

Unintended Consequences

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The capability of man to understand and manage his environment is impressive indeed. Advancements in structural engineering, transportation, agriculture, weather prediction and other such areas have made life more safe, convenient and comfortable for the masses. But man's technological prowess has its limitations. Every step further into the light of progress reveals the potential damage of unintended consequences.

For example, the Army Corps of Engineers thought it would be a boon to shipping if they could cut a canal across the upper Florida peninsula. About half way through the project, the Corps began to realize the disastrous impact of the canal upon the environment and they cancelled it. Likewise, the beneficial use of antibiotics has spawned a new breed of super-germs which are resistant to drugs. The introduction of kudzu as a soil protector has nearly choked the whole southeastern U.S. in the plant's uncontrolled growth.

Man's inability to foresee the implications of his actions highlights the importance of following the New Testament very closely. Jeremiah's precept of long ago – *"the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps"* (10:23) – finds direct application in modern man's rejection of scriptural authority and his insistence on doing things his own way.

Consider the impact of instrumental music in worship. The following comments are offered by Tom Lawson of the Independent Christian Church, who laments the effects of mechanical instruments in his denomination:

"My boyhood church has evolved ... to four or five specials in a worship gathering that takes no longer than it did 30 years ago. As you would imagine, it is congregational singing that has been drastically cut. The worth of a particular service is, many times, gauged by quality of these performances. Applause is not merely tolerated; it is expected. I am aware of churches that hire members of their 'praise band.' I heard one minister ... share at a public seminar on church growth what a wonderful thing it was that some members of their praise band had even become Christians.

My church feels obligated to not allow a single moment of silence ... every moment where someone is not speaking or singing must be filled with the organ or piano ... I do not need my moods programmed at every moment. I do not need the equivalent of elevator music to provide me with a sense of the presence of God.

To my friends within the church of Christ, I would encourage you to think long and hard before you join us and the rest of the evangelical world in this area that so clearly impacts the entire worship service. The grass may not be greener on our side after all" (*Bulletin Digest*, 6/96).