



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Let Her Be Covered

Several weeks ago, while shopping in a grocery store, my wife was approached by a woman who appeared to be very refined, in a very courteous manner. She indicated that she had a question that possibly my wife could answer. She and her husband had observed that some women wear coverings similar to the one that my wife was wearing. Why are they worn? Her husband's opinion was that it sig-

nifies marriage. She herself did not concur with that opinion. "Why DO you wear it?" That was her question. In response, my companion assured her that the wearing of the headcovering is a Biblical teaching recorded in 1 Corinthians 11. To her that was news. She seemingly was not aware that this was a Bible teaching. With gratitude in her voice, she promised to go home and read for herself from 1

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Corinthians 11.

A hundred years ago, an occurrence like that in Lebanon County would have been unlikely. Why? Because a hundred years ago, this practice was still being observed in numerous non-Mennonite circles. The widespread loss of this practice demonstrates what can happen in no more than a hundred years. Whether that woman was a church member or not, I do not know. I do know that today, in

many church circles, this teaching is either omitted, or explained away, or twisted so as to make the hair the only needed covering.

It is not my primary calling to condemn other church groups. Within our own circles we have a big enough job to keep this practice alive and moving in the right direction. In order to get that job done, it requires giving periodic attention to this teaching. That is why I have chosen to dwell on

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that subject. My record shows that it has been a little more than five years since I devoted an entire message to this subject. That is quite a long interval — maybe too long.

I have already named the Bible passage in which this teaching is found. Therefore, let us turn in our Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. The content of this chapter revolves around 2 items: the headcovering, and the Lord's supper. Due to their nature, we believe that they both fall in the category of an "ordinance." This is in agreement with the language of verse 2: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."

The now-popular approach to this chapter throws away the first of these practices (the headcovering) but retains the second, the Lord's supper. There is no valid ground for that kind of selectivity. Nonetheless, it is being done. That is one reason why there are people around us like that lady who approached my wife.

1 Corinthians 11:4, 5 and 6 serve as home base for both the doctrine and the practice of the headcovering, but all of the first 16 verses relate to the subject in one way or another. "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." These last four words in verse 6 are my text: "Let her be covered."

That is a straightforward command. It is comparable to other commands that are stated in a similar way. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (Romans 6:12). "Let no man deceive you" (Ephesians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 John 3:7). "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1). "Let your light so shine" (Matthew 5:16). The command in view here is no less binding than these other commands. The framework for the message will consist of a series of questions revolving around this command: "Let her be covered."

1) *To whom is this command addressed?*

That is a very simple question. Perhaps, it is too elementary to even raise. Your answer might be, "Why, it is addressed, of course, to the Corinthians!" That is right. They were the initial recipients of it. Does that mean,

then, that it was exclusively for them? Does that mean that what was enjoined upon them is not binding upon us? Have the teachings of the epistles been generally understood in that way? Among Christian people, is the Bible usually viewed as “out of date?” No! The Bible has been studied and applied because it is believed to be relevant for today.

If 1 Corinthians was intended only for the Corinthians, then we might as well close our doors and go out of business. Very few would take so radical a stand as that. The continued observance of the communion ordinance is evidence of the widespread conviction that the Corinthians and we too, are being addressed in this epistle. However, as was pointed out earlier, it is unfortunate that, in that larger group, there are those who, at certain points, draw back from that position in order to escape the reproach of Christ. Therefore, there is this practice of teaching one part of the chapter, but not the part of the chapter that might make you unpopular.

In answer to this question, there are yet other lines of evidence that ought to be looked at. The book of Revelation, in chapters 2 and 3, records individual messages sent by the ascended Christ to seven churches. At the

conclusion of each of those letters, this familiar refrain is repeated: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” It is plural. Each of those letters, in addition to being for one particular church, was to be heeded also by all the churches. Thus, also with the Corinthian epistle. It is for us too, even though it was for them initially.

To further reinforce this fact let us read 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, (2) unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here we have it again. The writer, God’s chosen servant, declares himself, that he is addressing not only the Corinthians, but also ALL that in EVERY place call upon the Lord.

There is, however, still more that ought to be added to this answer. Remember the question is: “To whom is this command addressed?” Was this portion of the letter for sisters only? The women are very much are in focus here. It surely relates to them, but are they addressed directly, or indirectly? Again in 1 Corinthians 11:2, 3 we find a

clue to that answer. “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 so on. Let us not overlook this!

Obviously, brethren are to be in charge — both in the church and in the home. It is their responsibility to teach God’s headship order, and to see that this order is maintained. Even though it may have been the Corinthian women who were pushing at the fence, God viewed it as a problem that rested on the shoulders of the brethren — fathers, husbands, and church leaders. I, myself, very much need to face up to this fact, and so do you, brethren. When wrong trends appear in covering styles or covering sizes, brethren, let us not blame one another. Let us work TOGETHER at correcting the problem, for this is addressed to US. Let us be willing to admit that an irregularity in relation to the headcovering is seldom a sister’s problem only. It usually involves more than the sister.

I think we’re ready now to move to another question. 2) *With what is this practice associated?* Some persons make much of the fact that, among the

women of that day, this was the then-existing practice. They immediately jump to the conclusion that on that basis it is not obligatory today. However, that line of reasoning completely ignores verse 3 and the obvious link between verse 3 and all that follows, for I am of the opinion that verse 3 is the KEY to the whole passage. Notice now again how verse 3 brings into focus something far more authoritative than a local practice: “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 wants it to be known that there is a divinely established arrangement for working relations within the divine human economy. This is otherwise known as God’s headship order. Better than anyone else, God knows that in every sphere of life there needs to be leadership and respect for leadership. God wants this fact known. He wants it known that on the human level God has assigned that leadership to the man. “I would have you know that the head of the woman is the man.” God wants that fact KNOWN. Wherever a church or a family departs from this arrangement, it steps outside of the will of God, and exchanges

the best arrangement for an inferior arrangement, which will inevitably lead to confusion.

We have now our answer to question number 2: “With what is this practice associated?” It is associated with God’s permanently existing headship order. Verses 4–6, follow immediately upon the disclosure of this headship arrangement. Verses 4–6 outline the God-prescribed way of preserving an awareness of this God-established headship order. The fact that the women of that day and place veiled their heads is to their credit, but it is simply an incidental factor. It is by no means the foundation on which this teaching is built.

Incidentally, for the Jewish men of that day, embracing Christianity did require breaking their custom. It may not have required a breaking of their custom on the part of the women, but on the part of the Jewish men they had to discontinue what they had been doing. Please do not allow anyone to ever convince you that this passage is merely a call to fit in with their culture.

3) *Does not this practice destroy the woman’s equality with man in Christ?* It is true that, more than anything else, Christianity elevated the status of womanhood. In Christ, the Christian woman stands before

God on a footing equal to that of man. That is the input of a verse like Galatians 3:28, in which it is declared that “there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

In relation to salvation, man and woman are equal. It may be, however, that in Corinth especially, this newfound liberty may have been interpreted too broadly — so broadly as to obliterate the headship order. Perhaps, in order to correct any such thinking, Paul was led to include in this passage evidence of the fact that the headship arrangement dates back, not only to the fall, but beyond the fall. It dates back to the time of the Creation. That shows that it was meant to be a permanently existing thing in the earthly order.

Verses 8 and 9 speak to that point. Let us listen now to verse 8: “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.” This speaks of man’s priority in the sequence of Creation. The fact that man was created first was not simply incidental. It was by divine design. Now verse 9, “Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” This brings into focus the Creator’s purpose. Eve was created for the purpose of being Adam’s helper.

The evident purpose for the

inclusion of these facts is to emphasize that redemption does not cancel headship. Headship remains intact in the reckoning of God. Therefore, the answer to our question is “NO,” this practice does NOT destroy woman’s equality with man in Christ. In God’s reckoning, man continues to function as the administrative head of the race. This is altogether compatible with woman’s spiritual equality with the man in matters pertaining to Christian experience. Both concepts need to be promoted. There is no conflict between them. The man and the woman are equal in spiritual privilege, but they are not equal in authority. Let us recall again the text: “Let her be covered.” That is God’s decree.

4) *Let who be covered? Who is to be covered?* If this is for Mennonites only (as some wrongly suppose) then it ought to read “let every Mennonite sister be covered.” However, the text has in it no such limitation. This is not a denominational teaching. This is a Bible teaching.

Already in verse 3 we are being prepared to think in a much broader scope, for there, where the principle is in focus, it is stated that the head of EVERY man is Christ. No exception is made. Christ is the authority figure for every man, whether or not he

obeys Him, Christ is his head. By the same token, man remains woman’s God- appointed head, whether or not she submits. Then, when we come to the application in verses 4-6, again it is EVERY woman and EVERY man, indicating the widest possible application, conveying the idea that this practice is intended to be universal. There is also no reference here to marriage, which eliminates the idea that this is applicable only to women who are married. We may sometime be confronted with that idea. Really, the headship of man over woman is an aspect of God’s government in this world. As such, it is not limited only to life in the Kingdom of God. However, since judgment begins at the house of God, Paul is here singling out an instance that would constitute a violation in the context of church life.

I am driven to the conclusion that EVERY woman who wants to take her God- assigned place under man is duty-bound to signify that purpose of heart by being covered. “Who is to be covered?” SHE is to be covered — the woman who recognizes and submits to her God-ordained place in God’s arrangement.

5) *Growing out of this is a fifth question: With what shall she be covered?* An increasing number

of voices are responding to this question with this easy answer: “With her hair. Let her be covered with her hair.” However, this answer simply cannot survive close scrutiny. To begin with, at the time of this writing (of 1 Corinthians 11) there was practically no need in Christian circles for a plea to retain the hair covering. Long hair had been the long-accepted practice, and to my knowledge was not even being challenged.

Furthermore, those who claim that this passage has in view no other covering but the hair are knowingly discrediting about 1900 years of Christian practice and Biblical scholarship. For that long of time, the wearing of an additional covering was taught and practiced on a very wide scope. Those who argue for the hair only are thereby implying that in respect to this issue, the Christian church started out wrong and has been wrong for most of her history. I am not ready to believe that.

Verse 15 does speak of long hair as “A” covering, nature’s covering, but it is not “THE” covering called for in verses 5 and 6. That conclusion is substantiated by the fact that, in the Greek, the word for covering in verses 5 and 6 is not the same word as is used in verse 15. This

difference comes to light in a number of the more reliable reference materials. They actually use the term “veil” in verses 5 and 6.

A careful reading of verse 6, even in the King James Version, should convince anyone that another covering beside the hair is in view. Verse 6 says, “For if the woman be not covered.” If, as some claim, the hair is the only covering in view, than this clause would envision a woman whose hair has been removed, right? “For if the woman be not covered.” That envisions a case where the hair has been removed, if the hair is the covering called for. Now, look at the next clause: “Let her also be shorn.” Now, we have a problem on our hands. How can we remove something that has already been removed? How can there be two successive removals of the same thing? What the statement really means is this: a woman ought to wear both the hair covering and the sign covering, or none at all. If she refuses to be veiled, she deserves a second mark of disgrace: that of being shorn.

Here is a still further consideration: If the only covering in view is the hair, the Christian man would need to remove his hair in order to comply with God’s will.

Remember, the question was “With what shall she be covered?” Here are possible ways of stating the simple answer. She is to voluntarily cover her head with a material covering. It ought to be distinguishable from protection coverings. It ought to be identifiable as one that carries religious significance. To think of it only as a symbol, allows for it to become too small. The terminology employed here requires that it be also a covering — that which “covers.” Although it is a symbol, it must be a symbol that covers.

6) “*When is she to be covered?*” In response to this, I can imagine someone saying, “Well, that is an easy one. The answer is right there in the text. ‘Every woman that prayeth or propheseth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head.’ There is your answer. She must be covered when she prays or prophesies.” As far as it goes, that is an acceptable answer, but I do not think the evidence is conclusive that this practice is to be limited to such times. That would reduce it to a “devotional covering” or a “worship covering,” when actually the larger context supports the view that it is primarily a “headship covering.” Since the headship of man extends to all of life, and since the world so much

needs the awareness which the covering creates, is it not logical to conclude that the wearing of the covering should be constant?

Why does Paul single out times of praying and prophesying? That is a valid question. Although we cannot know for sure, it may be that those were the occasions when the Corinthian women were beginning to think that they would be justified in throwing off their veil in the name of their newfound Christian liberty. I am simply suggesting that Paul might have received reports of violations occurring at such times. If so, that would explain why he would name these specific times.

Students of the Greek language have pointed out that the words of my text, “Let her be covered,” are in the present active imperative form, so that, by grammatical structure, it really means “let her continue to be covered.”

In relation to this question, I would conclude with these remarks. The veiled head does not necessarily signify that “here is a soul that is presently praying or prophesying.” Rather, it signifies that “here is a woman who seeks to honour God in all of life.” Therefore, it is not really a prayer veiling, but a woman’s veiling, worn to show that the

wearer is in God's order. Let us think of it in those terms — not a “devotional covering” — not a “worship covering,” but a “woman's covering” — a “headship covering.” That, I think, is the main thrust of the passage as a whole.

Again, let us call attention to our text: “Let her be covered.” One more question: 7) “*Why?*” I hope that some answers have already gotten through to you. To all that, I would add this: Wear the headcovering because you know God wants you to! I cannot supply you with a more valid reason for the performance of any deed than simply to know that God wants you to do it. Can you? Can you think of a more valid reason to motivate any action? For every pliable saint, what God has written in His Word should be enough to settle the matter.

It is here made apparent that God wants to preserve an awareness of His divinely established order. That is urgently needed in today's society. Furthermore, God wants YOU to have a part in that, not only the sisters, but also the brethren. He wants both Christian men and Christian women to give visible evidence of their pledge to abide by that order. For the man, that visible witness is given by the non-wear-

ing of a religiously significant covering. For the woman that witness is given by the wearing of a religiously significant covering. The God-supplied long hair will not suffice for this because it is not a personally supplied witness. It does not necessarily reflect a personal endorsement of God's arrangement. It does not convey the clear signal that “I am voluntarily submitting to man's leadership.” The humanly supplied covering should be worn to convey that signal. To all who see it, it proclaims this message: “I will not attempt to dominate. I will not attempt to manipulate my head. I submit to God's plan.”

To all of this the response of the critic might be: “So what? There is no salvation in it!” That is as much beside the point as to say that there is no salvation in baptism or in any other of the ordinances. We do not keep the ordinances to become saved. Rather, being saved, we gladly keep those commandments. “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21).

It is very obvious that some portions of this passage have not been touched on in this message. Perhaps they can be touched on some other occasion.

Before I close, I wish to add

some remarks bearing on the more practical side of this practice. We as church leaders try to monitor changes in covering styles and covering sizes, but changes can be made so gradually that we may not always be abreast of what is happening. Little by little, you can make your covering smaller and smaller, and you may suppose that no one else notices it. However, God knows it, and you know it, and very likely more people take notice of that than you realize. You may never know. If you take that course, you may never know how many other sisters are influenced to do likewise. Now you may take that course if you choose, but that will not build the

kind of church life that I think you want. It will not build the kind of church life that you want for your children.

I am glad for the healthy signs among us. It is a healthy sign when daughters appear with coverings as large as their mother's. That is something to rejoice over and thank God for. Really, anything less than that will lead in the wrong direction. If, in successive generations, the daughter's covering every time is a little smaller than the mother's, it will only be a few generations until the covering is lost. I do not think we want that to happen. Therefore, I plead with you to help to keep it from happening.

Evidences of Believing in the Christian Woman's Veiling

The ordinance of the Christian woman's veiling has something about it that makes it significant in the whole structure of Christian nonconformity. When one looks at Church history, one can soon discover that whenever groups lose out on the Christian woman's veiling it is not long before all the marks of nonconformity are extinct. Therefore, it is very key point and concept in relation to the doctrine of separation and nonconformity. One

brother put it this way, how a sister practices this ordinance says something about how she feels about God. Another brother said that this ordinance develops a dividing line between the Church and the world. Both of those concepts, I think, are vital in understanding the subject.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. We would like to read this passage and then take a very simple approach looking at seven evidences of our believing in the

Christian woman's veiling. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (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."

Some of the evidences. 1) *If we believe in the Christian woman's veiling it will be evidenced by a correct understanding of the meaning of the ordinance.* That is where we need to start. What does this ordinance signify? Simply putting it in a few words, it signifies that the wearer is accepting their God designated place. In other words, the sister who wears the veiling is simply saying that she voluntarily submits herself (and notice there are two things in this passage). Often, we focus on the fact that this passage teaches that she voluntarily submits herself to the leadership of man. That is only part of the picture. It, first of all, says that she is submitting herself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and then to the leadership of man. It is the twofold aspect.

We will be focussing more on the submitting to the leadership

of man. I believe that is the primary intention of the passage. The question could be raised, “In what sense is man the head of woman?” I believe that in verse 3, the word *head* there is not talking about a physical head. It is talking about one responsible for leadership, or one having directive or administrative responsibility. As we look into the Scriptures, when something went wrong in a home, and God approached the home, He always approached the husband. Eve sinned first, right? But, when God came into the Garden, He said, “[Adam] . . . Where art thou” (Genesis 3:9)? He did not say “Eve where art thou?” Adam was responsible for the home. He had administrative responsibility there. The same was true with Eli’s home. God approached Eli. Thus, the meaning of headship is simply that man is the leader — the one responsible for the home and to lead out.

Does this mean then that a woman is an inferior creature? If we would go back to how it was when the New Testament was written, I understand that in the Roman empire woman were virtually slaves. Therefore, the New Testament teaching elevated the place of women — gave them God’s intended place. It helps us

to put that into perspective. Sometimes the apostle Paul is looked at as a woman hater. You hear that referred to. Really his teaching has elevated the place of women and the place of sisters in contrast to the society in which he was living.

This relationship between men and women can be illustrated a bit by the relationship between God and Christ. Jesus once said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). That is equality. Again, He said, “I am not alone, because the Father is with me” (John 16:2), and “I do nothing of myself” (John 8:28). That is co-operation. Also Jesus stated, “The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). That is submission. This helps to illustrate the relationship.

Where we have equals, we need to decide that someone will lead out. If you have several brethren appointed to plan, prayer meeting programs or whatever (maybe you appointed three brethren) then one of them needs to be designated as chairman. If you have a father and his sons going at a project, we do not need to decide a chairman, do we? It is obvious who will be leading out and giving the direction. It is where we have equals

that leadership needs to be determined. In Christ, men and women are equal but God says that man is to be the one who is “chairman.” He is to be the one who is to lead out. Young people will remember that in the instruction booklet it illustrates it this way, if two will ride on a horse together, one must sit in front and the other one behind. God says man is to sit in front. That is helping us to see the concept.

How does this work out practically? Man is the chairman of the team. The chairman leads out, but he consults with the rest. It means that he does not ignore his wife, but it his responsibility and he will need to answer for what happens. We often look at this passage and we say our sister’s role is in focus. Let us remember the brethren’s role is also in focus here. Many a time, when a woman is out of place, it is because the men are not taking their place. Therefore, both principles are in focus here.

Some of you probably read this illustration. I sort of feel it illustrates the point. Maybe I would say this first. It is not without significance. Some of you older brethren can remember when maybe even denominations other than conservative Mennonites practiced this. I hardly can. I can remember the

Church of the Brethren and Brethren in Christ, but when it comes to Lutherans and some of the Methodists — that I do not remember. Some of you older brethren might. I am told that it was true. It is not without significance that at the same time that the veiling was dropped, it was also then that the women’s liberation movement came to its fullest expression.

Let us continue with the illustration. Suppose a locomotive on a track someday says, “This is so confining. I am so confined. I am simply confined to these two tracks. That is all I am related to. I wish I could get out in the field and go over the hill and see what is over the hill.” Thus, the locomotive decides to get off the track. You and I both know that the moment he does so he loses liberty, does he not? He cannot go anywhere. He was better off and he had liberty when he was where he was made to function. That is exactly the way it is with our sisters and with our brethren. This women’s liberation movement is actually a return to slavery. It is important that we keep that clear. You do not have to read much about that movement and some of the activities until it is so evident that they are losing the glory, and the very place that God intended for them to fulfill.

2) *If we believe in the Christian women's veiling it will be evidenced by an inner spirit and an outward life that is consistent with this outward symbol on the head.* We not only face the challenge of maintaining the outward practice. We also face the challenge of maintaining the inner spirit that it represents. One of the quickest ways to lose the practice is to lose what it means and stands for. Then, it becomes mockery to wear it, and eventually it is thrown away. We face that challenge as well.

A few thoughts on this. This passage (indirectly at least) brings, portrays an inner spirit of submission, reserve, quietness, and mellowness. Let us turn to 1 Peter 3, where this is maybe stated a little more directly. It is directed to wives to women. They are to (verse 1) “be in subjection to [their] own husbands.” They are (verse 2) to have a “chaste conversation coupled with fear.” In verse 3, they are not to adorn themselves outwardly, but as verse 4 says, “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” Peter refers to women of old that lived that way (verse 5).

1 Timothy 2:9 gives some fur-

ther Biblical instruction in this regard. “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.” Those two words, “shamefacedness and sobriety,” I understand, in the original language, the concept here would be this, “with downcast eyes, with bashfulness, especially as it relates to being in the presence of men, and especially as it relates to be in the presence of men where they are exercising their administrative responsibilities.” We have in 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 that women are not to exercise an administrative role or a teaching role over men. The Scriptures are clear on that.

I would like to make a few practical illustrations in relation to what the veiling symbolizes. It not only symbolizes that we are ready to take our place under the Lordship of Christ, and under the leadership of men, but it speaks of a reserve — a quietness — and as these Scriptures illustrate. If someone is living up to the spirit that the veiling symbolizes then if a sister needs help to know how to improve her veiling, if she really has the spirit of what the veiling symbolizes, she will very readily respond to help, will she not? She will very readily. She will be anxious to be right, and anxious to take direc-

tion. I think that is the attitude. When we see resistance to help sometimes that is needed. That is simply evidence that we are not quite having the spirit that the veiling actually symbolizes. It is important to keep that clear.

We see the wrong attitudes in a wife who will correct her husband frequently, or when he is talking in the presence of men and maybe he is not giving all the details quite right. I have observed this sometimes where a wife will in nearly about every phrase, or sentence the husband says she must to put some correction to it. This is not quite the spirit that the veiling represents. Maybe the husband does not quite please the wife, or did not quite do what she wanted and maybe then she will use the “silent treatment” on him — she simply will not talk to him for a while, or she pouts. Again, that is not in the keeping with the spirit of the veiling that is in focus as we have it here. Sometimes there is a team where maybe the husband is more backward and the wife is more outgoing. That becomes a special test for the sister and the wife to continue to respect this principle and not to be the one that dominates and takes over the discussion leaving the husband in the dust.

I would conclude this with this

illustration. Years ago, in another setting, there was a certain wife (woman/sister) who wore a veiling. Her husband had a business. She was the first one there in the morning. She opened the business. She always answered the phone. She scheduled the work. She is the one you dealt with if you wanted their services. She told her husband what to do. She was the last one to leave the business in the evening. She locked it. I never felt that was in harmony with what she had on her head. It simply was not in keeping. Now, I do not object if I call to your house and your wife answers. That is not what I am implying. The wife has a place. There are times, in the absence of the husband, where she might need to meet the public temporarily but I think you get the point. It is one of the areas where our wives, with the veiling, being keepers at home, as the New Testament teaches it, is certainly also part of what the veiling represents.

3) *If we believe in the Christian woman’s veiling, it will be evidenced by a visible practice of the veiling that is in keeping with the meaning.* I would like to illustrate this. I was recently in another setting. I had this message in my mind, and I saw two sisters there in the church and I

observed both of them. The one had a rather large veiling. The hair was neatly pulled right back to the veiling. Somehow the first thing you saw when you looked at her was the veiling. It left an impression of character. It left the impression that here is a woman who is concerned about obedience, and being right. Here is a sister that probably is right. (I did not know either of these sisters really well, but I simply would imagine that she would have been an easy woman for her husband to live with). I would expect so.

Right beside her I saw something else. Beside her was another sister, and as I looked at her, the first thing you saw was her hair. It tended to be pushed up in the front and there was a good bit of it out around the ears. It left me with an entirely different impression. I simply did not see the meekness and quietness. I doubt if the same character was present. Now, you say, "Well, now I do not know them," I know, but it certainly left an impression. I will put it that way.

Keeping that in mind, the size and the shape and how it is positioned on the head say much about the conviction and the commitment of the wearer, and the commitment of her husband, or her father, or her church lead-

ers. It says a lot, does it not? You brethren may be thinking this message is for the sisters. I am far more concerned about what brethren side of the house believes about this than what the sisters are thinking because that determines what we see. Young brethren especially, I am concerned about what you believe on this subject because what you believe will determine the kind of wife you will choose, and that helps to set the future of the church. Therefore, it is important that we see this issue rightly.

A) *It is the veiled head that fulfills the Scripture.* The mesh and the design should immediately suggest a religious meaning. A weather protection does not fulfill this Scripture. Simply putting a handkerchief on the head does not fulfill this Scripture. Simply throwing bed covers up over the head does not fulfill this Scripture.

I will maybe deviate here a little to illustrate. Sometimes, in giving encouragement to brethren to wear the plain Mennonite hat, the argument arises that it says here a man is not to have his head covered. I would quickly say that a hat (weather protection) does not fulfill this requirement for the Scriptures and neither does a weather protection on a brother

violate this Scripture. If I am out on a tractor on a winter day and I am all bundled up and my head is covered and I need to pray, I can pray with my weather protection in place. I do not need to stop and unwrap everything in order to be consistent with this Scripture.

Sometimes, when people see our sisters they immediately say, “That has religious significance.” It is not a weather protection. They can tell that immediately. It has religious significance. When they see my hat, nobody ever asks me why I wear a hat. They know that is for weather protection. They might ask me why I wear that *kind* of hat and then I can tell them I wear that *kind* of hat as a testimony against the fashionable hats and to identify me with a people, but it does not violate this Scripture. We need to keep that clear. If we do not have the hat issue straight, we will eventually lose our grip on the veiling issue as well. Therefore, it is important that we keep that straight.

B) *The Bible does not give a lot of direction on the size, shape, or the material, but it does imply some things.* I would just like to lift a few of those things out. i) This Scripture says clearly that it is to be on the head. ii) It would also teach that the veiled head is

the sign, and the glory, or the long hair is to be covered. Harry Hertzler, who studied Greek when he was a young man, in my presence once explained what this Scripture says in the original. He says it actually talks here in the original language — in the Greek it would imply that the long hair is to be wrapped up on the head “like our sisters do it,” he said. That is interesting. The veiling is to be predominant, not the hair.

iii) The material should immediately suggest a religious sign. Someone asked, “Where do you find that?” Here, in verse 10, if you read a centre column reference (or at least in my Bible) it makes it very clear that the covering is to be a sign. That is what it is to be. Therefore, we can conclude that. I believe that our practice fulfills this requirement. It also has historic precedence. I am told that if you were to go to the city of Rome and go down into the catacombs there you would see pictures on the wall of early Christians. There, the women were veiled with a cap type veiling. I saw pictures of it, but it was not real distinct. However, it did leave the impression of capped type veiling. In some of the older editions of *The Martyr’s Mirror*, there are pictures of Anabaptist sisters going

to be burned at the stake and there they very clearly have a cap type veiling, very much like our sisters wear (if anything maybe a little larger than our average). However, the style is definitely in focus.

On the basis of some of these observations, I would share this kind of direction for us in relation to the size and the shape. It should be forward on top of the head, at least to the front of the ear. Someone said that you should be able to put a string from the front of the ear across the head to the other front part of the ear and it should come at least to that point. That is at least something for us to think about. It should come to the back of the ear and should cover a lot of the long hair on the neck. I believe that a corner and a point on the veiling in the ear area (while it is the traditional practice) it also is a definite aid in helping to have the veiling to be full enough in the ear and the neck area. It is a very definite aid in that respect.

Sometimes the covering may be right but not put on right. I have had the experience where, observing some sisters, one time it looked right and the next time it did not, to the point where as a leadership we decided that apparently they were wearing different veilings, only to discover when

we worked on it that it was simply sometimes they put it on right, and sometimes they did not. That can be an issue in itself. Sometimes growing girls in their mid to late teens need larger coverings than they did when they were baptized, simply by the virtue of growth. It is something that fathers and mothers need to be aware of. I have had experience already where you encouraged and asked for a larger veiling and they said, "Well, this is the way you baptized them." Well, it was acceptable then, but it is no longer suitable now because of the growth factor.

4) *If we believe in the Christian woman's veiling, it will be evidenced by a hair arrangement that communicates a desire to be obedient.* Sometimes the covering might be acceptable, but the hair is put up in a way that shows that the wearer is not quite committed. Hair should be within the natural hairline. It should not be dropping down over the forehead and swooping and swirling. It should be within the natural hair line. It should be pulled straight and right to the veiling, avoiding the puffs and the swirls. That is what will communicate the kind of spirit that the veiled head symbolizes. A centre part is the traditional

approach. We have often said that no more than half of the ear should be covered. In many cases, even that is too much if we will keep it within the natural hairline. Hair in the neck area should be pulled snug and not left to fly loose.

5) *If we believe in the Christian woman's veiling, it will be evidenced by regular constant practice.* The Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 11:6, "let her be covered." I understand that even in the English it is this way but in the Greek more so that it is in the present active grammatical form, which means "now and always." That is the thought behind, "let her be covered." People say, "It says it here in relation to praying and prophesying." Sisters, you wear a veiling because you are a sister not because you pray and prophesy. Now, pray[ing] and prophesy[ing] do come into focus.

Suppose praying and prophesying does qualify as to time and place. What does the Bible say about praying? "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Therefore, we will need to have the veiling all the time. Prophesying is teaching, and sisters are teaching in the home every moment of the day. Older teachers are to teach younger sisters. Therefore, even if that was

the case, the constant aspect would come forward. Christian sisters wear the veiling because they are women and not merely because they pray or prophesy.

The question that is sometimes connected with this, "Is the headship veiling only for married women?" The words man and woman here, are referring to male and female not to husband and wife. The husband and wife relationship comes into focus, but even a single sister who is not married and lives alone still relates to the leadership of men in society as well as in church life. Therefore, the principle would apply. If we believe in the Christian woman's veiling, there will be a regular constant practice.

6) *If we believe in a Christian woman's veiling it will be evidenced by a weather protection that accommodates the Christian woman's veiling.* There are some weather protections that hide the veiling and make it such that when you are out in the public you cannot tell whether there is a veiling worn or not. However, the Mennonite bonnet very clearly accommodates the veiling, does it not? The Mennonite bonnet — when that is seen you know there is something underneath. You know that it accommodates something. The

Mennonite bonnet is a definite aid in maintaining a right veiling. Some veilings would not fit with a bonnet. Therefore, bonnets help us to have the right kind, do they not? It is an aid to that in that direction. The Mennonite bonnet leaves the clear impression that a covering is underneath. If we believe in a Christian woman's veiling, we will not want to hide the veiling in a way where it is not clear whether we have it, or whether we do not.

7) *If we believe in the Christian woman's veiling, it will be evidenced by a firm resistance to deviant practices.* Each generation has had its challenges. Even though we face a challenge, it should not alarm us, providing we face it and take care of it. I am not very old, but I am old enough to have watched this thing take some cycles. Those who are my age and older can vividly remember in some former settings where the veilings started getting smaller and started to move backwards. You thought for a while it would fall off the back, but right before it fell off it started going the other way. If you remember the way it finished, they took the long hair and piled it up on top and we refer to that as the beehive. Then, my mother would always

refer to the little doily on top.

Let us remember the principle is lost long before that. No longer does that little piece of material there have anything to do with 1 Corinthians 11. It was veiling the head but it was not veiling the glory. Therefore, there was a violation even though there was material present.

Deviations come and go and we can understand where a deviation will take us by following where it goes. If we see a deviation surface, then find a group that takes that deviation a little further. Then, find another group that takes that a little further and see where it takes you. That helps us to know where the deviations go. Deviations eventually lead to the violating of the spirit and the meaning of the practice, and eventually it leads to a spirit of mockery.

We might say, "So far we have been way out there. Let us bring it right home now." A) *Let us look at some things that we presently face.* i) There is a present trend among us to have a veiling that is too abbreviated in the ear area and in the neck area — there is that trend. ii) There is also a trend to carry the long wrapped up part too high on the head, which forces the veiling to be tilted upward, pulling it away from the ear and the neck area.

Further, when the long part is too far up on the head then the hair on the neck cannot be bound tight to the wrapped around part and then it tends to hang loose and fly around.

Along with this, when deviations are present, I have also noticed among those who follow some of these deviations, eventually there is a trend for those people to then start having a smaller veiling. That ought to say something to us, should it not? Deviations tend to do that.

This message is for our sisters but it is far more for our fathers. Let us go home and look at it fathers. Go home and look at our daughters. Is it right? Are our wives right? Does it come to the ear? Is the hair on the neck covered, and what cannot quite be covered, is it pulled neatly up to be under the veiling and very much in place? Fathers, we need to see to it that our homes are right. The pressure for these trends comes to us from groups around us who are not quite as careful about nonconformity issues. That is where the pressure comes from. We need to understand that.

There is also a pressure for some to move away from the mesh type material and the Mennonite design to an alternate veiling that appears more like a

bandana [a large handkerchief usually figured and brightly coloured]. This comes, of course, from some conservative mission fields, we understand that. I would like to share a few points why we have resisted that, and will continue to resist it. I am always glad to be able to travel to our foreign fields and to be able to look out over the sisters and they look like they do at home. That is very rewarding. We will resist this alternate approach because we believe that 1 Corinthians 11 would teach that the veiling should be distinct from what any other worldly woman would wear. You cannot find a worldly woman anywhere who wears a veiling like our sisters have in our churches. However, you can find worldly woman wearing some veilings that are similar to some of the alternate approaches. Therefore, that is one reason why we want to keep it clear.

The veiling should be immediately recognized as a religious symbol and not be confused with a weather protection. Again, when the world looks upon our sisters, they know they are not wearing that to keep their heads warm. However, with some of the alternate approaches it becomes confused. You cannot be sure. There also ought to be

reverence and care that are associated with our veilings. Again, the type of material and the style that our sisters have helps to foster and maintain a reverence that some other approaches simply do not. I think it is one of the areas.

Our forebearers wore the mesh style. We already noted that from history. One brother said to me years ago, he said to me, "Why do we not simply change it?" He gave some reasons why it would be good to change it. My response to his was, "All right, you could do that but you will have lost something by having turned from a long-standing practice." We will lose more than we would gain, and the risk is too great. *Christianity does develop its own culture.* Someone pointed out to me in the course of bringing these messages that he (having had some experience with some of the other approaches) says that it is very clear that our sisters' style is the most pleasant, the most comfortable and therefore will help us to maintain the practice. That was an interesting observation.

Now, I will make this point of alternate veilings more practical and close to us. We should wear a regular veiling to bed, sisters. If we wear an alternate to bed, then we are starting to break down the very principle that is

present here. This approach is what the church has chosen to be the sign. Wearing something else sometimes starts to break down our conviction with regard to that concept. I believe will move us away. It is true that you will not wear the same veiling to bed as the one you wear to church, but you can wear an old one. Many of you probably do that and find it to be very satisfactory, but I was simply giving that as a challenge.

I would like to conclude by just raising a few questions. Maybe there is someone present who did not grow up with this teaching and I would just like to raise a few questions. Maybe you are here and have been taught that this practice was for Paul's time only. I would simply raise this question. If the first part of 1 Corinthians 11 is for Paul's time only, then what about the last half of 1 Corinthians 11? The last half of 1 Corinthians 11 is communion. Churches everywhere do that. You cannot justify applying the one to Paul's time only and the other one not to be. You cannot separate the two that way.

The other thing, if it was for only Paul's time, then why did God inspire the writer here to take this principle of the veiling and take it all the way back to

Creation to have its anchor. It goes all the way back to Creation to establish that man is to be the leader and woman is to be veiled in the presence of that headship. If it was only for Corinth (if it was only for Paul's time) it seems like it was a very unusual thing to do to go all the way back to Creation to establish it — telling us that it stands for all time.

The question could also be said, if it was only for Paul's time then what about Paul's salutation in 1 Corinthians 1:2 where he greets the church at Corinth and churches everywhere. Also, in 1 Corinthians 4:17 he says that what he teaches there, he teaches in every church.

Maybe you have been taught that the long hair is the covering. At first reading of verse 15, did it strike you? "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." If you go back to verses 4, 5, and 6 there, the Greek word for covering is a different Greek word than for verse 15. I have a number of Greek scholars' books at home and a number of them will admit that verses 4, 5, and 6 talk about an artificial material that covers the long hair. I do not know if their wives did it or not. However, it is interesting that they will admit to that and that is the way it is. Further, if the long

hair was the covering, then the analogy in verse 6 would break down. It says, "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn." If the hair is the covering and if she will not be covered and we have already removed the hair, then how will we do anything more? In order for the analogy to hold there must be a material veil and the long hair. That is the only way it will work. Certainly, that helps us to understand it.

Then, of course some will say, "Well, what about the argument in verse 16?" "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom." I know some groups that say "There it is, we do not have any custom of wearing the veiling." If that is our interpretation of verse 16, then that would be about as ridiculous as a mother on a snowy morning in winter, giving a long argument to her children why they should wear boots, and why they should wear them for recess, and what will happen if they do not — gives a big explanation — and then finishes the conclusion by saying, "You do not need to wear boots, we do not have a practice like that." It would be equally as ridiculous, would it not? Paul gave this argument. Then in verse 16 when he says, "we have no such custom," he means "we

do not have a custom of sisters going unveiled.” That is the only logical conclusion.

Maybe you have been taught that Paul was not qualified to write such commandments. I would simply give this answer. In 2 Peter 3:15, 16 Peter refers to Paul’s writings as Scripture. We need to acknowledge and recognize that.

This practice, of course, is being neglected by many. However, it is standing yet today as an evidence of God’s permanent arrangement that man is the designated chairman — the leader, and that the woman veils

her head to show her submission to that leadership. It also acknowledges that she is submitting herself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Sisters, the wearing of your veiling is not only saying that you are ready to take your place in the presence of men, but also declares that you have pledged your life under the Lordship of the King of kings. It also indicates that.

The question that comes, “Can God use us to keep alive this neglected, belittled, yet vitally important practice? That is the challenge we face.

Preserving a Consistent Practice of the Headship Veiling

Preserving a consistent practice of the headship veiling implies that we believe that by and large we have a consistent practice and we want to maintain it. We want to preserve it. We want to build it up. It also implies that we are conscious that it is ever being threatened. We are very much aware that there are influences about us and all around us that tend to threaten a consistent practice. Therefore, we want to be alert to our need to preserve it.

Furthermore, the consistent wearing of the headship veiling

has always been an earmark of a spiritual people. That is an historic truth. There has always been a remnant, a faithful people, who had the earmark, the distinction, of wearing the headship veiling in a consistent manner. We want to identify with that. We want to be a part of that faithful remnant that continue this Biblical and historic practice. It is truly an identity. It is an identity when it is consistently worn. That speaks loudly and clearly. The identity is ever saying, “Here is a people who are serious about obeying the Bible.” That is real-

ly what it is saying. When the ordinance is clear and there is a consistency in practice we believe that message is going out very loudly and clearly.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 11:1–10. I do not plan to spend a lot of time with these Scriptures. I will refer to them. I soon discovered to take the time to do a careful explanation of these verses would consume more time than we have. Thus, I will merely pull out three basic, foundational points from these Scriptures and build on that.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (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” (1 Corinthians 11:1–10).

Before we go into our assignment in particular, I would like to point one thing out. The apostle Paul’s discourse on this ordinance was first of all directed to the brethren. Did you notice that? “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances.” That is a commendation. They were faithful in all things as he delivered them and commanded them. Then, verse 3 begins with a “but.” “But I would have you. . .” Who? The brethren. “I would have you [brethren] know.” This discourse is first of all spoken to brethren. He concludes with brethren. Do you notice verse 16? I did not read this, but I am sure you are familiar with it. “But if any *man*.” Now, why did he not say there, “Now, if any woman seem to be contentious.” He did not say that. He said, “if any man seem to be contentious, we have

no such custom [of not wearing the veiling].” That is my understanding of that.

The reason this is spoken to the brethren, first of all, is because of the headship order. That is why. It is because of the very truth, the spiritual significance that this order signifies. That is why it is spoken to the brethren. I suppose some of you brethren thought that this message is would be directed to the sisters. Well, it is, but according to the apostle Paul it is first of all to the brethren. If we fail in a consistent practice of the wearing of the headship veiling, the brethren are finally accountable and responsible. It is husbands who need to give direction to their wives. It is fathers who need to give direction to daughters. It is church leaders who need to give direction to members for failing in this area. We want our sisters to have their own personal conviction.

Certainly, we understand their equality in Christ. They share the same spiritual experience and richness and knowledge of the Scriptures. We are conscious of that. Therefore, we want our sisters to have their own personal conviction on this ordinance and practice. However, if any area is lacking it is the brethren who are accountable to the Lord, for the

maintenance of this ordinance and this practice. We must understand that accountability. That is actually an underlying truth of this ordinance because it falls back to the headship principle.

I would like to develop the message by raising the question, “*What is a consistent practice?*” and use this for the bulk of the message. We are looking at preserving a consistent practice of the headship veiling. What do we want to preserve? What is a consistent practice? We would like to take that apart and look at it. *A consistent practice is when the practice is in harmony with, or consistent with, the Scriptures.* The principles that we have right here in this passage as well as some other Scriptures shed light on this. This was always our foremost concern when we think of any particular practice among us — is it Scriptural? “What saith the Scriptures?” That is always the question we want to look at and make sure we are in conformity. If we are not Scriptural, then it is not consistent with the Scriptures. Therefore, first and foremost, that is what we want to look at.

I) The first principle that I would like to lift out of this Scripture is rather elementary, one that you all know. It is right

here in plain view, but it seems like we need to keep saying it in plain words. *This Scripture in 1 Corinthians 11 says that every Christian woman must have her head covered or veiled as we have the term rightly interpreted here.* The word *covered* as it is used here in verses 5 and 6 literally means with a material veiling. We could raise the question, “Why should every Christian woman be veiled.” The answer is clearly given in this passage: she is a woman, that is why. God placed her in His plan in relation to God — Christ — Man — Woman He placed her under His divine order of headship under man. A) God has clearly given direction that it does not matter whether she is married or unmarried. We notice the Scripture does not say *wife*, it says *woman*. Therefore, it is not a matter of whether married or unmarried. Some groups make that distinction. Some translations use the word husband instead of man. We always want to make the proper concept clear because God placed her in His divine order of headship under the authority and leadership of man.

B) Another thing I think we ought to notice. *Careful study of this passage would clearly show that there is a degree of maturity that needs to be involved in this*

personal, voluntary submission. I emphasize that because this is true of all ordinances. It is true of every Christian commitment. There is a voluntary aspect that goes along with it. That is why it is not consistent, in my opinion, to put the veiling on infants, or young and small girls. We believe that is not consistent with a careful study of this Scripture. There is a voluntary commitment of understanding and identifying with God’s divine order of headship, and that takes a degree of maturity. It is right that we connect the beginning of the practice of the wearing of the veiling with the decision and the choice to be a Christian. That is why I made the statement “Every Christian woman is to have her head veiled.”

C) Furthermore, let us look very briefly now at this word *covered* or *veiled*. There would be those (and I am sure you have read some of this) who would insist (in fact our opponents to this ordinance even use some of this argument) that this word actually means “to be fully covered, completely covered, including the face.” I recently picked up a pamphlet on this by a person outside of our group who did some writing on this and that is his argument. He says, “If you want to be consistent then you

must be fully covered.” In other words, not even a bit of hair showing. He went to the Old Testament to get his basis for even having the face veiled.

How do we answer that? That is not proper understanding of the use of the word. I am not a Greek student but I study those who are and that is not a fair evaluation of the use of the word in the Scriptures. There are a number of other places in Scripture where this very same word is used. In some instances it does mean that the article is completely and fully covered. In others it does not. One occasion is when Jesus was in the boat. The Scripture says, “the ship was covered with the waves” (Matthew 8:24). We do not believe that the ship was completely hidden from view by the waves. That is one illustration.

D) Another, even a fuller evidence of rightly understanding this word, is when Paul referred to the adorning of Christian women in 1 Timothy 2:9. He wrote how they shall adorn themselves, “not with broided hair.” If it had been the first century practice of completely, fully veiling the head such that not any hair would have been noticed, Scriptures would never mention how the hair should appear, right? There would have been no

need to mention it, because it would not have been in view. However, the apostle Paul specifically says that when women adorn themselves it should not be “with broided hair.” Peter also in 1 Peter 3:3 refers to the hair. Therefore, the fact that the Scriptures give some sort of directive in relation to how the hair should appear, is evidence to me that this word does not mean that every little stitch of hair must be covered.

Now, you might raise the question, “Well, what then does it mean?” We could go to the other extreme and say that it does not mean much. That is not true either. We know that it does mean that the material of the veil should not be too transparent. It is obvious if the material is very transparent, then it is not doing much of a job in covering. That is common sense, is it not? Yes, we can understand that.

1) This word does mean, “to hide from view.” It has that idea. To cover always implies that. We understand that is the other extreme. The material should not be too transparent. That is the Scriptural principle.

2) The veil should be prominent and not the hair. We understand that from this Scripture (and I will say a little more about that later). There is another rea-

son for that other than simply a covering is to cover.

3) The hair that is in view should not be styled in any way to catch attention. If that is the case then it actually militates against a very significant meaning of the ordinance itself — the wearing of the veiling. Thus, the hair that is exposed should certainly not be styled or combed in any way that it catches attention. That certainly would militate against a consistent practice.

II) *The second Scriptural principle is that the veiled head is the sign or the symbol of a woman accepting her place in God's order of headship.* That is not a new statement, but we must keep reminding ourselves of what that really means. It is the veiled head and not the veiling alone. Some groups would say, "It is the veiling that is the symbol." Therefore, it does not really matter if it gets a little smaller because it is still a symbol. You know what happens. It soon gets to a ridiculous symbol, getting very small in size. We believe, rightly understanding this Scripture, it is not the veiling alone. It is the veiled head that symbolizes the religious significance. Let us always remember with that thought that the veiling must carry, and must communicate the religious significance. If

it does not, it is not serving the purpose for which the Scriptures intended.

In other words that is why we clearly say in our discipline, in our discussions, in our literature, and in our writings on this subject that the normal weather protective things such as a bandana or a scarf or those things that you would commonly wear do not take the place of the symbol you see. They do not carry the significance in the minds of other people. It is very clear that the veiling is to be established as a symbol that communicates this understanding to all who observe it. That is why we always need to have a uniformity among us, and that we attach ourselves to the historic practice such that people understand beyond a shadow of a doubt what it means. It means that we are practicing 1 Corinthians 11. You need to make that connection. Not all people understand 1 Corinthians 11, but it needs to communicate that truth to an unregenerate society that there is a spiritual significance behind this.

Therefore, the veiling must have that distinctiveness about it that it can truly communicate that it is a religious symbol. It is always a temptation by the flesh (and we notice how it works). We are alert to what people do

around us. There is always that tendency to try to make it look like something else — to try to make it fit in with the hair. For instance, some people want to get away from the white and they wear the dark brown or the black (we call them doilies or whatever you want to call it — that material). When that happens, it has lost its religious significance. It no longer stands out as that symbol, that sign which represents this deeper spiritual truth. We must always keep that in mind. It must be distinctive and it must communicate this principle in order to be effective and to be consistent with the Scriptures.

B) Furthermore, the veiled head is communicating a spiritual truth. We always want to live out the truth that this symbolizes. That is very important. We can never divorce the practice from its true meaning. We always want to keep the meaning in mind. I have already said it illustrates God's headship order and woman's submission to man as the one in authority. However, it goes beyond that. When we think of the Scriptural expressions of this, Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:9 (there referring to that same Scripture I referred to earlier when it says, "not with broided hair,") "with shamefacedness and sobriety." Peter

says, [putting on] the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:4). That is the spiritual demeanour that complements the wearing of the veil. Then the practice and its meaning go hand in hand. It is inconsistent when women have a desire to put on the veiling (they want to symbolize the deeper spiritual truth) but they have not yet purged their hearts and their lives of some of the adornment of the world.

I think of cases like that of people who came from non-Mennonite background. They had this unction and desire; now they would like to wear the veiling. However, the life was not speaking the same thing as the veiling was to represent. That is always an inconsistency. Therefore, in order to have a consistent practice, we must always keep the spiritual significance in clear focus. We know what it represents and we are very conscious that our entire demeanour of life and action must complement the symbol — what it represents. We live out the truth in everyday life. Certainly, there can be cases where the veiling is appropriate, it looks appropriate, but the actions of the person wearing it are inappropriate. That is sad and is an inconsistency. We always want our actions to strengthen the spiritual signifi-

cance of the practice. We must keep that in mind. That is where husbands and fathers come in to help make sure that there is not an inconsistency, but there is a beauty and strength of that testimony that goes forth.

III) *The third principle is that it is a shame for a woman to be uncovered.* Maybe this one I will reread because somehow we lose the impact of this Scripture. Notice in the end of verse 5 that Paul says that if a woman is praying or prophesying with her head uncovered, “for that is even all one as if she were shaven.” Somehow that hit me in a new way as I pondered this Scripture yet. Notice what he says in verse 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.”

Careful study of this points out that Paul is putting all three of these in the same category. *Shaven* is when all the hair is shaved off. All the hair is gone or removed. *Shorn* is when it is trimmed or cut short. *Uncovered* is when the hair (regardless of what condition it is) is without a veiling. Paul is saying that if she is uncovered it is “all one as if she were [shorn].” That is what he is saying. He is putting all three in the same category.

Somehow our society today has an effect on us such that we do not see the shamefulfulness of being unveiled.

We are so accustomed to seeing women with very short hair that it almost looks (shall we say) or it almost stands out to us when you see a woman with long hair. I am talking about on the street in society. It almost looks like maybe they represent something although they do not even have a veiling on. Let us remember the Scripture clearly says although the hair is uncut and long, if it is unveiled it is a shame unto her. That is what the Scripture says. Somehow we lose the impact of that because of the attitude of our society around us. Paul says that word “shame” means that it is a disgrace and a dishonour to man’s position because it is a usurping of man’s position. That is how Paul explains it here.

Let us remember therefore (and this is what we need sharpening up on sometimes) that the loose, hanging, flowing hair, does not meet God’s requirements of Scripture. No. We see some sometimes who have long, flowing, loose hair with a veiling on the top. That is unScriptural according to a careful study of this. It does not meet God’s approval, and Paul says it is “a shame,” and a disgrace to have

that long hair uncovered. They may say, “Well, I have a little bit covered up here.” That does not meet a careful study of this Scripture. Verse 15 clearly points that out, “if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.” That is a different word than in verses 5 and 6. It literally means that “her hair is given her for a ‘wrap around.’” “For a mantle that is wrapped around,” is the literal meaning of that word. Therefore, it is very clear in the mind of Paul that the hair was to be uncut, untrimmed and then completely veiled — fully veiled as we understand that term in the relative sense.

We must remember this truth that God intends, the Scriptures intend that we understand the shameful of having exposed hair. God intends that it is put up — the wrap around (we call it the ‘bun’) so that it can easily be veiled. Then, let us remember that we do not want to be seen in public with our hair down unwrapped or uncovered. Sometimes sisters when they are washing their hair, they want to dry it outside on a nice balmy, warm day. Let us remember what Paul says, “it is a shame if that hair is uncovered.” Let us remember that. Somehow, we lose sight of that truth in society

because we are so accustomed to seeing persons who live in a shameful way that we lose sight of that Scriptural fact. However, if you study these Scriptures, it is right here to leave the hair down should only be done in private. Most of our homes are a little too public to go outside with our hair down. That is what I see in this Scripture. Therefore, let us be careful about that.

Furthermore, arranging the hair in such a manner that some of the hair is intentionally displayed outside of the veiling is a violation of this same truth, whether that is in the front, or the sides, or in the back at the neck. Intentionally combing the hair, or arranging it so that some of the hair intentionally stays outside of the veiling is a violation of the Scripture. It is intended, according to this that the hair is combed under the covering, taken to the bun, and as directly as possible without loose hair on the back of the neck. I will say more about that when I come to the practical side.

IV) *I would like to look at several directives from the church.* The church is responsible for giving some directives in relation to some of the details that the Scripture does not speak to. We know that applies to our manner of dress and many areas of life.

That is why it is right when the church gives direction on automobiles and many other things, and we have it right here in relation to the wearing of the veiling. The church has spoken and given some directives in areas which the Scripture does not necessarily always mention. Some of these are, of course, implied in Scripture but not all.

1) *We are thinking now of what is a consistent practice.* The first answer was what is consistent with the Scriptures. Secondly, it must be consistent with the teachings and the directives of the church in order to be a consistent practice. Now what are a few areas that the church has spoken that we must keep in mind. 1) *Our discipline clearly says, "It is to be worn at all times."* To be a consistent practice we must wear it at all times. That is why we prefer the term, and use the term, "the headship veiling," rather than the term the "prayer veiling" or the "devotional veiling." That would give it a religious worship experience. Some people want to take that interpretation and insist that it is only necessary for public or private worship. It is only a matter of time until people who have taken that position lay it aside. That is the first step of laying it aside. That is generally what happens.

We do not want to take that position. We understand it symbolizes much more than a woman in prayer. While it does that, it is more than that. Therefore, we recognize it is to be worn at all times. Naturally, we are to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Verse 10 mentioned the authority, "For this cause ought the woman to have power." The word translated power means "authority." "On her head because of the angels." That shows that she is a constant sign before the angels that she is worthy and eligible for their protection and their power. That is something that is to be there all the time. It is not simply an occasional thing. We have proof in the Scriptures that it is to be worn at all times. I would like to suggest (and I think this is the practice of many of our sisters) that they use their older coverings (veilings) for night veilings. I think that is an excellent practice. We know what it is to get awake at night and to pray and to meditate and it certainly is appropriate to use it as a night veiling so that we are veiled and always ready. We never know when an emergency will arise that you need to leave the house quickly. We never know that. Certainly, it is then appropriate to be veiled.

2) *As soon as the discipline*

addresses this covering and makes that statement about the wearing it at all times, then it immediately speaks concerning the hair. Why does it do that? It is well known that the hair arrangement either complements or militates against the effectiveness of the veiling. It is very important how the hair is arranged. Therefore, our discipline speaks to how the hair shall be combed in relation to having a consistent practice. It says this, “It shall be free from current worldly hair arrangements which do not express a spirit of meekness and sobriety.” That clearly gives directive in relation to the practice of the combing of the hair.

It also goes on to say “It is to adequately cover the hair,” and that is defined. “The veiling should come forward at least to the crown of the head, and close to the ears and the neck. As an aid in maintaining a consistent veiling, a covering with corners is encouraged.” That is some detailed direction given from the church to help us to understand what it means to have an adequate veiling. Some raise the question, “What is the crown of the head?” We generally say when the covering should come at least to the crown of the head that is at least to the front of the

ears, and the high part of the head (that is another way of interpreting that). In fact, the statement that was approved (I will refer to that later) at the April 1999 churchwide ministry meeting and distributed in the churches, actually defines the crown of the head as the high part of the head. Therefore, we believe it certainly means to at least the front of the ears. That is a good guideline to keep in mind. To the front of the ears, close to the back, close to the front of the ears on the top of the head, close to the ears in the back and close to the neck — those three regulations which our discipline speaks to, certainly will define for us what we call the adequate covering.

I would like to underscore the last phrase that I quoted from the discipline, “We believe that the covering with the corner is an aid in maintaining a consistent veiling.” I certainly agree with that, and I believe that is something that we are losing sight of. Maybe some people did not realize that our discipline strongly encourages that we maintain the corner on the covering. The reason that it is given is because we believe it is an aid to maintaining a consistent veiling. I personally, strongly agree with that.

Think with me a little bit. Here is what happens, and here is

how it works. We see some of this in our circles. On the coverings without corners, they place a tuck of material there, or simply overlap the material a little bit to make it look like a corner. Sometimes we refer to it as the “mock corner,” but it is not really a change in angle, or a change in direction. When a covering has true corners (a definite corner) it is not quite as tempting to try and shift that covering higher up on the head because it does not look right. It is only the covering that does not have corners that you can change and shift it around and it still “somewhat fits.”

If you want to think that through a little more, I am sure all of you still can think of sisters, around us who actually have the 90 degree corner on the covering. We call them the “square corners.” There is only one way which you can put a square corner covering on. That is one advantage of that. (I am not saying we must have square corners). My point is this, the more definite the corner is, the more it designates how the veiling can be worn. When you lose the corner you can shift the covering, or you can wear it higher, and it does not look all that different. That is the difference. Therefore, we ought to see the value of having a defined corner because the more

of a corner you have on the covering, the more it defines where that covering will be placed. Do you see what we lose when we lose the corner? That is why I feel our discipline is making a very valid point, and let us faithfully support our discipline in that. *We have some work to do on that. We have lost some ground perhaps because we did not understand that effect and how it happens. Therefore, let us give some thought to that.* Let us look around us. All you need to do is observe what happens. When we lose the corner, let us notice what happens. The next thing that happens is that the covering shifts higher, and higher on the head until more hair is exposed on the back. That is what happens.

3)The next thing that our discipline refers to (I want to say it like this) in the nonconformity and separation section of the discipline the first principle that our discipline lifts out is this, and that is a uniform garb. This certainly includes the veiling. Maybe we do not always make that connection, but that principle of Scripture and of our discipline certainly applies to the wearing of the veiling. I believe that is why our discipline calls attention to that. The first paragraph of the nonconformity section mentions,

in relation to our personal appearance, “We want to maintain a uniform garb.” Then it continues on to explain what that is. What I would like to emphasize is that we must maintain a good degree of uniformity. That simply means that our goal is that we want to have a practice that is a standard among us. That should be our jealous goal. We want a consistency between the young and the old and between daughter and grandmother. That is the kind of consistency we want. We do not want to develop a generation gap and allow two different styles to develop. That is the tendency of what happens if we do not maintain a consistency in practice.

For the sake of testimony we want to work toward a good degree of uniformity such that there is basically the same pattern. We comb the hair basically in the same manner. That is what we ought to aim for. Some of the traditional, historic practices are of real help to us in this, for instance, the parting of the hair in the middle. That has been a uniform practice that has preserved us, and been a strengthening to us. We want to maintain that. We want to encourage and maintain that because it is part of uniformity. In fact, it somewhat stands out in our circles when a

sister does not part her hair in the middle because that is the norm, and we want to maintain that.

Referring now to the church-wide statement that I mentioned earlier. That statement was developed because some of the innovations and because of some of the alterations. That is the terms it uses in its introductory paragraph and the burden behind it. That statement was produced because we were noticing that there are some sisters who are taking the liberty to change from the accepted practice of what we would call the standard practice. Therefore this statement specifically addressed this matter of the innovations and defined them.

It clearly defined that one of the innovations is that the “wrap around,” the bun as we call it is getting higher and higher and therefore it jacks the covering up. That is putting it in my terms. It has that appearance. Some of the coverings then are longer, away from the head, with the small circle in the back. Some of us who are my age and even older, well remember when that came in back in the late '50's and the '60's. This is nothing new to our day. We noticed it then, and in those days we called it the “western style.” I am sure many of you remember that term because that is where it came from. The prac-

tice came from the west. The coverings got higher and higher on the head, further from the head, and got the cone shape and narrow in the back. We know what happened and where it went from there.

Of course, it is right that the church (as a ministry) were concerned about this trend and wanted to do all we could to reverse it. Therefore, the ministry agreed on this statement which was distributed in April 1999. Some of you may not be familiar with it. I would encourage you, if you are not, to ask your ministry to see a copy of it, simply entitled *Consistent Veiling Practices*. To the ministry, I think we ought to distribute it at least once a year. Make sure our people have it because we are still facing that same pressure. It is still among us. Therefore, we want our fathers and our daughters and our mothers to have that information at their fingertips. Make it available to our people. I think that is part of preserving the practice.

I will quote a few times from the statement now because this is part of the directives of our church. "We must constantly be alert to alterations and deviations which erode a consistent practice and often lead to the loss of the veiling entirely." Then, the statement went on to address some of

those deviations and explain what they were. Let us pay attention to that.

I would like to summarize by simply giving a few quick points in relation to the preservation of a consistent practice. 1) *We must have a zealous teaching program*. We must ever keep bringing the Scriptures to our people on this doctrine, and help them to understand the Scriptural truth and the implication. We need to keep the doctrine and the practical side together, hand in hand. Every congregation ought to hear a message on the Christian woman's veiling at least once a year. We need to address it very clearly in instruction class. Spend time on it. Do not take it lightly. It is a very important lesson in instruction class. At that time, when the heart is tender and the young souls are looking for direction, that is the time to emphasize some of these truths. At Numidia Bible School we endeavour to use that opportunity. Every term we plan to have a message. We have been doing this for a number of years already. We try to address it every term that we have a message in the Christian woman's veiling. We recognize that we must have this zealous teaching program.

2) *I want to underscore, we as*

husbands, fathers and church leaders must be awake to these alterations — these deviations. It is our responsibility to give direction. We must have conviction that we need to understand what is the acceptable practice. When there is deviation let us be awake, husbands and fathers and church leaders so that we can give the direction that needs to be given. We must determine to preserve this time proven pattern and practice that we know of it. We want to preserve it.

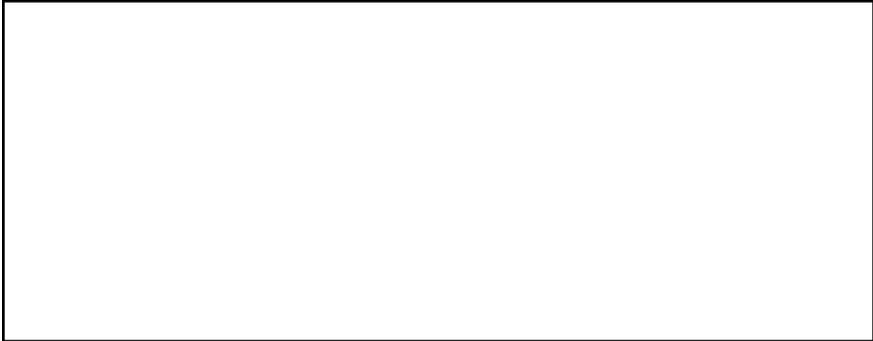
3) *We certainly recognize that on some occasions there will need to be discipline.* We need to see it as that serious that we need to get a hold of this matter because if we do not it will destroy us like it did other groups. We can read many articles of those church groups who lament the fact that they used to have this practice and they no longer have it. We do not want to be one of those facts of history. I want to be part of a people who are ever giving this earmark of a spiritual people. Therefore, we

need to be ready to administrate our discipline, because our discipline certainly spells it out right. It gives careful detail, but we must be sure that our members are living up to the discipline.

In conclusion, I would like to last read the closing paragraph of this statement that I referred to, which I believe is a good summary of how we preserve this practice. “We believe that the maintaining of a consistent veiling practice is necessary to our survival as a Scriptural church. We appreciate the firm conviction of many of our people in this area and encourage all our members and ministry to take a stand against the various innovations which confront us from time to time. We further believe that a zealous teaching program and careful church administration is necessary to perpetuate strong conviction and right practice to the next generation.” May the Lord bless us to that end that we each fill our place that we can yet be preserved as the people of God.

Scripture References

	Genesis	8:29	61	1 Corinthians	
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	Matthew	14:21	58	1:2	72
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11:4-6	51, 54, 55, 72	3:28	54	1 Peter	
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