

# Seek The Old Paths

*"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."*

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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## RICHLAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST, RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS ADDING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND LORD'S SUPPER ON SATURDAY

*Vernon Joines*

An article in the *Christian Chronicle* by Bobby Ross Jr. (Dec. 12, 2006) reads: **NEWS — NATION'S LARGEST CHURCH OF CHRIST ADDING INSTRUMENTAL SERVICE.**

1. The *Christian Chronicle* reporter, reported some astounding news about the Richland Hills church of Christ in Texas. His report contained some of the following: The preacher, **Rick Atchley**, says that the changes made at the church services were "the result of three years of study, prayer and fasting" by the congregation's elders.

Why would it take three years of study, prayer and fasting to learn God's will on the subject of worship? All they had to do was just read their Bibles to learn God's will in this matter, and save all that time and energy and devote all that time and energy to doing the will of God.

2. Jon Jones says the eldership "fully and completely" endorsed the decision, and that "there is unity in our eldership, and we are so thankful for that."

Why would a faithful Christian be thankful for an eldership that had just made a decision to change God's plan for how and when God was to be worshiped?

3. Roger Dean reports the congregation's overall response as "extremely positive." He also said

"...people are truly supporting the leadership and the eldership."

It is difficult for me to understand how the congregation could be positive in their response to an eldership changing the truth of God into a lie. I am also wondering who the "leadership" is. My brethren and I have always taught from the Bible, and still do, that the elders are God's appointed leaders.

4. Rick Atchley told the congregation that it will allow the congregation to "reach more people who need Christ."

What would these people become when they have been "reached" under these conditions? The Richland Hills Church has changed the church of our Lord into something else other than the body of Christ with the introduction of mechanical instruments of music into the worship services. They also have changed the worship in communion (Lord's supper) to Saturday night. I can assure you that Christ will have no part in these actions and changes from His divine word (II John 9-11).

5. Rick Atchley said that he did not want to leave the impression that he was promoting instrumental music in the worship anywhere else, but he also made it clear that there was no effort made to conceal it. Then in the next breath, he suggested that Richland Hills decision might

"inspire many other churches of Christ to be courageous in their kingdom efforts."

Does he sound somewhat like a double-talker to you? Does he not realize that Christians are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-16)? In addition, we learn that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump (I Cor. 5:6). All Christians are to be examples for good and not evil.

6. In addition, Rick also said Richland Hills must put the kingdom of God and Christ's mission above concern that the change might hurt the congregation's standing or influence among churches of Christ.

If Richland Hills is changing the truth of God's word so that it is no longer believed, taught or practiced, then your concern should be focused on correcting the error — then you won't have anything to be concerned about. You are leaving the impression that the decision has already been made to make certain changes no matter what faithful brethren think, say or do.

7. Atchley said, "I greatly appreciate a cappella praise." "But I firmly believe that if Richland Hills is to be most faithful to God's word and Christ's mission, we must become a both/and church with regard to

*(Continued on page 15)*  
**Richland Hills...**



*Editorial...*  
**MUSIC IN THE  
 NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

*Garland M. Robinson*

**M**usic in the New Testament church is a vital part of worship and, like all worship, must be “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). There are two types of music: VOCAL and MECHANICAL. The type of music specified by God in the New Testament is VOCAL. With this fact, no one argues. Still, legion are those who have taken it upon themselves to **add** to the kind of music God has authorized. Many advocate *singing accompanied with mechanical instruments of music*. Frankly, the Bible authorizes SINGING but does not authorize PLAYING mechanical instruments of music.

The chart in Table 1 lists **every** verse in the New Testament which mentions anything about music. Of these 12 passages, **none** authorize (command or allow) the use of **anything** except the human voice in

worship.

The question before us is restricted to what God wishes his people **in the church of Christ** to do. At the present, it is not our purpose to examine the Old Testament nor to look ahead and see what **might** be in heaven. We do not live by the authority of the Old Covenant (Heb. 9:16-17; Gal. 3:24-25), nor are we yet in heaven. What God may have allowed in the Old Testament or possibly may allow in heaven is not the question. What God wants and allows NOW, in the New Testament age, the church age, the Christian dispensation, is our concern!

The scriptures in Table 1 authorize only SINGING in the New Testament church. Anything other than God’s specified instructions is a violation of His Will. A mechanical instrument of music is an addition to what God has commanded. It is a commandment of men and not of God and therefore makes worship accompanied by it VAIN (Matt. 15:9). We are not to go beyond that which is written (I Cor. 4:6). When we speak, we are to speak as the oracles of God

(I Peter 4:11).

God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness in his word (II Peter 1:3). He did not give us the use of mechanical instruments of music in our worship, therefore, their use is not lawful and consequently is SINFUL.

The command of scripture is to not add to or take from that which is written (Rev. 22:18-19). Mechanical instruments of music are an addition to God’s word and are therefore forbidden. It is a cause of division which God hates (Prov. 6:19; Rom. 16:17).

The chart in Table 2 shows plainly that the human voice CAN do what God commands us to do in our worship in song. However, the mechanical instrument CANNOT meet any of the requirements God has placed upon us.

**HISTORY IS CLEAR**

The charts in Tables 3 & 4 illustrate that singing is what God commanded and that playing a mechanical instrument is not in accordance with a “*thus saith the Lord*.” Christ never commanded it. The Holy Spirit never authorized it. The apostles never sanctioned it. The New Testament writers never endorsed it. The New Testament church never employed it. All these facts make it clear there is no Bible authority for its use! Those who use it have no Bible basis to point to. They stand alone on the sea of human degradation and shame.

For over 600 years, the church rejected its use. Instruments were

**TABLE 1**

Scripture	Sing	Play
Matt. 26:30	YES	NO
Acts 16:25	YES	NO
Rom. 15:9	YES	NO
I Cor. 15:15	YES	NO
Eph. 5:19	YES	NO
Col 3:16	YES	NO
Heb 2:12	YES	NO
Heb 13:15	YES	NO
James 5:13	YES	NO
Rev 5:8-9	YES	NO
Rev. 14:2-3	YES	NO
Rev. 5:2-3	YES	NO

**TABLE 2**

The Bible Commands To:		Voice	Instrument
Eph 5:19	Speak in song	CAN	CANNOT
	Make melody in heart	CAN	CANNOT
Col. 3:16	Teach in song	CAN	CANNOT
	Admonish in song	CAN	CANNOT
I Cor. 14:15	Sing with the spirit	CAN	CANNOT
	Sing with the understanding	CAN	CANNOT
Heb 2:12	Praise God	CAN	CANNOT
Heb 13:15	Give thanks	CAN	CANNOT

TABLE 3

SING?	PLAY?
<b>YES!</b>	CHRIST NEVER COMMANDED HOLY SPIRIT NEVER AUTHORIZED APOSTLES NEVER SANCTIONED NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS NEVER ENDORSED NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH NEVER EMPLOYED NO BIBLE AUTHORITY

not introduced until about 670 A.D. The **American Cyclopedia** (Vol. 12, p.688) says:

*“Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of western Europe, about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 755.”*

The **Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia** (Vol. 2, p.1702) says:

*“In the Greek Church the organ never came into use. But after the eighth century it became more and more common in the Latin Church; not however, without opposition from the side of the monks. Its misuse however, raised so great an opposition to it, that, but for the Emperor Ferdinand, it would probably have been abolished by the Council of Trent. The Reformed Church discarded it; and though the Church of Basel very early reintroduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly, and after long hesitation.”*

Many well known preachers and scholars of past centuries have spoken out plainly against its use: men such as Adam Clarke, a distinguished Methodist scholar; John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church; John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church; Charles Spurgeon, a well-known Baptist preacher; and Martin Luther, the founder of the Lutheran Church. These are by no means all, but should serve as an example of the

TABLE 4

Singing	Instrumental Music
Matt. 26:30 Rom. 15:9 I Cor. 14:15 Eph. 5:19 Col. 3:16 Heb. 2:12	<b>??</b>

many who opposed its use. The churches of Christ are not alone in the opposition of it. However, mechanical instruments are not wrong because well-known men have stood against them, nor are they wrong because the church of Christ today opposes them. **Mechanical instruments of music are wrong (sinful) because of one reason and one reason alone, there is no Bible authority for their use!**

According to Colossians 3:17, authority is necessary for *everything* we do and say. The only authority in the world is the Bible. Jesus said God’s word is Truth (John 17:17). Truth can and will make men free (John 8:32). God has commanded his people to SING in worship and that is the **only** command there is. God NEVER commanded to PLAY on a man-made instrument. To introduce mechanical instruments of music into our worship is to violate God’s strict and plain command to SING. It makes our worship vain, and vain worship causes people to lose their soul!

Friends, it is clear what the Bible says on the subject of mechanical instruments of music. Will you honor it?

In the March issue, we will examine some arguments used to defend instrumental music today.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

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# THE HISTORY OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

*Rusty Stark*

God's word is the only thing that can show us what God wants. Before we look at the history of the instrument, let us look to Scripture.

**1. God commanded the use of instruments of music in praise to him under the law of Moses.** Trumpets were to be blown over the burnt offerings and peace offerings (Num. 10:10; 29:1-2). The use of musical instruments is commanded in Psalms 150, and II Chronicles 29:25 makes it plain that their use was not simply a human invention but a command of God. "And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets." Whatever may be argued about the 'ideal will of God' and whether or not his ideal will included instruments of music in worship, God commanded their use under the Old Law. The fact that they are commanded as elements of praise to God in Psalms 150 shows they cannot be considered simply as aids to worship today.

**2. God omitted the use of instruments of music in the worship of the New Testament church.** There is not one verse, not one example, not one fair inference that can be drawn from the New Testament connecting instruments of music with the worship of the church here on earth. In plain country vernacular, there 'ain't no scripture fer it.' No one would be so bold as to argue that God omitted the use of instruments through an oversight.

With these two simple facts, the matter should stand as decided. Those who respect the authority of God's word and those who understand the nature and greatness of our God will not be so bold as to approach him with the inventions and innovations of men. The proper form of worship to almighty God cannot be devised by weak, human

hearts. Worship is ordered by God, not dreamed up by men (Lev. 10:1ff; John 4:24; Col. 3:17,23). Our perfect God has given us a perfect plan for worship, and only the arrogant would try to add their human inventions to that perfect plan.

Unfortunately, the fact that a matter is decided by God does not mean it is ended in the mind of man. While searching what is pleasing to the senses and pleasing to the masses, many religious groups have departed from the simplicity of God's worship plan.

There is value in looking at the history of musical instruments in the worship of the church. History cannot prove the right or wrong of the use of such instruments, but it may instruct us and help keep us from making the same or similar mistakes.

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC WAS A DEPARTURE FROM THE WORSHIP OF THE EARLY CHURCH

It is not hard to establish that the early church did not use instruments of music in worship.

The Catholic Encyclopedia:

- "For almost a thousand years Gregorian chant, without any instrumental or harmonic addition, was the only music used in connection with the liturgy" (*Musical Instruments in Church Services*, www.newadvent.com — this website has reproduced much of the Catholic Encyclopedia for easy reference).
- "In the early centuries the objection of the Church to instrumental music applied also to the organ, which is not surprising, if we remember the association of the hydraulus with theatre and circus. According to Platina ("De vitiis Pontificum", Cologne, 1593), Pope Vitalian (657-72) introduced the organ into the church service. This, however, is very doubtful. At all events, a strong

objection to the organ in church service remained pretty general down to the twelfth century, which may be accounted for partly by the imperfection of tone in organs of that time" (*Organ*, www.newadvent.com. McClintock and Strong:

- "Use of Instruments in the Church. — The Greeks as well as the Jews were wont to use instruments as accompaniments in their sacred songs. The converts to Christianity accordingly must have been familiar with this mode of singing; yet it is generally believed that the primitive Christians failed to adopt the use of instrumental music in their religious worship" (*Music, Christian*, Electronic Database, by Biblesoft).
- "The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the 5th and 6th centuries; yea, even Gregory the Great, who towards the end of the 6th century added greatly to the existing Church music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments. Several centuries later the introduction of the organ in sacred service gave a place to instruments as accompaniments for Christian song, and from that time to this they have been freely used with few exceptions. The first organ is believed to have been used in Church service in the 13th century" (*Music, Christian*).

Why did the early church not use instrumental music in its worship? Since the Jews used instruments in their temple worship and the pagans used instruments in their worship of idols, the fact that the early church did not use them cannot be attributed to their cultural background. It could not have been a mere matter of accident or preference; it must have been a purposeful act with reason behind it. History shows that the early church rejected the use of

instruments of music in worship.

### THE JUDGMENT OF THE REFORMERS

The protestant reformation began in the early 1500s. Men like Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Knox (1514?-1572), and John Calvin (1509-1564) became increasingly disillusioned with the immorality, the abuse of power, the excesses, and the peculiarities of doctrine in the Roman church. They sifted Roman doctrines in an effort to determine which were pleasing to God and which were not. While we cannot accept all of their conclusions, we can applaud their courage and their appeal to the word of God as the authority in religion.

However much respected, not one of the reformers was inspired. Their testimony is not here introduced to prove that instrumental music is wrong. But it is historically significant that, in sifting through the doctrines of the Catholic church, these reformers saw the use of instruments of music in worship as a sinful innovation designed to please the worshipers rather than to please the God they were worshiping. Here are four examples:

#### Ulrich Zwingli

“Zwingli was one of the first Protestants to abandon the use of instruments during worship services. In fact, he was so alarmed by the abuses to which music was subjected (in his view) that some of his services did not have any music whatsoever. ... He found instruments to be an offense, quoting the Church Fathers for support. ... Much of the Reformed movement fell into agreement with the banning of instruments, although none followed the elimination of music. The organ in particular was denounced by leaders of the Reformed churches, as being a prominent example of what they meant by the corruption allowed into worship by the Roman Catholic Church. Zwingli recommended that a better use for an organ would be to sell it and give the money to the poor” (Ulrich Zwingli, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)).

#### John Calvin

“...When they frequent their

sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and 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” (*Psalm 33*, John Calvin’s Commentaries Complete, [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)).

#### Martin Luther

McClintock and Strong contains an article in which Martin Luther is quoted as calling the instrument an ensign of Baal (*Music, Instrumental*, McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Electronic Database, by BibleSoft).

#### John Knox

The same article in McClintock and Strong gives a famous quote of John Knox who called the organ a ‘chest of whistles.’

It is sad indeed that the stand these early reformers made regarding instrumental music has been forgotten by almost all of their followers. Having been led partially out of the darkness of Catholicism, in subsequent years their followers turned and embraced this error again.

### SUMMARY

History is clear:

1. The early church did not use instruments of music in worship.
2. The use of instruments and especially the organ did not gain wide acceptance until several centuries after Jesus established his church. Their use represented a departure from the early and widespread practice of the church.
3. It was the Roman Catholic Church that led this departure.
4. When the reformers came along they rejected the use of instruments of music in worship to God as an invention of Catholicism.
5. Since then the followers of the reformers (most protestant churches) have turned back to this practice that their leaders once clearly branded as evil.

### CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

For some it may seem like a contradiction for churches of Christ to point to the history of the church as an argument against instrumental music. We claim to follow the Bible, not the opinions or historical practices of men. Worship is ordered by God, not invented by men, and it must be done as God has ordered and directed (John 4:24). What men have done historically cannot prove the instrument to be either right or wrong. Then why write an article about the history of the instrument? There are at least two reasons:

1. The facts of history may help someone to look more closely at the matter. History supports the conclusion we have drawn from scripture — i.e. that instrumental music represents a departure from the original way. Some people are confident in their use of the instrument because of the false idea that ‘everyone’ uses instrumental music in their worship and that it has always been so. The facts of history may be helpful in bursting that bubble. History cannot decide the matter for us, but it can and does support our stand.
2. The departures of men from the truth can be instructive and cautionary for us who are determined to walk the narrow way and enter in by the strait gate that leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14). Seeing the error of others down through the ages should not only make us sad; it should also challenge us to be more determined, more on guard, and more zealous to stand for that which is right and against all departures from God’s plan (I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 4:1-5).

Back in 1978, Robert Taylor left us with this excellent quote: “Mechanical music in worship is not wrong because it was opposed by Clarke, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Luther and a host of others. It is wrong because it lacks warrant from the word; it lacks support from Scripture” (*Instrumental Music in History*, Spiritual Sword, v. 10, #1, October, 1978).

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# IS IT A MATTER OF FAITH OR OPINION?

Vernon C. Joines

The New Testament Scriptures teach that as the children of God, “*we walk by faith and not by sight*” (opinion) (II Cor. 5:7). In order to settle this matter we can ask and answer two questions, and if they are properly answered, they will distinguish between the two.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WALK BY FAITH?

In Romans 10:17, Paul declares: “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” So, if there is no message nor word from God, there can be no faith. If the inspired word of God does not specify a given course, there can be no faith to follow for FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD. Therefore, if we pursue any course that is not outlined by God in the scripture, we cannot walk with God nor by faith. But when God speaks, we MUST do precisely and fully all that He says.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WALK BY OPINION?

The next logical question is: How does one walk by opinion? Let’s use John 3:1-2, even though many other scriptures could be used to illustrate the answer. Nicodemus came to Jesus by NIGHT. But, WHY did he come by night? To those of us who believe the Bible, it is obvious that it is not told WHY he came by NIGHT. Why didn’t he come by day? I suppose we could easily find an answer to this question from some of the theologians who would attempt to follow their own guidance in the matter. Such an opinion would signify WHAT ONE THINKS, and IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS, it means what men think (opinion) when the Bible does not answer the question to their satisfaction.

The preceding was written in order to establish a principle to determine when a thing or practice is scriptural or unscriptural. A matter can be scriptural, unscriptural or antiscritural. Is instrumental music, when used in the worship service of the

saints, a scriptural worship? Is it scriptural and correct for Christians to use mechanical instruments of music when they assemble for worship to God? This question is very base, and it should be studied by all religious people everywhere, especially by members of the Lord’s church.

The following scriptures assuredly authorize singing: Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; Ephesians 5:19; I Corinthians 14:15; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12 and Hebrews 13:15. From these passages we can be absolutely sure that singing is right and cannot be wrong. This is the extent of the commandments, necessary inferences and inspired examples in the New Testament on how to praise God in song. That is the limit of His instruction, therefore that becomes the absolute limit of our obedience as well. We are warned against adding to the word of God (Prov. 30:6). The absence of any additional instruction speaks loud and clear, for neither God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, no apostle nor any inspired writer ever uttered a single word about using an instrument of music in worship to God. There is no record of a New Testament church using one either.

This being true, it would have to be brought into the worship of God by the tradition of men or by the commandment of men (Mark 7:7-9). We must hear God and Christ, not man (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:1-2).

Cain’s offering was rejected because there was no commandment for him to offer the fruit of the ground (Gen. 4:5). Nadab and Abihu died because they ignored God’s commandments (Lev. 10:1-3). They acted in service to God by doing that which God had not commanded them to do. No worship to God is acceptable unless it is authorized by God in his inspired word!

The users of instrumental music in the worship assembly of the saints ignore God and make their worship vain (Matt. 15:7-9). Since the Bible is the complete and final message authorized by God, our obedience can only be to him (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3). “*Sing and make melody in*

*your heart*” is a very specific command for a specific kind of music. This automatically excludes the use of any other kind.

## THE LAW OF UNITY

The law of unity must be discussed to some degree at this time in the context of this article. The law of unity is expressed in I Corinthians 1:10, “*...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” This verse is strengthened and supported by many other passages such as Romans 15:5, Philippians 1:27, Ephesians 4:4-6, John 17:20, II John 9-10 and Romans 16:17. The scripture says that God hates six things, even seven are an abomination to him. The last of these is “*...he that soweth, discord among brethren*” (Prov. 6:16-19).

In order to avoid division in the body of Christ, all things done by men must be done by the authority of Christ, that is, in his name. We can sing in the name of Christ in our worship services (I Cor. 14:15; Col. 3:16-17), but since the Lord has neither command, precept, nor inspired example in his word for the use of instruments of music in worship, they cannot be practiced without division and sin.

## EXAMPLE OF ITS USE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Let us look very briefly at some examples of the use of a mechanical instrument of music and some of its consequences when used in the Lord’s church.

The time was about 1860. The place was at a very small church building in Midway, Kentucky. The preacher was Dr. L. L. Pinkerton. Some of the expressions that were used following the introduction of the little mechanical instrument were: “*...almost caused a rift*” and “*a spirited controversy,*” but it later led to a division among the members of the church. Today, the little melodeon is

housed in a library room at the Kentucky Female Orphan School. I visited the town of Midway and the school many years ago while preaching in a meeting at Frankfort, Kentucky, and viewed the small instrument. According to reliable information, there were at least three of these instruments, since some of them did not survive the fury of some of the faithful members during this time.

I cite one additional example of what took place in Thorp Spring, Texas where a Bible school was located. When an instrument was introduced into worship services, a father was set against his two sons and they against their father. He stayed with the truth, and they went with error. The father later wrote about some of the results of the division, "...the affair spread rapidly to the churches, raising local tensions, crystallizing personal opinions, and splitting congregations," and it has been truthfully said, "when God finishes what he has to say on any subject we must accept that and cease action."

We dare not teach nor do more. There is an established principle of divine worship. We can only do in worship that for which we have apostolic command. If there is no commandment for it, it is barred. Everything as an element of divine worship is barred that is not commanded. We must respect God and his word enough to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. We believe this to be a scriptural plea because I Peter 4:11 admonishes us to "*speak as the oracles of God.*"

**God commands us to sing.** This is the act God commands. If you play an instrument, that is another act separate and apart from singing. God has specified that we sing and that the melody be made in the heart (Eph. 5:19).

Does instrumental music really aid the singing? Considering the purpose of singing as expressed in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, it cannot, for the chief purpose of singing is to be for the purpose of teaching and exhorting one another. Instrumental music cannot aid the voice in expression of thought, either for good or bad.

Now, before we conclude this article, I'll make a short statement about the Greek word "*psallo.*" Some have said and say that it includes the instrument of music, but the authori-

ties are very clear. I speak of the Greek authorities — the great scholars in the Greek language. They are very clear that this word had evolved by New Testament times to refer only to singing. The instrument is the heart (Eph. 5:19). That understanding is supported by the fact that our standard English translations of the Bible render the word *psallo* as singing or making melody in the heart.

I ask all who are using human practices in worship to God to lay them aside. All need to realize that unscriptural objects used in worship are just as sinful as teaching false doctrine. Faithful Christians should in no way be associated with those who use sinful practices or teach false doctrine. This makes the instrument a test of

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### **Richland Hills...**

*(Continued from page 9)*

instrumental and a cappella praise."

Well, I certainly hoped that he would appreciate that the only scriptural way to sing praise to God is to follow God's instruction and ignore what men would do to please themselves. They seem to have lost sight of the fact that we also in our song service speak to ourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and make melody in our heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). We are to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, while teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. Whatsoever we would do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:16-17). Let's see you try that with an instrument of music. The melody is not the only part of a song, but it is the part that God commands to be made in the heart, and not on a mechanical instrument of music.

7. Atchley drew a parallel to Acts 15 and the early church's discussion over whether circumcision should be bound on the Gentiles who became Christians.

The illustration is not even related to a parallel of the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church. Circumcision was not an item of worship even in the Old Testament, and did not avail anything

fellowship by the individuals who introduce and use it. The history of the instrument has been one of division and bad feelings of the brethren toward one another. God's promise to receive us is based on our decision to separate ourselves from those who practice sin (II Cor. 6:14-18; Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:6).

Finally, one thing is incontrovertibly settled: those who adopt the practice of using instrumental music are, to that extent, guided by the wisdom of man and not by the wisdom of God. They openly violate the plain and positive requirement of the Lord that His followers shall walk by faith and not by opinion.

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under the law of Christ. The instrument of music is not a part of the worship in the New Testament, therefore it is sinful when added to the commandments of God as an item of worship.

8. Atchley said, "We've already lost too many over a question that's way too unimportant."

How can any Christian change God's word and call it "a question that's way too unimportant?" Do you suppose that Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1-3 would agree that the things commanded by God were "too unimportant?"

9. Finally, one last statement by Rick Atchley — a repetition of the opening statement on the article by *The Christian Chronicle*. He said the decision to add an instrumental service with communion on Saturday nights was the result of a three-year journey by the congregation's leaders.

This decision is a blatant disregard for God and his revealed will on how and when the church should assemble and worship him. It just seems that some will openly ignore God's word and replace it with the doctrine of men in order to have their way, and thereby void their worship and place their souls in jeopardy. One soul of man is worth more than all the instruments and all the music made on them in all the worship services to God in all the world!

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

in the paper as there is a great need to 'Stand fast in the faith' (I Cor. 16:13). We are worshipping with the church of Christ in another town" ...**Ted A. Horn, PO Box 721, Maud, TX, 75567, ph. (817) 449-0584.** "Thank you so very much. I am enclosing a check. I so look forward to receiving my copy each month" ...**Sue Cannon, Fayette, AL.** "Would you please take me off your mailing list as I no longer live at that address" ...**Mary Andersen.** "I continue to enjoy the sound articles in your *Seek The Old Paths* publication. I am enclosing a check for myself and Clarabeth Barker who wishes to be added to your mailing list. This will help with the expenses of the publication. I plan to contribute small amounts as often as I can. May God continue to bless you, your family and your work with *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Murriel Windham, Las Vegas, NV.** "Please use this donation in continuing to publish *Seek The Old Paths*. I am the minister for a small congregation in far west Texas and find *Seek The Old Paths* a valuable aid for our edification. May God continue to bless you in your spreading the truth" ...**Jerry L. Duke, El Paso, TX.** "This is a very small amount to help with the publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. I pick up one at the Greensboro Road church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas. It's very helpful. Thanks. Keep up the good work" ...**Geralene Bearden, Jonesboro, AR.** "This year has gone by so fast it was hard to keep up. Before the year is gone, we want to thank all of you for laboring so steadfastly in the Lord's Vineyard. Bible truths are needed desperately in today's world, even in churches with the name church of Christ. God bless all of you in the new year and far many more to come as long as God allows the world to continue" ...**Doyle & Lois Schmidt, Nampa, ID.** "I moved and want to continue my subscription. Thanks" ...**Garrick Sullivan, Eutaw, AL.** "Thanks" ...**Brad Green, Lenoir City, TN.** "My dad, John Rider from Red Oak Oklahoma has subscribed to your letter but he is no longer with us at this time. He passed away in December and seeing as though there is no one to receive these sermons please take his name off your list. Thank you and God bless" ...**Tammy Hackworth.** [NOTE: Brother Rider had advised me years ago that he wanted to be put on the permanent mailing list of *Seek The Old Paths* because he did not want to miss a single issue. He has been on the list since 1994. We are saddened (on the human side) that he has passed away, but we're assured according to the Word of the Lord that he has gone on to his great reward. — Editor]. "I really enjoy your radio program, brother James Boyd has held meetings for us at the Cades Church of Christ. I have given our members your web site address" ...**Kenneth Ramsey, Milan, TN.** [NOTE: We have two web addresses for radio lessons. They are: www.pioneerpreachers.com, www.wsoj.net.] "Thank you so much for the work you are doing" ...**Michael & Cheryl Cook, Adrian, MI.** "Thank you" ...**Debbie Rose, Mammoth Spring, AR.** "Thank you" ...**Kyle Crews, Villa Rica, GA.** "Brethren: I have been receiving STOP for some time and appreciate so much the firm stand for the truth and the church as revealed in the New Testament. I would appreciate your sending the paper to several people. Thanks again for publishing such a valuable help in spreading the Gospel and holding the line for truth" ...**Jim Lundy, Tulsa, OK.** "Thank you" ...**Paul Zimmerschied, Green Valley, AZ.** "Thank you and may God bless" ...**Keith Neese, Citronelle, AL.** "Please remove me from your mailing list" ...**Georgia Phillips, Lincoln Park, MI.** "Refused. Returned to sender" ...**Ron Bryant, East Flagstaff church of Christ, Flagstaff, AZ.** "God bless you all for your wonderful ministry!" ...**Doreen Mueller, Clinton Township, MI.** "We have started a new congregation in Ludington, MI, and would love to receive a bundle of *Seek the Old Paths* every month. I am currently getting a single copy at my home residence. I would like to substitute that single copy for a bundle of 15. Please keep us in your prayers, and if by chance the congregation there is seeking to help in the mission field here in northern Michigan, that would be appreciated also!! Thank You" ...**Steve Baisden, James Street church of Christ, Ludington, MI.** "Thanks again" ...**Nikki Honkisz, Fords, NJ.** "This is to help support the good work you do with your publication" ...**Mark Ryan, Evans, GA.** "This check is to help with your

paper" ...**Billy Prather, Odessa, TX.** "Thanks for *Seek The Old Paths*. Please continue to print the truth. You may be interested in the enclosed 'response from the elders' Madison St. Church of Christ, Clarksville, TN. Some fifty members, including my wife and I, have recently been forced to leave the once great congregation. What's being accepted and promoted in the current 'Community Church' is truly said and tragic" ...**Joe E. Couch, Clarksville, TN.** "May God bless the efforts to stand for the truth" ...**A. C. Thomas, Little Rock, AR.** "I just recently came across a few copies of *Seek The Old Paths* and I really enjoyed reading them. The truth needs to be told. There is not enough of that these days. Please put me on your mailing list. I am currently serving time in an Oklahoma jail and I need all the prayers I can get. I would also like to be put on your pen pal list as well. Keep up the good work. God bless" ...**Jason Payne, 402 E. Evergreen, Durant, OK 74701.** "Let me thank you in advance for changing my address and may our heavenly Father, in His loving Son's name Jesus Christ, bless you all and keep you all in very high spirits and in good health. Amen!" ...**Manuel P. Rodriguez #670508, Dolph Briscoe Unit (N-043), 1495 West Highway 85, Dilley, TX 78017.** "We have been receiving your sound publication for some years. It continues to be one of the best publications in the brotherhood. We have encouraged sister congregations in south Georgia to take advantage of this fine publication. We ask that you continue to send the publication to us on a monthly basis. Please accept the enclosed check and use it in whatever way you deem best for the publishing and distribution of this good work. May God continue to bless you in your good efforts" ...**Bob Miller, Church of Christ at Allenhurst, GA.** "Brethren, we enjoy *Seek The Old Paths* and find articles and good lessons. God speed in your work. Thanks again" ...**M. D. Kirkpatrick, Tiptonville, TN.** "Unsubscribe me please. Thank you very much and may the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob reveal himself to you" ...**David Powell, Steeleville, IL.**

*Seek The Old Paths* is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed FREE upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

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