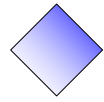


# The Voice of Truth



June 10, 2012

## Instrumental Music In Worship Right Or Wrong?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Generally, the world frowns on those who refuse to use mechanical instruments of music in their worship; but with those who truly follow Christ, it is a matter of principle, and respect for God’s authority. Let us examine some reasons why people use music.

There are those who attempt to justify the use of mechanical instrumental in Christian worship upon the grounds that they like it. But in worship unto God we must be concerned about what God likes, not what we like. In worship we are seeking to please God, not ourselves. In His book, He has told us what will please Him, and the only way we can please Him is to do what He says in the way that He says (**John 4:23-24**).

Look at this argument, all things which I like are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship is a thing which I like. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. Using this logic, I like Raisin Brand, toast and coffee, but I have no scriptural right to add these to the Lord’s Supper just because I like them.

There are those who contend that if mechanical instrumental music may be used in the home that it may also be used in worship. Look with me at this argument. All things which is right to have in the home are things which are right to have in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music is a thing which are right to have in the home. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which is right to have in Christian worship. Many things are permissible and wholesome in domestic settings that would be out of place in worship. Paul recognized this when he prohibited a mixing and mingling of a common meal and the Lord’s Supper (**1 Cor. 11:20ff**). Steak, potatoes, gravy, biscuits, tea and dessert are all right in a home setting on a dining table. They would constitute sin if place on the Lord’s table, instead of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. Games and ping pong or playing video games are all

right in the home setting but would be sinful if made into worship elements.

It is frequently claimed that we can have mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship because there is going to be instrumental music in heaven. *“And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps” (Rev. 14:2)*. Let us look at this argument. All things which John heard in heaven are things which may be used in Christian worship. Harpers harping with their harps is a thing which John heard in heaven. Therefore, harpers harping with their harps is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. In the first place John did not hear harpers. The record says that John heard a voice, voice was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps. John saw horses. What about riding horseback in Christian worship? *“And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:34-36)*. There will be no marriage in heaven. Does this mean a Christian man or woman who is married can’t be in the church here on earth? No faith, no hope in heaven; does this mean there is no faith or hope in the church?

Many contend that mechanical instrument music may be employed in Christian worship upon the ground that “David had it.” Let us look at this argument. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which David practiced. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be practiced in Christian worship. David offered animal sacrifices to God. Can we offer animal sacrifices in our worship? David practiced polygamy. Is the Christian authorized to? What if a man would justify the use of

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instruments by the Law of Moses? Here is the answer from Paul: "*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*" (**Gal. 5:4**).

Many contend that mechanical instrumental music in worship is authorized upon the ground that the Bible does not say "Don't have it." All things which the Bible does not specifically say "Don't have" are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which it does not specifically say "Don't have." Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing may be used in Christian worship. So, it's alright for me while preaching to hit a bucket of golf balls? Or put a basketball hoop up, and shoot baskets while preaching? The Bible does not say "Don't have it." What a silly argument. The Bible authorized by what it says, "NOT" what it does not say (**1 Pet. 4:11**). When God explicitly told Noah to build an ark out of gopher wood (**Gen. 6:14**), it implicitly excluded using any other kind. Noah would have been in violation of God's will to use pine, for God did not authorize it. It was sin that caused the deaths of Naadab and Abihu, the sons of Israel's first high priest. The Lord had prescribed the kind of fire to be used in offerings (**Lev. 6:10-13**). This was no secret, yet "*Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD*" (**Lev. 10:1-2**). After God specifically designated the fire, they could presumptuously say, "But he didn't say not to!" But that one case of logic cost them their lives! Since the New Testament in several passages (**Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13**) specifies singing in Christian worship, it would be a violation to offer any other kind of music

(instrumental) in the use of spiritual songs. Christians are not governed by the idea that we can do anything and everything in matters of religion which the Bible does not specifically condemn. Rather, we are governed by the divine principle that we can do only that which is authorized by the Bible.

While it is true that the Law was nailed to the cross (**Col. 2:14**), some hold that this did not affect the Psalms, the Psalms were not nailed to the cross. All things which the Psalms authorized are things which may be employed in Christian worship. Can we practice the dance in Christian worship because it was authorized by (**Psa. 150**)? Can we offer animal sacrifices in Christian worship (**Psa. 66:13**)? The truth of the matter is, the word "Law" refers to the whole Old Testament scriptures, including the Psalms. Notice these verses:

*"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (John 10:34). "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High" (Psa. 82:6). "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 12:34). "Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause" (Psa. 35:19).*

The scriptures teach us to sing (**Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13**). No scripture authorizes instrumental music in worship today, it cannot be found. Therefore, those who use musical instruments in the worship today violate the Lord's will. "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (**Rom. 10:17**). "*. . . For whatsoever is not of faith is sin*" (**Rom. 14:23**). Therefore, those who use instrumental music in worship are sinning! ♦

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## I Am Your Bulletin

I am not just another piece of paper.  
 I am your weekly church information sheet.  
 I do not come to you easily, or without expense.  
 I cost money, time, thought, and energy.  
 I should not be taken for granted.  
 I can only be as useful and valuable as you allow me to be.  
 I am often abused and overlooked.  
 Sometimes all I get is a fleeting glance.  
 Sometimes all I get is a critical analysis.  
 I want so much for you to read me, study me, appreciate me,  
 and make me useful for your spiritual activity and development.  
 I want to serve you. ♦

## “How Can I Make This Church Strong?”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Strength, whether physical or spiritual, is something that we all need. New parents want to make sure that their baby grows and develops physically, don't they? If it does not gain strength in the coming weeks and months, that child will go to every doctor and specialist around until he gets better, or a reason for the lack of growth and development is discovered!

In like manner, the local church here needs to gain and retain spiritual strength. This is something God demands (**I Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10; II Tim. 2:1; II Pet. 3:18**).

Knowing this is true, many concerned Christians say, “I wish this church was stronger or growing more than it is.” This is a great attitude to have, but it takes ACTION if we are to grow in the Lord. What can I do to make this church strong?

### Be Converted To God's Ways.

Once one is baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**), he must completely give up his old ways. **Romans 6:3-6** says we must die to the old man of sin (Also **Col. 3:5-14**). After this, we become a “new creature” in Christ (**II Cor. 5:17**). In fact, Jesus said we must be as a child if we wish to see Heaven (**Matt. 18:3**).

In applying these principles, one who will make this church strong is one that will not turn back to his old ways in sin, but will leave that old man “in the grave.” As a child of God, he must have the child-like qualities of humility and obedience to God (**I Pet. 5:5-6; Jn. 14:15, 23**). He/She must sincerely and completely turn to God (**Rom. 12:1-2**). Does this describe YOU? If not, it is time to “repent and do the works you did at first” (**Rev. 2:5**)!

### Be Faithful To God's Ways.

Unfaithfulness is to this church what termites are to a house!! Jesus promises to take care of our physical worries when we “seek ... first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (**Matt. 6:33; Ps. 37:25**). John stressed the importance of being righteous when he told those in Smyrna, “be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (**Rev. 2:10**). The apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing

*that in the Lord your labor is not in vain”* (**I Cor. 15:58**). If this church is to grow and be strong, it needs YOU to be faithful in your attendance, in your speech, in your thoughts, and in all you do (**Col. 3:17**)! Yes, it is a tall order, but it MUST be done!

### Be Educated In God's Ways.

In Old Testament days, God's people experienced a great famine. It was worse than a shortage of food or water. It was a famine of God's word (**Hos. 4:6; Amos 8:11-12**)!! In like manner, we have a similar famine, or shortage of God's word.

Unfortunately, our problem is not from a lack of spiritual food available to us, as in other countries. Rather, this famine is the result of a REFUSAL TO EAT (**I Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14**)!!! As a society, we are refusing to listen to God's word and let it settle in our hearts.

Paul said that only through reading (the Bible) could we hope to have his understanding (**Eph. 3:4**). He later told Timothy (and us) to “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (**II Tim. 2:15**). Peter commanded that God's people “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (**II Pet. 3:18**). How can this happen when we do not know what the Bible says? How can we ever hope to strengthen the church here when we have no earthly idea what we are doing or how to do it? Thus, the need for education and for application of what we have learned!

### Be A Worker In God's Ways.

We do many things that amount to nothing in this life; but working for God is something that is never in vain (**I Cor. 15:58**)! God said that His word will not return to Him void (**Isa. 55:11**). Thus, each and every thing we can do to increase our strength and the strength of our fellow Christians is a useful thing. We sometimes sing, “I Want To Be A Worker For The Lord” (**Hymns For Worship, #504**). Do we mean the words we are singing? Are we ALL chipping in and doing our part? I hope so — the strength of the Lord's church in this place depends upon it!!! Do you truly want to help? Are you willing to do what it takes to make this church strong? I am!! Credit: [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) ♦

*A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice.*

## We Need Fewer Givers

By John Gipson

We have a problem. We have too many givers. We would be better off if we did not have so many.

There are too many who GIVE UP! They serve Christ for a while, but then just quit. At one time they attended faithfully all of the services of the church, but they have started dropping by the wayside. They need to remember that Jesus said, *“No man having put his hands to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk. 9:62)*. The easiest thing in the world is just to quit. Remember that the reward comes after endurance. Don't quit!

There are too many who GIVE OVER! They become guilty of the sin of compromise. They frantically try to please men rather than God. Afraid of the disapproval and ridicule of others they just give over. In contrast with this compromising spirit, we need to hear the words of inspira-

tion, which tell us to STAND (Eph. 6:14). There are too many who GIVE IN! They give in to defeatism. “What is the use?” “It doesn't do any good.” “I just can't live the Christian life.” And with one excuse or another they give in to defeatism and despair. They bury their talent and go on their way, and Satan has made another conquest.

There are too many who GIVE OUT! They give out before the race is finished. And there is little point in running half a race. What a shame it is to run so far and never finish. Jesus promised, *“But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved” (Mk. 13:13)*.

Let us each resolve not to GIVE UP, GIVE OVER, GIVE IN OR GIVE OUT! *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

### What Do I Owe My Congregation?

Author unknown

**I owe it my loyalty.** I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation. I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me.

**I owe it my financial support.** It takes money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as He has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contribution when absent.

**I owe it my presence.** If everyone stayed home there would be no worship of God. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of my congregation's services. I must not be a parasite.

**I owe it the influence of a godly life.** The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it the harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be blessing to others. ♦

*A faith that will not take us to worship will not  
Take us to heaven!*

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

**Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew**

**How to Contact Us**

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**Schedule of Assembly**

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Green Bay, WI 54313

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*



\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

**www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com**