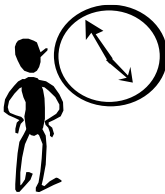


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### Time of Assembly



#### Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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## When Were Musical Instruments First Used in Christian Worship?

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

When Christianity arrived in the world, it drew followers from all nations. *"And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.'" For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3).* Interestingly, those people came from religions that traditionally used musical instruments in their worship but in Christianity, worship music was only vocal. It was a distinguishing mark that early Christians took pride in.

"Your [pagan] public assemblies I have come to hate. For there are excessive banquets and subtle flutes that provoke people to lustful movements" [Justin Martyr, 1.272, c. AD 160].

"The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches, as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song." [Pseudo-Justin Martyr, quoted in Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, vol. 1, p. 189].

"Of such persons, too, the Spirit has spoken through Isaiah: "They drink wine with harps, tablets, psalteries, and flutes. However, they do not regard the works of God." [Irenaeus, 1.464, c. AD 180].

"If people occupy their time with pipes, psalteries, choirs, dances, Egyptian clapping of hands, and such disorderly frivolities, they become quite immodest .. Let the pipe be resigned to shepherds, and the flute to the superstitious ones who are engrossed in idolatry. For, in truth, such instruments are to be banished from the temperate banquet ..."

[Clement of Alexandria, 2.248, c. AD 195].

“Of old, at the time those of the circumcision were worshipping with symbols and types, it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the *psalterion* and *cithara* and to do this on Sabbath days... But we in an inward manner keep the part of the Jew, according to the saying of the apostle... (Romans 2:28f.) We render our hymn with a living *psalterion* and a living *cithara* with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety, we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms. We are accustomed to employ such *psalmodies* and spiritual *citharas* because the apostle teaches this saying, “*in psalms and odes and spiritual hymns*” (Ephesians 5:19). Otherwise the *kithara* might be the whole body, through whose movements and deeds the soul renders a fitting hymn to God. The ten-stringed *psalterion* might be the worship performed by the Holy Spirit through the five senses of the body (equaling the five powers of the soul).” [Eusebius, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 91:2-3; *Patrologia Graeca* 23:1172D-1173 A].

“Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration V, Against Julian II*, speaks of things Christians have in contrast to pagan practices and says: “*Let us take up hymns instead of timbrels, psalmody instead of lewd dances and songs, thankful acclamation instead of theatrical clapping...*” (*Patrologia Graeca* 35:709B). His *Epistle 232 (193)* opposes the mixing of “*bishops with laughter, prayers with applause, and psalmody with instrumental accompaniment*” at weddings (*Patrologia Graeca* 37:376A).” [Everette Ferguson, *A Cappella Music in the Public Worship of the Church*].

It is generally believed that Pope Vitalian I attempted to introduce instrumental music in A.D. 660.

"The second ceremony are the musical instruments, which began to be used in the service of the Church in the time of Pope Vitalian about the year 660, as Platinu relates out of the Pontifical, or as Aimonius rather thinks, after the year 820 in the time of Lewis the Pious." [Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), *De Missa* 2.15 item de bon. Oper. 1.17].

"Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some churches of western Europe, about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 775." [*The American Cyclopaedia*, Vol. 12].

"The organ is said to have been first employed in the church during the time of Pope Vitalian I." [c. 666 a.d.] [*New International Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13, p. 446].

But the use of instrumental music continued to be renounced for centuries after this point.

"Our own cantors grasp neither cymbals, nor lyre, nor *kithara* nor any other kind of musical instrument in their hands, but rather in their hearts. For in so far as the heart is superior to the body, to that extent does what takes place in the heart better manifest devotion to God, than what is done by the body. These very cantors are the trumpet, they are the *psalterium*, they the *kithara*, they the *tympana*, they the chorus, they the strings and the body of the instrument, they the cymbals. Wherefore Augustine said of the last psalm in his book on the psalms. . ." [Amalarius (780-850), *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, Libri IV].

"Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize." [Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Bingham's *Antiquities*, vol. 3, p. 137].

However, instruments gradually became accepted in Roman Catholic services. However, it remained unused by the Orthodox churches.

"According to Plating ('De vitis Pontificum', Cologne, 1593), Pope Vitalian (657-72) introduced the organ into the church service. This, however, is very doubtful. At all events, a strong objection to the organ in church service remained pretty general down to the twelfth century, which may be accounted for partly by the imperfection of tone in organs of that time. But from the twelfth century on, the organ became the privileged church instrument . . ." [*The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913 edition), vol. XI, pp. 300-301].

"We have brought into our churches certain operatic and theatrical music; such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words as I hardly think was ever in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time learning these whining tones." [Erasmus (1466-1536), *Commentary on 1 Cor. 14:19*].

Initially, the Protestant denominations rejected instrumental music.

"With respect to the tabret, harp, and psaltery, we have formerly observed, and will find it necessary afterwards to repeat the same remark, that the Levites, under the law, were justified in making use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been his will to train his people, while they were as yet tender and like children, by such rudiments, until the coming of Christ. But now when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the shadows of the law, and taught us that God is to be served in a simpler form, it would be to act a foolish and mistaken part to imitate that which the prophet enjoined only upon those of his own time. From this, it is apparent that the Papists have shown themselves to be very apes in transferring this to themselves." [John Calvin (1509-1564) on *Psalms 81:2*].

“As to the playing of organs in the church, it is maintained that this should be completely discontinued in accordance with the teaching of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:19. And although some of these churches still use it at the end of the preaching as the people are leaving, it nevertheless generally causes the people to forget what was previously heard. There is also concern that organ playing will lead to superstition as it now does to levity. If organ playing would be discontinued, then it would be more appropriate to collect the alms at the doors as the people are leaving rather than in the middle of the service which hinders the worship of God.” [Provincial Synod of the Churches of Holland and Zeeland, Acts and Decisions of the Provincial Synod of the Churches of Holland and Zeeland held in Dordrecht Beginning on 16 June and ending on the 28th June 1574 in *The Church Orders of the 16th Century Reformed Churches of the Netherlands Together with their Social, Political, and Ecclesiastical Context*, trans. and collated by Richard R. Ridder with the assistance of Rev. Peter H. Jonker and Rev. Leonard Verduin (Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1987), p. 159].

“Latin songs, as well as organs (first introduced into the churches by Pope Vitellianus about 665) are for the most part abolished in the churches of this land.” [Nassau Confession (1578), vol. 3, p. 515].

“We do not consider the use of organs in the churches to be good especially for the preaching (services). Therefore, we judged that ministers should labor, even though organs are tolerated for a time, that they be removed at the earliest and most suitable time.” [National Synod of the Netherlands, German, and Walloon Churches...held at Dordrecht (1578), *ibid.*, p. 220].

As before, this gradually changed and by the 1900s instrumental music became common in various denominations.

## Kindness is a Virtue

By Jefferson David Tant

It is well known that several passages in God’s Word mention the virtue of kindness. One that is quite well known is Galatians 5:22-23: “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*”

There are also passages in the Old Testament where kindness is mentioned. “*He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?*” (Micah 6:8).

So, we understand that kindness is a characteristic of Christians. But, to whom are we to show kindness? Obviously, we show kindness to our family in the flesh and our family in the Spirit.

Enemies -- But there are others who should also be the objects of our kindness. For example, what about our enemies? Christ had a word about this which we can read in Luke 6:35: "*But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*"

It is quite obvious that Christ set the example for us, as we remember some of his last words as He was dying on the cross: "*But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves*" (Luke 23:34). Do you find it difficult to show kindness to those who have wronged you? Probably so. But since God gave us the power to control our emotions, we can have a forgiving spirit.

## Enemies

Christ had more to say about this attitude toward enemies: "*But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ... 'If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same .... But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men'*" (Luke 6:27, 33, 35).

Then the words of Christ in Mark 11:25-26: "*Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.*" Evidently, God is serious about the command to show kindness to our enemies.

## Strangers

Then, what about strangers? Note Paul's words concerning widows: "*A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work*" (1 Timothy 5:9-10). Then the exhortation in Hebrews 13:2 "*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*" Do you remember who came to visit Lot? They were strangers and he did not know they were angels, but he invited them in and took care of them. "*Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, 'Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.' They said however, 'No, but we shall spend the night in the square.'*" Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him

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*and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate” (Genesis 19:1-3).*

John also had some words about strangers: *“I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers” (3 John 1:4-5).*

Have you ever been out in public and noticed a stranger in some difficulty, and offered to help? How about a woman struggling to load groceries from her shopping cart into her car? How about a blind man seeking to cross a busy street? How about a woman, or maybe an elderly man, stopped beside the road due to a flat tire?

When you have strangers visiting the congregation where you attend, do you ever invite them to have dinner with you? My wife and I have been the recipients of such invitations, and it is good to be welcomed by brethren.

### Brethren

Is the congregation of which you are a member known for its brotherly kindness? Sunday is a time when brethren are together, and a good time to tell others, “Let’s have lunch together.” Such occasions help to produce unity, that which binds together a spiritual family.

*“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor” (Romans 12:10).*

*“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).*

### Animals

We could go on and on, but there is one more thing I would like to mention, and that is kindness to animals. I have known of those who have harshly abused animals, and I don’t think that’s what God wants us to do. How do you suppose Christ treated the young donkey that he rode into Jerusalem in what is called “The Triumphal Entry?”

*“Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.’” (John 12:14-15).*

And, of course, through ancient times, the people of God were dependent upon animals for their labor, farm work, and transportation.

And finally, here is an act of kindness shown by an employee at a Dunkin’ Donuts shop as a donut is being given to a Raccoon. A motorist was in the drive-thru lane and took a picture of what was happening in front of him. And I don’t think the raccoon was charged for the treat. So kindness can take many forms.

