

# CHRISTIANITY: THEN AND NOW

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## DOES BIGGER EQUAL BETTER?

Many brethren seem to think that bigger equals better. Those who are champions of change seem to operate under the illusion that this is the case. Since they now control many of the larger churches among us they presume they must have the better approach. Since they control our largest universities, they must be wiser, smarter and more in tune with the times.

If it is the case that bigger equals better, then surely Catholicism must be better than any other church, including the Church of Christ; but then Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and even animism all have more adherents than do we. Per this logic, they must be better! If bigger is better then many denominational bodies are larger than us and hundreds of denominational congregations are bigger than our biggest change churches, therefore folks should seek membership in them since bigger means better!

Is an author better or best because he is most popular and a best seller among the general population? Some imply that since Max Lucado is a popular, best-selling author, he must be saying and doing things right. But if this were the case, Chairman Mao was the greatest writer of our life-time. His little red book, the **Thoughts of Mao** has circulated many millions of copies.

The fact is, big says nothing about moral or spiritual qualities, whether of a business, a church, a school or an author. In fact, sometimes the ingredients that contribute to worldly success in numbers are deception, compromise; a message that is pleasing to the worldly-minded, rather than to God. The fact is, big only proves that a thing is big. It proves nothing about the rightness or goodness of the thing or those who made it big! Paul wrote, "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

Is a teacher better, wiser, more to be listened to or preferred because he has earned a Ph.D. from Harvard, Princeton or some other elite university? No doubt, in

the secular realm, a degree from such a prestigious school is a real plus. In the world of denominationalism, where the Bible is always of secondary consideration, a degree from those top schools demands high respect. We read of "knowledge that is falsely so-called" (I Tim. 6:20). But in God's church, where Christ is the supreme and only head; where Scripture is the absolute and only authority; where loyalty to Jesus, his church and his Word trumps all worldly attainments and knowledge; a Ph.D. from a great university of the world is of minimal consideration (John 12:48). In fact history will reveal that the Lord's church has suffered more from highly educated men than from common folks; from brilliant men filled with arrogance and pride than from the ordinary men, of ordinary educational attainments (I Cor. 1:21, 26-27).

Today it is not those ordinary preachers, toiling away in their local communities, that are giving us grief. The chaos and disruption is primarily flowing out of our Christian Universities and led by those change leaders who are so proud of their advanced degrees. We have had and now have well-educated men in our ranks who are yet humble servants of the Master, who love the church and respect the Word. But we also have a band of intellectuals who are deficient in all these areas. If they have their way the walls of Zion will be undermined and brought crashing to the ground. Big does not equal better nor does sophisticated equal right. At the end of the day, it is loyalty to Christ, love for his church and respect for his Word that makes a man a worthy leader of God's people. **JHW** \*\*\*

**Christianity: Then and Now Vol. III** is not available in a bound edition. Send \$6.50 for your copy. Volumes I and II are also available for the same price. Order all three volumes for \$16.00 post-paid.

Order: **Surviving the Storms of Change; Books About the Change Movement: Reviews and Recom-**

**mendations and Liberalism Deadly Enemy of the Church**, a \$41.00 value for \$32.50, post-paid.

## THE INVALIDS' BRIGADE

At the height of the Civil War every able bodied man in the South was away, serving in the field of battle. Left at home were aged men, young boys and those veterans who had been wounded or maimed in previous battles.

When advancing Union Armies approached a town the call went out for all who could to man the defenses. It was a pathetic but inspiring sight as smooth-faced boys of tender years bravely took their place beside white-headed grandfathers and wounded veterans. There were even courageous women who stood with them. Such was the natural response of those who loved their homeland. Such defenders were often described as an 'Invalids' Brigade."

Today a spiritual war is raging across the brotherhood of churches of Christ. The momentum is with those who are rebelling against the old biblical ways and are determined to change the Lord's church into another denominational body. For months the enemy has been advancing. Already a number of congregations have fallen into their hands. Yet many of our able-bodied men have been hesitant to stand up in defense of the kingdom of Christ. But as they have gone about their own affairs, God has raised up an Invalids' Brigade to defend His Cause. Those who are making it possible for us to publish and send forth **Christianity: Then and Now** and to maintain our [www.Christianity-Then-and-Now.com](http://www.Christianity-Then-and-Now.com) website are primarily aged saints, old veterans of many battles and some who have been wounded. These are folks who love the church of Christ. They remember her glory days when faithful men filled her pulpits and preached the glorious message of salvation without apology. They recall those days when multitudes came out to hear gospel preaching and numbers of them, convicted by the powerful messages, stepped forth to confess Christ. They remember when our schools were truly Christian. They knew them when they were bastions of soundness and their officers considered it their sacred mission to fortify the faith of young Christians and to train young men to be loyal men of God. Back then, the message emanating from the schools was rock solid. They remember with joy the blessings of sweet fellowship when saints communed on Lord's Day and lifted up their songs and prayers to heaven. There was no need then for entertainment to satisfy those who came. They remember when members glorified God in the name Christian and with godly pride identified themselves as

a church of Christ. They saw the Cause of their Savior march from victory to victory. They saw the church grow from a scattered handful meeting in rented halls in poorer neighborhoods to large, strong congregations meeting in beautiful houses of worship on the main streets of town.

The hearts of the Invalids Brigade are broken when they hear young preachers stand before God's people and preach denominational doctrine. They wince with pain when they see them marching hand in hand with denominational leaders. Their hearts are stirred with indignation when they see them laying profane hands on the sacred things God ordained for his worship and denying the great truths of the gospel..

The members of our Invalids' Brigade may be tired, bent and scarred yet they stand up courageously and fight the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12). They contend earnestly for the faith they embraced a half century or more ago (Jude 3). They still love the simple message of the cross and the church which they found in their Bibles when they were searching for the way to heaven. They are determined to pass that faith on to their children and grandchildren. Thank God for our Invalids' Brigade. There is room for you in our ranks should your wish to join us in the defense of the Lord's church. We welcome your participation. **JHW**  
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## PICK YOUR PROJECT

If you are concerned about the damage being done to the church perhaps you will help us in our effort to inoculate our brethren against the virus of change.

- \* We currently send CTN to 737 of the 1900 churches in Texas.
- \* We are mailing 753 of Tennessee's 1160 churches.
- \* We are only reaching 90 of Arkansas' 480 churches

Would you help us reach some of these churches? A monthly contribution of \$50 will allow us to mail two copies of the paper to the leaders of 100 congregations.

- \* We need to mail the 148 congregations in Canada. It will cost us .75 per congregation each month.
- \* For .95 per month we can send two copies of the paper to a church in England, Australia or South Africa.
- \* We need to mail bundles of the paper to the preacher students of our schools. For \$5.00 per month we could mail a bundle of 25 copies to a school of preaching or

Christian College.

\* We need to place our books **Surviving the Storms of Change** and **Books About the Change Movement** in the Libraries of all our schools. For \$27.50 we can send them to the library of one of our schools.

\* For the same price we can place a set of the books in the hands of a young preacher.

If you would like to be involved, please write or call: John Waddey, (623) 214-3715. Email: johnwaddey@aol.com

## RETURN TO THE OLD PATHS

Bro. Glenn McCoy has given us a book by the above title that sets forth in exciting detail the early history of our back to the Bible movement. We call it the Restoration Movement. Out of a morass of denominational confusion, a band of noble men, in the late 1700 and early 1800s, determined to cast off their sectarian bonds and go back to the Bible. They found their spiritual freedom in speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where the Bible is silent. They sought to do Bible things in Bible Ways and call Bible things by Bible names.

After a brief overview of Great Apostasy and the Protestant Reformation, the author explores the early roots of Restoration in Great Britain. His approach to telling the story is to weave it into biographical sketches of great preachers of the past. Among the first generation of American leaders he tells us about Abner Jones, Elias Smith, James O'Kelly, Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Later chapters detail the work of Walter Scott, John Smith, Moses Lard and J. W. McGarvey and a host of other noble men.

The value of this book lies not just in the interesting information it provides, but in identifying the reasons that motivated the Restoration pioneers. It is clear that they saw denominationalism as a great evil. It is evident that understood that God had but one church and that all were expected to be part of it. He notes that all of the early leaders eventually came to understand that baptism was an immersion and for remission of sins. It is clear that our brethren did not see themselves as just another denomination nor did they seek the fellowship of other denominational bodies.

Bro. McCoy devotes a significant amount of attention to the controversy that arose over missionary societies and instrumental music. He documents the opposition that faithful men raised against these innovations. Many useful and valuable quotes are found in the book that show that our early brethren rejected both of these matters and that a later generation of men imposed them on the church and thus caused the ensuing division. The break resulting in the departure of the Disciples of Christ/Christian Churches was finally realized and acknowledged in 1906. But the two

distinct ways of approaching God and practicing the Christian religion were clearly evident 30 years beforehand.

This book is timely because we are now witnessing a repeat of that sad chapter in our history. Those promoting changes for the church have embraced the very same agenda as did those of the liberal progressives a century ago. The clamor for instrumental music in worship, women in leadership roles, fellowship with denominational bodies and the preference for human organizations to do the work that the Master expects of his church are all replays from the past. The reader will see the devastating results the progressives brought upon the church a century ago and is reminded that such is happening to us yet again.

Most of the recent books on Restoration history have been written by authors who are part of the change movement. They hold a low view of the church and have attempted to revise our history to justify their denominational views. It is refreshing to read Bro. McCoy's book because he loves the church. He tells the story of our past as it truly was. It is a book that will greatly benefit all who read it. I recommend it highly. Copies may be ordered from **McCoy Publications, 22470 Mission Hills Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92887. JHW \*\*\***

## THE VOICE OF THE PIONEERS ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Back in 1932 Bro. John T. Lewis of Birmingham published a book entitled, **The Voice of the Pioneers on Instrumental Music and Societies**. That book, long out of print, served a useful purpose to clarify the thinking of our brethren and to refute the false claims of those who were promoting the use of instruments in worship.

Bro. Glenn McCoy has recently given us an excellent book on Restoration history. In the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of his book, **Return to the Old Paths**, he discusses the rise of the instrumental music controversy among our brethren from c.a. 1860 to 1900. I share with you some quotes that will help you understand what our leading preachers thought about the subject 125 years ago.

**Alexander Campbell** wrote: 'I wonder not then that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else 'hosannas languish on their tongues and their devotions die.' And that all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for their spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts should call for such aid, is but natural...So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in the church and whose animal nature flags

under the oppression of church service, I think with Mr. G. that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert” (p. 227).

**Benjamin Franklin**, the gospel preacher, was asked if there might be occasions when instrumental music would be acceptable. Franklin, with dripping sarcasm, responded:

\* “Where a church never had, or has lost the Spirit of Christ..

\* “If a church has a preacher who never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ, who has become a dry, prosing and  
(Continued on p. 4)

**VOICE OF THE PIONEERS** (From p. 3).  
lifeless speaker, so as to be entirely incapable of commanding and interesting an audience, it is thought that instrumental music would draw out and interest the people.

\* “If a church only intends being a fashionable society, a mere place of amusement and secular entertainment, and abandoning all idea of religion and worship, instrumental music would be a very pleasant and agreeable part of such entertainment” (p. 228).

**John W. McGarvey** wrote: “In the earlier years of the Reformation, there was entire unanimity in the rejection of instrumental music from our public worship. It was declared unscriptural, inharmonious with the Christian institution, and a source of corruption. In the course of time individuals here and there called in question the correctness of this decision and attempt was occasionally made to introduce instruments in some churches...” “...I again repeat, that every man who bows to the authority of God’s word, must oppose the use of instrumental music in the church...” (p. 230-231).

**Moses Lard**: Responding to the question, “What should be done with the churches using instrumental music, said, “What shall be done with such churches? Of course, nothing. If they see fit to mortify the feelings of their brethren, to forsake the example of the primitive churches, to condemn the authority of Christ by resorting to will worship, to excite dissension and give rise to general scandal, they must do it. As a body we can do nothing. Still, we have three partial remedies left us to which we should at once resort...Let those brethren who oppose the introduction of an organ first remonstrate in gentle, kind and decided terms. If their remonstrance is unheeded, and the organ is

brought in, then let them at once, and without even the formality of asking for a letter, abandon the church so acting; and let all such members unite elsewhere. Thus these organ grinding churches will in the lapse of time be broken down, or wholly apostatize, and the sooner they are in fragments the better for the cause of Christ” (p. 232-233).

**Robert Richardson** wrote, “The introduction of a musical instrument into a church is a triumph of the sensual over the spiritual” (p. 237).

These great men of God and those who shared their convictions were shouted down by their peers. In their generation most of our churches preferred their organs to the fellowship of those who would not accept that unscriptural innovation. The result was the separation of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches from us. After a full century of recovery and rebuilding we have the bizarre spectacle of a few preachers among us, introducing instrumental music into their worship. Satan never rests. Fools never learn. **JHW \*\*\***

## A BROTHERLY SPIRIT IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR SURVIVAL

Of Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone wrote, “I will not say there are no faults in Brother Campbell, but that there are fewer, perhaps in him than any man I know on earth; and over these few, my love would throw a vale, and hide them from view forever” (Earl West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 1, p. 32).

When the followers of Stone and Campbell contemplated uniting, their similarities far outweighed their differences. John Rogers wrote, “We found ourselves contending for the same great principles of Christianity, and we resolved to unite our energies to harmonize the church and save the world” (**Ibid.** p. 33).

Today our brotherhood faces a crisis of monumental proportions. With a “hostile takeover” being attempted by change agents on the left, those who still believe the Bible and love the church can ill afford to pick at each others’ imperfections. When the spirit of Barton Stone prevailed, our caused flourished in a marvelous way. When brothers attack each other, our enemies laugh as we destroy ourselves. They walk over the battlefield and claim the victory for themselves **JHW \*\*\***

*“I know the past, and thence I will essay to glean a warning for the future, so that man may profit by his errors, and derive experience from his folly” (Shelly)*

*“The worst deluded are the self deluded” (Bovee).*