



Order in the Church Pt 2: A Return to Head Covering
Lessons Learned from Controversy and Faithfulness Ten Years Later
May 5, 2024

Holy Text: 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

We have three goals today:

1. **Encouragement.** God is faithful to confirm His Word and bless humble obedience!
2. **Equipping.** This secondary/tertiary doctrine might be a barrier to visitors. We want you to know why we obey it.
3. **Exhortation.** We want you to love God and His Word and not be ashamed to keep His commandments.

On June 2, 2013, we embarked upon an *expository* series that would explore and help us conform to the truths in Paul's first letter to Corinth. *Why expository?*

Expository Preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers. (Haddon W. Robinson)

Expository Preaching: Five Why's¹

1. Expository Preaching expresses exactly the will of God, allowing God to speak and not man.
2. Expository Preaching retains the thoughts and intents of the Holy Spirit.
3. Expository Preaching frees the preacher to proclaim all the revelation of God, producing a ministry of wholeness and integrity.
4. Expository preaching promotes biblical literacy, yielding rich knowledge of redemptive truths.
5. Expository preaching transforms the preacher, leading to transformed congregations.

We had some hopes of what God might do for our church through reading, studying, and applying 1 Corinthians. We said in 2013:

1 Corinthians is at its core a letter of instruction written by the Apostle Paul to a church in the middle of a sexually perverse, pagan, idolatrous, "tolerant," and relativistic culture. Its strategic economic location made it an ideal place to spread the gospel and plant a strong church, as many cultures lived and worked there. But those same cultural dynamics made it a difficult place to minister and maintain any sense of unity. In the middle of all that, Paul proclaims a God-given standard in key areas; areas in which we still struggle today.

As we read and study this letter, I expect CRC(C) will be exhorted by the Spirit of God to reform more and more as we bring ourselves further under apostolic teaching, written by the Spirit of God Himself. (2 Pet 1:21)²

So What Happened?

Well, we would say eventually these things happened, but we had to go through great trials first, painfully experiencing the opposite of those goals for years.

¹ *Preaching*, John MacArthur, 2005.

² <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2014/5/8/an-introduction-to-1-corinthians-10-key-passages-6213>

- Although we never insisted on complete uniformity (we just encouraged the church to be good Bereans, obey the Scriptures, and show grace)³, head covering revealed some underlying disagreement about who we were supposed to be as a church, and initiated a long and difficult process of maturity.
- Sadly, disunity at CRC(C) arose because of the dislike of, distaste for, and embarrassment from this doctrine and what it represented: *visible* male/female distinctions, *visible* female submission to her roles in home and church, Christian modesty, and the vicious and unrelenting nature of spiritual warfare that surrounds these things.
- Biblical Womanhood, in general, also created angst amongst some. Regrettably, dissident camps developed. I'll never forget the "REAL housewives of CRCC," a clique of women (supported by their husbands) who boldly opposed what we were preaching.
- Even more tragically, some who were trusted to lead fomented disunity as well.
- We lost many members from 2014-2019 as a result. Some current members call it "The Exodus!"
- We were vilified and called sexist and misogynist: "He hates women!" Because of this and some of our other distinctives, like family integration, our congregation was dragged through the gossip-filled mud.
- Ironically, the beginning of the covid cautions signaled the end of that very hard season!
- In 2020, we began rebuilding. We bore down and kept praying, loving, preaching, worshiping, and discipling our families. We also changed our name in June 2020 to better reflect our mission.
- We slowly emerged from the fog of the "womanhood wars" and began getting healthier and more united. More people began to see that God's Word for His daughters is good and that failure to obey was actually HURTING not HELPING our HOUSEHOLDS.
- We continued to examine ourselves but never changed our doctrine. The Scriptural commands for men and women are very simple!
- The LORD, in His kindness (and I believe with divine humor), began steadily sending new members to us **BECAUSE OF** our loving stand on Scripture in these areas! Hallelujah!
- **Through it all, we say "Soli Deo Gloria!"** May we continue to attempt to "teach all nations" "to observe all things whatsoever" the LORD hath commanded. (Matt 28:18-19)

Some thoughts on Head Covering: Ten Years Later

1. It is a *straight-forward doctrine* for the Church. It isn't hard to understand. Here it is from The New Living Translation:

1 Corinthians 11:1-16 (NLT) *And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ. 2 I am so glad that you always keep me in your thoughts, and that you are following the teachings I passed on to you. 3 But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*

4 *A man dishonors his head if he covers his head while praying or prophesying. 5 But a woman dishonors her head if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head. 6 Yes, if she refuses to wear a head covering, she should cut off all her hair! But since it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or her head shaved, she should wear a covering.*

³ Acts 17:10-11 (KJV) And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

7 A man should not wear anything on his head when worshiping, for man is made in God's image and reflects God's glory. And woman reflects man's glory. **8** For the first man didn't come from woman, but the first woman came from man. **9** And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man. **10** For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority.

11 But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. **12** For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God. **13** Judge for yourselves. Is it right for a woman to pray to God in public without covering her head? **14** Isn't it obvious that it's disgraceful for a man to have long hair? **15** And isn't long hair a woman's pride and joy? For it has been given to her as a covering. **16** But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God's other churches.

2. It is a *historical doctrine*, followed by *all churches everywhere* until the 1960s.
3. It is a *beautiful doctrine*, divinely demonstrating the distinction between men and women in the church.
4. It is a *powerful doctrine*, demonstrating the reality and authority for both men and women to approach God!
5. It is *warfare-inducing doctrine*, "because of the angels." The world, the flesh, and the devil do not want men and women walking in their roles and obeying Scripture.

Holy Text: 1 Corinthians 11:1-16⁴

1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV) Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

- Paul was an apostle. His authority flowed from Christ.
- Remember, His Words were Scripture and should therefore be followed. (2 Pet 3:15-16)

1 Corinthians 11:2 (KJV) Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

- Remembering apostolic doctrine is praiseworthy! Don't let anyone pit Jesus against Paul!
- The *ordinances* should be kept! These include the LORD's Table (later in this very chapter) and Baptism. Here, Paul seems to include head covering among them.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV) 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.

- This is God's *Governmental* or *Governing Order*: God, Christ, Men, Women.
- This isn't saying that every woman submits to every man, but that men have been given *jurisdictional* headship. (Home, Eph 5:23; Church, 1 Tim 3:1-7; State, Rom 13:1-7/1 Tim 2:1-2)

1 Corinthians 11:4 (KJV) Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

⁴ For additional detail, see the original message: <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2014/6/13/head-coverings-history-context-and-exegesis-1-corinthians-112-16>

Also see our YouTube video, Head Coverings Revisited: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08T_iksFuQQ or our book, which we'll send free (PDF copy) to any CRC member who wants one: <https://www.ccmcleod.com/head-covering>

- To demonstrate this headship, men must pray/prophesy with their heads uncovered. Why?
- In Scripture, there are at least four reasons that something/someone would be covered: 1. Value/honor (Ex 40:21) 2. Submission/modesty (Gen 24:65) 3. Mourning (2 Sam 15:30; Est 6:12), 4. To demonstrate a need (or not) of authority/permission to enter into the LORD's Presence. (The holy veil: Lev 16:2, 21:23; Matt 27:51; Heb 10:19-20)
- By virtue of *Governmental (and Creation) Order*, men honor their Head (Christ) by praying uncovered. In other words, they need no other authority than their design to do so.

1 Corinthians 11:5 (KJV) *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.*

- Women, by virtue of *Governmental and Creation Order* (*she was made for man*), demonstrate their understanding and embracing of their divine role when they cover their heads.
- A woman dishonors her "head" (her husband, father, or other men in authority in the church) when she prays uncovered. Spiritually, it is like she shaved her head as an act of rebellion.
- Remember the four reasons for biblical covering? She is valuable so she covers her head. She is submissive so she covers her head. She mourns over Eve's rebellion (see 1 Tim 2:13-15) so she covers her head. And she, when under authority (displayed by this symbol), has just as much right as men to publicly worship God!

1 Corinthians 11:6 (KJV) *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.*

- Again, to be uncovered is akin to purposely shaving the head, which in Paul's day would be a sign of rebellion. (Often in ours too!)
- Note that being shorn or covered are two different states. The head covering is not hair.
- Paul isn't saying "If a woman hath not hair, let her cut her hair off." That makes no sense. The external covering and the hair are two different things. The covering was removable after times of prayer and prophecy, so it cannot be hair!⁵
- "Let her be covered" sounds like a command to me!

1 Corinthians 11:7 (KJV) *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.*

- "Ought not." Men should NOT have something on their heads when approaching God. Culture has mostly maintained this, not just in church but anytime there is something solemn or reverent going on.
- Why? Because man is the image and glory of God. No symbol of authority is needed.
- Woman was created differently. She too is made in God's image, but she is also the glory of man, and wears an outer symbol to show she submits to God's *Creation Order*. (v.10)
- This truth is another reason this doctrine is hated: It's as anti-independent feminist as you can get!

1 Corinthians 11:8 (KJV) *For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.*

- *Creation Order and Purpose* is to be reflected in the LORD's worship. God does not want androgynous, gender-confused worship.

⁵ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/bishops-blog/2021/10/10-reasons-the-christian-head-covering-is-not-hair-or-long-hair>

1 Corinthians 11:9 (KJV) Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

- Eve was created for Adam, from Adam. She was brought to Adam and named by Adam. (Gen 2:20-23)

1 Corinthians 11:10 (KJV) For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

- “Power” here is the symbol of authority Paul has been teaching on: the head covering.
- For this cause “ought” (a command) the woman wear a head covering in worship. Why?
- “Because of the angels.” Here Paul introduces yet another reason for this practice: *Spiritual Warfare*.
- “For this cause.” Here is an exegetical question worth asking: “Is there anywhere in Scripture where angels needed to be reminded that the woman was created for the man?”⁶
- Regardless of one’s view here, angels (spiritual warfare) ain’t cultural!

1 Corinthians 11:11 (KJV) Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

- Both men and women need one another as God designed them! The “gender wars” would lessen if we understood this!

1 Corinthians 11:12 (KJV) For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

- Women were made for men (wives for husbands), but all men come from women (their mothers)! This is God’s good design, Who alone is the Source of both and all things!

1 Corinthians 11:13 (KJV) Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

- This is a rhetorical question to the church; they were to think carefully about God’s design.
- The answer is obviously, “No, it is not proper or comely.”

1 Corinthians 11:14 (KJV) Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

- Why is the answer, “No” above? Because of all Paul has taught to this point (*Governmental Order, Creation Order, Spiritual Warfare*). Now he gives another reason: *Nature*.
- Paul is saying that even the way men and women *naturally* wear their hair testifies that men should not and women should be covered during times of prayer and prophecy.
- Another unpopular truth from this Holy Text: long hair on a man is a shame unto him. What is long?” Is a common question. Our answer: “Some things are obvious. Judge in yourselves.”

1 Corinthians 11:15 (KJV) But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

- Long hair is a woman’s glory! This is an obvious truth. Amen beauty industry? 😊
- Not only that, but remember that woman is man’s glory! She therefore covers both herself (modesty) and some or most of her glory (hair on her head with a head covering) that only God’s glory (not man’s or woman’s) would be manifest in the LORD’s worship.

⁶ Our view takes us back to Genesis 6:1-4.

1 Corinthians 11:16 (KJV) But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

- Anticipating push back (like in 1 Cor 14:36), Paul gives a final reason: *Uniform Church Practice*. There was “no such custom” as men praying covered and women uncovered in the churches:

“But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God’s other churches.” (NLT)

- Of note, this was new for Jewish converts, where men were often covered.
- All churches abided by this rule until the demonic incursion of feminism in the 1960’s.

Lessons Learned from Controversy and Faithfulness Ten Years Later

1. Scripture is Sufficient!

- What does this mean?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

- Despite the acknowledgment of many that Scripture is inspired, inerrant and infallible, often the tendency is to either look outside the Bible for answers or judge the Bible through the lens of our experiences or desires, thus denying *Sufficiency*.
- We learned to be strong and very courageous...to Stand on God’s Word! There is a reason God saw fit to include 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 in the Holy Text!

2. Simple obedience isn’t always simple!

- Head covering showed how hard “simple obedience” can be. Think about it. “Men, don’t put anything on your head when worshipping God. Women, put something on your head when worshipping God.” How hard is this?
- It turns out, when it goes against current trends and traditions, very hard!
- We learned that being the “called out” (*Ekklēsia* or Church) sometimes means standing out, which isn’t always easy! But keeping God’s Word brings a reward!

Psalms 19:7-11 (KJV) *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

3. Pride is a beast!

- Too proud for this “simple” doctrine? God resists the proud!
James 4:6-7 (KJV) *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
- We learned to continually self-examine and humble ourselves before God and His Word.

James 1:21 (KJV) *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

2 Corinthians 13:5 (KJV) *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

- Many blessings have overtaken CRC because God, by His grace, has kept us humble. May He continue to do so!

4. Love people where they are!

- We learned that everyone is on a slightly different growth and sanctification tract. Therefore we must be patient with God's people! (1 Thess 5:14; 2 Tim 2:24-25)
- We realized that head covering is strange to many in the church these days, so we allowed people to "come to it" at their own pace.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (KJV) *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Ephesians 4:15 (KJV) *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

- We pray we did not err in this patience, that the love we have for you was and is easily felt, and that when we admonish and encourage obedience (to any doctrine), the saints would read, heed, and if there is disagreement, walk in grace and love.

5. Be ready for war!

- There is massive Spiritual Warfare around God's Word to Women! The fight began in the Garden when Satan first attacked Eve! (Gen 3:1-7) Indeed, there are few things subject to MORE warfare.
- From abortion, to submission to husbands, to working in or outside the home, to modesty, to roles in the church, to head covering...every "woman's issue" enrages the spiritual realm!
- As a result, Biblical Womanhood is beautiful but extremely unpopular. Satan's use of feminism has made God's Word hard to hear!

6. Bear losses with humility and faith.

- Sound doctrine can lead to conflict. It did for Jesus! (John 6:60-71)
- We learned that friendships can be fickle and covenant can be based on comfort!

Psalms 35:11-15 (KJV) *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. **12** They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. **13** But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. **14** I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. **15** But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:*

- CRC, we learned to love deeply and press on anyway! Jesus is Enough!

7. God will not be mocked!

- Insofar as it is given to us correctly, we are all responsible for the teaching we receive.
James 1:22 (KJV) But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Hebrews 13:17 (KJV) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

- This isn't a light thing with God!
Galatians 6:6-7 (KJV) Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
- One of the joys AND hardships of 27 years of ministry hindsight is seeing God honor His own Word, sometimes with blessings, and sometimes with judgment.

8. Christ builds His Church!

- Despite holding to an exegetical, historical view of this and other unpopular biblical teachings, CRC has prospered! Christ is still building His church!

Matthew 16:18-19 (KJV) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

- Prosperity alone isn't enough to determine God's favor, but WE ARE GLAD our LORD has seen fit to meet our needs and to allow us to serve more people!

Final Thoughts:

Ten years ago, we naively worked our way through a simple Passage in the Holy Writ that both *devastated* AND *disciplined* our church. May we always be willing to reform our lives and ministry practices according to Scripture, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

If it be His will for us to face more challenges ahead, may we do so with love, mercy, patience, and humility, persevering for His glory and the good of this flock.

In Jesus' Name!

Amen!