

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Walden David

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Michael Simmons

#76 How Great Thou Art

#382 Why Did My Savior Come to Earth?

Scripture Reading by: Cameron Cantu

#361 Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross

Lord's Supper and Contribution

#622 Ring Out the Message

Sermon: "When You Come Together: Singing"

Colossians 3:16-17

#945 Kneel at the Cross

#852 When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder

Closing Prayer by: David Warren

Welcome by: Bobby Rader

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Michael Simmons

#841 Hide Me O My Savior

#387 Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Scripture Reading: Brooks McKelroy

Prayer by: Don Taylor

#827 Sweet Hour of Prayer

Sermon: "One Word: Love"

John 13:34-35

#470 Victory in Jesus

#794 Unto Thee O Lord

Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 6:00pm — Worship

Wednesday: 10:00am — Ladies Bible Class, 7:00pm — Bible Study Classes

February 17, 2019

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Music in the Chapel

I bet if you stopped 100 people on the street to ask them what they associate with churches of Christ, 90+ would say, "oh, they're the ones who don't use instruments" (or even "you don't believe in music!" as I've occasionally heard). That stands out to people because it is something of an oddity in the contemporary West. Most professing Christians grew up attending churches with an organ, or a piano, or guitars and drums, depending on the denomination. Whatever they think of our congregational singing – some admire it, some detest it – it's undoubtedly different. And for that reason, a growing number in churches of Christ want to jettison this practice, viewing it as an embarrassing relic that hinders our mission.

There are theological reasons to prefer unaccompanied singing. We will talk about those in our sermon. But what might surprise those 100 people on the street – and might even surprise you – is that, while a cappella is unusual today in the Western world, it was the dominant form of church music for nearly 2,000 years. Consider the term itself: a cappella comes from Italian, meaning "in the manner of the chapel." That's because this was the type of music you heard in church.

No one contests that the earliest Christians worshipped without instruments. In the centuries that followed, a number of early writers noted their disapproval of them. As the musicologist James McKinnon notes, *The antagonism which the Fathers of the early Church displayed toward instruments has two outstanding characteristics: vehemence and uniformity.* Accordingly, they were not adopted in the church for hundreds of years, perhaps as late as the 10th century. Even after their introduction, they were not widely accepted. The greatest theologian of the medieval church, Thomas Aquinas, noted c. 1250 that, *The Church does not use musical instruments such as the harp or lyre when praising God, in case she should seem to fall back into Judaism...For musical instruments usually move the soul more to pleasure than create inner moral goodness.*

Instruments were increasingly introduced in the 1300s so that, by the 16th century, most prominent churches had an organ – at least in the West. The Eastern church did not accept them; the vast majority of Orthodox churches even today practice a cappella. But the 16th century was also when the Protestant Reformation swept through Europe. In keeping with their rejection of what they viewed as the corruptions of the church, a number of leaders denounced instruments as an unscriptural innovation.

The leading figure in Reformed churches was John Calvin, and he wrote extensively on the subject. *To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery unquestionably formed part of the training of the law, and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving. We are not, indeed, forbidden to use, in private, musical instruments,*

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stiffemire is in Methodist Hospital.

Jean Blackburn is having health problems.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Bill Lunceford, Eric Davis, Mark Wilcox, Dayla Hale, Phillip Cottle, Kevin Coleman, Tim Watts, Minny Owen, J. P. Williams, Doris Trahan

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Pauline Taylor, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Ronnie Rubit, Joe Leonard, Dr. Ronald Davis, Larry Hicks

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa,
Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Plastic Bags

The Food Bank is in need of plastic grocery bags. A barrel is in the foyer.

Upcoming Activities

No Elders, Minister meeting this week.

We will be having a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Feb. 21st at 8:00 am.

We are in the process of starting a new church recipe book. Please be thinking of recipes you would like to share. Here is the email address for the recipes: liberty.ladiesministry@aol.com
We are collecting recipes until the end of this month.

You are Invited

You are invited to help celebrate Iva Votaw's 80th birthday. The party is Saturday, March 2, 2019 at the Kenefick Kountry Club, 536 Cr 640, Dayton. It will be from 12:00-4:00pm. Iva has requested "**no gifts please.**"
BBQ and all the trimming will be served at the party.

Communion Preparation: Jo Ella McKewen
Nursery Attendants: Tania Balch, Pat Hobbs

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Feb. 24th: Debby McKinzie
Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Feb. 24th: Jane Tinkle, Rita Upton

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but they are banished out of the churches by the plain command of the HS, when Paul, in 1 Cor 14:13, lays it down as an invariable rule, that we must praise God, and pray to him only in a known tongue.

Only in the 19th century did this conviction gradually begin to erode among some Protestants. The Puritans, heirs to the Reformed tradition with a strong emphasis on restoration, did not use instruments. The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, said *I have no objections to instruments in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.* Baptists, with their strong emphasis on the New Testament, were among the last holdouts. The great 19th century British Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, was staunchly against the use of instruments at his Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London: *What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.*

Of course, piling up examples or even quotations does not demonstrate these men or groups were right. But it does show that our commitment to a cappella is not idiosyncratic – it's not "church of Christism." Rather, it is the historic practice of the church. Virtually all Protestant denominations – Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians – shared this commitment up until about 150 years ago, not as a preference, but as a matter of principle. And, even today, there are other groups who continue it: the Orthodox churches, one of the 3 main branches of Christianity, comprising about 250 professing Christians worldwide; Primitive and Old Regular Baptists; some traditional Presbyterians strongly influenced by Calvin; a number of conservative Anabaptist and Mennonite groups. We are probably the most prominent group committed to a cappella in this country, but we are far from unique.

In the face of this historical evidence – not to mention the more weighty theological reasons – the primary counterargument is that this is insignificant, a matter of mere preference: we don't *really* believe it is a sin to play a piano in worship, do we? After all, God never said *not* to do it. Well, you will never hear me speculate on the eternal destiny of those who worship with instruments. But that's beside the point. Respectfully, that is an awfully shallow view of God, of worship, of our relationship to him. I am not interested in what I can get away with, but with what pleases him. Given the deliberate practice of the early church, the important doctrinal considerations, and the fact that this is the ecumenical position of two millennia, the proper question to ask is: why should we use instruments? Personal preference alone isn't enough.

Bryant Perkins

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

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