

FROM THE PREACHER

By: Blake Hudson

A Cappella Worship Service: Setting the Context, pt. 3

Over the past couple of weeks, the history of musical instruments in worship service has been briefly surveyed. This week, we'll consider specifically the Restoration Movement.

As with other reform movements, the Restoration Movement began with a rejection of instruments in worship. The movement was based on a call to strict faithfulness to the Bible for the sake of truth and unity. Therefore, what is done in worship must be approved of in the New Testament. For the first several decades there was no great controversy regarding instruments in worship. Nevertheless, by the 1850's the seed of the future controversy was growing. In 1851, after hearing of some congregations adding instruments to worship, Alexander Campbell publicly denounced the practice and concluded that "to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids [i.e., instruments] would be as a cow bell in a concert" (Millennial Harbinger, September 1851). Which congregations had added instruments is not known, and they must have been few in number.

The first congregation of the Restoration Movement on record for adding instruments to worship was the congregation in Midway, KY which added a melodeon in 1860. The addition was not made without controversy both internal and external. Internally, though in the minority, there were many members opposed to instruments in worship. One such member, Adam Hidler, went so far as to break into the church building at night and steal the melodeon (*The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 2, pg. 312). While his method of protest is morally questionable, his zeal is admirable. Externally, the addition of the melodeon at Midway led to a flurry of articles and counter-articles in the various brotherhood journals. Perhaps it could be called the first battle of Midway.

The debate over instrumental worship was sidelined shortly after it began by the American Civil War. During the war years, focus was turned to the question of participating in the war and to efforts at maintaining unity in the Church as the nation was torn in two. In the decades following the Civil War, however, the debate resumed. More and more congregations began adding instruments to worship and the argument grew more and more heated.

For several decades, efforts were made to keep the congregations of the Restoration Movement united, but the reality of "irreconcilable differences" continued to exert itself. At the heart of the matter were two conflicting approaches to Scripture; the addition of instruments was really a symptom of the deeper issue. Was anything not expressly prohibited by the New Testament acceptable in worship? Or, must any practice included in worship have express New Testament permission? How one answered such questions in large part determined one's opinion on instruments in worship. Over time, the difference in these two approaches led more and more congregations to split or break fellowship due to the addition of instruments. The division was a reality for many years before becoming official in 1906, when the U.S. census for the first time split the Restoration Movement into two groups: Disciples of Christ (those with instruments) and churches of Christ (those without instruments).



HEY TEENS!

There **WILL** be a devotional this Sunday evening, September 14th, hosted by the Sanfords, in the fellowship hall.



COME HAVE FUN WITH US IN OUR

YOUTH GROUP OLYMPICS

HOSTED BY MIDWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

SATURDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2025
3:00 PM

MIDWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST 10408 HWY 6 HITCHCOCK, TX

PLEASE GIVE US TENTATIVE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY 9/7
PATRICK ARMSTRONG 903-503-8752

Please see one of the elders if you plan to participate, if you have any questions or would like more information.

Canned Meat Drive

Goal: 10,000
Current: 5,814

Please put all donations on the cart in the foyer. The office staff will count them and move them into the auditorium. If you would like to give a monetary donation, please see one of the elders or office staff and we will purchase them for you.



I extend my deepest appreciation to everyone for your prayers, texts, expressions of love, kindness, moral support and other acts of kindness shown during the passing of my mother.

Sister Kathleen Vereen



September 28th, James Henry will speak during morning services. Scott Ratcliff will speak in the evening, on the missions and missionaries we support. Please make plans to attend.

We are accepting candy donations for our annual Trunk-or-Treat. If you would like to donate please leave your donations in the foyer.



Please Pray

Stephen Bailey had back surgery today...Barbara Filipp is home...Walter Anderson is scheduled to have kidney stone surgery Thursday 9/11...Bryan Evans, nephew of Bess Buck, has been hospitalized and is fighting a serious infection...Phil Carter is home but, still having some health concerns...Jackie Haynes is home...Charm Moser, sister of Donese Peltier, still needs our prayers

PLEASE REMEMBER:

Shirley Brown, Deena Damron, Robert Gautney, Jeanie Granger, Cliff Harper, Erin West Janik, David Johnson, Karen Lowe, Dorothy King, Marie Leblanc, Theresa Malish, Karen Smith, Charles and Elizabeth Street, Andy Tilley, Johnny Toon, Ceaser Vereen, Maggie Walker