

A Note From A “Minister Of Music”

The following article, written by Tom Lawson, reflects the point of view of someone who likes and uses instrumental music to worship God:

I am a part of the Independent Christian Church segment of the Restoration Movement. I only share that so my criticisms of instrumental music might be heard from my perspective. I would point out the following advantages of a cappella worship.

First, it tends to maintain the central players in worship as a congregation rather than the performers up front. When the music of worship is the music of the church itself, it seems less likely that we will move from worship to watching worship. The worth of a particular service is, many times, gauged by the quality of the performances. Applause is not merely tolerated, it is expected.

Second, it tends to preserve times of silence within congregational worship. My church feels obligated to not allow a single moment of silence within the entire worship experience. Every moment when someone is not speaking or singing must be filled with the organ or the piano. I do not need my moods programmed at every moment.

Third, it tends to preserve a simplicity of worship that may be increasingly attractive in our complicated age. I am baffled why some within the church of Christ would pick this time to move toward the inclusion of the instrument in worship. Doesn't the growing attraction of everything from a cappella secular music to Gregorian chants give indication that less may be more and that simplicity and times of silence may have an attraction as great as the 'big performance'?

To my friends within the church of Christ, I would encourage you to think long and hard before you join the rest of the evangelical world in this area that so clearly impacts the entire worship service. I find myself wishing that, at least once in a while, we would close up the piano, turn off the organ, unplug the guitars, and just see what would happen.

Interesting article, is it not? Although this man made no scriptural arguments for the use of a capella singing, of which there are many, his observations are most helpful in a time when a surprising number of local churches are considering implementing instrumental music into their worship services.

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