



Oologah  
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“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

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## THE DANGER OF CHORUSES

Michael B. Willy

Much has been written about the efforts by some to introduce choirs and other “special music” into the worship of the church. However, many in the brotherhood have been silent about a practice that has become commonplace for many congregations of the Lord’s church around the country: the hosting of a performance of a choral group from one of our “Christian schools.” These performances generally take place prior to or immediately after worship services and generally involve the choral singing of spiritual songs. The purpose of this discussion is to examine some of the dangers involved with these activities.

It is necessary at this point briefly to discuss the “law of exclusion” which stands for the proposition that where God has given a specific commandment to do something in a particular way; all other options are excluded, since they are not authorized. A familiar example is God’s selection of a type of wood with which Noah was to build the ark. Because of God’s command to use gopherwood (Genesis 6:14) in building the ark, all other types of wood were excluded, since no other is authorized. In order to be pleasing to God, Noah had to follow God’s specific command and use gopherwood in the construction of the ark.

The singing of spiritual songs is very definitely controlled by the law of exclusion. We are told to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). Ephesians 5:19 says, “Speaking to yourselves in

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are to be sung “to the Lord.” While singing, we are to teach and admonish each other, but **God is the One** to whom our song worship is directed. The Greek words for “one another” and “to yourselves” are reciprocal reflexive pronouns, which require the participation of all persons present. Therefore, what is authorized by these two verses is the **a capella, congregational** singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord. All other options are excluded by the specificity of God’s command. They are not authorized.

When spiritual songs are sung in a choral performance, the songs are not sung to the Lord as commanded but to the audience. The audience does not participate in the singing as commanded but merely listens. Because such performances violate the authority given us in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, they are an unscriptural method of singing spiritual songs. This is because there is no authority in the Scripture for the choral performance of spiritual songs. Christians cannot participate in such choral concerts, either as a performer or spectator, and be pleasing in God’s sight.

Proponents of the use of choruses would argue that because choral performances do not occur during worship, they are approved. This argument seems to stand for the proposition that, prior to or immediately after the worship service ends, the use of another form of music in singing spiritual songs is authorized, and that a Christian’s conduct needs to be conformed to God’s standard **only** during worship services. Furthermore, this argument has the logical result of reducing New Testament Christianity to a religion that has effect only during worship services. But in Colossians 3:17, Paul tells us, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” If we are to do all things in the name of the Lord, or by His authority, then we must do all things in accordance with His will. God has given His commands regarding music. If we go beyond that authorization, we are doing works of iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23). Regardless of when choral performances of spiritual songs occur, they are unscriptural. Such is not authorized.

Others will argue that because the purpose of the choral performers is entertainment, such is approved. In Exodus 20:7, we are told, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Reducing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (all of which invoke the name of God or His Son, Jesus Christ), to entertainment is, in effect, calling on the name of God and then saying, “*Don’t pay attention God, we’re just entertaining.*” It is taking the name of God in vain. There is no difference between the choral performance of spiritual songs and a performance by a “contemporary Christian” band. In either case, spiritual songs are sung in a manner which is not authorized by God’s word, and both are a form of entertainment. Yet,

why is one allowed while the other most assuredly would not be? Clearly, such “entertainment” is not pleasing to God.

Allowing choral performances before or after worship services desensitizes brethren to sin. This situation is similar to the one years ago where some elders allowed the membership to keep a piano in the basement of the church building in order to practice their singing. It was not long before the piano was moved into the auditorium. As noted above, many in the brotherhood are advocating the use of “special music groups” during worship. Surely the practice under consideration here helped pave the way for this apostasy and will continue to do so in congregations where these activities are allowed.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:22, we are told to “abstain from every form of evil” (ASV). In my opinion, it is the height of hypocrisy for brethren to criticize denominations and apostate brethren for using a choir during worship services and then have their own choir perform five minutes after the worship service is ended. These activities communicate the message that the church of Christ approves of choirs, and thereby placing a stumbling block in the path of the lost and those weak in the faith.

Many elderships allow such performances because they feel that since one of “our” schools supports the chorus, such activities must be scriptural. However, elders have the responsibility to feed and watch over the flock (1 Peter 5:2), and these responsibilities cannot be delegated to the administrators of our “Christian colleges.” Elders who allow such unscriptural practices will one day have to give an account (Hebrews 13:17).

It should be apparent that there are many dangers inherent in these choral performances. Those who respect God’s Word will reject such unscriptural “entertainment” and seek His authority for all things (Colossians 3:17). Only in so doing, will we be found acceptable in God’s sight.

TOO BUSY

There was a little girl who asked her mom one day, “Could you help me learn my Bible verse and teach me how to pray?”

Now Mom was very busy, as mamas often are. So she continued with all her chores and said, “We’ll do that later, dear. Now, go and play outdoors.”

The years passed by swiftly, and the little girl grew into a woman. One day her very busy mother said, “Let’s sit and talk a while when all my work is through.”

“No, Mother,” was her answer. “I have no time. Can’t sit with you and chat. While you were busy working, I found other things to do. You know, like drugs and sex and money is really where it’s at!”

So, Mothers, listen carefully when your children ask, “Mama, will you help me?” Put aside your chores and sit down by their side. Your time could save a soul from the hands of the evil one!

Observations and Concerns

May 3, 2023

Welcome Visitors! We are grateful you have decided to visit us today.

“I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies” (Psalm 18:3).

Expression of Gratitude: Remember to thank the Lord who daily loads us with benefits, both physical and spiritual (Psalm 68:19).

Just a reminder, there will be **no potluck** in May.

The **men’s business meeting** is this coming Sunday evening (May 7<sup>th</sup>) after services.

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ **Dicie Jackson** is recovering from surgery. It’s been good to have her with us some.
- ▶ We are thankful that **Bill Dilks** had a successful cataract surgery last week.
- ▶ **Nelda Hudson** continues to have issues with her heart.
- ▶ **Jim Allison** is recovering from a fall and a stint procedure. We are thankful he has been able to be with some the past few weeks.
- ▶ **Bobbie Mooney**, friend of the Nelsons, has cancer that has metastasized to her liver and lungs.
- ▶ **Jacob Weston**, grandson of the Hudsons, was attacked by a dog and sustained severe injuries to his arms.

Children need strength to lean on, a shoulder to cry on, and an example to learn from.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, May 3	Sunday, May 7 AM	Sunday, May 7 PM
	Announcements	Chris Nelson	Paul Praschnik	Ross Swearingen
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen	Bill Dilks
	Prayer	Paul Praschnik	Doyle Jackson	Chris Nelson
	Lord’s Supper (speaker)		Chuck Northrop	Doyle Jackson
	Lord’s Supper		Chris Nelson	
	Lesson	Russ Earl	Russ Earl	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer / Door Attendant	Ross Swearingen	Bill Dilks / Paul Praschnik	Russ Earl
Sundays				
Bible Classes. . . 9:30 AM				
Worship . . . . . 10:30 AM				
Worship . . . . . 5:00 PM				
Wednesdays				
Bible Classes. . . 7:00 PM				
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