

Service Opportunities

Announcements: Ted Wheeler
Usher: Delbert Leavens

RECORD

Attendance: **61**
Contribution: \$ 1945.00
Weekly Budget: \$ **2854.00**

Thought For The Day

"Why should we go reeling and staggering under the burdens and cares of life when we have such prospects before us? If there is nothing but glory beyond, our faces ought to shine brightly all the time."
MOODY

Church of Christ of Venice

4301 SR 776
Venice, FL 34293

MORNING SERVICES

Opening Prayer: Delbert Leavens

Songs: Mike Weber

Sermon: Ted Wheeler

Closing Prayer: Marvin DeMeester

EVENING SERVICES

Opening Prayer: Marty Wingo

Songs: Mike Weber

Sermon: Song Service

Closing Prayer: Wayne Vowell

COMMUNION

Tim Simmons Chris Dorris
Kerry Keathley Merritt Bailey


Church of Christ of Venice

"A friendly church, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ"

October 7, 2007

Volume 17, Number 40

What Is A Cappella Music?

 Did the first-century Christians employ mechanical instruments of music in their worship of God? If so, where is the evidence of such? If not, why did they refrain from such—when instruments were readily available in that era?

One of our readers recently wrote asking that we explain what is meant when it is stated that churches of Christ use only a cappella music. This is an excellent question and we are happy to respond.

The phrase a cappella derives from a Latin expression which, by way of Italian, means "in the style of the church," or "as is done in the church." It reflects the historical reality that instrumental music in Christian worship was not practiced in the Christian movement for many centuries, and that the rather late introduction of it constitutes an innovation void of New Testament authority.

Professor Everett Ferguson, one of the premier historians of church history alive today, has noted that the non-use of the instrument in worship was the "majority tradition of Christian history" until "comparatively recent times" (83).

Between 1708-22, Joseph Bingham, an Anglican cleric, produced his magnificent ten-volume work titled, The Antiquities of the Christian Church, a prodigious effort that required 20 years in composition. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church depicts this work as that which "has not been superseded" (Cross, 173). Regarding the use of instrumental music in church worship, the celebrated English scholar wrote:

Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so: for it is now generally agreed by

Continued on page 2b

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Please fill out a blue visitor card so that we might have a record of your visit. If needed, there is a nursery available at the rear of the auditorium. Bible classes for all ages are available Sundays at 10:00 am and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. We hope that you will join us for these studies. Please come and worship with us again soon.

Elders
Delbert Leavens
Wayne Vowell
Ted Wheeler

Minister
Ted Wheeler

Sunday Services
Bible Study-10:00 am
Worship-11:00 am
Evening Worship-6:00 pm

Wednesday
Bible Study-6:30 pm.

Church of Christ
4301 Highway 776
Venice, FL 34293
USA

Telephone:
941-493-2403

Email:
mail@venicechurchofchrist.com

Internet:
www.venicechurchofchrist.com

Outreach:



learned men, that the use of organs came into the church since the time of Thomas Aquinas, anno 1250. For he in his Sums has these words, "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to judaize" (I.315).

He then catalogs considerable testimony from ancient writers of the post-apostolic age to sustain the point.

There is scarcely any controversy regarding this historical matter. In their massive, twelve-volume Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (1876), John McClintock and James Strong (denominational scholars) noted:

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.

These scholars further noted that: "The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the 5th and 6th centuries [A.D.]" (VI.759).

They also observed that the early reformers, e.g., Martin Luther, and also Calvin and Knox (Presbyterians), protested against the use of instruments. The same could be said of Clarke (Methodist) and Spurgeon (Baptist). The men were the leaders of their respective movements.

In my library I have a volume titled Instrumental Music in Public Worship. It was written by John L. Girardeau, a professor at Columbia Theological Seminary (a Presbyterian institution). The book was published first in 1888. This little volume of 208 pages was delivered initially as a series of lectures that had been requested by some of the seminary students. A dear lady who heard one of Girardeau's lectures offered to have them published at her expense so that the evidence might stand as a "testimony to the truth."

Girardeau argued :

*A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements is **forbidden** (9; emp. original).*

The professor contended that the evidence shows that instrumental music was not commonly used in churches "until the thirteenth century" (156).

In 1965 James W. McKinnon prepared a dissertation at Columbia University on "The Church Fathers and Musical Instruments." In this exhaustive document, McKinnon contended that "early Christian music was vocal" and there was a "patristic [the "church fathers"] polemic against instruments" (1-2; quoted in Bales, 351-352).

The truth is there is no authority in the New Testament for the use of instrumental music in Christian worship—neither command, precedent, nor necessary implication. This is so elementary that it is like rehearsing one's ABCs all over again.

In view of this it is both shocking and disheartening that so many who profess an allegiance to Jesus Christ, and his New Testament revelation, have incorporated the use of mechanical instruments into their worship. As Christ once said of his contemporaries:

These people honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men (Mt. 15:8-9).

Sources/Footnotes

Bales, James D. (1973), Instrumental Music and New Testament Worship (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications).

Bingham, Joseph (1865), The Antiquities of the Christian Church (London: Henry Bohn), 2 Vols.

Cross, Frank, Ed. (1958), The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press).

Ferguson, Everett (1972), A Cappella Music in the Public Worship of the Church (Abilene, TX: Biblical Research Press).

Girardeau, John L. (1983), Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church (Havertown, PA: New Covenant Publication Society).

McClintock, John & Strong, James (1969), Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (Grand Rapids: Baker).

Wayne Jackson

CHRISTIAN COURIER, January 12, 2007

http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/what_is_a_cappella_music

Remember in Prayer

FRANCES LEAVENS

RUBY CACY

VALERIE FINLEY

BENNIE HOUSE

BUDDY WARD

CLARENCE RIGGENBACH

FRANK SMALL

IVA & LEM TURNER

PATRICIA FORD

JEANETTE THOMPSON

TODAY'S SERMONS

The Providence of God

Proverbs 3:5-6

Studies in 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

He who would be a mover of the world must not be moved by the world.

Mark Your Calendars

- ✓ **Oct 7:** Fellowship Meal @ noon
- ✓ **Oct 14:** Panama Slides & Report- Tim Simmons
- ✓ **Oct 18:** Booster Banquet @ Florida School of Preaching
- ✓ **Oct 28:** Song Service - 6:00p

— COMING SOON —

Ghana Slides & Report

Ted Wheeler