

*From Where I Sit . . .*

## **“Is It Really Such A Big Deal” – Part One**

The Freed Hardeman University Lectureship is once again history, and it was a very wonderful week of feasting on messages of light and hope from the book of Isaiah. The week climaxed, however, with a scheduled “Contemporary Discussion” between an advocate who believes that using instrumental music in worship does not violate the will of God, and an advocate who believes that instrumental music is an addition to that which God has authorized as a means of worshiping Him, and is thus unscriptural. The former advocated we can fellowship with those who chose to use the instrument; the latter advocated that such use is reason for disfellowship.

This is not a new topic as it has been hotly contested over the centuries. For centuries church historians are in agreement that the instrument was conspicuously absent from worship of the New Testament church. One can pinpoint a time in history many centuries after Christ when it was first introduced. Furthermore, that introduction was further grounds for differences between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church by the end of the first millenium A. D. ([A Concise Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge](#), p. 683) The Orthodox Church still does not use instruments in worship today. Furthermore, the use of instruments was not unanimously embraced among later leaders within the Protestant Reformation Movement. Little by little the various denominations gave way to growing pressure to add mechanical instruments.

John Spencer Curwen, member of the Royal Academy of Music, 1880, said “Men still living can remember the time when organs were seldom found outside the church of England. The Methodists, the Independents and the Baptists rarely had them, and the Presbyterians stoutly opposed them. But since these bodies began to use organs, adoption of them has gone unchecked.” ([Studies In Music](#), p. 179).

Adam Clark, noted Methodist commentator, stated, “Away with such pretentious baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly.” ([Commentary](#), Vol 2, p. 690-691).

John Calvin stated, “Musical instruments would be no more suited in celebrating the praises of God than the burning of incense...” ([Com. On 33 Psalm](#)).

Charles Spurgeon, perhaps the greatest preacher the Baptist church has ever produced, and for twenty years preached to 10,000 people every Sunday in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, London, England, when asked why he did not use the organ in worship, quoted I Corinthians 14:15, and added: “I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery.

Our brotherhood is once again having to enter into such discussions as these because of a growing trend within some Churches of Christ of adding the instrument either to their worship services, youth devotionals, or in some cases, having joint services with religious groups who do use the instrument. One should not assume apologetically that we are a poor and misguided people who single-handedly have taken a position that is rare, weird, unique, or just down right wrong. Furthermore, it is not those who oppose the instrument who have caused the division among churches, but rather those who added something which was not accepted by the First Century Church, nor was authorized in the New Testament. We’ll say more on this vital subject.

**. . . Terry Broome**

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