

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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HISTORIANS SPEAK

by Owen D. Olbricht

Many religious people, being used to instrumental music in worship, are unaware of the fact that such a practice is of recent origin and was not a practice of the early church. The consensus of historians is that instrumental music in worship began to be used years after the days of Christ and the apostles.

Notice the following statements which appear in reliable reference books:

The *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Willi Apel (Harvard Univ. Press, 1955) in defining "a cappella" states:

"Music written 'for the choir of a chapel,' i.e., choral music without instrumental accompaniment. The music of Palestine (see Palestine style) is usually considered the model of a cappella music. An a cappella choir is one formed for the cultivation of unaccompanied singing. Historians of the 19th century held the idea all 'early music' - i.e., music before 1600 - was a cappella. Such a statement is correct, however, only with respect to strictly liturgical music, such as masses and motets."

In *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Joseph Bingham, Vol. 1 (Reeves and Turner, p. 315), appears the statement:

"I should here have put an end to this chapter, but that some readers would be apt to reckon it an omission, that I have taken no notice of organs and bells among the utensils of the church. But the true reason is, that there were no such things in use in the ancient churches for many ages. Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so: for it is now generally agreed by learned men, that the use of the organs came into the church since the time of Thomas Aquinas, anno 1250."

Then on page 316 appears the following:

"But the author under the name of Justin Martyr is more express in his determination, as to the matter of fact, telling us plainly, that the use of singing with instrumental music was not received in Christian churches, as

it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song. (Justin, Quæst. et Respon. ad Orthodoxos)."

Vol. X of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 651 states:

"Although Josephus tells of the wonderful effects produced in the Temple by the use of instruments, the first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice. Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets (P.G., VIII, 440)."

In *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* edited by William Smith and Samuel Cheatham (Willbug and Williamson) p. 1365, appears the observation:

"Whatever evidence is forthcoming, is to the effect that the early Christians did not use musical instruments."

These are but a small sampling of statements by historians concerning the absence of instruments of music in the worship of the early church. Those who introduce them into worship do so without command, example, or inference in the New Testament scriptures, which means that, if introduced, such can be done only based on human authority and not on the authority of Jesus and the apostles.

The fact that we have no statement in New Testament teaching that authorizes us to use them in worship means that introduction of them in worship is to do so without the permission of Jesus. The only safe approach to worship is to use only that which is of apostolic origin. Until a New Testament statement can be produced that clearly teaches the use of instrumental music in worship, the only safe course is to follow the practice of the ancient church, i.e., singing unaccompanied by musical instruments.

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CARL SAGAN USES THE DESIGN ARGUMENT

by B. J. Clarke

Ah, consistency, thou art a jewel. Carl Sagan, noted atheist and Professor of Astronomy at Cornell University, authored an article for *Parade* magazine, Sunday, June 6, 1993. The article is entitled, "Is There Intelligent Life On Earth?" The subheading of the article reads: "What an alien spaceship might reveal about our planet - and ourselves."

In the article, Mr. Sagan takes the reader on an imaginary trip through space while looking down on the earth from a spaceship. The entire article is, amazingly, devoted to proving that the design and structure of the earth is evidence of life upon the earth. Sagan imagines looking upon the oceans with infrared technology and discovering that there is "sufficient water vapor in the air to account for the clouds and just the amount that must exist because of evaporation if the oceans are in fact made of liquid water." You then discover that the air on this world is almost 1/5th oxygen. According to Sagan, "No other planet in the Solar System has anything close to so much oxygen." Sagan grants that "the Oxygen would not be proof of life but rather the merest hint of life." As you continue your travel you discover that methane and oxygen are together in the same atmosphere. To quote Sagan, "In an oxygen atmosphere, methane is a sign of life."

Perhaps the most telling section of Sagan's article is found in the evidence of technology discovered on earth from the spacecraft. From the craft you are able to detect radio transmission from the earth. Sagan writes, "So, as an alien explorer, you would know that at least one of the species on earth has achieved radio technology." To search for the species behind this technology, Sagan hypothesizes looking at the earth with a telescope at about 100 meter resolution. His next statement is absolutely correct and yet absolutely contradictory based

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on Sagan's philosophy. Sagan writes, "The planet is revealed to be covered with straight lines, squares, rectangles, circles, *of regularity and complexity that would be hard to explain except by life and intelligence*" (Emphasis mine, BJC). He then adds that if you take pictures at a few meters resolution, "you find that the criss-crossing straight lines of the cities and the long straight lines that connect the cities seem to be filled with streamlined, multicolored beings a few meters in length, politely running, one behind the other. At night they turn on two bright lights in front so that they can see where they're going. The streets of the cities and the roadways of the countryside are clearly built for their benefit. Some of them, when their workday is done, go to little houses to retire for the night. At last you have detected *the source of all the technology*, the dominant life form on the planet" (Emphasis is mine - BJC).

So what's the point of all this? Carl Sagan looks at the complexity of the makeup of the earth and its physical infrastructure and deduces that this just didn't happen by accident. In the magazine, Sagan inserted a satellite photo of the heart of Washington D.C. The caption reads: "The regular geometry of Washington, D.C. - including the Capitol, the Pentagon and bridges over the Potomac - *provide presumptive evidence of intelligent life on earth*" (Emphasis mine - BJC).

Mr. Sagan, if the intricacy of one small section of Washington D.C. is evidence of intelligent life then would it not also

follow that the more complex intricacies of the human body also point to an intelligent designer and architect? Mr. Sagan is in the unsavory position of believing that the roadways of Washington D.C. required intelligent beings to construct them, but the ones who built these roadways did not come from an intelligent source. They just accidentally got here. Mr. Sagan admits that technology has a source from which it was created or invented but according to Sagan the source of this technology, mankind, has no source from which he was specially created. You could never convince Mr. Sagan that the sophisticated high-powered telescopes taking these photographs from outer space just exploded into existence and yet Mr. Sagan believes that the planets in outer space did come from a big explosion. You could never convince Mr. Sagan that a spaceship could just create itself given enough time and yet Mr. Sagan believes that the ones who built the spacecraft just evolved by accidental happenstance.

Come on Mr. Sagan - be consistent! If you're going to use the design argument some of the time, then be honest enough to accept its weight all of the time. "For every house is builded by some man: but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4). Mr. Sagan accepts the truth of the first part of this verse. To be consistent, he must accept the last phrase in the passage as well.

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If you cannot get people to listen any other way, tell them it is confidential.

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A DOG AND HIS BARREL

by Neal Pollard

Our neighbor is so helpful, watching our house while we are away, calling the police at the sight of a stranger in the area, and giving tips on lawn care. His greatest asset to us is his assistance in the care of our two dogs. A couple of weeks ago, he proposed a solution to a very present problem through which our dogs have been suffering.

Several months ago, we had to tear down the fence which held our dogs and their house. They were too big, so we put them on leashes. The problem? They had no shelter from the cold or rainy weather. My neighbor maintained a park near town until it closed several years back. He took me out to that recreation area to retrieve a couple of old garbage barrels which our dogs could use as shelter. "What a wonderful idea," I thought to myself. When it rained, they would stay dry. When it grew cold, they would stay warm. This would be perfect.

Someone forgot to tell the dogs!

The day after we set up the barrels, we had a front move in which produced three solid days of rain. I was amazed to find both of those dogs standing pitifully in the middle of the yard, getting soaked to their bones. I stormed outside to shove them in the barrels. They steadfastly refused to enter. The harder I pushed, the more they resisted. Finally, soaked myself, I returned indoors. I could not believe that a couple of dogs who could be taught to shake, sit, and heel had not the sense to get out of the elements. They shunned the very thing which provided protection. How curious!

We beg. We badger. We bribe. We brow-beat. In fulfilling the Great Commission and obeying the will of God, we preach and teach over and over again the necessity of baptism. From Ephesians 1:3, we teach that all spiritual blessings are given by God to those in Christ. Romans 8:1 tells us there is freedom from the penalty and power of sin in Christ Jesus. Paul stresses that there is equality in Christ Jesus, whether one is Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female (Galatians 3:28). Back in Ephesians one, we find that in Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins..." (verse 7). Blessings overflow for them in Christ Jesus like the water of a river saturated with

torrential, relentless rain showers. For the person in Christ, there is ceaseless joy – even in persecution. Also for one in Christ, there is insurmountable hope of an eternal destiny with the Christ whose death for him was not in vain. In Christ is protection and shelter, when we live faithfully for Him (cf. 1 John 1:7-9; Revelation 2:10). The way to be in Christ is expressly revealed in the Bible.

Returning to Galatians three, we back up from verse 28 a few verses. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ**" (Galatians 3:26-27). Simply, Paul states, "baptism into Christ equals putting on Christ." If one has not put on Christ, we should infer that no spiritual blessing are given to him by God (cf. Ephesians 1:3). We should also draw the conclusion that out of Christ is all condemnation (cf. Romans 8:1). Out of Christ, there is inferiority, for one out of Christ is less than the individual in Christ (cf. Galatians 3:28; see Matthew 11:11). Observe, too, that out of Christ we do not have redemption through Christ's blood, nor the forgiveness of sins (cf. Ephesians 1:7). Active faith, in response to God's amazing grace, leads one to be baptized. When one is baptized, then he is saved (1 Peter 3:18-21; Romans 6:1-4). At no point before baptism can one be free from the raging elements of sin.

Please understand me. I am not attempting to insult the intelligence of anyone, nor am I comparing any person's intelligence with my dogs'. The point is in the following parallel. If one refuses to accept God's grace and provision by submitting to baptism, he stands as unprotected against the rain of brimstone as my dogs stand unprotected against the rains that wet the earth. How foolish to shun what God has provided for our eternal good!

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He who seeks to justify his activities by the words of uninspired men makes a silent confession that he cannot justify his activities by the word of God.

It's always right to do right and it's always wrong to do wrong, and we have a right to do as we please when we please to do right.

You will never get experience on the easy-payment plan.

SINCERELY WRONG

by Bruce Stulting

In 2 Samuel 6 we read of a man named Uzzah. Along with others, Uzzah accompanied King David when he sought to return the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. When they had reached the threshing floor of Nachon, the oxen pulling the cart upon which the ark was carried stumbled. As Uzzah was walking beside it, he put out his hand to keep the ark from falling. He died immediately, being struck down by God for his offense. Was Uzzah religious? Was he sincere? The answer is yes to both.

Why then was he put to death? The answer is quite simple. According to Numbers 4, the ark was only to be moved by the Levites. Also, it was to be carried on their shoulders. Even then, the Levites were forbidden to touch the ark on pain of death. Some people are bold enough to question God, about His reasons for putting Uzzah to death. We must remember that God doesn't use our standard, and no man has the right to question His. In fact, God has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Isa. 55:8).

We also do well to consider the apostle Paul. Before his conversion, Paul had persecuted Christ and His Church (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1). After his conversion, Paul said, in Acts 23:1, "I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." Paul further said, in 1 Tim. 1:13, 15, "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." As a Jew Paul was religious and sincere. He was able to live in good conscience because he was doing what he thought was right, but he was wrong and lost. Although Paul was sincere, he was "**SINCERELY WRONG.**"

We must remember, Christ saves those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). Jesus asked, in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things which I say?" Jesus further stated His conditions for acceptance in Matt. 7:21 when He said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Sincerity is necessary but not sufficient.

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The wages of sin have never been reduced.

DOES GOD ACCEPT DENOMINATIONAL BAPTISM?

by Dennis Gullede

Imagine the following scenario: A couple visits the worship services of the local church of Christ and want to know more about the Lord's church. You set up a study with them that lasts several weeks. All goes well, except when you get to the matter of baptism for remission of sins being a requirement for entrance into the church (Acts 2:38). They have both been baptized before; one in one denomination and the other in another. They feel good about their baptisms and see no need to be "baptized again," but, want to be recognized as members of the church. What would you do?

That scenario was reality for me recently. I handled it by much and careful study with this couple on the purpose of baptism to help them understand its connection with remission of sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). They objected to being "baptized again." I suggested that they not think in terms of being baptized again, but think in terms of being baptized for the right purpose, because if one has not been baptized for the proper purpose he has not been baptized at all in the sight of God. Nevertheless, it was to no avail. They wanted to be members of the church here, but would not agree on baptism.

If I were a follower of some brotherhood advisors that are out there I would have accepted them gladly on their denominational baptism, even though neither of the churches into which they were immersed believe or teach what the New Testament says about baptism. If I were of the mind of some presently in the church I would have accepted their generic baptism and yielded to the notion that it isn't necessary that one understand that the specific purpose of his baptism is "for the remission of sins" in order to be valid, such as Jimmy Allen espouses in his recent book, *Re-Baptism*.

There is one baptism accepted of God. This is baptism by the authority of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). One is not saved at the point of "accepting the Lord into your heart," and later being baptized, as this couple believed. One is

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saved through the obedience of faith, who comes believing in Jesus as God's Son, repenting of sin, confessing Christ with the mouth and being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3), where he is washed in the saving blood of Christ. Thus, by the grace of God, and through no merit of our own, are we saved of past sins.

Obviously, I am not in a position to judge anyone's motive when he or she is baptized. But, if one from a denomination wants to place membership with the Lord's church I must insist upon a study of what the one baptism is and does. One cannot be taught wrong (as in a denomination) and be baptized right (for the right purpose).

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I CORINTHIANS ELEVEN - THE VEIL

by Jerry Moffitt

Here's what happens in the first sixteen verses of this chapter. Paul teaches that the head of the woman is the man (verse 3). Every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head. He said that would be as if she were shaven. He insists that if it is a shame for her to be shaven, that she should be veiled (verse 6). Then Paul says she should have on a veil "because of the angels" (verse 10). He argues then that a woman should have long hair and a man short hair (verses 14 and 15). Finally, Paul says, "But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16).

In all this, two questions, at least, come to mind. One: should a Christian woman wear a veil today? Two: what does verse 10 mean when Paul says a woman should have a veil on her head because of the angels. Let us briefly suggest two answers for your contemplation.

First, this writer believes that a veil was used by a woman in Greek culture as a custom which would show her husband's headship in the marriage. But Paul had taught that in Christ Jesus there "can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). They were going to take the veil off. Obviously they think custom is not important. Paul argues forcefully that it

is. He tells them to go shave their heads. It is indicated that that would be a shame, possibly indicating she was a harlot or some such. If women recoil from that, they should put on the veil because obviously custom **does matter**. Then in verse 16 Paul says neither he nor the churches have such a custom. What custom? There is no custom such as taking off the veil. So Paul puts all this in the realm of custom. And the fact of the matter is **we** have no custom of wearing veils in our culture. So our women need not wear a veil today.

But the second question is, what does verse 10 mean regarding her having a veil on her head because of the angels? Notice Jude 6. It says, "and angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Back in 1 Corinthians eleven when Paul says a woman should have on a veil "because of the angels," it is not because angels are watching the women. This writer believes it is because of **what happened** to the angels. Women, because of what happened to angels when they left their proper habitation, don't leave **your** sphere of being in subjection to your husband. Remember the fall of the angels! In view of how the angels were punished when they were dissatisfied with their estate, women, don't make the same mistake. Well, think on it.

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WHO SHOULD READ THE BIBLE

- The Young** - To learn how to live.
- The Old** - To know how to die.
- The Ignorant** - For wisdom.
- The Learned** - For humility.
- The Rich** - For compassion.
- The Poor** - For comfort.
- The Weak** - For strength.
- The Strong** - For direction.
- The Haughty** - For warning.
- The Humble** - For exaltation.
- The Troubled** - For peace.
- The Weary** - For rest.
- The Doubting** - For assurance.
- The Sinner** - For salvation.
- The Christian** - For guidance.

Do not be like a wheelbarrow - it has to be pushed all the time, and is very easily upset.

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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