

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of June 11, 2023 -

Sunday Morning Service	41
Sunday Evening Service	35
Monday Eve., 06/12/23 Service	37
Wednesday Eve., 06/13/23 Service	36
Wednesday Eve., 06/14/23 Service	27

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of June 11, 2023 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,419.00
Love Offering, Dr. Phil Stringer	\$ 1,055.03
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/11/23:	\$ 2,474.03

- Week of June 4, 2023 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings	\$ 2,457.50
Front Porch Restoration Fund	\$ 50.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/04/23:	\$ 2,507.50

- Week of May 28, 2023 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,498.00
Front Porch Restoration Fund	\$ 150.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 05/28/23:	\$ 1,643.00

- Week of May 21, 2023 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings	\$ 846.00
Love Offering, Dr. Phil Stringer	\$ 250.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 05/21/23:	\$ 1,096.00

- Week of May 14, 2023 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings	\$ 925.00
Front Porch Restoration Fund	\$ 210.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 05/14/23:	\$ 1,135.00

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,600.00



FRONT PORCH RESTORATION FUND -

Amount Received, Week of 06/04/23:	\$ 50.00
TOTAL RECEIVED, THUSFAR:	\$ 410.00

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part of the pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Sadly, some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing THEMSELVES of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, most of our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

1. **By mail** - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. **Drop it off** - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. **Online** - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

**WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE!
YOUR FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR RENEWED OUTREACH EFFORTS!**

Church Directory

Todd W. White	Pastor
Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell, Lois Mae Floyd	Pianists
Derek Quinnelly	Greeter
Larry & Mary Byars	Outreach
LeAnna White	Custodian
GinaMarie Shufelt	Flowers
Seth White	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, David Smith, Derek Quinnelly	Trustees

**SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY
REMINDER**

Volume XXIX

June 18, 2023

Number 24



The Secret Habit of Great Dads

A Special Father's Day Charge from Stephen Kendrick

As young boys, my brothers and I would head out the front door of our home in Smyrna, Georgia to eagerly explore the woods across the street with our neighborhood friends.

Swinging on vines. Killing snakes. Shooting fireworks at one another. As I look back at the dangers we dove into, I can see that God was constantly sparing us of many more emergency room visits than we deserved.

As the youngest son, my personal explorations also took me deep into the uncharted territories of our suburban home. Crawling under beds and hiding in closets, I became very familiar with almost every inch of our house.

But there were a few times in my adventures when I'd wander in on my dad unexpectedly. I never found him looking at inappropriate magazines or using drugs. But - multiple times - I caught him in his room or in his closet on his knees... praying for us and our family.

You can tell a lot about a man's character by what you stumble upon him doing when he's alone. And in my home, I was impacted deeply by how I saw my father willingly bowing before God.

Over the years, I remembered seeing our family's needs being miraculously met when the exact amount of money dad was praying for would show up out of the blue. I saw how God carried us during hard times, clearly guided major decisions, and strategically provided key people and resources to help my father start a Christian ministry in the late 1980's.

Dad prayed and God worked. It was undeniable.

There was clearly a powerful and loving God whose ears were attentive to our gray-headed father's desperate pleas. And my brothers and I had a front row seat to this reality.

Now with four children of my own, I can honestly say that my dad's example and the Word of God have taught me that prayer is one of the most important responsibilities I have as a father.

As men who will one day give an account to God for how we have led our families (Hebrews 13:17), all fathers have been given the ultimate responsibility as the heads of their homes for the physical and spiritual welfare of their children (I Timothy 3:4, Proverbs 17:6).

But God knows that we are sorely inadequate on our own and that we will not be successful or found faithful without His ever-present help. We must learn to constantly rely on Him in prayer.

No matter how smart or sufficient you may think you are, your children will always be subject to circumstances beyond your reach. You cannot always protect them, provide for their every need, or control the constant influences around their lives. You won't always know their hearts, and you definitely don't know their future.

But we can all rest in the fact that there is a loving God Who understands and loves our children more than we do. He can

(continued inside)

go with them and guide them when we can't. He can protect them and influence them in every situation. And He invites us to place each of them and our every concern into His loving arms.

Jesus said, *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* (Matthew 7:11). This is an invitation to prayer.

Imagine it. The Sovereign God of the universe has chosen to allow you to know Him, talk to Him, and make requests of Him like a beloved son may ask and receive things from his compassionate father. Prayer is a daily opportunity for us to talk to God about every facet and detail of our children's lives.

You can bank on it that the devil has already been trying to discourage and distract you from praying for your children by telling you that you are too busy to pray or that your prayers are ineffective. But Jesus has promised us: *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”* (Matthew 7:7).

Now granted, the Bible makes it clear that there are keys to praying effectively. For our prayers to be unhindered, the Scriptures say that we must know God (John 14:6), be right with Him (Psalm 66:18), be right with others (Mark 11:22-26; I Peter 3:7), and also have our hearts right (James 1:5-8; 4:6). And anytime this is true in your life, then you can get busy praying knowing that *“...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (James 5:16).

We are all unqualified on our own. But through the mercy and access to God that Jesus attained for us through His death on the cross, we can *“...come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16).

It is by uniting our hearts with Christ and keeping aligned with His will that we place ourselves in a position to prayerfully bring about more good for our children than almost anything else we could do on earth (John 15:7).



So, on this Father's Day weekend, I would like to exhort all dads to take a step of courageous faith into the practice of praying four different types of prayers for your children.

❑ **PRAYERS OF DEDICATION** (I Samuel 1:11, Proverbs 16:3): Even as Joseph and Mary dedicated Jesus as a newborn in the temple, we too should willingly commit all of our children's lives to the glory of God. Our Lord has faithfully demonstrated that He blesses and takes good care of that which has been entrusted to Him.

Anytime you as a father start something new, your fatherly

prayers of dedication should follow. New children, new jobs, new houses, new years, and new days are all new opportunities to stop and thank God for His goodness and re-purpose the new beginning for His glory and place it under His watchful care.

❑ **PRAYERS OF ASSOCIATION** (I Thessalonians 5:16-18): It is the will of God for fathers to pray for, with, and around their children. Regular prayer in our homes can draw our kids closer to God while redirecting their attention away from their daily problems and onto the One who holds every solution. If a father is unwilling to trust God with his temporary needs, why should he expect his children to want to trust God with their eternal souls?

If you don't know what to pray about, then consider what you are currently worried about. Your worries are merely burdens you are currently carrying in your own strength that you haven't yet cast fully upon the Lord's strength (Philippians 4:6-7). **“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”** (I Peter 5:6-7).

❑ **PRAYERS OF BLESSING** (Ephesians 1:3, Luke 3:22): Thirdly, fathers should learn to pray prayers of blessing over their families. You can do this by speaking encouraging and loving words over their lives while asking God to bring about their maximum physical and spiritual success (Psalm 20). So pray often for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done in their blooming lives.

In my family growing up, my parents would let Scripture teach them how to pray for us. They often prayed Isaiah 54:13-17 and Psalm 91 over us in the car as we drove down the road.

When your children overhear you thanking God for them, and telling God how much you love them and want His very best for them, it can change them forever.

❑ **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** (Exodus 17:12): Lastly, fathers must learn to confront evil, problems, and any crisis in their families with the weapon of prayer.

Ephesians 6 tells us that we are to put on our spiritual armor and get busy praying so that we will be ready to stand firm in the day of evil. In prayer, we wage war (Ephesians 6:10-19) against the spiritual forces that want “to steal and to kill and to destroy” our children's purity and faith (John 10:10). If you fight your family's battles in prayer first, you will see much more fruitfulness and effectiveness in resolving problems when you get up off your knees.

In conclusion, if a man desires great things for his children, then he should request great things from God. But do not let things lack and fail simply because you lacked to pray and failed to ask (James 4:2). As the Lord responds to your requests in His perfect timing, your children will get to see His power and handiwork firsthand.

Then one day they can share with their own children about the way they were forever changed by seeing their earthly father prayerfully introduce them to the powerful and loving care of their Heavenly Father.

Chick-fil-A Is Way Worse Than First Thought

Earlier this month, social media was in an uproar with news that Chick-fil-A has officially gone over to the dark side by hiring a **VP of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**. No one knows why this became an issue recently; after all, Erick McReynolds has been VP of DEI since 2021. He was not a new hire but was promoted within the company, where he has been employed since 2007. The principles of DEI for Chick-fil-A are committing to be “Better at Together” and to foster “mutual respect, understanding, and dignity everywhere we do business.”

On its face, this is not objectionable. However, DEI initiatives across hundreds of U.S. companies are simply a ruse for a highly discriminatory system that encourages racism rather than a meritocracy.

As several journalists have pointed out, this is not a new phenomenon for the company. In fact, Chick-fil-A has been pandering to the woke mob for years. In 2019, after years of pressure from LGBT groups, the company stopped funding the Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In 2020, the Chick-fil-A Foundation announced their new approach to charitable giving would focus on “nourishing the potential in every child” and donating to a smaller number of organizations focusing on education, homelessness and hunger. Though it reframed how grants would be allocated, the foundation did not expressly mention the LGBT controversy, nor did it exclude giving to faith-based charities in the future.

Back in 2019, the Federalist ran a story on how Chick-fil-A diverted its resources to organizations like Covenant House, which hosted drag queen story hour, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, which vilifies conservatives with irrational hyperbole, accusing them of being white supremacists and racists.

As if those new programs were not evidence enough that Chick-fil-A is no longer the beacon of Christian values in Corporate America, the problem may actually be far more insidious.

In 2023, the Chick-fil-A Foundation funded a relatively small non-profit called **Elevate USA**. Its mission is to build “long-term, life-changing relationships with urban youth, equipping them to thrive and contribute to their community.” They offer tutoring, mentoring, and other standard programs that serve at-risk youth. None of this is unusual until you explore the organization's financing. Chick-fil-A has joined the murky underworld of the Silicon Valley liberal elites and their multi-billion dollar nonprofit empire targeting conservative and Christian values in every sector of American society. Let me explain:

Elevate USA receives over 75% of its \$1 million+ funding from the **Stand Together Foundation Inc.** (notice the similarity in the language to “Better at Together” from the Chick-fil-A DEI page). This foundation had over \$140 million in annual funding for 2021, with over \$356 million in assets. A large chunk of their

tax-free funding came from the National Philanthropic Trust, which had 9.4 billion dollars in revenue in 2021 and nearly 16 billion in assets. The funding ladder ultimately led to the **Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF)**, which accumulated over 15 billion dollars in assets in 2021. Though this web of organizations does not seem related to the average person, it is well-known for tracking terrorist financing or organized crime, money laundering schemes are often hidden behind a complicated set of interlocking companies to mask the sinister nature of their activities.

The SVCF invests millions of dollars in the California Black Freedom Fund to intentionally provide unrestricted funds to non-profits that advocate for public policy changes that “eradicate systemic and institutional racism.” The California Black Freedom Fund was also generously supplied with grants from the Gates Foundation, JP Morgan Chase, and others right after the 2020 riots to “build on the momentum” created during that time. Yes, they believe that the rioting and destruction of millions of dollars of personal property and government buildings in the summer of 2020 was a momentum they hoped to maintain and expand.

Despite its lofty goals and air of egalitarianism, the SVCF was slammed in the news for its toxic work culture and suspicious funding mechanisms. In addition to claims of workplace sexual harassment, unfair working conditions, and failure to serve local communities, SVCF became a repository for donor-advised funds (DAF) of wealthy Silicon Valley tech giants like Mark Zuckerberg. DAF's are a legal fiction that allows donors to get a tax deduction for billions of dollars they give to a tax-exempt entity while still controlling how that money gets spent. In other words, foundations like SVCF and the NPT are how Zuckerberg, Gates, and their buddies fund the massive effort to kill unborn babies, host drag shows for kids, and advocate for legislation that lets children castrate themselves without parental consent. These tech mob bosses have created and built thousands of small charities with the specific purpose of dismantling the foundational values of our society.

The biggest “charity” in the US last year, according to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, was not the United Way or the Salvation Army but **Fidelity Charitable**, the not-for-profit arm of the mutual fund company, where about 150,000 donors have DAFs, second only to Gates Foundation. Fidelity gave its single largest donation of 2021, \$141 million, to the Church of Latter-Day Saints, also known as the Mormons. They also provide significant contributions to Planned Parenthood and the Salvation Army.

Chick-fil-A is the latest company in the crosshairs of furious conservatives calling for a boycott of popular companies like Budweiser and Target. However, what makes their allegiance to this network of disingenuous evildoers masquerading as do-gooders is their betrayal of their loyal patrons.

Chick-fil-A is a family-owned company, so they're not beholden to the ESG standards of publicly traded companies. They cannot pretend they were forced into this agenda. Their largest consumer base has always been the Christian community.

Yet, they have been trying to appease the left for over a decade and have now caved to the pressure to fit in. It reminds me of the biblical account of Lot, who, when faced with an angry mob that wanted to rape his angelic visitors, offered his daughters instead. The fear of the angry mob can make human beings do dreadful things.

So Chick-fil-A is not only woke, they have chosen the side of evil over the Christian community on whom they built their fortune. It's much worse than we thought. They have joined the soulless tycoons who sacrifice our children to this demonic agenda, warping their sense of self-identity in exchange for a lie. It is time that Christians call them out for their hypocrisy and remind them:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

***- II Corinthians 6:14
- The Christian Post***

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

☛ ***ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER CALLS HEAVEN A “FANTASY”*** - The following is excerpted from “Arnold Schwarzenegger,” Christian Headlines, June 7, 2023:

“Longtime Hollywood actor and former Republican California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger dismissed the idea that people will see their loved ones in Heaven as a ‘fantasy.’ During a conversation with fellow actor Danny DeVito, which was published in *Interview* magazine, Schwarzenegger shared his response to DeVito’s question on whether humanity will endure in the future.

‘It reminds me of Howard Stern’s question to me: Tell me, governor, what happens to us when we die? I said, Nothing. You’re 6 feet under...’ Schwarzenegger recounted. DeVito refuted Schwarzenegger’s answer by insisting, ‘You don’t know.’... Schwarzenegger said, ‘We don’t know what happens with the soul and all this spiritual stuff that I’m not an expert in, but I know that the body as we see each other now, we will never see each other again like that. Except in some fantasy. When people talk about, I will see them again in Heaven, it sounds so good, but the reality is that we won’t see each other again after we’re gone. That’s the sad part. I know people feel comfortable with death, but I don’t.’

Schwarzenegger also said he is not looking forward to his own death because he will miss ‘everything.’ ‘To have fun and to go to the gym and to pump up, to ride my bike on the beach, to travel around, to see interesting things all over the world,’ he said.”

☛ ***FIRST RELIGIOUS CHARTER SCHOOL APPROVED IN THE U. S.*** - School choice is the only program that can have a significant impact in reducing the power of America’s propagandizing public school system, and school choice is growing. At the same time, the government remains in ultimate control of the money in these schemes, which always spells

danger at some point. The best thing Bible-believing parents can do, in our estimation, is to home school or church school and don’t take a dime from the government. God has promised to take care of those who trust Him. At the same time, the school choice movement is an encouraging sign in these times.

The following is excerpted from “First Religious Charter,” Christianity Daily, June 6, 2023:

“Oklahoma has approved what could be the first Christian charter school in the U.S., igniting a potential constitutional dispute. While raising concerns about the direct use of public money to support religious institutions, the ruling has been a huge success for Christian conservatives. The St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School is an online school that will be managed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa. Religious lessons will be incorporated into the school’s curriculum. It sparked some controversy because taxpayer’s money will be used since it is a charter school. ... Republicans in Congress, especially those in Oklahoma, have been pushing for private schools more and more in recent years, citing discussions about parents’ rights. These substitutes include tax credits and vouchers, which give parents financial aid to help pay for private tuition, frequently at religious institutions.”

☛ ***CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE APPROVES FEMALE ORDINATION*** - There should be no debate on the issue of female pastors, as the Bible clearly forbids it. The woman cannot teach nor usurp authority over the man (I Timothy 2:12) and does not meet the twice-repeated pastoral standard of “the husband of one wife” (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).

The widespread acceptance of female pastors is a mark of end-time apostasy. The following is excerpted from “Christian and Missionary Alliance,” Christian Headlines, June 6, 2023:

“The Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination is now ordaining women and allowing them to use the title of ‘pastor.’ More than 60 percent of the delegates of Alliance’s general counsel voted in favor of the change, Christianity Today reports.... The Alliance has about 2,000 churches across the country. Previously, women could be ‘consecrated,’ but not ordained and could not use the title of pastor.”

☛ ***FORMER SBC SEMINARY PRESIDENT SPENDS MILLIONS OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST DOLLARS ON PERSONAL RESIDENCE*** - Eight months ago, the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) in Ft. Worth, Texas was rocked by the sudden resignation of its then-president, Adam Greenway, amidst allegations of plagiarism against the former SBC president, Ed Litton, whom Greenway openly supported. However, leaked documents now suggest that Greenway’s transgressions extended far beyond plagiarism scandals, diving into dangerous territory of financial mismanagement and misuse of power at SWBTS.

Amid an investigation into Greenway’s activities, board member, Aaron Sliagar’s trustee report revealed shocking allegations about Greenway’s tenure, pointing out gross financial incompetency and highlighting staggering amounts of

overspending on renovations and improper usage of institutional accounts.

The severity of these allegations indicated systematic failures rather than isolated incidents. The report revealed an appalling violation of trust as it cites instances of credit cards taken out in the names of unsuspecting staff members, leaving them liable for the payments. Along with damaging personal credit scores, these credit cards were allegedly used for institutional expenses, a clear violation of trust and potential identity theft.

There were also accusations of donor designation changes, implying funds were shifted from their intended purpose to operations. As these allegations shake the community, trustees have called for a meeting demanding full disclosure and transparency. As this crisis of leadership unfolds, the SWBTS and the wider Southern Baptist community are left grappling with the severe implications on their trust, financial stability, and moral standing.

Between 2019 and 2022, the Seminary’s President’s residence swallowed up a staggering \$1.5 million in renovations and furnishings, all while you were told about crucial budget cuts and a trimming faculty. In addition, \$59,865.79 was squandered on Christmas decorations, \$25,000 vanished into artwork, and \$11,123.49 was poured into an espresso machine and its accessories. There was also a questionable \$180,000 spent on additional HVAC work in late 2021, after previous extensive renovations were completed.

☛ ***RICK WARREN: SOUTHERN BAPTISTS WILL CHANGE ‘AT SOME POINT’ ON FEMALE PASTORS*** - The same day his former church was removed from the Southern Baptist Convention for his hiring of a female pastor, pastor and author Rick Warren said he believes the denomination eventually will change on the issue.

“I can guarantee you that change will happen at some point,” he said Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

On Tuesday, June 13, SBC messengers voted to affirm a decision by the denomination’s Executive Committee, with 88 percent voting to deem Saddleback Church not “in friendly cooperation” with the convention’s beliefs and 11 percent voting to allow Saddleback to remain in the denomination.

The SBC’s Baptist Faith and Message states that “while both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.”

In February, the Executive Committee voted to disfellowship Saddleback, which appealed the decision to messengers. Saddleback has female pastors on staff.

“We received more votes than I anticipated in New Orleans,” Warren said. “We have said since last February that we didn’t expect to win. We made this effort to push a conversation that’s been stagnant for years.”

Warren acknowledged his own views have changed on the issue. He said he spoke up for the “millions of Southern Baptist women whose spiritual gifts, leadership gifts and talents are being wasted.”

“This is not the end of the debate,” Warren said. “But my love for frightened pastors and frustrated women in our churches demanded that I not just slink off in silence. I knew I’d lose friends. I knew it would be a very unpopular position to take in our denomination which has been overwhelmingly complementarian. But I could not sit by while others claimed that you can’t hold to the inerrancy of Scripture and support women in ministry.”



LESSONS ON CONGREGATIONAL SINGING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

by Evangelist David Cloud

David organized the music worship program for the Tabernacle. This began on the occasion of bringing the ark of God from Gibeah to Jerusalem (I Chron. 15:1-24). After the ark was set in a tent in Jerusalem, David appointed a continual music program (I Chron. 16:1-7, 37-42). When David was old, in connection with the charge to Solomon about the building of the Temple, he further organized the Levitical music program, assigning 4,000 priests to this task (I Chron. 23:1-5; 25:1-31). He did this by divine revelation (II Chron. 28:11-13).

Suddenly, the Tabernacle was filled with holy worship music. There had been no such thing from the time of Moses until David. The divine Tabernacle service is described in Exodus and Leviticus, and there is ***no*** music. There were no Levites appointed to music. There was no hymnal.

With David, a new era begins. We are moving further along now toward the coming of Christ! David is promised an eternal throne and kingdom, ruled by his Son, who is Christ (II Samuel 7:12-16).

In a foreview of that glorious kingdom, David begins to write the Messianic hymnal. The last five psalms of the hymnal explode with Messianic praise. “**Praise**” is mentioned here 50 times. These psalms are about “***an everlasting kingdom***” (Psalm 145:13; 146:13). The words “***for ever***” and “***everlasting***” and “***all generations***” appear nine times. These psalms prophesy of the time when the LORD will “build up Jerusalem” and strengthen the bars of her gates and “gather together the outcasts of Israel” and make peace within her borders and fill her with the finest of wheat (Psalm 147:2, 13, 14). Then the entire universe will resound with praise the LORD: the angels, the sun and moon and stars, the heavens and the earth, the mountains and hills and trees, the beasts and flying fowl, the kings, the princes, the judges, the young men and maidens, old men and children (Psalm 148:1-13). Then, the Lord’s people will execute vengeance upon the heathen (Psalm 149:6-9). Then the LORD will be praised with the sound of the trumpet, the psaltery and

harp, the timbrel and dance, the stringed instruments and organs, the loud cymbals and the high sounding cymbals (Psa.150:3-5). Then everything that has breath will praise the LORD (Psalm 150:6)!

In 2nd Chronicles 5:12-13, we see the music ministry operating full blown in Solomon’s Temple.

“Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD.”

All of these passages contain instruction for the churches. **“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning...” (Romans 15:4).**

This does not mean that we are to construct grand buildings and have magnificent professional choirs and orchestras like the Mormon Tabernacle. The New Testament church is a **pilgrim church**. We live in tents, so to speak, like Abraham. We are composed of the weak things of the world rather than the noble (I Cor. 1:26-29). We are ever waiting and ready for the call, “Come up hither” (I Thess. 1:9-10). We are not laying up treasures on earth, but in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). Our affection is not on earth; it is in heaven where our Saviour resides (Colossians 3:1-4).

But there are important lessons from the Temple music service for New Testament churches. Here follow some of them:

THE INSTRUMENTS WERE HARPS, PSALTERIES, CYMBALS, TRUMPETS AND CORNETS (I Chron. 15:16, 28). Though some churches don’t believe in using music instruments, it is obvious that God loves sacred worship music that incorporates instruments. There should never have been a debate about this in churches; the Psalms are not just for the Mosaic era. Today the church is the house of God and the things in the Old Testament are our example (Rom. 15:4). We are specifically instructed to sing Psalms, which takes us right back to the Psalms and the instruments mentioned therein. **Observe that these are not the type of instruments used to create worldly dance music.** There were no drums, for example (drums can be used properly in sacred music, such as in the timpani section of an orchestra, but drums as used in pop music to emphasize the dance back rhythm are not sacred.) Cymbals are percussion instruments, but there can be no doubt that when used in the Temple worship, they were not continually banged together to create a discordant racket. That would be more in keeping with Babylonian music. The cymbals were not used as in a rock band. The instruments mentioned in I Chronicles 15:28 were used in accompaniment to the singing of the priests, so it is obvious that

they were used in moderation so as not to drown out or overwhelm the voices.

The singers and musicians were skillful (they were to “excel,” I Chronicles 15:21; “skilful,” in I Chron. 15:22; “cunning,” in I Chron. 25:7). One qualification for ministry is **ability**. When God calls an individual to a ministry, he gifts and equips him for that ministry. For example, the elder must be apt to teach and must be able to exhort and convince false teachers (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). If a man cannot do this work, he is not called to be an elder.

THEY EXCELLED (I Chron. 15:21). They wanted everything to be as perfect as possible; mediocrity was unacceptable. Anything we do for the Lord should be done right, with the highest level of expertise and preparation that we can produce. He is most worthy of our very best. God’s people need to be getting better educated, stronger in every area, moving in the opposite direction of most churches. This is the path of victory and revival.

THEY WERE TRAINED (I Chron. 25:7). Churches should do everything they can to provide training for their singers and musicians to the glory of the Creator. It is one thing to be untrained and ignorant, but it is quite another thing to be content to remain untrained and to offer unto God something less than our best. Every church must be a serious Bible training institute.

THEY WERE WELL ORGANIZED - there was oversight; they submitted to God’s order and to the authority figures God had put over them; they were assigned their places (I Chron. 15:17, 19; 25:2, 6). The lot was used (I Chron. 25:8) so that God’s will would be done in the appointment of the singers and musicians and so that no favoritism would be exercised by the leaders. The lot was used to determine God’s mind. There is no place for jealousy and carnality and favoritism in the church’s music ministry. All things should be done by the mind of God and for the glory of God rather than for man. Compare I Cor. 12:7. We don’t need to use the lot today, because we have the indwelling Spirit and the complete Word of God. Submission to God-ordained authority is the way of peace in the congregation (I Thess. 5:12-13).

THE MUSIC WAS A MINISTRY OF THE PRIESTS (I Chron. 15:16). Compare with I Peter 2:5, **“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”**

This is a description of a church that is much more serious and wise and spiritually zealous than the vast majority of churches in these last days.

It is a church of a regenerate membership (“living stones”). It is a spiritual house, not a carnal, worldly, flippant affair. It is a holy priesthood. Each member of a true New Testament church is a priest of God! His or her job on earth is to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God, works that show God’s holy character to an unholy world, lives that shine light into this dark world.

THEY SANG AND PLAYED WITH ENTHUSIASM AND

JOY (I Chron. 15:16). God’s people should follow this example in the churches, and the music leaders should teach and encourage it. I believe that congregational singing is a reflection of a church’s spiritual character. Many of the Lord’s people do not sing, or they sing so softly that no one can hear them, but the song service is not about me and whether or not I feel like singing or whether I like to sing, and it’s not a time to be entertained. It is about singing to God and edifying one another, and it should be done with exuberance.

THEY PROPHESED (I Chron. 25:1-3). Compare with I Cor. 14:24-25 which says that all the saints should prophesy. This doesn’t mean that every member preaches. Paul limited the actual prophesying or preaching to two or three (I Cor. 14:29). First Corinthians 14:3 says prophesying is speaking **“unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”** Any of that is prophesying. For all to prophesy means that every believer participates in and responds to every part of the service from the heart: to the singing and playing, to the preaching and teaching, even to the corporate prayer. I like the practice I have seen in Korean Baptist churches. During public prayer, as one brother is leading, the brethren say a loud “amen” after every statement. This is prophesying! This is unity in corporate prayer. When visitors see that the members are enthusiastically involved in the services, they understand that the brethren really do believe in Christ, and they are convicted of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

THEY SANG GOD’S WORDS (I Chron. 25:5). Compare with Colossians 3:16. Worship must be based solidly upon Scripture; it must not be heretical or frivolous or shallow. The first test of Christian music is the test of whether its message is Scriptural. Worship music should flow from lives that are filled richly with God’s Word, and from lives that understand the Word and practice its precepts wisely in daily living. This is what creates a spiritual song service. Yet in my experience, the average member of Bible-believing churches is ignorant of God’s Word and doesn’t have the wisdom to apply it to daily living. No wonder our services are so lukewarm.

THEY GAVE THANKSGIVING TO GOD (I Chron. 25:3). This is the first and foremost purpose of the Christian life and church. There are two kinds of spiritual songs: those that teach and edify the brethren and those that praise the Lord (Col. 3:16). The churches need to make sure that they sing hymns of worship and not only songs for the edification of the saints. True worship is not a rock & roll dance party; it is not a performance. True worship is glorifying God with the mind and heart for His attributes and character and works. See Psalm 100. True worship is to give thanks to God. God’s people owe Him everything, natural life and spiritual life. **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:17-18).** He saw us, loved us, planned our salvation, accomplished our salvation, called us by the gospel, saved us by His grace, lives in us by His

Spirit, gave us the very riches of Christ. How wicked we are when we fail to give thanks for everything! **“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15).**

THEY SANG IN UNITY (“The Trumpeters and Singers Were as One, to Make One Sound to Be Heard,” II Chron. 5:12-13). The singing and playing were one voice. It was harmonious rather than discordant. It was not a bunch of individuals doing as they pleased. Every individual was submitted to the Lord and to one another and to the leadership as one body. God made the amazing human voice, and its first purpose is to praise God. How lovely it is for God’s people to use their God-given voices to unite in teaching and admonishing one another and in proclaiming thanksgiving to God!

WHENEVER THERE WAS A REVIVAL IN ISRAEL, THE TEMPLE MUSIC “PROGRAM” WAS REVIVED. We see this in the days of Hezekiah (II Chron. 29:25-30).

In ancient Israel, when she was right with God, the music associated with worship was carefully prepared and skillfully performed with godly oversight.

All too often a church’s song service is led by individuals who know almost nothing about what they are doing, who lack the skill, enthusiasm, and spirituality to do a good job and aren’t interested in getting a proper education to improve their ministries.

No wonder many are tempted to move to a church that has an enthusiastic contemporary worship service. No wonder young people often think of church as dull. I received an email recently from a woman who informed me that her family left an independent Baptist church that was lifeless and that they are now happy members of a lively, contemporary Southern Baptist congregation. That’s too bad, but I wonder how many people have turned away from the truth because it was presented in a lifeless, incredibly boring manner!

A doctrinally sound church that is dull, half-hearted, half-dead, and mediocre does not glorify the Lord. God’s people are instructed to do everything heartily **“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men,” Col. 3:23).**

If a church is half-hearted and boring, it is not a true NT church, because Jesus Christ and the Bible are the most exciting “things” on earth!

If a church is young and the congregation small, it is understandable that there might not be proper musicians and song leaders. No one expects a young church to have everything that a more established church has. Under such conditions, the church must do the best it can with what it has and beseech God for growth. We are referring here to churches that could do better in this matter but don’t simply because it is not a priority. They are content with mediocrity and dullness.

We need to be getting better educated, stronger in every area, moving in the opposite direction of most churches, which is weaker, less cautious, more ignorant. To get stronger is the path of continual revival. ■