

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – PEACE

NUMBER 172

JUNE, 2022

You don't have to look very far to see that the world we live in is filled with turmoil. People observe their surroundings and search for a respite from the chaos and tragedy. Many people equate the word peace with calmness. True, if you are at peace, you are calm. Lasting peace, however, comes from within and doesn't depend on circumstances. The fruit of peace comes to us when the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts.

Continued on page 2

OUR GREATEST PRIVILEGE

"But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father who sees everything will reward you." (Matt. 6:6 NLT)

The creator of the universe, our awesome and powerful God is ever present with his children. His ear is tuned to hear our cries. He listens and responds. Is there any greater privilege than that? And just in case we are so wounded that we don't know what to say, he has provided a helper. The Holy Spirit lives in us to translate our thoughts and needs.

Continued on page 4

WHAT DOES JESUS ASK OF A DISCIPLE?

"To love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind", "Love your neighbor as yourself". Matthew 22:37-38 "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". Matthew 16:24

Continued on page 3

NO CHRISTMAS EVE CHURCH SERVICE?



June should be a good month to discuss Christmas.

A neighbor who doesn't go to any church said to me last December that they would like to go to our Christmas Eve service with us. I told him that we did not have Christmas Eve service, but they could go to church with us the next Sunday morning, 5 days later. They didn't. I could have told him the local Baptist church would have a good Christmas Eve service, but I didn't.

Continued on page 5

IN THIS ISSUE:

Fruit of the spirit - Peace	1
Our Greatest Privilege - Brown	1
What does Jesus Ask of a Disciple	1
No Christmas Eve Service?	1
Airtag Necklace	6
Impossible for Evolution	8
Instrumental Music	13
Calendar of events	23

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - PEACE P. 2

Continued from page 1

When Karl Marx said “Religious is the opiate of the masses”, he wasn’t trying to say something good about religion; but he may have been onto something. When you can live in a world of turmoil and be at peace because of a deep trust in God, you have a profound advantage over an atheist—not a chemical advantage because of some drug, but a spiritual one.

Atheists have, they believe, only one life to live. When they die, they believe that like Rover, they are “dead all over.” In that sense Romans 8:28 “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” would make no sense. Johnny died at 26 in a car accident. His life was cut short. How can that be good? Similarly, Matthew 5:5 “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” That makes absolutely no sense in an atheistic philosophy. Gentle people are not going to gain the earth, aggressive business people are. Warriors are.

The Christian’s knowledge that we live here for a short while and then will spend an eternity in Heaven can give us a peace that is incomprehensible to an atheist. We are not just going to inherit the earth, we are going to inherit a new heaven and a new earth. (Rev. 21:1)

Consider the fact that we lead a double life – both physical and spiritual. We can view “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” from both vantage points. The “good” which Paul is talking about has dual meaning. It refers to working out things in our earthly life. Not always the way we would choose, but for good according to His eternal wisdom. Ultimately, working our lives to the greatest possible good: spending eternity with God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

People who have struggles and face uncertain

situations are very likely to turn towards God (remember the old saying “there are no atheists in a foxhole”?). For most people, times of strife and crisis are the most likely time they will pray to God. If we had all our desires answered and got our way on everything, we would be unlikely to turn to or believe in God. We would arrogantly consider ourselves to be self-sufficient, to consider a God beyond ourselves unnecessary.

When we see or feel pain and suffering, it reinforces our tendency to reach out to God, like a child needing a parent for comfort or help, wanting to be in His presence. When we come to Him, through Christ, He works in our lives for our present and the eternal “good.”

In John 14:27 Jesus tells us “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” In other words, regardless of the state of the world, we can feel at peace because the fruit of peace comes from Jesus, not from the world. Inward peace is reflected outwardly and allows us to be ambassadors of Jesus’ peace. True peace comes from knowing God is in control. Without that, we feel responsible for things that happen and feel the need to “fix” our own problems.

Continued on page 3



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - PEACE P. 3

WHAT DOES JESUS ASK OF A DISCIPLE?, P. 2

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Jesus is described as the Prince of Peace, the one who brings peace to the hearts of those who desire it. He says in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". In Matthew 5:9 he says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

DEEDS OF THE FLESH: CONQUEST

If a fruit of the spirit is the peace you receive from having a right relationship with God, what Satan is likely to offer to you instead is conquest. He would not try to attract you to a lack of peace, as anyone would think that peace would be a good idea. However, wouldn't you be willing to sacrifice a little peace for a conquest? Presently Russia is sacrificing a little peace for the acquisition of some or all of Ukraine. Are we tempted to do this in our lives on a smaller scale?

Might you start a destructive rumor to get the promotion which you feel you deserve? Might you gain an advantage by discrediting a business competitor? Do you gain advantage in sports by bending the rules?

A promotion, an extra sale, or a sports trophy is a conquest of sorts. Promotions, sales, and trophies are certainly not bad things, but violate God's commands if you gain them by destroying your peace or the peace of others. You will have a short term gain and a long term loss.

Continued from page 1

What is man that you are mindful of him, the Son of Man that you care for Him? You made Him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned Him with glory and honor. You made Him ruler over the works of your hands; You put everything under His feet All flocks and herds and the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the sea. Psalm 8:4-8

"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers." Hebrews 2:9-11

Disciples are ambassadors of Jesus, believers who have passion for life and desire to be kind and do good for others, making His joy complete by living according to God's plan and drawing the lost away from the evil of this world. Disciples are driven to become part of something beyond the limits of their personal capacity that is worthy of celebration and praise to God. As people of this world join Jesus' team of disciples and become trained and equipped to make new disciples, they can swarm onto the field of harvest as workers for the Kingdom of God, no longer content to be only spectators marveling at the action of salvation.

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

OUR GREATEST PRIVILEGE, P, 2

Continued from page 1

Use this privilege wisely. Prayer is a personal responsibility and should be done privately with an alert mind and penitent heart. In Bible times prayers were spoken orally. Notice how many times Jesus went up on the mountain to pray, or went a stone's throw away. It was so he could pray without being heard. "One day, Jesus left the crowds to pray alone." (Luke 9:18 NLT)

It's not the number of times you repeat your request, or the number of people who say the words that makes them effective. "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him." (Matt. 6:7-8 NLT) Have faith that God hears your prayer and accept his answer by saying, "Thank you!"

Use this powerful privilege of prayer to pray for others. Paul's letters are filled with prayers for the spiritual growth of those he loved. "Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." (Eph. 6:18 NLT) Try praying Paul's prayers today for everyone you know.

Elizabeth Brown , Texarkana

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NO CHRISTMAS EVE CHURCH SERVICE?

Continued from page 1

To compound the problem, some congregations cancel Bible Classes, Sunday evening services, and Wednesday night services near Christmas. When most people are thinking more about Jesus, we are doing less.

Christmas is not a religious holiday. With the shepherds in the field, it is likely that Jesus was not born in the winter. The question is would it be wrong to have a Christmas eve service? I grew up in the 1950s when it was definitely considered to be a sin, along with some other issues which have been reconsidered.

The Biblical example is to meet on the first day of the week. Would that not make Wednesday evening services unscriptural? I have never heard anyone take the position that having a Wednesday evening service was unscriptural. Following the understanding that you can have a worship service on an arbitrary day, would it be wrong to have a devotional service on a Tuesday Christmas Eve? If something is wrong with it, it would not be that it was Tuesday. It is a worship service, just like it was Wednesday.

It may seem radical to suggest having a worship service to Jesus on a Tuesday night, to those who cannot separate tradition from scripture. But at least we can quit cancelling worship services when most people in the world are most likely to visit us.

While we are talking, Easter always falls on Sunday. It is literally the day Jesus was resurrected. Would it be bad to talk about Jesus on Easter Sunday? Would it be wrong to have an Easter Sunrise Service? If you choose to have an Easter Sunrise Service, it is not the time to cancel Bible classes. It is the time to make your Bible classes all they can be. It is time to have a congregation wide meal to invite your visitors to attend. It is time to tell your members to focus on showing love to our "neighbors" rather than just each other.

I WAS DRUGGED BY MY PARENTS

When I was asked why we didn't have a drug problem when you and I were growing up I replied,
 " I had a drug problem when I was young. I was drug to church on Sunday morning. I was drug to church for weddings and funerals. I was drug to family reunions.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults. I was also drug to the woodsbed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered profanity. I was drug to the neighbors to help out some poor soul who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline or chop some firewood.

Those drugs are still in my veins and they affect my behavior. They are stronger than cocaine, crack, or heroine. If children today had this kind of drug problem America would be a better place."

Written by a concerned citizen.



AIRTAG NECKLACE

My wife having aphasia dementia gives the rest of us some concerns about her getting lost. She has never been lost yet, but we worry.

We have put the Find My Friends app on our cell phones and so we can know where her cell phone is at any time. Unfortunately she forgets to take her cell phone regularly.

We bought an Apple Air Tag as is seen below and put it in her billfold in her purse. The Apple Air Tag is \$29.00 and easily links to the Find My Friends on our cell phones. Then she left her purse on the bus at the OKC airport. We might not have been able to find her, but we could find her purse.

Then I looked on Amazon for Air Tag holders and found the protective case shown on the lower right picture. She is shown wearing it on the upper right photo and has received several comments on how attractive it is. As long as she is wearing it, it does not matter if she loses her purse or cell phone, we will know where she is.

This air tag holder comes in 4 colors each for \$12.99. The open like a compact and easily receive the Air Tag. The front and back give a different look, with the back being a simple ring.

As a practical matter, we can now easily know where she is, her cell phone is, and her billfold is. If she has her necklace, cell phone, or billfold with her, we



will know where she is. The cost was minimal and gives us a feeling of security which is beyond value.

If you are in a similar situation, we would encourage you to consider doing something like this.

If you have other ideas, send them to info@occg.institute and we will publish them also.

Barry





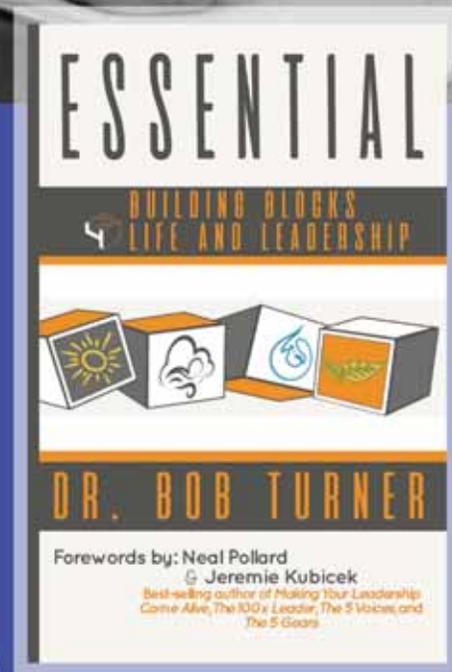
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Dr. Bob Turner is the current director of SALT (Sunset Academy for Leadership Training). He holds multiple Bible degrees and a Doctorate of Intercultural Studies, emphasizing Adult Leadership Development.



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IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #128 – BACTERIAL 3D COMPASS

A compass needle lines up with the magnetic fields on the Earth and provides direction for travel. It is generally presumed to have a 2 dimensional measurement on the surface of the earth.

The compass is said to have been invented in China during the Han Dynasty **between the 2nd century BC and 1st century AD** where it was called the "south-governor" or "South Pointing Fish" The magnetic compass was not, at first, used for navigation, but for divination and fortune-telling by the Chinese.

Turns out some bacteria called *Magnetospirillum* have had this ability since creation.

This is achieved through the bacterium's cytoplasm of special organelles or crystals called magnetosomes. These are mounted on a Magnetoskeleton along the body of the bacterium.

When the bacteria ingests iron, proteins inside their cells interact with it to produce tiny crystals of the mineral magnetite, the most magnetic mineral on Earth.

That in itself would be impossible for a bacterium to accidentally develop, but it doesn't stop there.

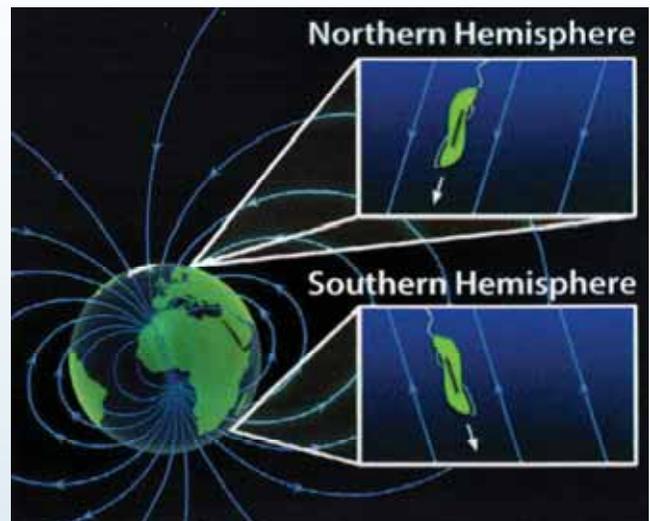
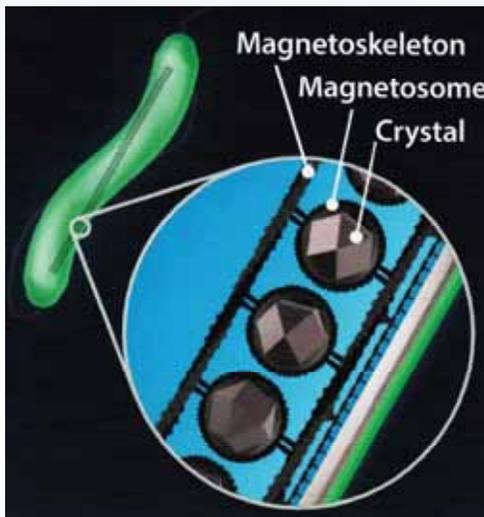
The typical habitat of *Magnetospirillum* species consists of shallow fresh water and sediments, characterized by low concentrations of oxygen for growth (microaerophilic) where they live in the upper portion of the sediment (oxic/anoxic interface) and prefer an oxygen gradient of around 1–3%. This means that it likes to live at the bottom of bodies of water rather than near the surface.

To do this the bacterium has to recognize that near the north and south poles the magnetic lines have a vertical component rather than being parallel to the surface of the earth (i.e. 2D). After doing this the bacterium has to recognize which way is down and swim that way.

This means that all the zero I.Q. bacterium had to do was to accidentally invent the compass, recognize the vertical component of the Earth's magnetic fields, and know which way to swim along it in the hemisphere they live in.

This is a spectacular proof of an intelligent designer, and that intelligent designer is God!

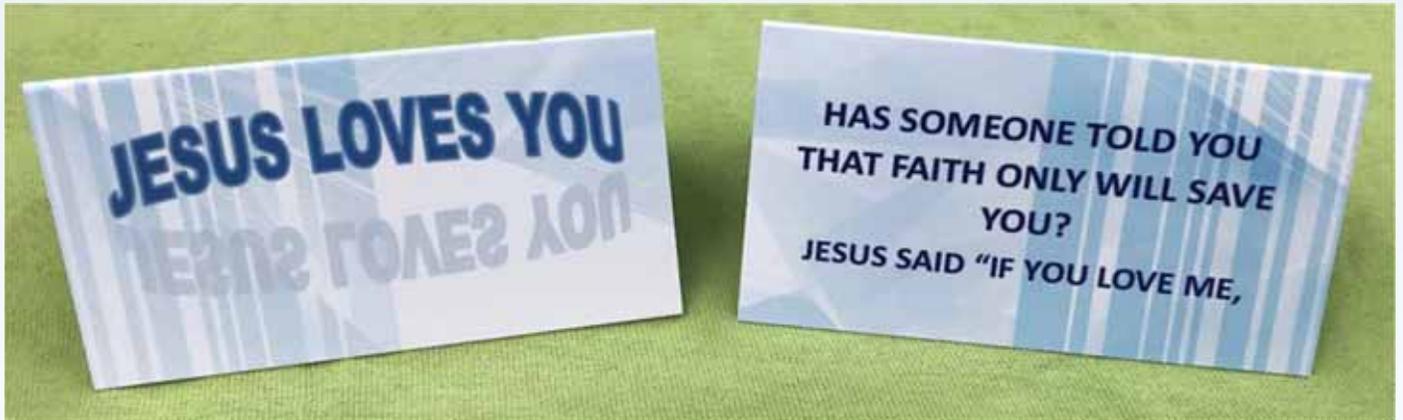
Benton F. Baugh



Due to the curvature of the Earth's magnetic field, bacteria wanting to travel downwards travel towards magnetic north in the Northern Hemisphere and toward magnetic south in the Southern Hemisphere.

Information from Wikipedia and Creation Mag.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM TENT CARDS



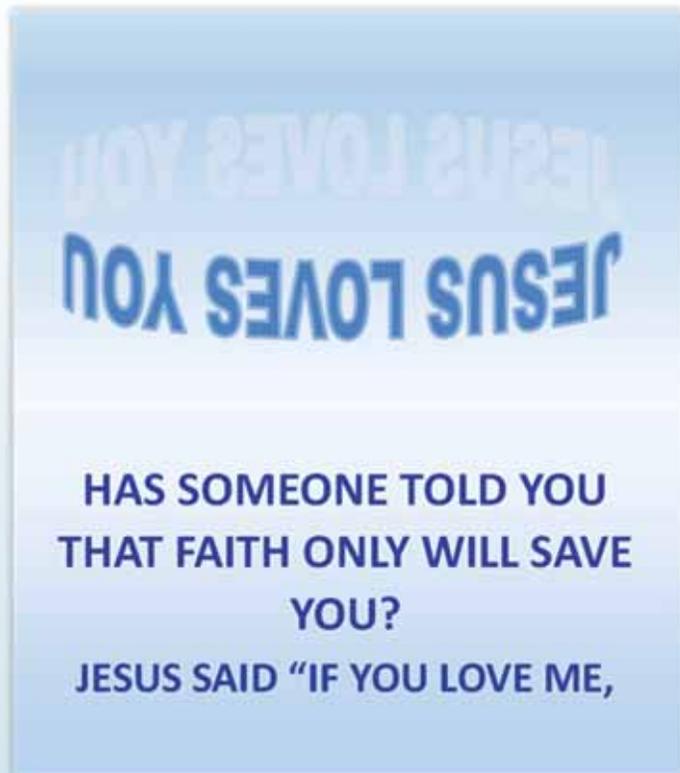
Tent cards are business card size and are folded into a small tent. You can hand them to someone or when you go to lunch, you can simply leave it on the table. The purpose is to try to start a discussion, or at least to give an invitation.

They can provide a message like these samples or can say anything you like.

Imagine you equip your members with 1000 of these and consider the impact it can have on your congregation.

You can get products like these at your local printer or online by searching for tent cards.

If you like contact us at info@occg.institute and we will assist you.



OUTSIDE OF CARD



INSIDE OF CARD

PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRI-FOLDS

Personalized personal evangelism tri-folds are a tool which has proven to be an effective way to begin conversations similarly to the Tent Cards discussed last month.

These cards not only tell the basics about Churches of Christ, but also can give location details and service times about your specific congregation. They can be edited to give whatever information you think to be beneficial for you're area and circumstance.

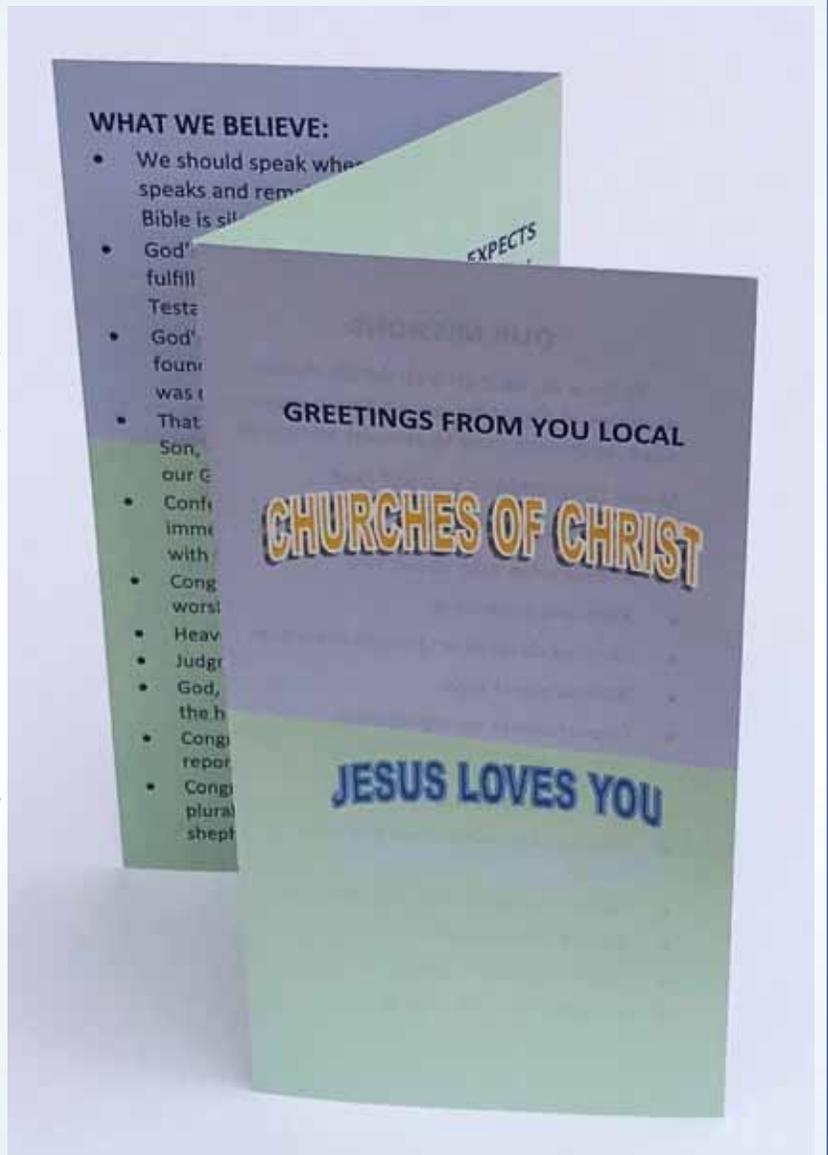
Cards similar to this can be obtained from a number of printers, with Uprint.com being the one we have used. In the example shown we used a 5.5" x 8.5" Z-Fold printed on the outside and inside in full color. It is found under brochures.

The following will give the base costs for the tri-folds, with shipping being extra.

100	\$37.19	\$0.38 ea.
250	\$106.31	\$0.43 ea.
1000	\$238.49	\$0.24 ea.
10000	\$1,074.46	\$0.11 ea.

You can go online and design any style tri-fold or other brochure you prefer. As an alternative, if you like the wording and style on the example shown, we will have them printed for you.

The following page shows the wording which was used for Memorial in Houston. If you want us to coordinate them for you, print the next page, mark it up as you like, and email it to bbaugh@occg.institute. Our part of the process will be a free service. You will pay only for Uprint's printing costs.



If you deal with them directly, they will send a free sample of your printing. As we have dealt with them before, they will not send us a free sample for you. We will send you a free sample which looks like the following page before anything is printed.

Hopefully this will be a method which will be of assistance to some congregations. If you have another idea we can publish in a future issue,

PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRI-FOLDS

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- We should speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent
- God's word in the Old Testament was fulfilled; and we now live by New Testament teachings
- God's complete plan for us today is found in the New Testament, which was completed in the first century
- That Jehovah the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit together are our God
- Confession of sins and baptism by immersion brings us into relationship with God as His adopted children
- Congregational singing is part of the worship of God
- Heaven and hell are real
- Judgment day will come for everyone
- God, the Intelligent Designer, created the heavens and the earth
- Congregations are autonomous, reporting only to Jesus
- Congregations are overseen by a plurality of scripturally qualified shepherds

WHAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE:

- Salvation by faith only
- The inability to fall from grace
- Substitution for the scriptural baptism by immersion (sprinkling, pouring, infant baptism)
- Purification in purgatory
- Divorce and remarriage of Christians other than for adultery
- Approval of extra-marital or homosexual conduct
- Judgment on the eternal destiny of others
- Updating the New Testament to match contemporary teachings

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YOU WILL FIND:

- A spiritual home for you and your family
- Fellow members who care about you
- Support for yourself
- Support for your family
- An opportunity to belong

WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXPECTS US TO LIVE A GOOD CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE, ON SUNDAYS AND EVERYDAY:

We honor Christ's sacrifice by:

- Attending weekly worship services regularly.
- Learning His word and making friends in Bible classes
- Spending time daily with God, reading His word and praying
- Finding ministries where we can serve Him by serving our fellow man
- Sharing our faith.
- Financially supporting the work of the church.
- Growing in faith and love for God and each other

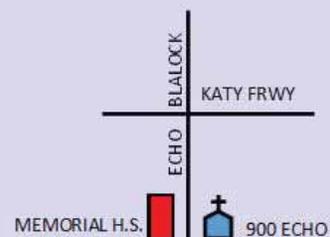
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TOPICAL STUDIES

USING INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP



SUMMARY: The object of this lesson is to help the reader list and explain five reasons why the use of instruments of worship in worship to God is not God's plan for Christian worship.

INTRODUCTION:

The question of using instruments of music in Christian worship is widely debated and has been for centuries. While the majority of "Christian" churches today use instruments, less than two hundred years ago, many in churches using it today were opposing its use. Of course, the answer to this question does not lie in who does or does not use instruments today, but lies, rather, in what the scriptures reveal about our worship of God.

Before answering the specific question of what music we should use in worship, it is helpful to set this question in the broader context of the meaning of Christian worship and how to participate in it. Then we can better answer the question of just what we should or should not do in worship.

- A. The word most commonly translated "worship" in the New Testament is a Greek word rooted in the concept of "kissing the ground before." Obviously if one kisses the ground or falls prostrate before something, he is seeking to honor the object before which he bows. So the word "worship" means to offer a message of respect, contrition, or praise to an object of worship. To respect this meaning, any effort to worship God, then, must include the sense of "bowing in submission to offer praise."
- B. Jesus uses this word in John 4:23-24 when speaking to the woman at the well. He said God seeks people to "worship" Him, to bow in praise to Him. In explaining this to the Samaritan woman, Jesus emphasizes that since God is "spirit" He wants us to worship Him "in spirit." Jesus explains that in the New Covenant, worship is not restricted to a special place. Since God is "spirit," He is everywhere and may be worshipped anywhere as we approach Him in our "spirits." Christian worship, then, is "spirit to Spirit"-- my spirit reaches out to contact the Great Spirit and on this spiritual level worship takes place. The Jewish worship had required the right place, the right offering, the right priest, and the right ritual, but Christian worship will be different--it is direct. My spirit reaches the Great Spirit, who is everywhere.

Jesus also tells the Samaritan woman that another change in the new worship is that it will be "in truth." Since He is still contrasting His new system of worship with the old, "truth" here suggests not only that in worship Christians must follow the truth of God's Word, as did the old, but Christian worship is also "in truth" or reality in contrast with the types and shadows of the Jewish worship.

My worship flows out of my life with God. Only if I have a close personal relationship with Him in my daily life and am walking in His ways can I worship Him well. Worship, then, is to be a way for those living the Christian life to make contact with their Maker and Father.

- C. But worshipping God must be more than just man's desire to reach out to God. God, the object of our worship, has always specified why we should worship Him and how we are to worship Him. From the very first recorded attempt at worship, that of Cain and Abel, it is clear that not everyone who seeks to worship God pleases Him. There are probably as many cases of failed worship recorded in the Bible as cases of successful worship. God seeks us to worship Him but He also tells us why and how.
- D. We might summarize the reasons to worship God (scriptural ends) in four words: proclaim, adore, communicate, and edify. Paul said taking the Lord's supper affords us an opportunity to "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

First, our worship, then, is to proclaim and announce, to testify to others, both in the church and in the world around us, of our faith and commitment. In our hearts, then, as we worship, there should be a sense of declaration that we believe in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Second, our worship should be to express our adoration, praise, and honor to God. Our worship is to Him and for Him (Hebrews 13:15). God is the object of our worship and our primary aim is to please Him.

Third, worship is to communicate, to send a message to God. Our worship should tell God of our love for Him and express our thanksgiving to Him. Worship is also a time to communicate to Him our confession of sins and our commitment to do better. The very word worship, as we have seen, means to send a message of contrition and honor. Obviously we will have feelings and emotion in our communication with God as suggested by Ephesians 5:19: "make melody in your heart to the Lord." If we are not communicating with the Lord as we sing, pray, and take the Lord's Supper, then we are not actually worshipping.

Fourth, worship is to edify our brethren. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul makes this point repeatedly. While our primary object is to honor God, a secondary purpose is to build up our brethren. We do "only what is good for edifying" (v. 26). In this regard, we come primarily to give edification to others. The very nature of worship means that it is not selfish--I do not come to please myself. I worship to give to God and to give to others. That I receive a blessing is, of course, important but it comes only if I do not make that my primary goal. So we must have the scriptural ends or purposes for our worship.

- E. But not only must our worship flow from our Christian lives toward God as we worship with the right purpose and "in spirit" and "in truth," we must also worship God by doing the right things. God has never left the choice of what to do in worship up to His people. From the very beginning, He has specified how He wanted to be worshipped--by animal sacrifice, by keeping the Passover, through a priest wearing special garments and doing special things. In fact, some of the worst consequences God has

sent on people was for their not worshipping Him in the way He had specified. So we must have the right means for worshipping God--using those methods of worship which He has commanded. For Christians, for example, He has told us to pray, sing, and take the Lord's Supper.

- F. God has made worshipping Him to be a very important part of what He expects from His people. It has always been so. We must both do the right things and do them in the right ways. With this laid as a foundation, we are now ready to approach the question of whether we should use instruments of music in Christian worship

REASONS NOT TO USE INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP

This lesson will give five reasons the author suggests for not using instruments in our worship today. Others could be given but these will be helpful to you as you are explaining this point to those you are teaching.

1 **CHRISTIANS MUST WORSHIP ONLY AS GOD HAS COMMANDED.**

God has always given commands to His people about how they were to worship Him and has given strong retribution to those who have gone beyond His commands. Note these examples from scripture.

- A. God specified a way to get the fire for burning incense in the tabernacle. When Nadab and Abihu, however, sons of Aaron, were offering incense God struck them dead because they offered it with "strange fire." The Bible says they obtained their fire in a way different from the way God had commanded. He commanded one way and they used another (Leviticus 10:1-2).
- B. God specified that only those of the priestly line could offer sacrifices to Him, but when Samuel, a priest, was late, Saul, a king, offered the sacrifice. God was very specific to tell him that the kingdom would be removed from him because he had departed from the way God said to worship (1 Samuel 13:13).
- C. God specified a way to move the ark of the covenant--using poles on the shoulders of priests. When David was moving the ark, however, he thought it would be more convenient to place it in an ox cart. Uzzah was riding in the cart and reached out to steady the ark. When he touched it he died (2 Samuel 6:3). David was angry about this but later said he "did not seek him according to the ordinance" (1 Chronicles 15:13).
- D. God's expectation that we worship as He has commanded is no less in the New Testament. Jesus quotes Isaiah, "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the teachings of men" (Matthew 15:9). If our teachings about worship or other subjects is not what God has specified, our worship will be vain. In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul emphasizes that we are not to "go beyond the

things that are written." Paul's experience with the Corinthians is particularly appropriate here. When they changed the practice about how to take the Lord's Supper from what Paul had prescribed, he reminded them that what he gave them he had received from the Lord. He added that those who did not follow this instruction would be "eating and drinking damnation to themselves" (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

- E. The worst sins imaginable have been committed in the name of worship: drunkenness, fornication, murder of innocent women and children. When people are left to their own, they devise ways to worship a god that are sinful. So God specifies how He wants to be worshipped and we are to worship exactly as He has instructed.

So not only must we worship as God has commanded but we must refrain from doing as worship what He has not commanded.

2 INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IS NOT COMMANDED.

- A. Singing is commanded for Christian worship.
- B. While all of these verses mention singing, none of them mentions the use of instruments in Christian worship, nor does any other verse in the New Testament. Instruments were available, but their use was not commanded for Christian worship.
- C. Some Old Testament verses speak of using instruments in Jewish worship, 2 Samuel 6:15, Psalm 150:3-5, and 2 Chronicles 29:25, for example. But these verses are speaking of the worship that had animal sacrifices, burning of incense, and sprinkling of blood on the altar. To use such verses as authorization of instruments in Christian worship is as inappropriate as to use the verses that authorize the other Jewish practices.
- D. So far, then, we have seen that God is very clear that we are to worship Him only as He commands and that God does not command us to use instruments in Christian worship.

3 THE CHURCH, WHEN UNDER APOSTOLIC DIRECTION, DID NOT USE INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP.

- A. The early church, when under the leadership of the apostles, did not use instruments in their worship. This is clear from several points of evidence. First, there is no mention of instruments in Christian worship when Christian worship is described in the New Testament. Secondly, the voice of church history and music history is very clear on this point: early church music was vocal only. The Jews and the pagans used instruments in worship and the culture was filled with instruments of many kinds. Yet, when these people became

Christians, they never used them in their worship to God. The word "a cappella," which we use today to designate unaccompanied singing, is a Latin word that means "according to the chapel or church." Thus, the "church way" to sing is unaccompanied. Third, there are strong denunciations of the use of instruments among the church fathers, but always directed toward their use in pagan settings. Never did they speak against their use in the church for such was, to them, unthinkable. (See Milo Hadwin, pp. 55ff.) Fourth, it was more than a thousand years after the church began when the first use of instruments began to creep in Christian worship.

- B. Several conclusions may be drawn.
- 1 That early church music was purely vocal.
 - 2 That the vocal nature of early church music was intentional because it was so counter-cultural.
 - 3 That unaccompanied singing was the church music approved by inspired apostles. No such authority, however, approves instruments for worship.
 - 4 That those who seek to follow the teaching and practice of the church New Testament times will sing without accompaniment.
- C. The practice of the apostolic church, then, corresponds precisely to the first two points of this lesson: (1) Christians must worship only as commanded and (2) instrumental music in Christian worship is not commanded.

4 **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS MERELY AN AID IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.**

Some would suggest that instruments may be used in Christian worship because they are not worship, in and of themselves, but are only an aid to the worship in singing. Since we may use a songbook as an aid, then we can use an instrument as an aid.

- A. In the worship of the Jews, instruments of music were played as a specific means of worship. Psalm 150:3, for example, says "Praise him with trumpet sound." Under the Old Testament system, then, instruments were an act of worship just as were animal sacrifices and incense. Instruments are capable, then, of being a means of expressing one's worship to God just as might be offering incense or a burnt offering. To take this "stand alone" means of worship, used in the Old Testament, and to bring it into New Testament worship calling it only an aid to singing, is not reasonable. A song book can be

an aid because it can never be a means of expressing ones thoughts and feelings to God. The same is true of a public address system or air conditioning. These are aids that are not capable of being a means of worship in their own right. Not so with instruments.

- B. Secondly, we should not consider instruments as just an aid because that is not how they are typically used. Often in the services of those who use them they are played when no one is singing and frequently complete musical numbers are played by instrumental combos or orchestras as part of a worship service. Such could certainly not be considered as an aid and such use is really crossing the line into substituting audience "entertainment" for audience "participation," which is contrary to the spirit of New Testament worship.
- C. Thirdly, we should not consider instruments as merely an aid because the command to sing excludes the use of other types of music in our worship.

It is important to note at this point something important about commandments. Every commandment has built within it an innate level of specificity. The very nature of the wording of the command means that it includes some things and excludes others. Things equal to or greater than the commanded action are excluded while lesser things are included. Thus, a prescription does not allow a change in the medicine specified but allows choice in the size, shape, and type of bottle to put it in. A blueprint excludes anything not specified but allows some flexibility in who will build and, to some extent, the order in which things will be done. A wife who asks her husband to go to the grocery store will likely say, "Get two, 2-litre bottles of de-caffeinated, diet Coke, and don't pay more than \$1.25 each. Such a statement naturally excludes Dr. Pepper or Pepsi, caffeine, 3-litre bottles, and one that costs \$1.30. Within the allowance, however, would be the particular store he uses, how he gets there, and whether he uses money or a credit card. In every command, then, there are understood inclusions and exclusions. Silence prohibits what would be the same as or greater than the commanded element while silence allows what would be less than the commanded element.

God's commands are the same. They both include and exclude. The command to use fruit of the vine and unleavened bread in the communion excludes other foods but leaves open the method of distribution to the people. The command "go" allows any method of transportation but the command to teach what has been revealed when we go, excludes teaching anything but what has been revealed.

In the same way, the command to sing both includes and excludes. It excludes the use of other types of music (instrumental) but allows us to sing in unison or parts, various types of songs, using a book or a projector.

- D. We should not, then, justify instruments as just an aid to worship. They have been and are often today used as a means of worship. In addition, they do not usually aid singing for the singing is typically better where people sing without them.

5 INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC HAS BEEN BOTH A CAUSE OF DIVISION AND DEPARTURE WHEN IT HAS BEEN USED.

- A. As mentioned above, instruments were never used in the apostolic church and this prohibition continued for over a thousand years. Even as late as 1250, Thomas Aquinas, the famous Catholic theologian, opposed their use, expressing strong opposition. Not until about 1400 A.D. did their use become widespread.
- B. Leaders of the Protestant Reformation also opposed their use. John Calvin opposed it and so did John Wesley and Adam Clarke. Charles Spurgeon, famous Baptist preacher, would not permit them in his service in London. The Greek Orthodox Church did not permit instruments at all until the late twentieth century.
- C. The use of instruments, then, has been widely opposed and often has been a point of division among professing Christians. It was, in particular, a point of division between what is now known as churches of Christ and Christian churches. Those who sought to restore New Testament Christianity in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thus, divided, in part, over this issue.
- D. A study of this split reveals not only that the use of instruments has been divisive but that those who justify it, saying "it is not condemned in scripture" have, because of that argument, made other changes based on that same philosophy. A position of accepting the instrument, then, has become the basis for accepting other differences in the practice and teaching of the apostolic church. Thus, when one opens the door for the instrument by adopting the philosophy that "whatever is not specifically condemned is acceptable," he/she is laying a foundation which will eventually lead to accepting many other unscriptural practices because they are "not specifically prohibited."

This article is provided by Dr. Stafford North and is from his book HOW TO EXPLAIN SIXTEEN BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, Lesson 14.

Note: Instrumental music was added into the church in A.D. 667, by Pope Vitalian (the organ)

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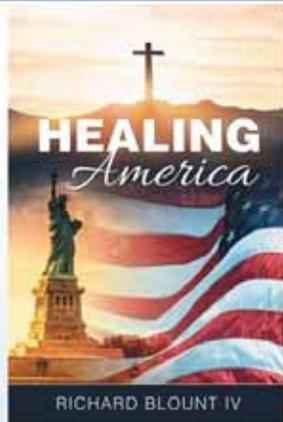


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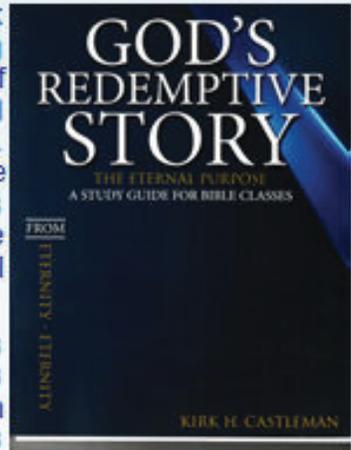
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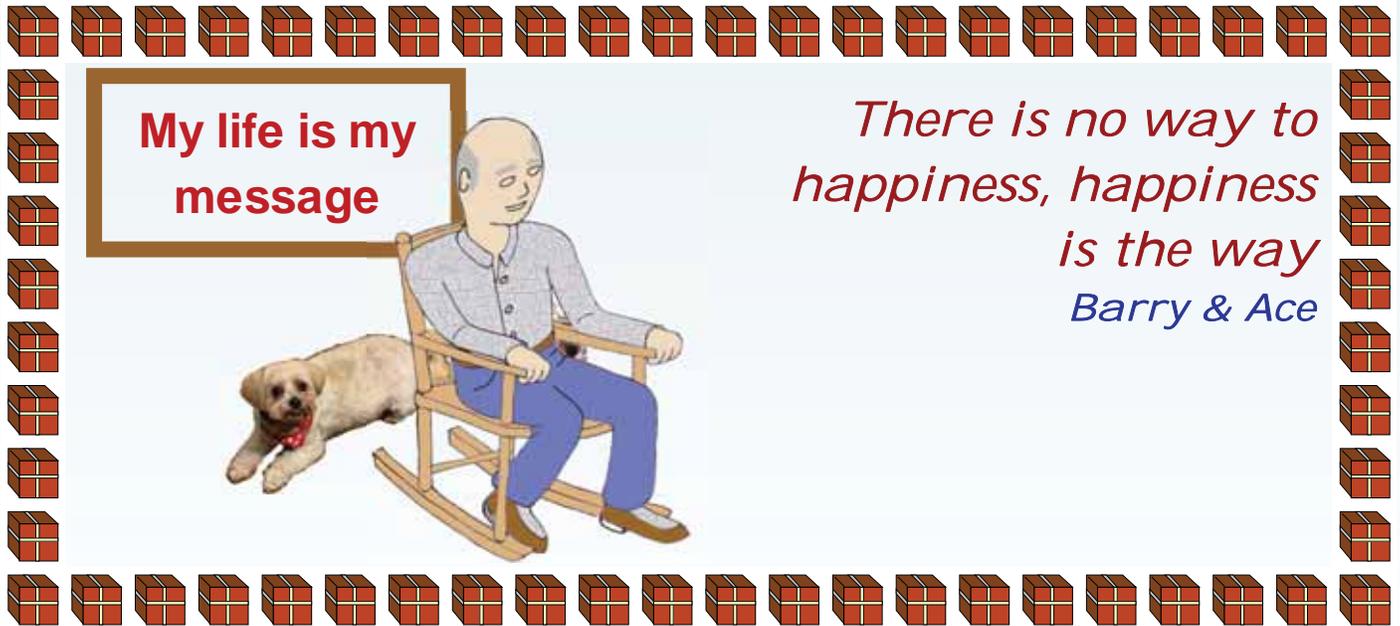
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