

Back to Bible Basics

Issue 26

What Would the True Church of Christ Do With the Bible?

Brett Rutherford

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the true church of Christ. However, the claims of the Roman Catholic Church must be reviewed in light of their activities and proclamations. These activities appear to be working against the wishes of God. Would the true church of Christ go to extreme measures to keep the Bible out of the hands of the general population? The answer to that question is obviously "NO". However, that is exactly what the Roman Catholic Church has attempted to do over the past one thousand years. They have burned tens of thousands of copies of Scripture. They have persecuted and killed those who have translated the Bible. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church has executed more Christians, and destroyed more copies of the Bible than the Roman Empire ever did. Consider their history for just a few moments.

In 1199, Pope Innocent III had French Bibles burned in the city of Metz. He forbade the French people from making more copies. If they were caught making more copies of the Bible the Pope would sentence them to death. In 1234, Council of Tarragona, Spain, under the direction of Pope Gregory IX ordered the Spanish people to bring any copies of the Bible they owned to Tarragona to be burned. The Catholic rulers of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella (1474-1516), decreed that no one in their kingdom was to possess a copy of the Bible. In

1383, John Wycliff was condemned for heresy by the Catholic Synod of Oxford for translating the Bible into English. In 1369, the Catholic ruler of Germany, Charles IV issued a decree that no German Bibles were to be produced. In 1553, Pope Julius III was advised by his bishops to take measures to restrict the access to the Scriptures by the general population.

In addition to the aforementioned decrees of this church, the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II was guilty of hosting a Bible burning in Graez, Steiermark on August 8, 1600. In 1637, the Jesuit Order of Bohemia boasted that they had burned as many as 60,000 copies of Scripture in that year alone. In 1713, Pope Clement II condemned anyone for reading the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church strongly opposed the Bible Societies because they were producing copies of the Bible to be distributed to all men. Pope Pius VII called these Bible societies a pest because of this practice. Pope Gregory XVI rebuked those who supported the Bible societies and declared that they were guilty of the grossest crime before God and the church. *

Would the true church of Christ have such an infamous track record in regards to their attitude toward the masses possessing the Scriptures? Thankfully, despite the best efforts of the Roman Catholic Church the Bible is still the current best-selling volume in the world. In 1939, the Bible was translated into its one thousandth language. It is now available in some format in every country in the world.

The Bible was intended by God to be good news for all men. It is the power to save (Romans 1:16). It alone has that power. God intended that every man should read it for himself and realize its power by obeying it. As Paul wrote; "Who [God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The Bereans were declared to be noble for searching the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11).

Furthermore, we will not be adequately prepared to meet the Lord in judgment if we have not studied His word and applied it (John 12:47-48).

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The true church of Christ rejoices when the Scriptures are distributed and read in every country. The pseudo Church of Christ opposes its distribution. It is identified by its actions to squash the reading of the Scriptures by every man. 

*George W. Dehoff, Why We Believe the Bible , Dehoff Publications, Murfreesboro, TN, 1944, pp 115-116.

Singing and Making Melody in Your Hearts to the Lord

Ian McPherson

Colossians 3:16 says: "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". This verse notes the following things about church music.

"LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY". A little girl was taken to hospital for a serious operation. The Doctor said "Cry and scream as much as you want". She replied "I would rather sing". This illustrates the wonderful therapy of singing. Singing is a means that God has devised to have our inner man strengthened, and the word of Christ embedded in our souls.

"IN ALL WISDOM". Wisdom is application to the instruction in God's word. Singing is therefore a vehicle through which a deeper understanding of the gospel is conveyed to the hearts of the hearers. Paul said to the Corinthians, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also"- 1 Corinthians 14:15.

"TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER". This shows that congregational singing is meant. In church worship, every Christian is to sing. Choirs and solos therefore have no place in the worship service. Even if one is "tone deaf", God still requires every worshipper to lift up their voice in praise to Him.

"IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS". Only songs that bring a spiritual and scriptural message, and that are sung in a respectful manner are permitted in worship. Church worship is not for entertainment.

"SINGING". The Greek word here is "Ado" which means only to sing. This can only be done with the human voice. We cannot sing without using words.

Singing is therefore the only type of music that God accepts in worship. Instrumental music, humming, whistling and yodeling are different types of music, and are therefore forbidden by God in worship. Ephesians 5:19 says that when we sing we are to "speak to one another" Mechanical instruments cannot sing, speak, teach or admonish and therefore cannot accomplish anything God wants in worship.

"AND MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEARTS". "Melody" is the Greek word "Psallo". It originally meant to pluck the strings of a musical instrument such as a harp, but by New Testament times it meant only to sing. It is translated as "sing" in Romans 15:9, 1 Corinthians 14:15, and as "sing psalms" in James 5:13. (sing praise AV)

Hence, in the New Testament it means to sing songs of praises to God. The human body is the greatest of all musical instruments. The melody mentioned in the text is that which resonates from the human body as the strings of the heart are plucked and beautiful words of praise that originate in the mind come forth from the larynx.

The human body is the greatest of all musical instruments created by the God of heaven to be offered in sacrificial praise to Him (Romans 12:1), and to be the holy temple that brings Him glory and honour (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

"TO THE LORD". The purpose of our singing is to reach the ears of our Lord. Many ask, "Does it really matter whether or not we sing to mechanical instruments or not?" Those who ask such a question should consider carefully the fate of Nadab and Abihu in the Old Testament who were burnt to death by the Lord because they "offered strange fire to the LORD, which He commanded them not "- Leviticus 10:1-3. In Verse 3 the Lord gives the reason for his wrath. He said to Moses and Aaron, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified".

If Nadab and Abihu incurred the wrath of God by offering strange fire to the Lord, would it not stand to reason that those who offer strange music will also displease the Lord? God has defined the music He wants us to worship Him with, so let us honour His choice by praising Him with the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name - Hebrews 13:15

