

The "New" Arguments for Instrumental Music in Worship

Gregory K. Circle, II (2008)

Our young Christians need to be taught the arguments for such issues as instrumental music in worship so they can "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). The new arguments are simply the old arguments. This discussion will be about some of the Greek words in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, especially the word, *psallo*, and the arguments related to it. Each of these words represent a different type of music.

First, the word translated "song" is the Greek word *ode*, which simply means a song in its general sense. The word may be recognized in its transliterated form from Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." This word can mean any type of song. Many odes were sung for the welcoming home of heroes. But, if the adjective "spiritual" is added to modify the word, then the song becomes a specific type of song, namely, one that would be sung as worship.

Second, the word "hymn" is translated from the Greek word *humnos*. In the Bible, this word only occurs in the two verses being discussed here, and while the word *ode* simply means a song, *humnos* is more specifically, a religious song.

Third, the word which is transliterated, "Psalms." It is the Greek word *psalmos*. According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, this word is even more specific. While *ode* means "a song," and *humnos* means a "religious song," *psalmos* means "a religious song that is sung in Hebrew." It refers to the Psalms of the Old Testament. These "psalms," according to Strong, could be accompanied with the voice, harp, or other instruments. Those arguing for instrumental music in worship often use this fact to what seems to be their advantage. However, notice that it can be accompanied with the voice **OR** other instruments. The instruments do not have to be present in order for it to be a "psalm."

It is often asserted that the base word for *psalmos* is *psallo*, which means to "pluck, pull, or twang." (This word is used in Ephesians 5:19 and translated by the phrase, "making melody.") Many will say that in order to pluck, pull, or twang, you must have a mechanical instrument. This is simply not true. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us what "instrument" we must use while we are "singing and making melody." Ephesians 5:19 says, "...in your hearts." We are to "pluck, pull, or twang" our heartstrings according to this biblical command.

It is also important to note that in the KJV, the word *psallo* is used four other times and is translated "sing" those times. There is not a case of mechanical instruments being used in the New Testament to worship God. The Bible commands singing. Nothing more. Ω

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Publishing Peace

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"Behold on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!..." (Nahum 1:15)



From the Director's Pen

Be Careful of the Advice You Give Others

Denver E. Cooper

It is often said, or at least implied, by members of the church that the church is just another denomination. Some elders fail to stand for the truth about the church as they ought. Fortunately, most elders know what the Bible teaches and faithfully teach it. Far too many people have either forgotten or just don't care that the church is different from any denomination. We must remember that God's curse is upon any church or preacher who does not uphold the truth (Gal. 1:8-9).

Many of our day are influenced by the youth to do that which they believe will cause people to obey the Gospel. Some have resorted to using the instrument with the idea that other young people will be influenced to obey the Gospel when the church uses the instrument. Some elders are forgetting God's curse on the unfaithful.

Some young men are relying on their talent, experience, comedy and youthful knowledge. Solomon said, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; (**ALL THINE HEART**), and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:5-7). A good example of this is Rehoboam when he became king. Jeroboam and all of the congregation came to Rehoboam stating their desire to have him lessen their tax burdens. Rehoboam consulted the old men requesting that they "advise that I may answer the people." They advised him to do as the people requested. "But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him" . . . (1 Kings 12:1- 8). Verse 10b says their advice was, "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins." Rehoboam took the advice of the younger men and it divided the people into two nations. How often it is the case that churches are divided and even destroyed when men seek advice from the wrong people.

Ahab, king of Israel made a similar mistake when he ask 400 men what he should do about going to battle against Ramothgilead. They all said he should go. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, then asked: "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides?" Surely the advice of 400 should be adequate, but Jehoshaphat sought the advice of just one more. First, Micaiah the prophet agreed with the 400. Micaiah was given instruction to "speak that which is good." (1 Kings 22:13). When he told Ahab to go and prosper, Ahab said, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?" Micaiah eventually said, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." (1 Kings 22: 14). Ahab commanded that Micaiah be put in prison and "give him the bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace" (1 Kings 22: 27). Unfortunately, the King of Israel went into battle disguised and a soldier shot an arrow which hit Ahab and he died. The prophecy concerning his death came to pass just as he was told.

Leaders need to be very careful from whom they receive advice. Young men seeking to be important in the eyes of the world many times cannot be trusted to tell the truth. They often seek the praise of men as an indication of their great wisdom and knowledge. Of course, not all young men deserve such blame. Yet, all who lead God's people need to be very careful of the advice they give to those seeking a scriptural answer. Ω

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A New Beginning

Andy Robinson

Gene West was the first preacher I remember hearing proclaim the Gospel of Christ. It was in the sound of his voice I was reared for the first seven years of my life. My father used to travel with him to lectureships, and Dad would tell stories about how Gene was enthralled by the learning atmosphere and was a voracious note taker. Through the remaining years of my upbringing, we visited and vacationed often with the West family. I remember with the greatest fondness the devotionals in State Park cabins, and the two-family worship services that Gene would often lead. I recall visiting small congregations in southern West Virginia where they would beg Gene to preach—even on his vacation Sunday. The scholar of the man shone through in everyday conversation that I overheard. He knew his Bible, and he knew his Civil War history—he could make a battlefield State Park with but a cannon and an overlook tower come alive with his knowledgeable, eloquent narration. It is appropriate, and not empty flattery (cf. Pro. 28:23; 29:5), to acknowledge duly deserved honor (cf. Rom. 13:7).

Decades later, I am humbled to have the task of trying to fulfill some of the roles Gene has so dutifully and masterfully performed at the West Virginia School of Preaching, including the editorship of this newsletter. Please, dear brethren, do not expect his shoes to be fully filled. In one short meeting with him, I'm overwhelmed with the workload this man of God has been performing for so many years. I solicit your prayers for my persistence in studies and commitment to continuation of excellence in the classroom and publications.

An instructive yet extra-Biblical proverb says, "If you see a turtle on a fencepost, you can be sure he didn't get there by himself." Men may turn out to be great Gospel preachers, but they never get there by themselves. Their desire and subsequent development is the result of a brotherhood's worth of encouragement, labor, generosity, study, and prayer. A case in point, valuable for training effective messengers of the light for West Virginia, the Ohio Valley, the Northeast, and the ends of the earth is WVSOP. The library is excellent, the continuing

faculty is top-notch, and the facilities are renovated and primed. All that is left is for an ever-renewed zeal to capture the hearts of the faithful supporters and the new, and for more faithful men and their families to be willing to give their lives selflessly to the cause of Christ's proclamation.

The Gospel is the only hope of the world (Rom. 1:16). It is a collective effort to prepare men to preach it. Gene West has led that effort in the classroom and pulpit, and will continue. Please pray for succeeding persons and generations to pursue passionately that same path. Lost and dying souls all over the globe are dependent upon it. Ω



Ed Melott (2002)

We rejoiced by witnessing four baptisms in June with the Steelton church of Christ, New Martinsville, WV. This brings the total to 9 baptisms and 6 restorations this year.

Alumni News

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Feature

The Church Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow Matthew 16:18

Emanuel Daugherty

The Church Yesterday. In this article I propose to give a brief summary of the Lord's church in my lifetime of 72 years, and my 45 years of preaching. Times have changed since my youth. Christ's church in those days was experiencing great growth numerically, financially and materially. I attribute this to the industriousness and zeal of Christians who migrated from the south to the north looking for work during the Depression of the 1930's and those men and women that endured the rigors and harsh discipline of WWII. They had experienced economic failure and the devastation of war. They saw Jesus Christ and the gospel as being the only real solution to the world's troubles. They became preachers, elders, deacons, soul-winners, and missionaries, with a deep desire to build up the church and spread it wherever they went. This was a time when people were hungry for the things of God, and the church was growing steadily. The Associated Press called the churches of Christ "the fastest growing church in America." Church work in the "old days" was hard and difficult. It will always be so. Those in the church of Yesterday were up to the task and made the necessary sacrifices to sow and reap, and sow and reap again, over and over. That's why we have the church Today!

The Church Today. Things began to change when television became America's "entertainment center," and our affluence and craving of material things began to dominate us. We have been absorbed by sports and entertainment. Sunday used to be a day for family, worship and rest. Sunday is no longer "the Lord's Day" for many Christians. Soul winning is sluggish, our churches are aging. There is a "missing generation" in many congregations. Our children are choosing the secular rather than the spiritual. Sex and violence are rampant in our society. But, in some ways the church is doing well—better facilities, advances in technology and the media that makes presentation of the Gospel clearer—internet, chat-rooms, web pages, etc. Yet with all these modern advances, we are falling behind in evangelism. The church of today is in a state of lethargy. Our generation must make the sacrifices as did our fathers that gave us the church of Today if we would pass on the church to those of Tomorrow.

The Church Tomorrow. If there will be a church tomorrow we must save souls TODAY! An army does not win battles simply with bombs and missiles, but with "boots on the

ground." Technology does not replace men and women out working day to day and door to door spreading the Gospel. If the church does not return to evangelism practices of the New Testament – "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20), the church of Christ will continue to shrink in numbers and influence in the world. A healthy church is a church composed of all ages of people—infants, children, teens, young adults with families coming on, middle-aged men and women working, teaching and serving and aged saints providing wisdom, knowledge and leadership of the church. There must be more true conversions to the Christ to take up the slack of those saints departing to be with the Lord, and evangelists and elders must lead the way. Members will not get out into the field of labor if leaders do not lead, showing them by example how the Lord's work is to be done! **The church Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. Brother, sister, how do you see her future? Ω**

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