candles at night in the place of worship (Ex. 40:24-25), dancing (Psl. 150), the offering of animal sacrifices, a priestly caste, holy places to which pilgrimages are to be made, instruments of music in corporate worship (although the human heart is indicated as the instrument whose music the Lord desires, Eph. 5:19), resting on Saturday, physical circumcision as a religious rite (we now have a spiritual circumcision called baptism, Col. 2:10-13), and many other such things. Most of these are not specifically mentioned with a "thou shalt not," but are just not commanded.

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