

Mount Zion 7<sup>th</sup> Day Church of God UK International Conference

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The UK International Conference Policy on

## HEAD GEAR WEARING AND WEARING OF TROUSERS

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In the New Testament (Greek Scriptures), we find in the book of Corinthians, the subject on headdress and the conduct of the woman inside the Church at Corinth.

1Corinthians 11:3-15 reading from the *Amplified Bible*. (Zondervan, 1997)- 'But I want you to know and realize that Christ is the Head of every man, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who prays or prophesies (teaches, refutes, reproves, admonishes, and comforts) with his head covered dishonors his head (Christ).

Any woman in the early Near Eastern custom, who [publicly] prays or prophesies (teaches, refutes, reproves admonishes, or comforts) when she is bareheaded dishonours her head (her husband); it is the same as [if her head were] shaved.

For if a woman will not wear [a head] covering, then she should cut off her hair too; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her head shorn or shaven, let her cover [her head].

For the man ought not to wear anything on his head [in church], for he is the glory of God [his function of government reflects the majesty of the divine Rule]; but woman is [the expression of] man's glory (majesty, pre-eminence)". This is in the (middle voice): If she should discard her veil like a man, she should chop her hair like one too!

Verse 10: "Therefore she [be subject to his authority and should] have a covering on her head [as a token, a symbol, of her submission to authority, that she may show reverence as do] the angels [and not displease them]. Nevertheless, in [the plan of] the Lord and from His point of view woman is not apart from independent of man, nor is a man aloof from and independent of woman; for as woman was made from man, even so man is also born of woman and all [whether male or female go forth] from God [as their Author]".

Consider for yourselves; is it proper and decent [according to your custom] for a woman to offer prayer to God publicly] with her head uncovered? Does not the native sense of propriety (experience, common sense, reason) itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is a dishonour [humiliating and degrading] to him;

but if a woman has long hair, it is her ornament and glory? For her hair is given to her for covering. 'Verse 10 presents two major problems of translations and interpretation (1) the meaning of veil. The word here is *exousia*, meaning authority. While the context might suggest that this is to be interpreted as a 'sign of being under authority,' i.e., 'a veil', the word itself suggests that it is rather 'a sign of her own authority.'

This was an ordinance. "Ordinances" were instruction relating to doctrine, moral standards and codes of conduct that Paul delivered to the Church by Christ's authority. Note by way of observation that the instructions in the same verse of Chapter 11, outlines the will of God for His people in such matters as outward adornment that it should be modest in appearance and proper in conduct. This teaches us that God is concerned only with inner attitudes and not with "externals" which departs from God's clear revelation in scripture. To dress properly and modestly is a Biblical principle of lasting validity- see 1Timothy 2:9.

In other words, this is a timeless truth, which Paul is trying to convey. The woman who covers her head in Paul's day demonstrates her modesty and submission to her husband and demonstrates to herself a display of dignity. The veil meant that the woman ought to be respected and honoured as a female.

In the early years of the Early Eastern custom women without a veil had no dignity.

Men did not deem woman with high dignity without veils because they were seen as flaunting their wears as it were, (that is being sexually provocative) without the veil. The women were deemed among themselves as publicly and shamefully common if they did not cover publicly or veil. Thus, the Veil served as dignity, honour, and glory of womanhood as God created her. The principle behind the wearing of veils is still **required today** in the early years of Eastern culture.

However, within western culture, covering of the head is not a prerequisite or binding, apart from set solemn and ceremonial occasions, such as weddings, Royal Ascot, and royal occasions when the covering then becomes customary as well as mandatory. Furthermore, there are no written Scriptures in the Bible forbidding women to wear wigs or extensions. However, it is recommended that if wigs/extensions are worn, then these should be discreet and be of modest appearance in accordance with 1 Timothy 2:9a. (“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel”). Also 1st John 2: 15a; and Romans 12: 2. (“Do not love the world” (part of 1st John 2:15), “or be conformed to the world” (part of Romans 12.2). Note: Extended eyelashes and extended fingernails are forbidden. Note: The bleaching of the skin using cream etc is forbidden.

(Please note the conference does not lay a binding mandatory law on any sister if she chooses to wear or not to wear a covering or hat. However, it is welcome to see sisters with some sort of covering, but if the Sisters choose not to, they should not be condemned).

A Christian woman should dress in a modest and careful way; she must be honourable and dignified in her attire that allows her to go anywhere with security and profound respect. When dressed modestly and properly this alone brings glory to God; a woman enhances her own God-given place of dignity and worth whether veil or unveil.

Once again in order to understand the right context of Paul's argument he emphasizes that a woman should be veiled in public i.e. 'have a symbol of "power" or authority on her head. The phrase because of the angels-messengers may refer to the fact that angels-messengers are concerned with proper order and are shocked at conduct that is not in tune with the will of God.

Another view is that angels are present in worship and will observe their conduct and be offended. They do observe human conduct, Luke 15:7, 10. God desires that the physical differences between male and female in terms of headship is that man is the head of the woman and Christ is the head of man.

Men and woman must observe that Paul uses the hair as an example, stating that

the length of the hair of men and woman should be such as, in order to distinguish between one and the other. A woman's hair should be long in comparison to the man's, symbolizing her acceptance of the dignity and worth of womanhood as God created her. A man's hair, in contrast to the woman's hair should be short. It is noteworthy that a married woman covers her head, because of submission to her head, which is her husband, (thus she veils); while it is true that the man does not cover because his head is Christ.

This however does not apply to the single sister. At Corinth long hair for men, signified pagan male prostitution and short hair for woman identified them as prostitutes. The Greek wording in Verse 15 - "to-him it-is woman yet if -ever-may be-tressing esteems to- her it-is that the tresses instead of about -cast have been-given to her": **eigap apoboln auto os katallags koduos tis n nrodlnuphis ei unsoon ek uekpoos**. It still stands true today that Asian woman usually regard the length of their hair with pride. Even within Western culture, a woman's hair is kept longer than a man's. Yet the limitation too of such generalization is finally bereft of this source of pride; this is neither the physical nor cultural pattern this can be demonstrated, through the natural covering, the principle of subjection.

In Verse 16 - reading from the Amplified Bible. (Zondervan, 1997) "There are no customs - it speaks here of contentions; this was brought about concerning the above matter that he (Paul) merely aforementioned; but if one is inclined to be

contentious, we have not that practice, nor have the churches of God.

Contentious in regards to this practice, there are no such customs in the (Greek) western culture/custom of woman worshipping without some form of a covering.

Her hair is given to her for a covering. This is not the same word, which is used in verse 5-6. The point here is that as the hair represents the proper covering in the natural realm, so the veil is the proper covering in the religious realm (Near Eastern culture). In relation to the role of woman in the early church the custom was carried over by the Catholics as exhibited by Nuns who themselves veil.

However, such practice is not a prerequisite in the Church today as was then in the Church in Corinth. This should not create a problem within our worship services.

#### **In the case of Pants wearing by woman.**

It must be noted that the custom, which remains a practice in the Near East, is where women cover the lower parts of their body in their **jamilia- Pants** (baggy pants) This is so, on account that woman is not to show any skin, and it stops men from lusting. This is true both of Woman in Islam and in Judaism and the Nuns in Catholic Monastery's in Israel. She (Islamic woman) only uncovers for her husband, and not in public. Is this Custom relevant for the Church today? A good question - Pants or no pants wearing - this has no scriptural base.

Note: In the early Eastern custom, man and woman wore the same unisex garments and this custom is the same today. By way of observation, concerning woman should not wear men clothing; well we should not wear two different pieces of material such as wool and polyester; this was sin and punishable by stoning to death in the Early Near Eastern custom. Is that so today? Judge for yourselves.

Lev 15.2-32 speaks in this regard on the matter of discharge, as to both sexes. How does that apply to today, what, is the context of this subject, that is applicable today? This context has no application for the believers today.

The modern disregard and ridicule of these wise customs are symptom of the prevalent apostasy and insubordination to the truth of God's word, as well as the ignorance, which do not appreciate the profound wisdom, which underline it. It would seem that the Messengers-angels realize these various headships and the signs, which should acknowledge them and therefore through men have lost all appreciation of their significance. It is still due to these unseen observers to comply with a custom, which is in accord with both nature and revelation.

Finally let me conclude by stating the fact that the Mount Zion 7<sup>th</sup> Day Church of God UK International Conference accepts that there are no written Scriptural text in the Bible, which instructs us to forbid women wearing trousers made for a women, or to force women to wear a hat for

worship services if they choose not to do so. However, the Conference does have a dress code for Sisters who are fellowshipped members that they are asked to wear modest dresses to church on Sabbath and other major worship services i.e. services such as Conference programmes, weddings etc. Standing Order No 10 confirms this rule.

**By Bishop E. S. Henry. Dip. Theo.**

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Final matter on faith and Doctrine of the **Mount Zion 7th Day Church of God International Conference UK.**

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