

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 4

2018

Editor's Note: I was very blessed in being able to spend a great deal of time with Robert Turner and I am sure many others profited from his teaching and writings. Because of his writing ability one person referred to him as the "co-author" of more bulletins than any other man because his articles appeared in so many bulletins. I am one of those who have printed many of his articles in the bulletins I have edited through the years. Very few men have the ability to teach the truth through writing as did Robert. I commend the following article to you. (JH)

"People Of God"

There are two classes of people in the world: those acceptable to God, and those not acceptable. Peter says of the acceptable, "*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.*" (RV "a people for God's own possession") (1 Peter 2:9) These "*people of God*" are those "*called out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" (vs. 10)

The "call" is that of the gospel of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:14) by which all people are taught. (John 6:45) In one sense, this "call" is the dividing line between those acceptable to God, and those not acceptable; in that those who believe and obey God's call are acceptable, while all others are "in darkness" "without mercy". (Note with care Colossians 1:12-14; Acts 26:16-18; Acts 2:37-42)

In the first century these "called out" people-these "acceptable" with God – were called the CHURCH, i.e., the greek word by which they were then designated, is now translated as "church". (Note Acts

11:20-26. In Antioch those who heard the preaching of Christ, and believed, turned to the Lord; these made up the CHURCH.) (Cf. Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 4:15) Thus, the N.T. teaches that the CHURCH (i.e., those who make up the church) are the people acceptable unto God; while all others (those outside the church) are not acceptable.

Yes, the church is important! Yes, church membership is essential! Those who are not a part of the Lord's church are not a part of the people or God! THESE SEEMINGLY EXTREME STATEMENTS ARE "RADICAL" ONLY TO THOSE WHO FAIL TO GRASP THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION OF "CHURCH" OR "PEOPLE OF GOD." I have not said you must "join my party" to be saved. I have not said that only members of a denomination called "Church of Christ" would be saved. But I must make it equally clear that no one is a member of the Lord's church – that will be saved – who has not "obeyed from the heart" the unadulterated call of the gospel. (Study Romans 6:16-18, 3-7; Acts 2:37-47)

Methodist sprinkling, Baptist voting, and "Church of Christ" communion are not gateways to heaven. We must learn to distinguish between being acceptable to a party of people, no matter what name they wear, and in being acceptable to God.

The "people of God" are likened unto a temple, in which God dwells. The foundation is Jesus Christ, and the walls are of lively stones – faithful Christians. (1 Corinthians 3:11, 16-17; 1 Peter 2:4-8) They are likened unto a kingdom of citizens, with Christ as King; (Colossians 1:13) or a body of members, with Christ as Head. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:12-f.) The church belongs to Christ and congregations of Christians are called "churches of Christ" (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16) God's people are even likened unto the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-f.) so it is easy to see why these people should wear His name.

But the people of God wear the name of Christ because they are His people – they are not His people because they wear His name. (Maybe this should be re-read -- slowly!!)

✍ Robert F. Turner

Editor's Note: At one time the following article would be for our denominational friends who use instrumental music in their worship, but in recent years many who claim to be members of the Lord's body are either using or condoning the use of instrumental music in worship. But the truth, as taught in the following article, has not changed. (JH)



Why We Do Not Use Instrumental Music In Worship

One of the first things that people notice when they visit our worship services is that we don't use instrumental music. Some wonder whether it is a matter of finance, personal preference or a matter of conviction. The reason a flag is raised is that most of the denominations have some form of instrumental music in worship. An organ or piano is most common. However, it is not uncommon to find churches with a full band - including drums and brass instruments. Why do we not use instrumental music in worship?

Careful students know that we must have Bible authority for all that we do in service to God. Paul said, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17). To do a thing "in the name of" someone is to do it by their power or authority (Acts 4:7). John wrote that we must abide within the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9).

Bible authority is established by (1) Command, (2) Example or (3) Necessary inference. All three of these were used in settling the matter of circumcision in Acts 15. Without a command or direct statement, an example that is approved of God or some principle that necessarily infers the matter, it is without Bible authority.

To illustrate: what would be wrong with having grape jelly on the Lord's table - along with the bread and fruit of the vine? There is no command to have it. We find no example of such. Furthermore, there is no passage that causes us to conclude that it was used or should be. Thus, there is no Bible authority for it. The same is true with instrumental music. To do something without Bible authority is sinful (2 Jno. 9).

What God did authorize, as far as music is concerned, is singing. Consider the following passages:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing

with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

There are seven other passages in the NT that deal with music in worship. All refer to singing (Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Hebrews 13:15). There is no passage authorizing the instrument.

God did authorize singing. God did not authorize instrumental music. Therefore, it is unscriptural.

Since God specified singing, we are not at liberty to use any other kind of music. For example, Noah was told to build the ark of "gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14). Had God said, "wood" (leaving it in the generic), Noah would have been at liberty to use any kind of wood. Yet, because God specified "gopher" that eliminated the use of any other kind of wood. To build the ark of oak would not be authorized. To use gopher and oak would not be authorized.

Let's consider again the matter of the Lord's Supper. God specified that the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine should be used (Matt. 26:17-28). If we decide that we want grape jelly to go with our bread, we now have another element on the table and thus an addition to the word of God.

The same is true of music in worship. Had God told us to have music (leaving it in the generic), we could have chosen vocal or instrumental or a combination of both. However, since God specified, singing (Ephesians 5:19), other kinds of music are thus eliminated. Instrumental music is therefore an addition to the word of God. *✍ Donnie V. Rader*

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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