

JEFF WALLING & THE INSTRUMENT

Jim E. Waldron

Churches of Christ in the United States in the latter part of the 1800's were in a life and death struggle with a strong digressive movement for their very existence. Isaac Errett of Cincinnati, editor of *The Christian Standard*, took the position that instrumental music in worship was not commanded, but it was a matter of opinion. Due to this approach and the popularity of instruments hundreds of churches across Ohio, Indiana and other places were caught up in the so-called progressive movement and swept from the old paths of the gospel into the ranks of denominationalism. Had Errett taken a frontal approach through the pages of *The Standard* he might not have made such an impact. The devil is using the same ploy now by saying to our young people, instruments of music in worship are just a matter of opinion.

Jeff Walling of the Providence Road church in Charlotte, NC has been making this argument for years. For example, as far back as 1981 he publicly took such a stand. That year the church of Christ at 816 N. Andover Rd, Andover, Kansas 67002 held a youth rally at the local high school. Brother Walling was a guest speaker.

During a panel discussion, moderated by Chuck Northrop (P. O. Box 10892, Conway, AR 72034) a question was asked about the scripturalness of instrumental music in worship. Northrop correctly affirmed that such was not authorized showing from Ephesians 5:19 and other scriptures that acappella music is. At this point Walling, who was not on the panel, came to the platform and literally pushed Northrop away from the podium and declared, instrumental music in worship is simply "a matter of opinion...a gray area." Walling has continued this theme over the years. (***Behold The Pattern***, 5114 Montclair, Colleyville, TX 76034).

It is a matter of historical record that Isaac Errett's position brought much division, sorrow and heartache to the churches of Christ of his generation. Jeff Walling is doing the same today in youth rallies (e.g., Winterfest) and lecture series. Those who constitute the board of directors of David Lipscomb University, the faculty and those promoting Lipscomb as though it stands for the truth ought to know these things, but they are set to perpetuate more division and heartache in Middle Tennessee and the nation this summer. For they have scheduled Walling as one of their speakers, July 5-8 in their "Summer Celebration." These men are like those described by the Holy Spirit, "by good words and fair speeches(they) deceive the hearts of the simple"(Rom.16:18) Go to "<http://summercelebration.lipscomb.edu>" on the internet to see a host of speakers who are determined to do for the churches of Christ what Errett did 125 years ago.

BULLETIN BRIEF

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THEY WENT OUT FROM US

Jim E. Waldron

One hundred years ago for the first time the U. S. religious census recognized (1906) the distinction between the churches of Christ and the Christian Church. The division had been taking place over some fifty years; the reason for the split was the question of Biblical authority. Those in the churches of Christ said there is no authority in the word of God for a super-church body like the American Christian Missionary Society. They also pointed out that even though instruments of music had been used in Jewish worship, neither Jesus nor His apostles ever authorized such in the worship of Christians. The doctrine of Christ by example and command shows that sacred music (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs) is to be acappella (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:26, Acts 16:25, Rom. 15:9, I Cor. 14:15, Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, Heb. 2:12, James 5:13; cf. Heb. 13:15). And we must abide in the doctrine of Christ for if we do not we do not have God (II John 9-11).

Hundreds of churches across the nation were taken over by the so-called progressives who subscribed to the American Christian Missionary Society and instruments of music in worship. "***They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us...***" (I John 2:19). Now they want to re-unite with the churches of Christ, but on the same terms: compromise the word of truth. This reminds one of a drunkard who leaves his wife because she objects to his bottle, but later says, it is your fault, *but* we can reconcile if you will accept my bottle. The Christian Church leaders and their membership have no intention of abandoning the things that caused the division in the first place. In this they are being aided by some rather high profile men in the church. Read on,

RELIGION TODAY

Murray Evans — Associated Press Writer

TULSA, Ok. (AP) March 30, 2006. The turning point for Jeff Walling came two decades ago at a church youth conference. Sitting with arms folded, he listened to 3,000 teenagers singing and praising God with a guitar accompaniment - and felt ashamed. Walling, the son of a Churches of Christ preacher, had adamantly held to his group's teaching that using instrumental music in worship was wrong. But as he heard the youths worship, he began having doubts. Now Walling and other Churches of Christ leaders are at the forefront of what could be a seminal moment for their fellowship - a possible reconciliation with another group of independent congregations 100 years after the two became recognized as separate.

Neither group speaks of itself as a "denomination" and the distinction between the two can be confusing to outsiders. Local congregations, known collectively as the "Churches of Christ," shun practices not contained in the New Testament - in particular the use of musical instruments in worship. The "independent Christian" or "instrumental" churches, use musical instruments and generally associate with the annual North American Christian Convention. But the two groups have common roots.

"I have struggled mightily with this. Not this moment, as much as getting to this moment over the last 20-plus years," said Walling, the pulpit minister for the Providence Road Church of Christ in Charlotte, N.C., during the Tulsa International Soul Winning Workshop. The annual meeting is one of the nation's largest gatherings for Churches of Christ members. This year's workshop included independent Christian speakers, and prominent preachers from both groups shared keynote addresses.

The two groups claim a combined 2.6 million members in 20,000 U.S. congregations. But some, particularly within Churches of Christ, aren't excited about the possibility of reconciliation, as they believe that to compromise on the instrumental-music issue is akin to risking one's salvation. They maintain that there is no New Testament example of instruments being used in worship, and that Christians need to be silent where the Bible is silent.

MORE THAN ONE KIND OF UNITY

Jim E. Waldron

A lanky, lean snake got in touch with a fairly fat frog. The frog was flattered by the attention of the snake, yet he was a bit apprehensive as to what was on the snake's mind.



"Unity is on my mind," declared the lanky, lean snake.

"Unity?" asked the fairly fat frog. "What is the benefit of unity between snakes and frogs?"

"Oh, many things!" exclaimed the lanky, lean snake. "I, for example, envision close communion between snakes and frogs. It will provide warmth and energy, especially when snakes and frogs get together at meal time. I mean close communion. Yes, sir, real close communion."

"But how could the two of us ever get together to talk about unity?" asked the fairly fat frog.

"We could have a Summit," declared the lanky, lean snake.

"A Summit?" gulped the friendly, fat frog. "A Summit? Do you mean a Summit like the Russians and Americans used to have? What would we do at a Summit?"

"Eat...er, I mean plan programs where we can work together," said the snake.

"Where could we have such a Summit?"

"At my place, of course."

"But what would we talk about?"

"There are many things to talk about. But we must discuss ways snakes can get together with frogs. We have been kept apart too long."

"Will we discuss the evenly spaced row of ivory teeth you have?" Asked the faintly fearful frog.

"Oh, of course not!" Exclaimed the lanky, lean snake. "Only knuckleheads bring up such subjects. If anyone wants to press that subject, we will not invite him."

"Now I wouldn't want to be classified as a knucklehead," said the fairly festive frog. "But there are many who are concerned about your evenly spaced row of ivory teeth."

"Well, I certainly have no intentions of giving up my teeth. I have had this evenly spaced row of ivory teeth for over 100 years and I am joined to them."

"Speaking of 100 years ago, didn't a lot of your ancestors take away a number of our congregating places?" said the fairly fat frog who with flaccid fervor sought to stem the failing of his fleeting faith. "In fact," he continued, "as I recall, many faithful friends were forced from their property because of that evenly spaced row of ivory teeth."

Flashing a toothy smile, the lanky, lean snake sighed, "That's negative. We will make this Summit meeting positive. Negatives like the loss of property will not be discussed. Everything must be on the upbeat. We must not dwell on the differences between snakes and frogs. That would be detrimental to our goal. Remember the goal is for snakes to unite with frogs. There are con-artists who want to keep frogs at enmity with snakes."

"People who point out differences between snakes and frogs are erecting walls instead of building bridges. When they dwell on my evenly spaced row of ivory teeth or my wide mouth for swallowing things, they become architects of anarchy and masons of mutiny. It cannot be expected that snakes will be transformed into frogs. We will just have to accept unity in diversity. Untold harm has been done to the cause of snake and frog unity by stressing differences. Things argued into prominence would long since have died if not given artificial respiration through debate. Snakes do not like to debate; they would rather eat."

"What will we discuss then?" Asked the fairly fat frog whose feeble faith had finally fizzled.

"We will discuss cooperation in meetings and missions, especially foreign missions. We can talk about your coming to my den for dinner and I to your pad for plate lunch. We must emphasize the importance of togetherness between snakes and frogs. In fact, snakes and frogs must unite."

"Jolly," said the fairly fat frog as he gushingly invited the snake to tadpole school to lecture on the urgency of snake and frog unity.

