A WOMAN'S HEAD IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

A Pamphlet to Answer the Question:
"What Does the Bible Say About Headcoverings for Women in Public Worship?"

1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

Written by Marion Lovett

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Dedication

This pamphlet is dedicated to my wife who has been my glory and crown throughout our marriage. God has truly given me my complement in life and ministry. I thank God for how He has worked in her life and has given her a submissive spirit in the Lord. Chesley has been a faithful companion in the ministry and has supported me every step along a difficult road. This pamphlet is dedicated to her because she is the one who has been most affected by its contents. To go to church and be the only one wearing a hat has been uncomfortable on many occasions for her. Her resolve to obey God, to show her proper place in the atmosphere of public worship, to follow her husband, and to live with a clear conscience have been her guiding factors that have made her an example for other women to follow. My hat goes off to her.

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Introduction

"I noticed that your wife wears hats in church. Is that simply her decorum or is that a conviction?" I was asked while sitting behind closed doors of another pastor. After I responded that it was a biblical conviction, he shot back, "So do you think your wife is more spiritual than my wife because she wears a hat and mine doesn't?" Being somewhat taken off guard by the quick turn of emotion, I tried to answer as graciously as I could, "No, it's simply a conviction about which we feel strongly, but in no way do we use it as a measure of spirituality." At this time in my life, I was in the process of planting a church in the Atlanta area, so the next sentence from this pastor really rattled me. Lounging back in his seat and looking straight at me across his big desk, he replied, "You are going to have a hard time planting a church with that kind of conviction!" I was stunned and frightened at the same time. "Was he right?" I pondered. "But if the Bible truly teaches that a woman should cover her head in public worship, how could I do otherwise?" I thought to myself. The fear of how people will respond to the straight and clear teaching of God's Word, I believe, has watered down the strength of many pulpits in America and in turn their churches. Many preachers who have lost their focus in their ministry easily fall prey to the fear of man and the reactions from the pew resulting in a ministry that is less than honest with God's Word in handling it accurately.

I have often told my wife that I would rather pastor a

church of 100 people teaching them sound doctrine and having a clear conscience before God than to pastor a pragmatic church of a 1000 compromising the integrity of God's Word and instructions to His church. I am not faulting large churches and certainly there are some advantages in being a part of a large church. However, the instructions in our great commission given to us by the Lord, are not just to make disciples and baptize them, but also to teach them "whatsoever things I have commanded you."

For the first three years in my ministry, I never taught on the subject of headcovering. There were two main reasons for my delay. First, I clearly wanted to establish a model for the teaching through my wife before I opened the Scriptures to the subject. I felt this to be God's leading for me because this is a most unpopular subject in the majority of the churches and I wanted the people to get comfortable with the idea of seeing it practiced, and through its usage draw some questions that might open up the discussion. Secondly, I did not want our ministry to be one which was primarily known for its practice of headcoverings. The primary foci of our ministry for which it should be known include such things as: expository preaching; evangelism; missions; reverent worship; prayer, etc. - all for the glory of God.

The practice of headcovering is a secondary focus, however an important one, for it too, is relevant to God's glory. In speaking to His disciples, Christ said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). This verse has guided my thought in the timing of teaching this subject to an infant ministry. I have also seen the importance of

clearly establishing the philosophy of the ministry so members have a clear understanding of what they are joining. To that end is this pamphlet intended.

In our modernized church we can easily lose sight of God's purposes and instructions if we are not careful. The church in America has put too much emphasis on pragmatism at the expense of godliness. God desires His church to be practical, but practical in His way, not in our own thoughts or wisdom. Pulpits have diluted the message of the gospel and many have erred by turning away from God toward man. Subtle shifts have left many in the pew desiring the wrong things from the church and looking in all the wrong places for a true biblical church.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to explain a doctrine that is largely lost in all but a few churches today. Because of the influence of our culture upon the church, the infection of the women's liberation movement into the church, and other variables, today's church has excused, ignored, and sidestepped the teaching and practice of headcoverings for women in worship.

While teaching this doctrine, it is my fear that readers may respond inappropriately in one of several ways. First, the reader may be repulsed by such a notion of the practice of headcoverings in today's church. I pray that each reader who is reticent on this doctrine read through this material with an open Bible and an open heart to its teachings. The Bible is our authority for faith and practice and we should always be willing to adjust ourselves to it and not look for ways to make it fit our convenience or malign its teaching to harmonize with our disobedience. The second response that I fear

is a favorable response to this teaching, but an unfavorable result in return. Sometimes when we are illumined with truth we feel that we have arrived at some new level of spirituality and a prideful response of the heart is sometimes a natural result that occurs. In no way does the author intend for this doctrine or its practice be used as a spiritual barometer among believers. There are many godly and spiritual women who do not wear headcoverings and probably some ungodly women who do. Because so many churches have failed to teach on this subject, many people do not know that this subject is in the Bible. For those who have stumbled across it in their daily reading, many have discounted its teaching because the pulpits have either neglected it or dismissed it as irrelevant for us today. So we must take extreme care how we handle this subject in relation to others. We must be very gracious with those who strongly disagree with us and not let this doctrine be an issue over which fellowship is broken or even attenuated among God's people. We must, however, be honest with Scripture, and in doing so hear the clear Words of God on this subject.

I sincerely pray that each reader will be edified with the contents of this pamphlet no matter what position he or she takes.

An Overview of the Different Positions Held

The passage in question with which this paper attempts to address is 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 regarding the proper use of headcovering for women in public worship. Before I explain this passage, I would like to give an overview of the different positions held by Christians on the practice of headcovering taught from this portion of Scripture.

The different positions held by believers on the doctrine of headcoverings can be segmented into three main categories. Each of these three positions have several variations that reflect the various teachings on this subject.[1]

I. The Covering is the Woman's Hair

The first position held by many is that the covering is the woman's hair. Within this position, three variations exists. Some understand this doctrine to teach that the woman's hair must be longer than the man's in order to be an appropriate covering. The support for this view comes from the verses 14-15 where the Scripture says, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering." Others have maintained that the woman's hair must remain uncut for it to be a covering.

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[1] Mark Minnick, "Teaching Regarding Headcovering," Sermon preached on 2 Corinthians 11:3-16, (Greenville, S.C.: Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, December 17, 1995), Tape Number 2792

They draw their support from a verse like, "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered" (v.6, cf. also v.15). While still others understand this passage to teach that a woman's hair must be *properly arranged* in order to be a covering. This particular view comes primarily from a variation in the word that is translated, "covered" in verses 14-15. This word literally is "down from head" and only occurs in this passage and in Esther 6:12. The term "down from head" has been interpreted to mean "hair" where the hair should be properly arranged for a woman such as putting it up (like some do in a bun).

II. The Covering is Something in Addition to the Woman's Hair

The second position held by others is that the covering is something in addition to the hair. The position has six variations associated with it. Some believe this doctrine teaches that women must wear some external covering on their head all the time (e.g. Mennonites). Others hold that only married women must have their heads covered at all times. Another view teaches that women are to wear something on their heads in a gathering of God's people when they are gathered for a spiritual purpose.

Closely associated with this position is the teaching that women ought to cover their heads in *certain kinds* of spiritual gatherings, and another is that only married women are instructed to do so in these gatherings. The last view of this second position is that women ought to wear something on their heads when they are ministering in public worship.

III. The Covering is not Relevant Today Because it was Something Cultural

By far the most popular position today is that although the covering was one of the former two positions, it is irrelevant today because the passage is reflecting something cultural in the first century. Most often, this position teaches that the doctrine of the headcovering was a matter of cultural propriety and since the culture has changed, the principle of the passage still remains, but its specific application of covering the head is no longer relevant today in our present culture.[2] This cultural position teaches that female prostitutes and "loose" women wore their hair either shaved or cut very short which violated the natural godly distinctions between man and woman. Therefore, since loose women are not known by this distinguishing fashion today, then the application of the headcovering is not applicable in our day as it was then. A variation on this cultural view is that temple prostitutes in the Greek

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[2] An axiom is a self-evident or universally recognized truth. It is a self-evident principle that is accepted as true without proof as the basis for argument. Paul is stating an axiom in v.14-15 that he expects everyone to know. This axiom is the basis for illustrating his point that is not self-evident.

culture did not wear headcovering when they were in the temple. Therefore, Christian women in that culture specific to Corinth should distinguish themselves from these worldly women by wearing a headcovering in public worship. Since we are not concerned with distinguishing ourselves from temple prostitutes in today's culture, the practice of headcovering is not applicable today.

These variations taught from this passage testify of the difficulty of this passage in ascertaining its true meaning. It is especially difficult to interpret objectively in light of today's culture which is contrary to Biblical teachings, and in light of the position held by the majority of the church. Therefore, it is helpful to look across the ages to have the help of others in history that were not faced with the same kinds of pressures that we currently face regarding this topic. If we can step back before the time that the Women's Liberation movement has so overwhelmingly infected the church, we shall see testimony of the commonly held position of this passage throughout church history. However, first let me go straight to the Scripture itself and comment on its teaching.

The Author's View and Thesis

My view and the thesis of this paper is that the Bible clearly teaches that a woman's head should be covered while she is ministering in the realm of public worship. Since worship is not a spectator event, or a passive activity, I believe it is appropriate that all women wear a headcovering while *participating* in corporate

worship. With her head covered, a woman can properly open her mouth in the realm of corporate worship and join in the corporate singing of God's praise, recitation of responsive readings and creeds, and participation in the Lord's Supper. Likewise, this teaching also instructs that men should never have a headcovering of any kind while in public worship.

Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

[2]Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

[3]But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

[4]Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

[5]But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

[6]For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

[7]For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

[8]For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

[9]Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

[10]For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

[11]Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

[12]For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

[13]Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

[14]Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

[15]But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

[16]But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Logical Outline of the Passage

I. The Theology – Headship (v.3)
II. The Application of the Theology in the Realm of Public Worship - Headcovering for Women and None for Men (v.4-5)
III. The Explanation – The Glory of God in Public Worship (v.6-7)
IV. The Supporting Arguments
    A. Argument #1 – Argument from Creation (v.8-12)
        1. The reason a woman ought to have her head covered in public worship is because of God's created order (v.8-9)
        2. The practice of headcovering in public worship is important for angelic witness regarding God's creative order (v.10)
        3. A proposition clarifying God's creative order supports the argument (v.11-12)
    B. Argument #2 – Argument from Everyday Life (v.13-15)

1. The use of headcovering in public worship restated (v.13)
2. In everyday life woman has a covering for her head – her hair which is also her glory (v.14-15)
3. Paul's point: As a woman has her long hair for a covering in everyday life, so ought she to have an external covering on her head (covering her hair) in public worship
4. Note: the passage is not instructing that the long hair is the woman's covering in public worship, but only in everyday life. If the woman's hair were her covering in public worship, then men would have to come to church bald or shaven. The logic of the passage is using the woman's hair in everyday life as the basis for the need for her to be covered in public worship.
5. A woman ought to cover her glory (her hair) in public worship.

V. The Final Word Against Those Who Oppose This Practice (v.16)

The Logic of the Passage

Before commenting on each verse in this passage it is important for the reader to grasp the logic of this passage. Evaluating the reasoning of the passage itself will guard the reader from drawing wrong conclusions at the outset. The following comments are given to help the reader grasp the contents of this passage before a detailed analysis is given.

Although the passage begins in verse two, the logic of Paul's argument begins in verse 3. In verse 3 Paul states the theology of the practice he will address in this passage - headship. In this verse the term "head" is used three times. Headship is an eternal truth which includes not only the Godhead but also man as God's creation as it relates to Him. This relation of God to man in creation is brought out more explicitly in verses 7-9.

Next, in verses 4-5 the Scripture now applies this principle of headship to the realm of public worship by stating the manner in which men and women ought to properly adorn themselves in this atmosphere. Note that the instruction is not solely for women, but also for men.

Verses 6-7 further explains why a woman should wear a headcovering and a man should not. In verse 7, the discussion of headship moves to its chief end - the glory of God. God created headship and when it is properly observed its end is to glorify Himself.

Paul now supports this entire argument of headship and the necessity of headcovering in public worship in verses 8-15 with two arguments. First he argues from creation itself in verses 8-12. In verse 8-10, Scripture states that God had a purpose in His creative order and that purpose should be acknowledged and recognized through the use of a headcovering in public worship.

However, lest someone malign or misconstrue the biblical teaching on headship, Paul qualifies this teaching in verses 11-12 to establish the codependency and equality in the Lord of man and woman. Although man and woman are equal in the Lord (cf. Galatians

3:28), that does not mean that their distinctiveness has been erased. The same can be said regarding the Father and the Son (cf. v. 3). The Father and the Son are coequal, yet distinct. God has created man and woman distinct from one another and it is through the retention and display of this distinctiveness that God is glorified. In fact, through salvation God is bringing back His intent for man and woman in the order that He created them. The fall of man has greatly marred the image of God in man, but Christ has restored the image through His atoning work on the cross. This restoration through the Lord Jesus is to be displayed through the use of headcoverings for women in places of public worship. Christ is the object of worship in any truly worshipful assembly, and as the head of His church, this is acknowledged through an outward visible symbol whereby we are continually reminded of God's creative structure of headship and glory.

A second supportive argument Paul uses in establishing the reason for headcovering in the realm of public worship is an argument from everyday life (v. 13-15). Since Paul is arguing that God's creative distinctiveness must be acknowledged in the realm of public worship, he uses a parallel analogy from nature. The argument here is that nature itself teaches that in everyday life a woman ought to be covered, and so a woman's hair acts as that covering in her everyday life. It is her hair that is a clear mark of her distinction from a man in everyday life. Paul is not here saying that the woman's hair is a covering in the place of public worship. Paul's previous discussion has centered on the necessity of something external - in addition to her hair

- to be placed on the woman's head. We would grossly miss his point if we think that all along he has been referring to merely the woman's hair. Paul is using these verses to support his argument that because nature itself in everyday life displays the distinction between man and woman through the hair - that is, long on women and short on man - then this supports what he has been saying regarding the use of the headcovering for a woman in the realm of public worship.

The logic of this passage must be understood to keep one from drawing wrong conclusions the Scriptures did not intend.

The Context of the Passage

The question may naturally arise, "How do we know that the teaching of headcovering is only applicable in the realm of public worship?" In fact, some people, such as the Mennonites, believe that women ought to wear headcovering all the time. It is helpful to place Paul's discussion of headcovering within the context of the book.

Paul has been addressing problems within the Corinthian church. The church was plagued with divisions and impure conduct throughout. He addresses a church discipline issue in chapter 5. Then he turns his thoughts to litigation among believers and fornication in chapter 6. In chapter 7 he answers questions regarding marriage, and then spends chapters 8-10 dealing with issues of Christian liberty. In chapter 10, Paul prohibits the Corinthians from becoming involved

in pagan worship. Paul naturally flows from this discussion into addressing three abuses associated with their own public worship. In chapters 11-14, public worship is the sphere of the apostle's concerns. First, Paul begins his discussion on these problems in public worship in chapter 11:2-16 with the proper veiling of women. Second, he addresses abuses of the Lord's supper in 11:17-34. Last, in chapters 12-14, Paul addresses problems associated with spiritual gifts and their abuse in public worship. He begins in chapter 12 discussing the purpose and place of spiritual gifts in the church. He follows in chapter 13 with the priority of love regarding gifts in the church. In chapter 14 he then addresses the proper use of gifts in the church. In chapter 14 the context makes it clear that the discussion is referring to public worship.[3]

Another indicator that the passage regarding headcovering is in the realm of public worship is in 11:4-5 which states, "Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." The two verbs, "pray" and "prophesy" indicate to us that the context is one of

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[3] In verses 16-19 and 23-33 of chapter 14, the Scripture discusses the use of gifts as it edifies the gathered public assembly in worship. Verse 28 of this chapter clearly contrasts public worship with private worship. Verses 33-35 clearly show the contrast of a woman in public worship versus her liberty at home. That which is instructed for the woman in verses 33-34 about keeping silent is not true in the same way for her at home. The Scripture is clear that some things that are proper at home are not so at church. I think the teaching of the headcovering fits this principle as well.

public worship. One can pray in public or private worship, but prophesying is directed toward the community of believers for the purpose of edification and encouragement (cf. 14:15).

Therefore, in regard to the place of headcovering, the Scripture seems to limit the discussion of its practice to the realm of public worship. Having established the logical argument for the passage and having placed it in its context within the book, I will now turn to the individual verses of the passage and comment on them.

Commentary

The first reason woman is to have her head covered in public worship is based on God's creative order of headship. The covering of the head for a woman and the lack of it for a man in the realm of public worship testifies of God's principle of headship.

v. 3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

God reveals His established order. The use of "head" in this verse is metaphorically speaking of "headship" (i.e. authority). In the next few verses, Paul will use the term "head" both in this metaphorical sense of headship and in the literal sense of head (i.e. the part of the body that rests upon the shoulders). However, throughout this passage Paul relates the two usages of "head" as it applies to the teaching he is here setting forth. The physical head is an important symbol related to the spiritual truth of headship. Therefore, the connection between the symbol and the reality which the symbol

reveals throughout this passage is important and should not be dismissed.

v.4-5a These verses explain to us the *application* of this creative order in the context of public worship.

v.4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

This verse gives instruction for the man. A man should not have his head covered while ministering in the context of public worship. The term "covered" is the word *katakephale* and is literally "down the head." The same term is used in the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT) in Esther 6:12 when Haman was mourning with shame for having to publicly honor Mordicai, the man he detested. The Scripture says, "But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered." The phrase "having his head covered" is the word *kataphale* and refers to having something external on his head. The term is also used in classical Greek referring to a garment that would be put on the head.[4] Therefore, Paul's use of this word was for something external that would be put upon the head.[5] As with Haman, this passage would be nonsensical if we understood this term, *katakephale* as long hair because Haman did not mourn by growing his hair out, nor do men pray or prophesy by removing their long hair.

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[4] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians.* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), p.507.

[5] Some interpreters take this word to refer to having long hair "down the head," meaning that a man should not have his hair up as a woman. But this view would not be consistent with the usage of the word, nor the logic of the passage.

Using the word in its common usage as *something external put upon the head* is the proper meaning that should be maintained in these passages. Many religions today do exactly the opposite. Jewish and Muslim men alike practice public praying with their heads covered. It should not be so for a Christian man. If a man violates this instruction, this verse says he dishonors his head (used here metaphorically). That is, the man dishonors or shames Christ who is the head of man (v.3).

v.5a But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head

By way of contrast, Paul now instructs the women. When Paul is using the terms praying and "prophesying", he is referring to ministering in the public worship service. The term "prophesy" can be taken in a non-technical sense to include even the ministry of music. The Scripture makes reference to this in 1 Chronicles 25:1, "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals."[6] Therefore, in contrast to the man, a woman dishonors her head when she ministers publicly with her head uncovered. That is, the woman dishonors her immediate head, which is her husband, thus dishonoring her ultimate head Christ as well. For a woman to fail to cover her head in worship she would bring shame upon the man by breaking down the

[6] It could have been in this non-technical sense that Saul prophesied with the prophets in 1 Samuel 10:11 and 19:24.

distinctions of the male/female relationship.

v.5b-9 This section explains *how* God's creative order affects the covering of the head in public worship.

v.5b for that is even all one as if she were shaven

An uncovered woman is one and the same as a woman with her hair shaven. It is a shame to her head. An uncovered woman is a shame to her husband (head) in the same degree as a shaven woman is a shame to her own (physical) head. The shame seems to be related to her becoming like a man with regard to her hair, thus by analogy suggesting that the women were blurring male/female relationships in general and sexual distinctions in particular.[7]

v.6a For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn

Paul builds his argument on this idea of shame, so that if a woman does not cover her head let her shave it - for the two are alike. That is, it is a shame/disgrace for either to occur - both are alike in that they are disgraceful. When Paul says, "let her also be shorn" he is rhetorically speaking that if a woman does not cover her own literal head it is a disgrace to her metaphorical head, her husband, so let her shave her literal head so that she herself will be disgraced. The term "shorn" means to cut very short as one shears sheep (cf. Acts 8:42).

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[7] Gordon Fee, p.511.

v.6b but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

Paul continues his argument by stating if a woman is disgraced with a shaven head - and the implication is that surely she would be - then let her be covered. In the same way that it is a shame for a woman to have her hair cut off[8], it is a shame for her to have her head uncovered in public worship -- she dishonors not only herself, but her head (i.e her husband, ultimately Christ).

If a woman shaves her head then it is a disgrace for herself. Why is this? From verse 15 in this passage we get the answer -- because her hair is given to her for her glory. If she shaves her hair off, she cuts away her own glory thereby disgracing herself. This is parallel to the uncovered woman in worship, for in being uncovered she disgraces her head, that is, her husband. In other words, it is the same dishonor for the husband if his wife is uncovered as it would be for the woman herself if she shaved off all her hair.

The second reason why a woman is obligated to have her head covered when ministering in public worship is because she reflects the glory of man. God has created a structure through which He is glorified and this structure is integrated in the creation of man and woman.

v.7-9 These verses explain upon whom men and women

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[8] Paul uses a more emphatic term for cutting short in the phrase, "but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven." The term "shaven" means to bald. Therefore, if it is a shame for a woman to bald herself, then let her be covered.

reflect glory.

v.7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

Paul explains the structure of glory in God's creative world as it pertains to headship. This verse does not teach that woman is not made in the image of God, but that in creation there exists a natural creative order (v.3) of authority that finds its end in God. Man is the image and glory of God here in the sense that he has authority over the woman just as Christ has authority over the man and God has authority over Christ (cf. v3). The reflection of glory of one person upon another is in the existence of one bringing honor and praise to the other.

v.8-9 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

These verses further explain this structure of reflective glory by explaining God's creative order and purpose. First, verse 8 explains *God's creative order*, that is, that woman was created out of man, and not the man out of the woman. This creative order gives the priority to the man in creation. Second, verse 9 explains *God's creative purpose*. Woman was created for man and not vice-versa. Woman came out of the man to be his glory and was created for him. Although man and woman were created equal in essence and importance, they were not created similar. God created them with a definite distinction, that is, they were created different in function and authority. This similar distinction can be seen in the Godhead itself where the Father and Christ are both God and are equal in essence and importance,

yet they are functionally different in their persons, and in the authoritative structure. In Genesis 1:26-27 the Bible says that God created man and woman in *our* image. The plurality of the persons of the Godhead is translated into the creative likeness and imagery of man and woman together which reflects God's glory. (cf Genesis 1:26,27 also Genesis 2:18, 21-23). Woman exists for man in the sense that man is not complete without her. When man sees the woman God made for him, he "glories" in her by bursting into song. She exists to his honor as the one that came from him to be his companion and together they will form humanity.[9]

To illustrate the point in verses 7-9, imagine you were in a church business meeting discussing a controversial issue. During this meeting, a man stands up and makes a emphatic dogmatic statement, and then sits down. You do not wonder to yourself, "I wonder what his wife is thinking?" If the man is wrong, he shames himself only. However, if a woman got up and made the same emphatic dogmatic statement and sat back down next to her husband, and her husband sat quietly beside her without saying a word, you would probably wonder to yourself, "I wonder what her husband is thinking?"[10] When children make controversial statements in public in the presence of their parents and their parents remain quiet, everyone wonders what the parents are thinking. But no one wonders what the kids are thinking if the parents were to make the same assertions. This same fact is true of any public situation

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[9] Gordon Fee, p.517

[10] Minnick.

where there is authority, and subordinates are present in a gathering, whether it be a business meeting at the office, or a political meeting, etc. People wonder what the authorities think. If a subordinate speaks out and doesn't defer to the one over him, everyone will wonder if the authority really feels the same way.

A woman under headship reflects for good or bad upon her husband when she ministers. Therefore, this becomes the reason why there needs to be a visible distinction between her and the man when she ministers.

The third reason why a woman is obligated to have her head covered when ministering in public worship is because of the angels.

v.10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels

Another reason why women are to have their heads covered in public ministry is because of the angels. When a woman has power or authority on her head as this verse indicates, it means that she should be wearing a *symbol* of authority upon her head.[11] This indicates she is under the authority of her spiritual head. What the woman does with her physical head either honors or dishonors her spiritual head. This somehow connects with the "angels." This is a difficult verse because it is difficult to relate it to the present context and God gives us no further explanation. There

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[11] Although the term "symbol" is not in the text, the context seems to indicate the phrase is elliptical requiring the insertion of the word. Most modern translations insert this word, and some versions make reference to this in the margin.

are two interpretations that are valid that fit the context of this passage.

The first interpretation sees the term translated "angels" as the leaders in the church and not a spiritual being as the term is often used. The Greek term *aggelos* often translated "angel" is the same term used for "messenger." So the term does not always refer to angels in the sense of spiritual beings, but occasionally to earthly messengers. In Mark 1:2, this same term is used referring to John the Baptist, and in Luke 9:52, the term is used referring to Jesus disciples. If the term is so employed in the present passage it could refer to messengers at the local church, who are the leaders of the church. In this sense, the verse means that the women are obligated to have a symbol of authority on their head to display their proper subordination when they minister in public worship in the presence of the spiritual leaders in that assembly. The headcovering is an outward visible distinction that all can recognize and acknowledge that the woman is not ministering in the same degree as her male counterpart. That is, her headcovering indicates she is under headship and is not ministering with the same authority as the messengers present.

The second interpretation uses the term *aggelos* in its more common translation as an angel, that is, a spiritual created being. Although this translation is less strained its meaning is more mysterious. However difficult it may be to understand, Scripture is not silent regarding angels and the church. Ephesians 3:10 is a strong verse to support the credence of this second translation. This verse tells us that angels are learning

of God's manifold wisdom through their observation of His church on earth. This is a profound statement for the role and responsibility of the church, not only to be a witness of Christ in the world, but to testify and teach the wisdom of God to His unseen spiritual creation. The church does this to the extent that it abides by the revelation that God has given to it. If taken in this sense, this verse means that women are to have their head covered while ministering in public worship, so the angels can learn of God's manifold wisdom by observing the conduct and spirit of His church on earth. Therefore, the woman is obligated to have an outward symbol of authority on her head in public worship as she prays and prophesies so that the angels can learn more about God in that setting. How and what they learn from it is not fully understood, but the context would indicate that it teaches them God's wisdom regarding the created structure of authority and glory of God through man and woman in the church of God.

v.11-12 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

These verses qualify Paul's statement regarding men and women. He takes the time to insert these verses to balance the present discussion lest one be tempted to distort the role of women and degrade her meaning in the role of creation and her importance to the man. Both the woman and man are created (together) in the image of God and both are equal in importance because both are out of God.

The fourth argument why women are obligated to have their heads covered when ministering (or participating)

in pubic worship is because nature itself, in everyday life, teaches us the distinction between man and woman. This distinction is illustrative by way of analogy for the public worship setting (v.13-15).

v.13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

Paul resumes his argument regarding the headcovering by asking a rhetorical question when he says "judge for yourself the answer to this question, Is it proper for a woman to pray with her head uncovered?" The question is put forth in such a way so that a negative response is expected. To help his audience answer the question, Paul will continue an argument in v. 14-15 to lay out the obvious answer they should give to his question.

v.14-15 This is an argument from nature itself . Paul gives an illustration from nature by way of analogy to explain his argument of why women's heads should be covered.

v.14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

Paul says, nature itself teaches you that it is a shame for a man to have long hair. This verse does not *explicitly* teach that man should not have long hair; for Paul assumes that his readers already know this fact. Paul is drawing an axiom[12] from nature to illustrate the point he's been making throughout this passage. So

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[12] An axiom is a self-evident or universally recognized truth. It is a self-evident principle that is accepted as true without proof as the basis for argument. Paul is stating an axiom in v.14-15 that he expects everyone to know. This axiom is the basis for illustrating his point that is not self-evident.

implicitly one can deduce from this verse and its assumed response from his readers that it is a natural thing for a man to have short hair as compared to the woman.

v.15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

The Scripture continues to display the contrast between man and woman in nature, that is, in everyday life. If it is a shame for a man to have long hair, in contrast, long hair for a woman is a glory to her in nature and in her common daily existence, the hair of a woman is her natural covering and her glory. Therefore, it is natural for a woman to have long hair -- it is in fact her natural covering. The term in this verse "covering" is an altogether different word than what was used anywhere else in this passage. This term means "veil." Hence a woman's *long hair* is give to her for a veil.

If God's glory is Christ (v.3), and man's glory is woman (v.3,7), then what is woman's glory? This verse answers that question. Her glory is her hair and her hair is upon her head. The woman's hair is that which magnifies the woman and brings a high opinion to her onlookers. In this way her hair is her glory. If she cuts her hair short, she loses her glory. If she prays or prophesies in public on the same level as her husband, her husband loses his glory. In a related way that woman loses her glory by cutting off her hair, the man loses his glory when she refuses to show distinction in public worship.[13] Throughout this passage we see the term "head" used

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[13] Minnick.

both metaphorically for headship (v.3) and literally for the physical head (v.4,5), and yet the two are being related one to the other in terms of glory and honor.

Note in verses 4 and 5, the first occurrence of "head" is used as the physical head (*i.e. head covered*) yet is symbolically representative of God's creative authoritative structure. The second occurrence of "head" in these two verses is "headship" (*i.e. dishonoreth her head*). Paul is relating the headship issue with the physical head so that the spiritual reality of headship is symbolized outwardly upon the head with a symbol of authority (i.e. headcovering).

In the realm of public worship it is desirable for a man to expose his head since he is the glory of God (v.7). Therefore, a man's head uncovered in public worship brings glory to God since Christ is his head (v.3-4). Yet it is undesirable for a woman to leave her head uncovered since man is her head in the Lord, and her existence brings glory to man and God. Her glory, that is, her hair, should be covered since it exists to her own honor and praise.

The argument from nature teaches that if nature itself outwardly and physically distinguishes a woman from man in everyday life through the length of hair, then there must be a definite distinction between man and woman in the sphere of public worship -- especially when a woman is ministering in what could be seen as an authoritarian role such as praying or prophesying.

It is clear that this distinction in worship cannot be the woman's hair. If the hair were the woman's covering in worship, then we have problems when we go back and

plug it in verses 5-7. By plugging in "hair" as the woman's covering in verse 6, the verse would read, "For if the woman be not covered (doesn't have her hair), let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered (have her hair)." This is nonsense and could not be the meaning of the passage.

v.16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Paul is not reversing what he had just taught. On the contrary, he is saying that if any man is contentious about what I have just taught, then let him know that we do not have such a custom about what this person is teaching, nor does any other church. In other words, all the other churches were practicing headcovering and had no custom as one who is contentious with the teaching. From early church evidence, this practice of headcovering was widely exercised in all parts of the world, not just in Corinth.

Concluding Points

1. Paul's argument is an argument of distinction between man and woman in the realm of public worship.
2. God's order of headship is established in terms of God, Christ, man, and woman.
3. Therefore, because of this headship, a clear and definite distinction must be visually displayed when a woman participates within the context of public worship (v.4-7).

4. If this distinction (a headcovering as a symbol of authority) is not visually present, it is a shame/disgrace to her head (husband and Christ).
5. Although the passage is dealing with the natural created principle of man and woman in marriage according to Genesis 2, the exceptions of singleness also applies. If the woman is single, the headship of Christ applies as it would if she were married and so headcoverings apply to single women as well as married.
   a. A married woman is under the authority of her husband who is under Christ.
   b. A single woman is under the authority of her father (1 Corinthians 7:36-38) and still under the headship of Christ through man because of God's creative order and the fall.
   c. A woman, married or single, is not allowed to usurp authority over a man (1 Tim 2:12; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35).
6. This distinction is shown in God's creation in the order and purpose of creation (v.8-12).
7. This distinction is shown in nature itself by a woman's long hair being a veil to her and is her glory. This is contrasted to a man's long hair being a disgrace.
8. If anyone is contentious about what I have just taught, know this---that we (Paul included) and all the other churches have no other practice other than the one I just spoke about. In other words, all the churches practice this, so don't let someone disturb this teaching because it is the practice of the Church.

Refutation to Other Positions Held

1. *Justification:* The headcovering is the woman's hair
   Objection: As pointed out in the logic and commentary on the passage, the woman's hair is used as a covering in everyday life. However, it is not the covering that Paul refers to in this passage. He is simply using it as support for the argument that an external covering is needed. For the one that holds that the hair is the covering for the woman in verses 4-7, then in order to be consistent with his position, he also must hold that a man must shave off all his hair when he ministers. This is not what the passage is teaching at all. (see commentary on verses)
2. *Justification*: The headcovering is the woman's *long hair*
   Objection: This is a corollary of the previous objection. This view is taken from v. 15 where long hair is identified as a woman's glory and covering. If we substitute "long hair" for headcovering and run it through like a formula in vv.4-7, it seems to work. That is, women are to have long hair when praying and prophesying and men are to have short hair. While the algebraic substitution might work, this view avoids what Paul is dealing with altogether. If the woman's long hair is meant to be her covering in all spheres of life, including worship, then would Paul go through the trouble of his argument about women praying and prophesying? Why not simply state that women are to have long hair and men short hair and be done with it? Why would Paul address the need for

women to have long hair in the worship setting if their long hair applies to them at all times. Well, that's not what Paul is doing here. He is specifically identifying something external to be worn on the hair covering her hair during corporate worship. The long hair in everyday life in v. 15 is the illustration of the point, not the point itself. Paul has been laboring rather meticulously in making a specific point about the need for an external covering on a woman's head in the realm of corporate worship.

3. *Justification:* The passage is teaching something that was relevant in the Corinthian culture but that is not so for us today.
   Objection: This is the most popular teaching today for those who do not hold to the teaching of headcovering. There are at least five reasons why I object to this cultural excuse.

First, there is almost no evidence at all that Corinthian women who were loose cut their hair off. Gordon Fee in his copious commentary on 1 Corinthians responds to this commonly held thought,

> "It was commonly suggested that short hair or a shaved head was the mark of the Corinthian prostitutes. But there is no contemporary evidence to support this view (it seems to be the case of one scholar's guess becoming a second scholar's footnote and a third scholar's assumption). Even Martin, for whose interpretation this possibility would be especially helpful, admits the lack of evidence."[14]

If there is no substantial evidence that these practices among Greek women were even real, then there is no argument for the cause of culture.

Second, assuming for a moment that there is something cultural in the passage, that does not mean it is not also biblical. Be careful about dismissing a passage saying it was cultural. Culture may be practicing what God intended. Even when culture ceased its practice, it does not mean that God's people should ignore what is biblically instructed.

Third, if you dismiss this passage as cultural, then you have a problem with women's ministry of any kind in the realm of public worship. The only thing you have left about women's ministry in the public worship is two other passages. One passage is 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 where women are instructed to keep silent (speechless) in churches. The other is 1 Timothy 2:11, where a woman is to be in silence (quietness) not usurping authority over a man. Therefore, if you leave out 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, what we are left with is this: the women are to be quiet and speechless in the church. If, however, you retain 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and not

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[14] Gordon Fee, p. 513.

dismiss it as cultural, the Bible allows for women's public ministry upon certain conditions, namely her head be covered.

Fourth, and most importantly there is nothing in the passage that mentions society or culture. The very basis upon which Paul is arguing is Creation, not culture. R. C. Sproul, well-known author and teacher at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida writes,

> "Some very subtle means of relativizing the text occur when we read into the text cultural considerations that ought not to be there. For example, with the hair covering issue in Corinth, numerous commentators on the epistle point out that the local sign of the prostitute in Corinth was an uncovered head. Therefore, the argument runs, the reason why Paul wanted women to cover their heads was to avoid a scandalous appearance of Christian women. What is wrong with this kind of speculation? We are not only putting words into Paul's mouth, but ignoring the words that are there. Paul provides a rationale which is based on an appeal to creation not to the custom of the Corinthian harlots. We must be careful not to let our zeal for knowledge of the culture obscure what is actually said. To subordinate Paul's stated reason to our speculatively conceived reason is to slander the apostle and turn exegesis [reading *out of* the text what the text says] into eisegesis [reading *into* the text what we want it to say]."[15]

Paul's argument is one from creation, of reflective glory,

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[15] R. C. Sproul, Knowing Scripture (Downers Grove Inter-Varsity Press, 1977) p.110.

in the presence of angels, and from everyday life - all of which have a timeless basis. Therefore, the practice of headcovering today should not be dismissed with this cultural excuse.

Lastly, church history has demonstrated that the use of headcovering was not a cultural idea relevant only to the first century or to the city of Corinth. It is this last point I would like to develop more fully by showing the understanding on this subject through the history of the church, from the early church fathers to the present day.

Historical Perspective on Headcoverings

While the emphasis of this paper has been on the biblical exegesis of this topic, church history should also be something from which we can learn. While the traditions of the Church are not authoritative like the Bible, they do help us to consider our interpretations and check us against interpretations that may be novel or new. In other words, if I interpret a passage of Scripture in such a way that is contrary to the overwhelming majority of how the Church has understood that same passage throughout the ages and across sectarian lines, then that should give me a reason for a great pause. Unfortunately, we don't know our Church history very well, and when we do our current generation is all too quick to throw care to the wind in contradicting its historic understanding.

To broaden our perspective and remove ourselves from contemporary influential persuasions and to listen to voices of the past on current issues can be helpful. The

following is a small cross-section of many voices throughout church history who have spoken for the practice of headcovering in the time they lived.

Tertullian was a leading and influential figure in the early church. He was a prolific writer whose doctrines were significant in developing the Christian thought of his era. Writing from Alexandria, Egypt on the role of women in the church, about 160 years after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, he says,

> "Throughout Greece, and certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of Churches keep their virgins covered. There are places, too, beneath this (African) sky, where this practice obtains; lest any ascribe the custom to Greek or barbarian Gentilehood. But I have proposed (as models) those Churches which were founded by apostles or apostolic men; and antecedently, I think, to certain (founders, who shall be nameless). Those Churches therefore, as well (as others), have the selfsame authority of custom (to appeal to); in opposing phalanx they range "times" and "teachers," more than these later (Churches do). What shall we observe? What shall we choose? We cannot contemptuously reject a custom which we cannot condemn, inasmuch as it is not "strange," since it is not among "strangers" that we find it, but among those, to wit, with whom we share the law of peace and the name of brotherhood."[16]

It is notable that the veiling of women in the early church was not seen by contemporary writers in that

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[16] Tertullian, "On the Veiling of Virgins." The Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume 4. Edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, p.54

day as being a "Corinthian" custom, but widely practiced by all the churches.

A contemporary of Tertullian was a church leader named Clement of Alexandria. In the prime of his life (A.D.189-231), Clement was considered to be one of the church's leading theologians. Clement saw a spiritual connection between a woman's love and devotion to Christ and her submissively wearing a headcovering. He writes,

> "Woman and man are to go to church decently attired, with natural step, embracing silence, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God. Let the woman observe this, further. Let her be entirely covered, unless she happen to be at home. For that style of dress is grave, and protects from being gazed at. And she will never fall, who puts before her eyes modesty, and her shawl [veil]; nor will she invite another to fall into sin by uncovering her face. For this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled."[17]

Augustine (A.D. 354-430) was one of the most important theologians of all church history. During his day, he was the most intellectual and spiritual leader of the Western Church. In battling ancient heresies in the early church, Augustine established the corpus of doctrine that was instrumental in leading the Reformation over 1000 years later. In a letter to his friend, Possidius, an elder in a local church, he details the relationship of the spiritual headship in the home

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[17] Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor." Book 3 *The Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume 2*. Edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. p.566.

and the spiritual headship in the church when he writes,

"But those who belong to the world have also to consider how they may in these things please their wives if they be husbands, their husbands if they be wives; with this limitation, that it is not becoming even in married women to uncover their hair, since the apostle commands women to keep their heads covered."[18]

John Wesley (1703-1791), founder of the Methodist denomination, was a contemporary of both George Whitefield and Jonathon Edwards. Though not the preacher that Whitefield was nor the theologian of Edwards, Wesley did more to change his time than either of these great men. Wesley will be remembered as one of the greatest evangelists of all time. Though Wesley's view of women's role in the church are quite different from the author's[19], his comments on headcovering are notable. Wesley states,

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[18] Augustine, "To Possidius, the Elder, Letter 245." *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*. Edited by Phillip Schaff. (Ages Software, 1996, 1997), p.1183.

[19] Wesley encouraged women to become preachers of the gospel, and hence the Methodist denomination ordains women into leadership roles in the church. The author finds this to be in direct violation of Scripture. The Holy Spirit speaking through the pen of Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Wesley's own position regarding the necessity of headcoverings for women seems to contradict his own teaching for women preachers.

> "For a man indeed ought not to veil his head because he is the image and glory of God in the dominion he bears over creation, representing the supreme dominion of God, which is his glory. But the woman is a matter of glory to the man, who has a becoming dominion over her. Therefore she ought not to appear except with her head veiled as a tacit acknowledgment of it."[20]

Other great leaders throughout the history of the Church who have written persuasively on the biblical practice of veiling women in public worship include John Calvin, Martin Luther, Menno Simons, Ulrich Zwigli, John Knox, and others.[21]

John Calvin was rather prophetic when he stated,

> " . . . so if women are thus permitted to have their heads uncovered and show their hair, they will eventually be allowed to show their breasts, and they will come to make their exhibitions as if it were a tavern show; they will become so brazen that modesty and shame will be no more; in short, they will forget the duty of nature."

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[20] quoted from David Dunlap's, "The Head Covering: An Historical Perspective Surveying the Views of Evangelical Scholars." (Tampa, FL: BIBLE & LIFE), p.4. John Wesley, *Notes on the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Asbury Press, 1987), p.517.

[21] David Dunlap, "The Head Covering: An Historical Perspective Surveying the Views of Evangelical Scholars." (Tampa, FL: BIBLE & LIFE) p.5.

> "So, when it is permissible for the women to uncover their heads one will say, 'Well, what harm uncovering the stomach also?' And then after that one will plead [for] something else: 'Now if women go bareheaded, why not also [bare] this and [bare] that?'"
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> ". . . In short, there will be no decency left . . ."[22]

Matthew Henry's (1662-1714) comments are notable for us 300 years after the time he penned these words,

> "It was the common usage of the churches for women to appear in public assemblies and join in public worship veiled; and it was manifestly decent that they should do so. Those must be very contentious indeed who would quarrel with this or lay it aside."[23]

Today modern evangelicals among Baptist, Presbyterians, Reformed, and independent Bible churches are taking another look at this doctrine in light of the church today and many are convincingly arguing that the headcovering should be practiced in church today. Dr. Bruce Watke, professor of Old Testament at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. writes,

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[22] Calvin, John, "Men, Women, and Order in the Church." P.12-13

[23] Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible.* (Peabody, Mass: Hendricksen Publishers, 1991), p.453.

> "A woman in an assembly of believers should cover her head as a symbol of her submission to the absolute will of God who ordered His universe according to His own good pleasure. The symbol must be present or the reality and its truth may be lost. Thus the face with which God chose to reveal Himself to the world is one that the world desperately needs to see, namely, a man who displays the image and glory of God through Christ, and a woman who, though equal to man, submits to him. It would be well for Christian women to wear head coverings at church meetings as a symbol of an abiding theological truth."[24]

Charles Ryrie, author of the Ryrie Study Bible and former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, explains about the woman's role in worship,

> "Women should be veiled or covered in the meeting of the church, and men should not. Paul's reasons were based on theology (headship, v.3), the order of creation (vv. 7-9), and the presence of angels in the meeting (v.10). None of these reasons was based on contemporary social customs"[25]

The purpose in showing these men's understanding on this subject both throughout the history of the church and contemporaneous with our own day, is not to take their position as authoritative, but to show that the practice of headcovering has been practiced throughout

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[24] Bruce K. Watke, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation", (Bibliotheca Sacra 135, 1978) p.46

[25] The Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986) p.1832.

the church in every era. When we can see examples in other eras in men like these, it helps us come to the text in the Bible more objectively and less defensively. This is especially true since the practice of headcovering is not recognized nor taught by the majority of the churches today. Seeing this wider perspective helps us to be more objective when its practice seemingly cuts against the grain of the common practice in the church today. The practice of the church throughout its history has overwhelmingly favored the practice of headcoverings for women while present in corporate worship[26]. That fact should cause us to pause before we

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[26] In those few exceptions that we see where a woman is not covered in worship seems to prove the rule. In January 1584, a session records the following:

> "The which day, compears [appears—RPNA] Jhone Paterson, merchant and citiner in St. Andrews, who grants and confesses that he has had carnal dealings with Issobell Gray in adultery, he being married to Jonet Trymlay his spouse (he then admits his guilt but denies part of Issobell's statement).
>
> **The Session, in respect of his confession, with one voice ordains the said Jhone Paterson, and also the said Issobell in respect of her confession, to begin, upon the Sunday next to come, their humiliation for the said offense; to wit that both together to compear clothed in sackcloth, bare headed, and bare footed at the Kirk** of the said city, at the second bell to sermon before noon, and to stand there until the third bell to sermon be ceased; and thereafter to compear together on the highest degree of the penitent stool, and sit as said until the sermon and prayers be ended, and so forth to continue each Sunday until the Kirk be satisfied."

(The Register of the Minister[,] Elders and Deacons of the Christian Congregation of St. Andrews, Comprising the Proceedings of the Kirk Session, and of the Court of the Superintendent of Fife, Fothrik, and Strathhearn, 1559-1600, p. 551, emphasis added.

relegate our understanding of 1 Corinthians 11:2-17 as merely cultural or irrelevant for today.

In this case, the woman was instructed not to cover her head, because it was an act of shame and humiliation, hence the accompanying sackcloth and bare feet. The issue of headcovering in corporate worship is one of shame, not immodesty (but, of course, immodesty is shameful). For the elders to instruct the woman to appear bareheaded in this shameful situation seems to prove the rule by its very exception. It also seems to show their understanding that to appear bareheaded did not refer to the woman's hair or long hair, but the absence of something external placed upon the head - for she was appear in that condition "*until* the third bell to the sermon be ceased."

Concluding Comments

As unpopular as it may be in the contemporary church, I think we have a clear passage of Scripture that specifically instructs us for the usage of headcoverings for women involved in public worship regardless of culture or era. Although my wife's practice is to have her head covered at all times during the public assembly of worship, it is my conviction that, *at the very least*, ladies and girls who are ministering in some way during the public gathering of worship ought to do so with their heads covered. Ministering would include elements like singing special music, playing an instrument for accompaniment, giving a testimony, counseling another lady, etc. However, since worship is participatory, I believe that women who participate in worship (e.g. congregational singing, recitation of responsive readings, Lord's Supper, etc.) ought to have their heads covered. This has been the accepted interpretation through the ages and the practice of the Church since Her beginning. If the reader concludes with the author that headcoverings ought to be adorned by females in the public worship assembly, then he/she should seek the mind of the Lord concerning the matter of *application* concerning the "when," "how," "with what," "who," etc. for his/her practice of this doctrine.

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