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BULLETIN BRIEFS

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RESURRECTING AN OLD PLOY

Jim E. Waldron

Brothers Rick Atchley of the Richland Hills Church, Fort Worth, TX and Jeff Walling of the Providence Road Church, Charlotte, NC are both pushing as hard as they can to introduce instruments among the churches of Christ (www.christianchronicle.org/ aug/dec'06). Both know mechanical instruments with sacred music (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs—Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) are not authorized (Col. 3:17) either by command and/or example, but they want them and they are going to have them.

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So, they are using the ploy that a matter of judgment. They want Walling has advocated this for years Gobel Music, Behold The Pattern, 5114 Montclair St., Colleyville, TX 76034, pp. 198-223). Atchley on the web page of the Richland Hills Church in December '06 (www.rhchurch.org/audio.php) declared that the question of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God is like the question of circumcision in the early church (Acts 15) i.e., a matter of custom,

choice or tradition.

In doing this these brothers and other change agents among us are resurrecting the doctrine of expediency which was used so successfully from 1870 onward by Isaac Errett of the Christian Standard and others to corrupt the worship of the churches and divide the body of Christ (Earl West, Search For The Ancient Order, Vol. II, pp. 81-92).

The Richland Hills church has sent out a DVD showing Jeff Walling's speech before the Christian Church Convention, Louisville, KY June 27-30, 2006. The DVD not only features Walling with smooth words and fair speech painting sound brethren, like his

father, as hard-hearted legalists, but it also shows a slick gospelrock stage production with a full band.

THE ARGUMENT OF EXPEDIENCY Glenn V. McCoy

Those who favored the use of the instrument in worship planted their primary argument for its use squarely upon the matter of expediency. This argument had previously been used in the case for the American Christian Missionary Society. The outspoken advocate of this position was Isaac Errett through the *Christian Standard*. In the spring of 1870 Errett came out in the *Christian Standard* taking the position that he would counsel against congregations using the instrument for the sake of harmony, but he said that it was just a matter of opinion, and that its use by a congregation should not be a test of fellowship. Ben Franklin disagreed in the June, 1870 issue of the *American Christian Review:*

"We put it on no ground of opinion or expediency. The acts of worship are all prescribed in the law of God. If it is an act of worship, or an element in worship, nothing may be added to it. If it is not an act of worship, or an element in worship, it is most wicked and sinful to impose it on the worshippers. It is useless to tell us, 'It is not to be made a test.' If you impose it on the conscience of brethren and, by a majority vote, force it into the worship, are they bound to stifle their consciences? Have you a right to compel them to submit and worship with the instrument?...If you press the instrument into the worship, we care not whether you call it an element in the worship or an aid, and drive them away, because they cannot conscientiously worship with the instrument, YOU cause the division — YOU are the AGGRESSOR — the INNOVATOR you do this, too, for the accompaniment of corruption and apostasy, admitting at the same time that you have no conscience in the matter."

Clearly, Franklin felt strongly that the use of instrumental music was not merely a matter of opinion. Man had no right to add an element of human origin to the divine worship. Such was an unacceptable innovation. These two views, championed by Errett on one side and Franklin on the other were miles apart. Down to the present day this has been the fundamental reason why fellowship between the churches of Christ on one side, and the Christian Church on the other is

not achievable.

22470 Missions Hill Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92887 NATION'S LARGEST CHURCH OF CHRIST ADDING INSTRUMENTAL SERVICE

Bobby Ross, Jr. The Christian Chronicle December 19, 2006

Editors note: The following comes from an article, which was widely spread on the internet, yet many do not have access to that medium. Here we are reproducing only the first portion due to the lack of space. You may check the whole at (www.christianchronicle.org). It is self explanatory in that it boldly illustrates the work of change agents among us who are restructuring churches of Christ and seeking to mute our efforts to return to the old paths of the gospel (Acts 2:42; 1Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2). Some will claim that the autonomy of the local church permits them to do these kinds of things, but we are to "love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17). That statement alone makes it clear that no congregation or eldership has the right to hide behind autonomy, poison their own flock (Acts 20:28 -30) and spew their toxicity over that rampart. One might as well add stone prayer wheels to worship like the Buddhists, as to use machinery with which to praise; neither can teach and admonish (Col. 3:16). Praise is to be done with the lips (Heb. 13:15), and to the question of adding instruments to the worship the Lord did say, "Thou shalt not" (Rev. 22:18) J. Waldron.

"Richland Hills minister says new service the result of three years of study, prayer and fasting by 6,400 member Texas congregation's elders. The Richland Hills church in Texas—the largest of the nation's 13,000 a cappella churches of Christ—has decided to add an instrumental worship assembly with communion on Saturday nights. Jon Jones, an elder and former pulpit minister at the 6,400— member church, told the congregation December 3rd, 2006, that Richland Hills' elders 'fully and completely' endorsed the decision.

"There is unity in our eldership, and we are so thankful for that,' Jones told church members at a combined adult Bible study, according to a video on the church Web site. Elder Roger Dean characterized the congregation's overall response as 'extremely positive.' 'Frankly, we did not know what to expect,' Dean said. 'We felt like it was going to be pretty difficult, but it has not been. People are truly supporting the leadership and the eldership.""

"Senior minister Rick Atchley — a national leader in efforts to foster better relations with instrumental Christian Churches — told the congregation the decision should help ease crowding at Richland Hills' two Sunday morning services. Moreover, he said, it will allow the congregation to 'reach more people who need Christ.' 'We didn't make this decision on a Tuesday and announce it on a Sunday,' Atchley said in the adult Bible study, citing much study, prayer and fasting by the elders. 'This has been part of about a three-year journey that the leadership has been on.'"

BULLETIN BRIEFS TENTH YEAR

The year 2007 marks the tenth year for *Bulletin Briefs*. It was January 1998 that this little paper first saw the light of day. During this time the articles have not been designed for political correctness, the tender ears of a PTA or to fill bowls with Pablum for those who love a social gospel.

We have dealt with the wickedness of boozing and social drinking, of the lottery and playing the slots, of abortion and euthanasia, of so-called gay marriages and unscriptural unions, of the prom and other forms of lasciviousness, etc. A major thrust has been to deal with change agents among us who lust after the lack of a pattern in the community churches and push as hard as they can to re-structure the churches of Christ in that shapeless mold.

These new digressives, who are like termites in the house of God, are often high profile—as per the *Christian Chronicle* and the internet—and therefore cause many to be concerned at the danger of this new push toward apostasy.

And well we should for it illustrates the ever present danger of "the mystery of lawlessness" (II Thess. 2:7), which in every generation attacks "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

You will however be pleased to know in these nine years how few churches have asked to be dropped from our mailing list. Some may be simply throwing them away, but until this date only 391 have asked to be removed from that list. That figure is 3.3 percent of the total we began with in 1989.

If you can ascertain the original number, we will send you a free copy of a book that is not on our free list: Return To The Old Paths, by Glenn McCoy. Simply send your answer