

Question: Why don't churches of Christ enrich their worship to God in song with musical instruments? (Part 2)

Last week we listed all the New Testament scriptures that pertained to singing in worship to God and instructing/edifying the Christians. Not one of the passages indicated the use of any type of instrument other than the heart of the worshipper. This week we will listen to the voice of history. The following are quotes from historians, reformers and scholars on the subject.

“Both the Jews in their temple service, and the Greeks in their idol worship, were accustomed to sing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity accordingly must have been familiar with this mode of singing...But it is generally admitted, that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their worship.” -- Lyman Coleman (Presbyterian), THE APOSTOLIC AND PRIMITIVE CHURCH

“Only singing...and no playing of instruments, was permitted in the early Christian Church.” -- Hugo Leichtentritt, MUSIC, HISTORY AND IDEAS, p. 34

“There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was everywhere entirely of a vocal nature.” -- Emil Nauman, THE HISTORY OF MUSIC, Vol. 1, p. 177

“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.” -- Dr. Frederick Louis Ritter, HISTORY OF MUSIC FROM THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO THE PRESENT TIME, p. 28

CATHOLIC -- “... the first Christians were of too spiritual a fiber to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice.” -- CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

GREEK ORTHODOX -- “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.” -- Constantine Cavarnos, BYZANTINE SACRED MUSIC

PRESBYTERIAN -- “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, 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 apostle is far more pleasing to Him.” -- JOHN CALVIN, Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. I, p. 539

METHODIST -- “I have no objection to instruments of music, in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.” -- JOHN WESLEY (founder)

METHODIST -- “Music as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruption in the worship of the Author of Christianity.” -- ADAM CLARKE (commentator)

LUTHERAN -- “Martin Luther called the organ an ‘ensign of Baal’.” -- MCCLINTOCK & STRONG'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

BAPTIST -- "I would as soon attempt to pray to God with machinery as to sing to Him with machinery." -- CHARLES H. SPURGEON

Why did these men object so strongly to the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church? Because they properly realized that it was a carry-over from the Jewish and pagan worship, and that as such it was out of harmony with *true* and *spiritual* worship (*Jn 4:24*).

Study your Bible and search the Truth. Jesus said "*the truth shall make you free*" (*Jn 8:32*). Free from sin, that is, and its consequences, not freedom to serve our desires and interests. "*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed*" (*Jn 8:37*). Jesus gave us no "*word*" on "*enriching*" the worship of God in song with musical instruments.

C. Boyd Jennings