

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
Speaker, Robert Emerson
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

— Colossians 3:17

**Servants during January:**

Songleader: Stanley (2), Larry (9), David (16), Peter (23), Stanley (30)

Reading: Robert

Announcements: Marty

Table: Larry, Peter, David, Stanley

Wednesday Lesson: Stanley (5), Kris (12), Larry (19), Stanley (26)

Area Meetings:

Singing River, **CANCELLED**, 1/21;
 Gooch Lane, **CANCELLED**, 1/28;
 4th Street (Cullman), Darryl Smelser, 2/11-13;
 Jordan Park, singing, 2/18, 7pm;
 Market Street, singing, 2/25, 7pm

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road
 Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” –1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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The Spiritual Simplicity of Our Singing

By Paul Earnhart

In the 1940's Elmer T. Clark observed that it is “a peculiar type of mind which is convinced that God is interested in whether his worshipers sing with or without instrumental music” (Small Sects in America, p. 16).

Clark's words carry a twentieth century bias. The truth is that the mind which he thought so peculiar was once dominant in “Christian” thought. The use of musical instruments in the worship of the churches is a relatively recent development. Most Protestant churches in America did not yield to the practice until the nineteenth century.

The unadorned simplicity of our spiritual singing is not a cultural statement but a matter of faith—a response to the teaching of the New Testament.

The worship of the Old Testament church with its complex rituals was not simple. During the intricate rites of the temple sacrifices a Levitical chorus was

commanded to sing and a Levitical orchestra to play, 2 Chron 29:25-28. But the New Testament refers to the appointments of temple worship as “carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation,” Heb 9:10. This reformation is dramatically illustrated by the total absence of any reference in the New Testament to Christians worshipping God with sacrificial animals, incense, lamps, choirs, or orchestras. There is only the admonition for the disciples to speak to each other and to the Lord in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” Eph 5:19; Col 3:16.

Christian worship in song is not a choral contest. Spiritual singing has spiritual ends. Since God's ways differ radically from our own, Isa 55:8,9, it is of no consequence that in the mind of some the absence of musical instruments (or of devotional lamps and incense) diminishes the appeal of

the singing. What is important is that we have sufficient trust in God to follow His instructions with the confidence that His methods achieve His purposes.

The silence of the New Testament on instrumentally accompanied singing has had its impact in history. The early centuries not only reveal no use of instrumental music in worship but an expressed opposition to it as belonging to the spiritual infancy of the Old Testament church.

Eusebius of Caesarea (early 4th century), commenting on Psalm 91:2,3: "Of old at the time those of the circumcision were worshipping with symbols and types it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the psalterion and kithara... We render our hymns with a living psalterion and a living kithara with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument."

Chrysostom (late 4th century): "It was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn from idols; but now, instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal."

Theodoret of Cyrhus (early 5th century): "Question: If songs were invented by unbelievers to seduce men, but were allowed to those under the law on account of their childish state, why do those who have received the perfect teaching of grace in their churches still use songs, just like the children under the law? Answer: It is not simple singing that belongs to the childish state, but singing with lifeless

instruments, with dancing, and with clappers. Hence the use of such instruments and the others that belong to the childish state is excluded from the singing in the churches, and simple singing is left." (all preceding quotes taken from Questions and Answers for the Orthodox).

The Roman Catholic Church continued this opposition at least until the time of Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274) who wrote: "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize."

The Greek Church (Orthodox) has never used musical instruments. Several Protestant reformers held to the same sentiment. Calvin wrote that "musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law" (Commentary on Psalm 33).

John Wesley (founder of the Methodist church) was more succinct: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN," (quoted in Adam Clarke's Commentary, Amos 6:5, emphasis his).

The use of instruments in worship is not progress but a carnal retreat to spiritual kindergarten. We should glory in the supreme spirituality of our singing, sanctified by God and accompanied by the higher melody of our hearts. 📖

Regardless of what the majority in "Christendom" may say, we must follow Jesus Christ, Mt 28:18—and there is no authority in scripture for instruments or choirs in worship, public or private. —kv

A DOG'S NOSE!

By Robert Hines

A friend of mine in the Navy had an uncle who did a good bit of lumberjacking in the Northwest early in the 20th century. The biggest and worst surprise he ever got was in an Indian camp. The policy of the logging companies in those days was to stay on as good terms as they could for the sake of peace as well as prosperity. A nearby Indian tribe had invited them all for a meal, and my friend's uncle said the main dish, some sort of stew in a huge cauldron, really was not that bad. It was a different sort of taste, but it was all right. As a matter of fact it was good enough that he decided he wanted another bowl of the stuff. He got the dipper and stirred around in that big pot and dished himself up a 'mess'. Apparently, he dug a bit deep. Out of the depths of that pot he dished up—I suspect I had better just go ahead and say it—A DOG'S NOSE!! It's truly amazing how a fellow's appetite can disappear as he comes face to face (or nose to nose!) with the main ingredient!

In the denominational man-made religious world of today there is

something that tastes good. It may be the sincerity of its followers, although this is not enough in itself, Acts 26:9. It may be the beautiful buildings which please the eye, although Jesus points us to other things, Jn 4:20-24. It may be doctrines of easy acceptance, and simple belief, and no possibility of falling from grace, although Jesus demanded strict adherence and faithfulness to His ways, not ours, Rev 2:10. It may be the appeal of the social gospel rather than basic concern for souls. It may be smooth and eloquent preachers able to paint beautiful word pictures instead of God's simple truths, 2 Chron 18:5. But behind every one of these things lies the old dog's nose: it is the tradition of men that makes for vain and unacceptable worship, Mt 15:9.

Men need to dip deep into their beliefs to see if it is God's truth or if it is the dog's nose. It may make you sick at your stomach, but you will at least know what you are eating. And it may just make you change your diet. "Prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," Rom 12:2. 📖

Remember in Prayer

Please continue to remember **Dot** and **Norman Hice** and their family, as they mourn the loss of **Tim; Norman** is still recovering from the virus. **Stanley** and **Larry** have contracted it as well, but

appear to be weathering the storm well. Please continue to pray for **Madelene Britnell, Carolyn Dennis,** and **Joyce Smith.** 📖