## 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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# Music In The New Testament Church

Music 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 music specified by God

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 a mechanical instrument of music.

The chart to the right 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 vet in heaven. What God may have allowed in the Old Testament or possibly may allow in heaven is not the What God question.

SCRIPTURE	SING	PLAY
Matt. 26:30	YES	NO
Acts 16:25	YES	NO
Rom. 15:9	YES	NO
l Cor. 14:15	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. 15:2-3	YES	NO

wants and allows **NOW** (in the New Testament age) is our concern!

The scriptures listed in the chart on the previous page authorize only SING-ING 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 in our worship, therefore, their use is not lawful and consequently SIN.

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 use of mechanical instruments of music did not begin until 670 A.D. The American Cyclo-

#### **pedia** (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 re-introduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly, and after long hesitation."

Many well known preachers and

THE BIBLE COMMANDS TO:		VOICE	INSTRUMENT
Eph. 5:19	Speak in song	CAN	CANNOT
	Make melody in heart	CAN	CANNOT
C-1 2:10	Teach in song	CAN	CANNOT
Col. 3:16	Admonish in song	CAN	CANNOT
1.6 44.45	Sing with the spirit	CAN	CANNOT
I Cor. 14:15	Sing with the understanding	CAN	CANNOT
Heb. 2:12	Praise God	CAN	CANNOT
Heb. 13:15	Give thanks	CAN	CANNOT

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 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!

Authority is necessary for everything done in religion (Col. 3:17). 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 manmade instrument.  $T_{\Omega}$ 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!!

Dear friends, what does the Bible say?

Garland M. Robinson

## What Some Denominational People Have Said Regarding Mechanical Instruments Of Music

As far as history records, mechanical instruments of music did not have their introduction into Christian worship until 670 A.D. There is not one shred of evidence in the Bible from Matthew 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, that it was ever commanded or that it was ever practiced, nor is even implied! God specifies the kind of music he wants and in every passage it is always SINGING, never playing!

Many through the centuries have opposed its introduction and use in worship. And, even though we find listed here their comments, it is to be understood that the instrument is not wrong because these men have opposed it. It is wrong and sinful because the Bible gives no authority for its use. However, to show that members of the church of Christ are not alone in recognizing this basic Bible truth, note what

many others have said concerning it.

Adam Clarke, a distinguished Methodist scholar, made these comments concerning Amos 6:5 (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p.684): "... The use of such instruments of music, in the Christian Church, is without the sanction and against the will of God: that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are sinful." "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. 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 corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity."

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church said: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen."

John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church (John Calvin's Commentary, 23rd Psalm): "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 other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews."

Charles H. Spurgeon preached to 20,000 people every Sunday for 20 years

in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle and never were mechanical instruments of music used in his services. When asked why, he quoted I Cor. 14:15, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." He then declared: "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."

Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran Church, opposed the use of the instrument in worship (McClintock & Strong, Vol. VI, p.762). He called the organ "an ensign of Baal." An ensign is a flag, banner, sign, signal or badge. Luther called the organ a banner of idolatry, a sign or signal of sin.

John Knox, a Presbyterian preacher called the organ "a kist (chest) of whistles." (McClintock & Strong, Vol. VI, p.762).

W. J. Convbeare and J. S. Howson, both of the Church England commented on Eph. 5:19 by saying (Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. II, p.408): "Throughout the whole passage there is a contrast implied between the Heathen and the Christian ...When you meet, let your practice. enjoyment consist not in fulness of wine, but fulness of the Spirit; let your songs be, not the drinking songs of heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment, not the music of the lyre, but the melody of the heart; while you sing them to the praise not of Baccus or Venus, but of the Lord Jesus Christ."

J. H. Garrison from the Christian Church said: "There is no command in the New Testament, Greek or English, commanding the use of the instrument. Such a command would be entirely out of harmony with the New Testament."

Lyman Coleman, a Presbyterian scholar commented: "It is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their Christian worship. Neither Ambrose. nor Basil, nor Chrysostom, in the noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon music, make any mention of instrumental music. Basil condemns it as ministering only to the depraved passion of men. Musical accompaniments were gradually introduced: but can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth or sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in the church until the eighth or ninth century. Previous to this they had their place in theater rather than in the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West."

Joseph Bingham, who was of the Church of England: "...music in the church is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music is not."

defection from the truth and into corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for twelve hundred years."

The Jews did not use mechanical instruments of music in the tabernacle and the synagogue - although it was used in the temple. Winford C. Douglas, in Church Music History and Practice, p.15, states: "The synagogue music was an adoption without musical instruments of the temple music." It wasn't until 1815, in Berlin, that the first instrument was introduced in the Jewish Synagogue under violent opposition by many of its members. The first use of it in America by Jews was in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1840. There was bitter opposition to it resulting in a court trial with the ultimate victory given to the instrument.

These last two men are members of the church of Christ from the past century. Alexander Campbell: "I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians such...would be as a cowbell in a concert." David Lipscomb: "The church that adopts instrumental music goes into apostasy."

Garland M. Robinson

John Giradeau, a Presbyterian professor wrote that the Church, "although lapsing more and more into

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

# THE USE OF MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IS SIN

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). The injunction of II Cor. 5:7 is that we "walk by faith, not by sight." Since faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17), we therefore live according to his word and not what may appear right in our own eyes (Jer. 10:23). Many ways may seem right to men, but they are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12). We are to walk "in the light" of God's word (I John 1:7). When we step out of God's searchlight of truth, we place ourselves outside of God's approval. Unless we live according to his word (walking by faith), we are not pleasing to him and are guilty of sin. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and separation from God leads to eternal torment (Matt. 25:46). Therefore, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:16). To do a thing in his name simply means to do it by his authority or command.

In respect to mechanical instruments of music being used in worship to God, the New Testament does not give any authority for it. It is NOT walking by faith to employ its use and if we do not walk by faith, we sin against God. Notice these plain facts about it. CHRIST never COMMANDED it, the HOLY SPIRIT never AUTHORIZED it,

no APOSTLE ever SANCTIONED it, no NEW TESTAMENT writer ever ENDORSED it, and no NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ever EMPLOYED it! The use of it is SIN!! It is a sin because we cannot use it in faith and obedience to God.

Mechanical instrumental music is a SIN because:

It rejects New Testament authority. Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) and he did not instruct the apostles to use it. The Holy Spirit led the apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and he did not lead them to use it. God tells us what he wants and when we reject what he says we reject his salvation, for salvation only comes to those who obey him (Heb. 5:9).

It goes beyond that which is written. We are not to think above that which is written (I Cor. 4:6). We must not add to or take away from God's word (Rev. 22:18-19). We must not go beyond the doctrine of Christ, for if we do so we no longer have fellowship with God and Christ (II John 9-11). To teach and practice another gospel than what God has given is to invoke the wrath of God upon us (Gal. 1:6-9).

It violates scriptural worship. Our worship must be in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). To worship in truth is to worship according to the truth.

God's word is truth (John 17:17); hence, we must worship according to the instructions of the New Testament. When something other than the human voice is employed, we violate God's specified plan of worship and no longer worship according to the truth.

It causes division. God hates division and those who cause it (Prov. 6:19). Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). The apostles taught and commanded unity (I Cor. 1:10). Those who cause division are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17). Who is causing division, the one who introduces its use or the one who opposes its use? It is not difficult to figure out who has violated God's instructions. The one who adds to what God commanded is the one who causes division, not those who contend for what God authorizes!

The use of mechanical instruments of music is an innovation of man that is totally without Bible authority and constitutes VAIN WORSHIP. Vain worship brings the curse of God upon it (Matt. 15:9). It is a plant God has not planted and will be rooted up (Matt. 15:13).

Leroy Brownlow gives four logical arguments as to why mechanical instruments of music cannot be used in worship to God. (Why I Am A Member of Church of Christ, pp.178-179)

#### **Argument One:**

- (1) Every Scripture is given that the man of God may be furnished unto every good work (II Tim. 3:16-17).
- (2) No Scripture authorizes instrumental music in the worship today (cannot be found).
- (3) Therefore, instrumental music in the worship today is not a good work.

#### **Argument Two:**

- (1) It is a violation of the Lord's will to go beyond the things which are written (I Cor. 4:6).
- (2) Musical instruments in New Testament worship have not been written (cannot be found).
- (3) Therefore, those who use musical instruments in the worship today violate the Lord's will.

#### **Argument Three:**

- (1) "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17).
- (2) The word of Christ does not give us musical instruments in the worship (cannot be found).
- (3) Therefore, instrumental music in the worship is not an act of faith.

#### **Argument Four:**

- (1) God has given us all that pertains to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).
- (2) What God has given does not mention instrumental music in New Testament worship (cannot be found).
- (3) Therefore, instrumental music in the worship today does not pertain unto life and godliness.

Garland M. Robinson

SINGING	INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
Matt. 26:30 Rom. 15:9 I Cor. 14:15 Eph. 5:19 Col. 3:16 Heb. 2:12	??

### **TELL ME WHY?**

If a lawyer finds a flaw in the title to property, and does not warn about it, he has not done his duty.

If a physician discovers a disease in our body and does not properly prescribe treatment for it, we sue for malpractice.

If a bank examiner knows of discrepancies and does not report them, he loses his position.

But, if a **preacher** sees flaws in our title to a home in heaven and warns about it; if he discovers conditions dangerous to spiritual welfare and reports it; if he finds a diseased condition in our spiritual body and reveals the diagnosis; if he finds discrepancies in our spiritual accounts and declares it; many will think he has gone too far. He is just meddling and trying to find fault!

### **Burlesons To Florida**

## THE ANNUAL MISSISSIPPI LECTURESHIP

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as an associate editor of "Seek The Old Paths" and to be able to assist in organizing the Annual Mississippi Lectureship each year. A tremendous work for the cause of Christ is being accomplished by the paper and the Lectureship. Those of you who are supporting the lectureship and the paper in any way, please continue to do so. Those of you who have not been involved, please begin. To the men who labor so willingly in this work, keep up the good work. The brotherhood will be blessed by your efforts and God will bless you.

Since I have moved out of state to Pensacola, Florida, it is necessary that I resign as an associate editor of "Seek The Old Paths." I stand ready to assist in any way I can. Brother Garland Robinson is an excellent editor and deserves the support of us all.

### FIFTH ANNUAL MISSISSIPPI LECTURESHIP

We have just returned from attending one of the finest lectureships in the brotherhood. The Annual Mississippi Lectureship is second to none.

The East Corinth church of Christ agreed to serve as host for the lectureship again this year upon very short notice. The elders and the entire congregation are appreciated by all who attended for their excellent effort. Everything progressed smoothly. To those who provided and prepared food each day, THANK YOU.

The excellent lesson preparation was demonstrated by the presentation of each speaker. One did not sit there and wonder if some "way out doctrine" may be presented by one of the speakers. All of the lessons were Biblically sound, true to the book, and presented from hearts full of true Biblical love. Each speaker's love for God and souls of human beings was evidenced by their being careful to "...speak as the oracles of God...." (I Peter 4:11). The lessons will live long in the hearts and lives of individuals. Audio and

video tapes may be obtained by writing the East Corinth church of Christ.

My only regret is that more people did not attend. I am amazed why people, especially preachers, who live in Mississippi and neighboring states do not avail themselves of the opportunity. The thing that bothers me most about all of this, is that some live close by and do not attend. One will not hear better lessons anywhere. The speakers are not always, "the big name preachers in the brotherhood," but one can be assured they will be prepared and will present lessons that will benefit the hearer. I have attended many lectureships through the years and I place the Mississippi lectureship at the top of the list. If you have not been attending these lectures in the past, please make your plans to attend the 6th Annual Mississippi Lectureship in July, 1991.

## NORTHWEST FLORIDA SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

For many years I labored in the Lord's vineyard in the state of Mississippi serving the following congregations: Mantachie, Plainview, Hamilton and Northside in Meridian. I served the Northside congregation in Meridian for fourteen years. It was a joy working with these congregations and they will always have a special place in our hearts.

We moved to Pensacola, Florida, June 15, 1990, to begin work with the Ensley church of Christ as Evangelist for the congregation and as director of Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies. The school is one of the works of the Ensley congregation.

It is a privilege to be working with the Ensley congregation and directing the school. We wish to encourage your support for the school and ask you to be a student or recommend the school to someone who may be interested in attending the school.

Following are some reasons one should consider Northwest Florida School of

#### Biblical Studies.

- 1. A qualified and dedicated faculty.
- 2. College level instruction. A two-year program involving six quarters.
- 3. Upon satisfactory completion of two years work with Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, a student will receive a certificate of completion.
- 4. Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies is tuition free. The facilities and faculty are provided by the school. A student must buy books, supplies, etc., and provide livelihood while in school.
- The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies believes that the Bible is verbally inspired, being God's final revelation to man. It is our intent and purpose to better train laborers in God's vineyard.
- 6. The two-year curriculum is an exegetical study of the Bible, evidences, debate, languages and history. This course of study will prepare the student to preach or to serve in some other capacity in God's kingdom.

Are you wondering what to do with your life after you retire from your secular job? Why not attend Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies and prepare to preach the gospel or to better yourself to serve as an elder, deacon, or in any other work for the cause of Christ? There is nothing you can do that would be any more important.

FOR APPLICATION WRITE TO:

#### NORTHWEST FLORIDA SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

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(Continued from page 12, Arguments)

No real proof is offered to justify the use of the instrument in worship.

#### NO HARM IN IT

Others attempt to prove that it is alright to use the instrument in worship by stating there is no harm in using it. There may not be any bodily harm done unless the volume is up to the level of some of the automobile radios today. The question is not bodily harm, but will there be any spiritual harm? If the instrument is not authorized by God, it will cause a person to lose his soul eternally. All that we do religiously should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus; that is, by his authority (Col. 3:17). We have authority for singing but not for playing.

#### **NATURAL TALENT**

Some seek to justify the use of the instrument in worship to God because they say it is a natural talent and we should be able to freely use our talents in worship. What about a natural talent in sports? Would it be proper and scriptural to play ball in worship? Suppose a person seemed to have a natural talent to lie, cheat and steal; could that talent be utilized in worship? Absolutely not!

#### **MAJORITY USE IT**

The appeal is often made that the instrument in worship is alright since the majority use it. The Bible teaches

that the majority of the people will be lost (Matt. 7:13-14). That has been so through history and is still true today. We are warned not to follow a multitude to do evil (Exodus 23:2). Right is never determined by the number of people that do a thing, but whether it is in harmony with truth. The Bible nowhere justifies a practice by the number of people who do it.

#### IN THE HOME

There are also those who think instrumental music in worship is acceptable because people have instruments in their homes. They reason that anything in the home would be perfectly alright in worship to God. We use pots and pans in the home, but we do not use them in worship. We shower at home, but we do not shower in our worship to God. We have numerous things in the home that we do not have in our worship service. The truth is, God has not authorized the use of mechanical instruments of music in accompaniment with the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, whether in the assembly or at home! If so, where's the scripture for it?

#### AN AID

Some seek to justify the instrument because they say it is only an aid. An aid will not change the activity that is being done. A walking cane aids one in walking, but the person is still doing the same thing — only walking. Noah no doubt used aids in building the ark, but

it did not change the ark. We use aids in serving the Lord's supper. We use containers for both the bread and the fruit of the vine, but the elements remain the same. Instrumental music in worship is not an aid, it is an addition. Another kind of music is added when the instrument is used. We are not commanded to play an instrument, but we are commanded to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The action is different in playing from what it is in singing.

#### IN HEAVEN

Those who use the instrument in worship say there will be instruments in Heaven so we should have it in worship here. They generally allude to three passages in Revelation (Rev. 5:8-9: 14:1-3: 15:2-3) as proof texts. All of the above passages are figurative and also state that they sang. There are a lot of things in Heaven that we do not have in worship here. Angels are in Heaven, but we do not have any in the church. Babies will be in Heaven, but we do not have any in the church (I am not talking about the building, but in the body of Christ). The question is not what may or may not be found in Heaven, but what does God authorize in worship now in the church.

#### IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Since instruments were used in the Old Testament, are we authorized to use them in New Testament worship? It is somewhat ironic that people want

David's music but not his wives, his day of worship, or his kind of sacrifices. The Old Testament law was a schoolmaster to bring man to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The body of Christ on the cross made man dead to the law (Rom. 7:4). The old law was taken away at the cross (Col. 2:14). The first law was taken away that he might establish the second (Heb. 10:9). The question is not what did they do under the old law, but what does God require of those of us who live under the New Testament? To appeal to David in the Old Testament is an admission of two things: (1) authority is necessary, and (2) there is no New Testament authority!

#### "PSALLO"

A few try to make an argument based on the Greek word psallo by indicating that the instrument could be included in that word. If that be so, then the instrument would be mandatory. If the instrument was included in the word psallo, then each person would have to have an instrument. Paul defined it as "sing" (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). The instrument on which the melody is to be made is the human heart, not a man-made instrument.

#### CONCLUSION

Bible believers will be content to do what the Bible teaches and sing. Playing is not commanded, but singing is.

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### ARGUMENTS USED TO JUSTIFY THE USE OF MECHANICAL INSTRU-MENTS OF MUSIC

Charles Leonard

Across the years numerous arguments have been made to justify or defend the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. All of the arguments made either seek to justify the instrument by existentialism (an appeal to self and feelings) or an appeal to truth. An appeal to existentialism is subjective and changing, while an appeal to truth is absolute and changeless. Are there valid arguments to defend the use of a mechanical instrument of music in worship to God? We will examine some of those arguments used to justify the use of the instrument.

#### I LIKE IT

The instrument is used by many because they like it. If the truth were fully known, that might be the main reason why most use it. Please observe that there is no appeal to any objective standard; it is based wholly on what one likes. The likes of people are different, so with this argument there would never be any way to have unity of this matter because you would never be able to come to a consensus of the people. (See Arguments on page, 10)

This issue marks the completion of our first year of publication. We have tried to speak concerning issues that would be of interest and beneficial to the kingdom. Our plans for the future are the same. Sounding forth again the fundamental points of the first principles is much needed. The issue of Instrumental Music is a case in point. Who would have dreamed, just a few short years ago, that we would be fighting it all over again. It's high time that men everywhere "ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

Seek The Old Paths is a publication of the East Corinth church of Christ and is under the oversight of its elders. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:1; II Peter 1:12.

Manuscripts are welcome.

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