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INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC & NO BARBERS

This article is based on a true story with some modification in order to make the illustration. I knew of a person once who thought himself to be a very devoted Christian. He loved to listen to gospel music. Unfortunately, he also loved to drink! One day while intoxicated he wanted to listen to some gospel music. The songs moved him to tears. His heart swelled with deep emotion and love for the Lord. He had never experienced such spiritual feelings before. The next day when he was sober, he listened to the same music again. But something was wrong. While he enjoyed the music, some how it didn't have the same effect on him. It was quite a let down. Later in the week, he was drinking again and began listening to his collection of gospel music. This time that

wonderful elation returned. What joy and happiness he felt. After he sobered up and while thinking on the problem, he came to the conclusion that the only way he could truly enjoy the music and have the feeling he thought he was suppose to have was to be in a drunken state! As a result of this wrongful conclusion, he was never again able to listen to gospel music while sober.

I have asked many people that used mechanical music when they sing why they did it. The most standard reply was, "because it makes me worship better!" Others say it "stirs their souls" or "they feel closer to God through its use." "Why you can't beat a good old fashion hand clapping, foot stomping song service to get you in the spirit." "Can't you

worship God without it," I asked? "I guess, but who would want to? There's just no feeling without a good piano or something playing the background."

"But we are told to sing only, don't you think the Lord had something better in mind when He forbade their use?" "Don't you think any emotions we feel by singing these psalms and hymns should come from the heart? And that true worship which God intended would be evidenced by singing unaided and by following His command?" Usually, the conversation ends here with, "well, it makes me feel good, and I don't see anything wrong with it."

I believe a fair comparison may be made with the use of intoxicants and instrumental music in worship. Both are artificial stimulants. And both induce a false sense of emotions, which I believe are very addictive! Just as the alcoholic comes to rely on his booze to artificially stimulate him that he might function in life, so the use of mechanical music by those who have come to rely on that to stimulate them to worship. It is

truly sad that those who continue to rely on such will never know the real joy of worshipping God in song as He has commended.

- J.D. Williams

A man visited his barber. As always, they struck up a conversation. As they talked, the discussion turned to religious matters. The barber finally said, "I just don't believe in all that God nonsense. I'll prove it to you. Look outside. If God were really out there, would there be so many broken homes and abandoned children? If God were really out there, would there be so many people starving? If God were really out there, would there be so many people in pain and suffering? Nope. I say God doesn't exist. If He did, He would do something about all this.

The customer wasn't sure how to respond and sat there quietly. The barber finished and the man walked out. On the sidewalk, he saw a man with ragged long hair. He came back to the barber and said, "Barbers don't exist."

"But here I am to prove it."
"No, barbers don't exist."

MONTHLY CHALLENGES



DIRECTIONS: *Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.*

1) CREATE A PROSPECTIVE CHRISTIAN LIST

Mark 16:15 *"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'"*

Write down names of anyone you think might be open to contact and hand it to the elders, and provide contact information (e-mail, address, phone number, etc.), if available. Some of these interested people might be:

- a) church members' spouses who may not belong to our church
- b) people who have visited in the last 18 months
- c) people who have demonstrated any interest in our congregation
- d) parents of children who attend Sunday School
- e) people you work with or go to school with
- f) people at businesses you deal with on a day-to-day basis
- g) someone new to the neighborhood/new to work or school
- h) teammates
- i) people with similar hobbies as you
- j) members of other congregations (you would be surprised here, especially write down those who talk about God freely and proudly)
- k) anyone and everyone else you can think of

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Matthew 6:25-34

25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? **27** And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? **28** And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, **29** yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! **31** Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' **32** For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **34** "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Look outside. If barbers were really there, would there be people with such long ragged hair?"

The barber replied, "Well, I exist, but not everyone comes to see me. That is why there are people with long, ragged hair."

"Exactly," the Christian responded. "The same is true with God. He exists, but not everyone will come to Him. That is why there is so much sin, suffering and pain."

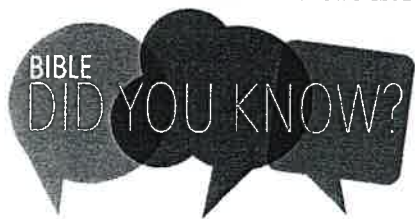
There was a time when no one suffered any pain. No one got sick. No one hurt. But then a serpent entered the garden and sin entered the world (Genesis 3). Since that time, Satan has continued his influential work. People have turned their backs on God, have committed sin and we have a world of suffering because of it.

Does suffering mean our God doesn't exist? Or does it merely mean everyone hasn't turned to the loving God. Sadly, because our world is so governed by sin, even when a few of us do turn to God, we still suffer.

Sometimes we suffer because we turned to God (2 Timothy 3:12). However, a

time is coming when those who turned to God and still suffered will suffer no longer. In that time, we will learn that all the suffering was worth it because the glory that will be revealed to us and through us will be worth it all (Romans 8:18). We will see God and we will be with Him for eternity. There we will be able to rejoice with exultation and glorify our God for eternity without fear of suffering. But to ever enjoy that comfort, that peace, that joy, we have to turn to God. Have you turned to Him? (Hebrews 11:6).

- Edwin L. Crozier



When was the Bible written? It was written over a period of some 1,500 years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ).