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Paul's Discourse on the Use of Head Coverings During Public Worship — Part One:

An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

By Richard Bacon

[Editor's Note: The following article is part one of an edited transcript of the material presented in a video lecture on the same topic. Thanks go to David Knight for the initial transcription work. Information for ordering the original video is on page 8.]

Introduction

1 Corinthians 11:2-16: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 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. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. 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. 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. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if

a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

It is important when we examine any passage of Scripture that we place it in the proper historical and textual situation; that is, in its proper context. We need to understand what has gone before the passage, and also what follows. As the saying goes, "a text without a context is a pretext."

Outline of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

1. **The Question of Headship (v. 3)**
2. **Headship Related to Worship Practice (vs. 4-5a)**
3. **How this is Shameful (vs. 5b-6)**
4. **Reasons Why There Has to be a Difference (vs. 7-9)**
5. **Authority and Angels (v. 10)**
6. **Creation in the Lord (vs. 11-12)**
7. **The Natural Order of Things (vs. 14-15)**
8. **The Question Decided ... Judge for Yourselves (vs. 13, 16)**

Liberty of Conscience

Paul, in writing the first epistle to the Corinthians, wrote it with the intention of correcting several abuses at the church in Corinth. In the three chapters preceding

this passage (chapters 8-10), he dealt with the general subject of Christian liberty. Christian liberty is the freedom we have as Christians, and Paul taught us how we are to handle that liberty in the context of the communion of the saints. In our Christian liberty, we are always to defer to the weaker brother's conscience. Paul declared that if his eating meat caused a brother to stumble then he would refrain from eating meat "as long as the world stands" (1 Corinthians 8:13).

There is never a time when we are free to trample the conscience of a brother. The law of love bounds our Christian liberty. Because we love a brother we refrain from anything that could cause him to stumble. Please notice that Paul did not say that we are to refrain "if our actions *displease* a brother." That is altogether different. Many things may displease a brother. Doing that which is necessary and right *may* displease a brother. That is not the issue. Paul defined an offense by asking these questions: Is it going to cause him to stumble in his walk with Christ? Is it going to cause him to proceed against his conscience? That was what Paul meant by an offense.

Public Worship

Let us put 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in the proper context. Paul said in verse 33 of the previous chapter, "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." He then continued that statement in verse 1 of chapter 11 by adding, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:1 is a transitional verse. Starting at verse 2 Paul began to deal with various ordinances of public worship. From 1 Corinthians 11 verse 11 through the end of chapter 14, Paul continued to deal with behavior in public worship. Chapter 13 is an excursus in which he showed that even the gifts of the Spirit must be exercised in such a way that they, too, are bounded by the law of love. So chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14, concern public worship and its abuses. Therefore, we must understand that in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul was explaining *behavior in public worship*.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

In chapter 11 we find two things about propriety in worship or what might be called *decorum in worship*. The first has to do with the relationship between men and women in worship and the second has to do with our relationships with respect to the Lord's Supper. In both cases Paul said that there has been something that has

been delivered to him, and he then passed it along as an apostolic tradition. In the first instance we find (in verse two) "remember me in all things and keep the ordinances *as I delivered them* to you." If we go on to the section on the Lord's Supper (in verse 23), we find, "For I have received of the Lord that which also *I have delivered* unto you." So there is an apostolic "reception" of truth and there is an apostolic "passing along" of truth: a *paradosis*, if you will. In both cases we must deal both with *propriety* in worship and with *apostolic injunctions*.

Not an Easy Passage

Having situated the passage in the context of apostolic injunctions on proper church behavior, it must be admitted from the outset that this is not an easy passage to understand. It is a passage that has stirred up considerable controversy especially in the last twenty-five to fifty years. As a difficult passage it has been used as a 'proof text' for all manner of false doctrine and behavior. That is why it is necessary to view the entire discourse and situate the passage in its overall context in order to understand it correctly.

"*Woman's Bible Commentary*," after referring to those "chaotic verses" in 1 Corinthians 11, claims that "while this is certainly Pauline," nevertheless Paul's arguments are "inarticulate, incomprehensible and inconsistent." While it would be wrong to suggest that this is an easy passage, nevertheless at the end of this study, I trust it shall be demonstrated that rather than being "inarticulate, incomprehensible and inconsistent" Paul was perfectly articulate, comprehensible and consistent. Paul articulates *quite well* the mind of Christ regarding the position of women and men in the public worship assembly.

The Scope of the Passage

Verses 2 and 16 form discursive "bookends" for the passage. These verses hold the passage together as bookends on a bookshelf hold certain books together. In verse 2 it is clear that we are to keep the *ordinances* "as I delivered them to you," and in verse 16 we read that "if any man seems to be disputatious" (or contentious), "we have no such *custom*, neither the *churches* of God." I propose that these two bookends form a section that deals with how women should cover themselves in the churches of God. This section of Scripture *does not deal* with how women are to cover themselves outside the churches of God. There may be differing opinions on

the subject of headcovering outside the churches of God, and differing opinions are permitted because Scripture does not speak to the subject — certainly not in this passage. However, in this passage we *do* have specific instructions on how a woman is to dress and how a man is to dress *in the public assembly*. The first table on page 1 gives a conceptual outline of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

1. The Question of Headship.

We should look at the question of *headship* first because that is where Paul began. In verse 3 he explained the foundational issue as being one of *headship*. In **Table 1** you will see that the phrase “the head” is used three times in this verse.

Table 1

The Question of Headship (1 Corinthians 11:3)		
[The Head]*	[of every man]	[is Christ]
[The Head]*	[of the woman]	[is the man]
[The Head]*	[of Christ]	[is God]
* The term “head” or <i>kefalè</i> means “authority” not “source.”		

The Greek word that is used for “man” in this verse is not the word that means “mankind in general.” The word that is used here is not the Greek word *anthròpos* which means “mankind in general,” but the Greek word *anèr*, which means “a man” as opposed to a woman, or “a husband” as opposed to a wife. When Paul speaks here of the *anèr* and of the *gunè*, the word used for “woman,” he is speaking about males and females; he is not speaking of mankind in general. He is talking about the *difference* between the sexes.

Also in verse 3 Paul said something very significant. “I want you to know” He did not say, “Here is my opinion” He did not say, “I have taken a poll and a lot of people think...” He did not say, “Dr. Gamaliel reported that Rabbi Shammai said” Rather Paul declared, “I want you to know” He stated, “I want you to have some certainty about this subject.” He gave *apostolic authority* to his statements. “I want you to know something and here is what I want you to know — the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man and the head of Christ is God.”

Notice that there is only one “person” in the passage who does not have a “head” and that person is

God. “The head of every man is Christ,” “the head of the woman is the man,” and “the head of Christ is God.” The word that is used here for “head” is the Greek word *kefalè*. This Greek word does not mean “head” in the sense that a river has a head — the “source” of the river. Rather the word here for “head” is that which is “chief,” that which is “in charge.” Paul used a play on words in the passage on the word “head” meaning first the physical head and then “head” meaning the one who is in charge. Before this play on words can be understood, it is necessary to know that the word *kefalè* does not mean “source” but that it means “authority.” There is not a commentary more than about twenty years old, which, in discussing 1 Corinthians 11:3, claims that the word *kefalè* means “source.” That is a fairly recent rendering of the Greek.

Wayne Grudum,¹ who has an excellent command of Greek sources, claims that there are 2,336 extant examples in Greek literature outside the New Testament of the word *kefalè* being used in Attic and *Koinè* and Ionic Greek. In none of the 2,336 is there a convincing example of the word *kefalè* meaning “source.” Nearly four hundred years prior to the writing of the New Testament there are two examples in which *kefalè* could be interpreted to mean “source.” These are the only two times out of 2,336 extant examples of that word and they are doubtful. We must conclude that the word here *kefalè* means “authority.” It means that the man is the “authority” of the woman, Christ is the “authority” of the man, and God is the “authority” of Christ. The idea of it meaning “source” comes from the egalitarian feminist bias of those pushing that agenda in the church today.

In 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 — the same epistle written by the same apostle — Paul said, “Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power” Notice the Lord will put down Rule, Authority, and Power. “For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death for He hath put all things under His feet, for when He sayeth, ‘all things are put under Him’ it is manifest that He is accepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things

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under Him, that God may be all in all.” This is the same concept here in 1 Corinthians 15 that we see in chapter 11. God himself is the “authority” over Christ who in turn ‘reigns and rules’ over everything! The same idea is carried throughout Paul’s writings.

In Ephesians 5:23-25 Paul taught that same relationship and even used the same parallel to illustrate it. “For the husband is the *head* of the wife even as Christ is the *head* of the church, and He is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” One of the important things that Paul taught here is that, like our Christian liberty, so the law of love bounds this Christian authority. Even the authority that a husband has over his wife is hemmed in by the love that the husband is to have for the wife. It is a loving authority, but nevertheless it is a true authority. Paul concluded in verse 33, “Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

We have tried to demonstrate so far that the concept of Christian authority is not unique to this passage. It is a Pauline teaching that can be found not only in other Corinthian passages but also in others of his epistles. In Ephesians 5:23 we found the language of “authority” and the language of “submission.” There is one who is the authority in the church and the church is to submit to him. There is one who is in authority in a marriage and the wife is to submit to him. That is the same parallel brought out in 1 Corinthians 11:3, “the head of every man is Christ,” that is to say “the authority of every man is Christ;” therefore the man is to submit to Christ. “The head of the woman is the man,” therefore the woman is to submit to the man. “The head of Christ is God,” therefore Christ as we saw in 1 Corinthians 15 finally delivers up the kingdom to God so that “God may be all in all.” In these first few verses of the passage, Paul laid a foundation. He set forth a concept from which everything else will follow. He used the word “head” in two ways in this passage: in both a literal way and in a figurative way. In verse 4 and the first half of verse 5, the “play on words” takes place.

2. Headship Related to Worship Practice

1 Corinthians 11:4 states that “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth

his head.” If we were going to be very *wooden-literal* in our translation it would read, “having something down from his head.” What is the play on words here? If a man has a veil hanging down from *his physical head* then he dishonors *his authoritative head*. Verse 3 explains that Christ is the head of the man. Therefore, if a man prays with a veil hanging down from his head he dishonors Christ. To continue in verse 5 we read that every woman who prays or prophesies, with an *uncovered head*, shames *her head* or dishonors *her head*. See **Table 2**.

Table 2

Headship Related to Worship Practice (1 Corinthians 11:4-5a)		
Man prays or Prophesies	With something down from his head	Shames his head
Woman prays or prophesies	With head uncovered	Shames her head

The parallel is this: when a man prays or prophesies with his head covered he dishonors his *head*, that is Christ. When a woman prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, she dishonors her *head*, her husband. At this point we should ask the question: *Covered with what?* Paul has not discussed that yet. Some people often jump immediately from here to verse 15, deciding Paul meant a covering of hair. We will not make that mistake. We must deal with the discourse the way in which Paul wrote it, drawing from it the lesson that Paul intended for us to learn, without imposing our own views upon the passage. Another question arises, *Is he speaking only to wives?* I do not think so. I believe he is speaking to anyone who has reached the age of puberty. I think he is speaking to those females who might be regarded as “women.”

It might also be asked, “If one woman does not wear a covering on her head does that mean that she is shaming every man in the congregation?” No, I would not say that. However, Paul is laying out a general principle for us here. That general principle is that women pray and prophesy *with their heads covered* and men pray and prophesy *with their heads uncovered*. The issue here is not so much marriage as it is to how women dress in church. It is certainly true of wives, but it is also true of all women in the church.

Let us consider the question, “Covered with what?” Whatever it was, the people to whom Paul was writing knew what it was. I do not believe that the women of the Corinthian church would have had as much trouble understanding this passage as we might have today. I realize that there are numerous books explaining to us what life was like in the first century. The fact is, we know more about what life was like in Corinth in the first century from the pages of the New Testament than we do from any other source. In fact, almost one hundred percent of what we know about life in Corinth we learn from the pages of the New Testament. It was evident to the women in Corinth how to cover themselves.

It was also evident to the women in Corinth what the significance and shame was of a shaved head. They knew the shame that comes upon someone who is covered *as a male* and who is uncovered *as a female*. The shame does not come directly upon them, but comes upon their head, the one who is in authority over them. In the case of the man the shame does not come directly upon him if he covers his head. It comes instead upon Christ. In the case of a woman also if her head is uncovered the shame does not come directly upon her, but upon her husband. The one who is in authority over her is shamed. Paul explained that if a woman is uncovered there is a shame involved. In the later half of verse 5, Paul stated that the shame involved is the same as if she had a shaved head. Paul said, “... for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”

In the springtime the sheep shearers take the sheep that have grown huge coats of wool during the winter and with larger clippers, they shave it all off. That huge woolly looking sheep is all of a sudden a skinny looking little thing, looking as though it is going to totter and fall. It is shorn or shaved. That is the word used by Paul here. It is altogether the same as if she had a “buzz” haircut. Not only that, but he used a command to do that to the woman. What a strange thing! But that *is* the command. Let us look at that under part three, “How This is Shameful” in verses 5b and 6.

3. How this is Shameful

“She is one and the same with her who is shaved” or “is all one as if she were shaven. For if a woman does not cover herself, let her have her hair cut off.” This is jussive command. Look at the commands on the right side of **Table 3**. There is a condition. This is called a

“simple conditional clause.” It means that the “if” clause, the *protasis*, is considered true for the sake of argument. Paul said, “Let us consider the case of a woman who is uncovered.” What follows from that is a jussive command — “Let her also have her hair cut off.” In English we do not have the particular form of speech of a jussive command, and so the “permissive” is used. Understand, however, that Paul did not simply give her permission to get a haircut. He said, “This *ought* to be done.”

Table 3

How this is Shameful (1 Corinthians 11:5b-6)		
For if a woman	Does not cover herself	Let her also have her hair cut off
If a woman	Has her hair cut off	Let her cover herself

A jussive is a “third person command.” In English we have a first person command in what we call a cohortative — “Let us do that.” There is also an imperative, which is a second person command — “You do that.” This is very much like the command in James 5:13b where James said, “Is any among you merry,” not “let him sing the psalms” but, “he *should* psalm,” *psalletò*. It is a jussive command and it means, “he needs to do this; this is the right thing to do *in this case!*” If something happens, then *this is the command* that fits that case. Therefore, if the woman is uncovered, she is supposed to be shaved! “But,” Paul said, “I know you Corinthian women already know that it is a shame for a woman to be shaved,” so he continued in verse six, “but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven,” (and it is) then “let her be covered.” The idea of shaving here is to take a razor and remove what little hair was left by the “buzz” haircut. “If it is a shame for a woman to have her hair cut, or to have her head shaved, then let her cover herself.” That is also a command.

Paul assumed that the women knew that it was a shame for their heads to be shaved. We could carry on lengthy speculations as to *why* the Corinthian women considered it a shame. Perhaps they thought she looked like an adulteress. Perhaps they thought an uncovered woman was usurping authority. Many things have been suggested, and the merits of each shall not be explored. We do not have the time to explore each one. Whatever

the reason, it is a certainty that the Corinthian women regarded it to be a shame. However, these are not merely sociological issues. Paul assumed that shaved heads were shameful and he assumed that uncovered heads in public worship on the part of women were just as shameful. He did not say that it was shameful for a man to have a bald head or a shaved head, but he did assume that it was shameful for that to be the case for a woman. And if it is the case, then he commanded “let her be covered,” or “she should be covered.”

4. Reasons why there must be a difference

In verses 7-9 we have the reasons given as to why there must be a difference. Notice the *nearly poetic* structure of this passage. Not only is Paul *not* inarticulate; he has become so eloquent at this point that he is almost writing poetry. Look at **Table 4A**. Paul wrote, “For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman,” [] “is the glory of man.” This is a figure of speech we call an *ellipsis*, that is to say, something has been left out. This is very common not only in Greek poetry but in English poetry as well. “For a man ought not to have his head covered since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman, []” What goes in the brackets? If a man “ought not to have his head covered” what goes right below that statement to fill in the empty space in **Table 4A**?

Table 4A

Reasons Why There Has to be a Difference (1 Corinthians 11:7-9)		
A man	Uncovered	He is the image and glory of God
But a woman	?[]?	She is the glory of man

The answer is obviously “**covered.**” She *should* be covered. Why ought a man not to have his head covered? What is the reason that Paul gave? Because he is the image and glory of God. God’s glory is to be uncovered in worship. This is so important that the entire passage is going to be brought together at the end on this very basis: *God’s glory alone is to be seen in the public worship service.* The reason he “ought not to have his head covered” is that he “is the image and glory of God.” It

follows that anything that brings glory to anything or anybody other than to God ought to be *covered!* “But the woman is the glory of man.” Therefore we *cover* the glory of man. This passage implicitly commands us to *cover the glory of man* and to *uncover the glory of God!* Consider the brilliance of this argument! Paul argued in these verses that this involves *more* than just a relationship of man to woman. It certainly involves that, but the matter also involves the relationship that our worship has toward God. God’s glory is to be *uncovered* and man’s glory is to be *covered* in public worship.

See **Table 4B**. “For man is not out of woman, but woman out of man” (1 Corinthians 11:8) Once again Paul is talking about the priority of women and men. There is a chiasmic structure here. The structure is A-B-B-A; man-woman-woman-man. Again, where do we find chiasms? In poetry! Paul is practically writing poetry here! He is not inarticulate; he is quite eloquent.

Table 4B

Reasons Why There Has to be a Difference (1 Corinthians 11:7-9)		
For man	Is NOT out of	Woman
But woman	out of	Man
And man	was NOT created	For the woman
But woman		for the man
<p>Chiastic Structure</p> <p>man (A) woman (B)</p> <p>woman (B) man (A)</p> <p>Related Scriptures: Deuteronomy 22:5, Genesis 1:27, 2:18, 2:22, 5:1-2</p>		

In verse 8, Paul stated, “Man is not out of woman, but woman is out of man.” Paul referred back to the fact that the original woman was made from the rib of a man (Genesis 2:22). The man has precedence because the man was created first. “Man was not created *for* the

woman, but woman *for* the man” (1 Corinthians 11:9) The two things that he referred to in both of these passages are the precedence of man because of his *prior* creation and the fact that man was not created to be a help for woman. In Genesis 2:20, we read that woman was created to be a help for man, “an help meet for him.” Adam was given the original task. The woman was made as a helper to him. Therefore man has precedence (headship) because of his *prior* creation and he has precedence (headship) because of the *purpose* of her creation. She was created for the very purpose of helping him. How can she not accept him as her “head?”

In Deuteronomy 22:5, we see that God claims authority over the way we dress. This passage also has something to do with the way we are covered or are uncovered in worship. “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.” God cares if a woman dresses like a man. God cares if a man dresses like a woman. He hates it! It is an abomination to him.

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul did not say that the woman is *not* the image of God. He said, however, that there is a distinction to be made between male and female. The male, Adam, was the original creation. Genesis 1:27 explains that, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” We read virtually the same thing in Genesis 5:1-2, “God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them.” Notice in the Corinthian passage how glory and honor are tied together. It is not simply the “image of God” that God sees when he looks down on a worship service, but his glory as well. When God looks on a church worship service he sees little images of himself worshipping him. And if the worshippers are regenerate he sees little images of Christ filled with the Holy Ghost worshipping him. However, man is in a *particular way* the glory of God. If a man puts on a woman’s headgear and dresses like a woman, it disgraces Christ. In what sense does such a thing disgrace Christ? It is an abomination to God. Look in verses 14 and 15a, “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.” We are going to deal with the second half of verse 15 later in our discussion, but now we need to deal with 15a. In verse 15a Paul explained that, if we know that the man is

the glory of Christ or the glory of God, and if the woman is the glory of man, then the glory of the woman is her hair. Her hair is given to her for her glory. If we are going to cover every glory except God’s glory in our worship services, we are not only going to have to cover the *head* of the woman, we are going to have to cover the *hair* of the woman as well. Why? Because not only is the glory of man not to show in worship, neither is the glory of woman.

Proverbs 12:4 contains an interesting concept about a wife and her relationship to her husband. There we read: “A virtuous woman is a *crown* to her husband.” A crown is worn on one’s head. His wife is *his crown*, his glory. His wife is that which shows him to be the king, that which shows forth his majesty. She is to be covered, because his glory, his majesty, his crown, his kingly estate is his wife. But if she makes him ashamed she is like “as rottenness to his bones” (Proverbs 12:4b). How does a wife make her husband ashamed? In the worship service she makes her head ashamed by uncovering her head. This is the same parallel. As you can see, this is a teaching not just of Paul but one that we find in various places of Scripture. Paul went on to adduce still more reasons.

Paul was not inconsistent in the Corinthian passage. Paul was not teaching first one thing and then another. He was not teaching first, “Let them be covered with a fabric cover” and then “Let them be covered with their hair, because their hair is covering enough.” Paul was not being inconsistent. Paul was not being inarticulate. He certainly was not incomprehensible. If he were incomprehensible the feminists would not hate this passage so much. The problem that the feminists have with this passage is that Paul was altogether too comprehensible for their comfort. Many times as my wife and daughter and I have visited churches in which head covering of women is not practiced, there is a class of women who just *glare* at my wife and daughter when they sat down in the worship assembly with their heads covered. Why? Because *they know what it means*. There is no doubt in their minds what a covered woman in the worship assembly means. It means that here is a woman who has accepted a biblical role with respect to her husband, and in the case of a daughter, a woman who has accepted a biblical role with respect to her father.

Let us move on to 1 Corinthians 11:10. “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head

because of the angels.” This is a difficult verse to understand. First we need to discuss what the term “angels” does *not* mean. It very clearly does not mean that a woman ought to have a symbol of authority upon her head because that is the way everyone else does it. Paul did not say that a woman ought to have a symbol of authority upon her head because otherwise the Corinthian prostitutes will be offended. He did not say

that a woman ought to have authority upon her head because otherwise the Greek men might think that the women were available for dating. Whatever the term “angels” means, it does not say *that*. Paul was not making a *cultural* argument! He was making an argument that had to do specifically with beings that are intimately related to God’s ministry and redemption. [This article will be concluded (D.V.) in the June 1998 issue].Ω

Second Annual Blue Banner Conference

Scheduled for May 25 - 27, 1998.

Scheduled Guest Speaker: John Robbins of The Trinity Foundation, speaking on Apologetics.

The conference is free, but please contact us to register if you are planning on attending. Write Blue Banner Conference c/o *The Blue Banner*, P O Box 141084, for more information about times and the available accommodations.

Dr. Robbins received the Ph.D. in Political Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University in 1973. His background includes being founder and President of the Trinity Foundation, lecturer at Sangre de Christo Seminary, the Westminster Institute, Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), the Chesapeake Theological Seminary, the Heritage Foundation, and Director of the Freedom School. Dr Robbins maintains memberships in the Evangelical Philosophical Society, the Evangelical Theological Society, the National Association of Scholars, and the Association of Private Enterprise Educators. He is author or editor of a dozen books, including *Who is Ayn Rand* and *Without A Prayer: Ayn Rand and the Close of her System*.

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1. Apologetics: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How
2. How **not** to do Apologetics: Evidentialism
3. How **not** to do Apologetics: Rationalism
4. How **not** to do Apologetics: Irrationalism
5. The Apologetics of Jesus and Paul
6. The Philosophy of Ayn Rand Refuted

Blue Banner Video

Male Headship and Head Coverings in Worship

A Discourse Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11.

By Richard Bacon

There is a bible commentary called *The Women’s Bible Commentary* (so called because women are welcome to make comments in it) that refers to the passage of the Apostle Paul’s first letter to Corinth, as those “chaotic verses.” The comment then goes on to say “while this is certainly Pauline, nevertheless Paul’s arguments are “inarticulate, incomprehensible and inconsistent.” Richard Bacon, in this 2 hour video series, examines the whole 1 Corinthians 11 passage carefully using a discourse analysis approach. Summing up his introduction he says: "I am not going to suggest to you that this is an easy passage, nevertheless at the end of this study together I want you to decide for yourselves whether Paul was “inarticulate, incomprehensible and inconsistent” or whether in fact he was not quite articulate, comprehensible and consistent. 1 Corinthians 11 articulates *quite well* the mind of Christ regarding the position of women and men in the public assembly."

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Concerning the Constituting of True Churches by Reformation out of Such as have been Corrupt

By James Durham

[From James Durham, *A Complete Commentary upon the Book of Revelation*, Chapter Eleven, Lecture five. Durham is drawing conclusions (of which this is the third) from the song in Revelation 11:15-19, Durham after having demonstrated that by the similitude of opening the temple, sets forth the idea:

“By this similitude of opening the temple, this is set forth, that as, in the Jewish times, during their greatest defections, there was still some temple and church; and, at the time of reformation, there was no new temple built, nor new circumcision instituted, nor priests appointed, but corruptions were removed, and the temple and priests put again to their own proper use and duty; so, during the defection of Antichrist, there should still be a church, temple, ordinances, and ministers, and that the bringing of the gospel again to public in the world after that, should not be by erecting a new church, and new ordinances, or appointing new officers, but should be by the purging away of the former corruptions, and applying of the ordinances and officers to their own former use. For, it is the same temple after reformation which was before, but now it is opened; the woman (chap. 12), is the same under persecution, while she is in the wilderness during the 1260 days, that she was before her fleeing, and continues to be the same after her return from the wilderness; only that which by Antichrist's additions was veiled and corrupted, now, by the removal, becomes more visible and pure.

“Upon this very ground it is, that the reviving again of religion is commonly called reformation, not as bringing in any thing new, but as purging what formerly was corrupted. Upon this ground, baptism continues to be baptism, though transmitted through them, and a ministry continues to be a ministry, except we say there were no ordinances and ministers before the time of reformation, and so no church, which is expressly contrary to the scope and letter of this and the following chapters. From this also it appears, there needs no new constitution of a church that is brought from Popery, such as might be called for from heathens who are not Christians, but the purging away the dross of Antichristianism, and the practical

adhering to the purity and power of the gospel, even as there was great odds amongst the Jews, in the recovering of them from their grossest defection, and the admission of Pagans into the church.

“Durham then clears two objections raised, that Rome is a true church, and if not, then those who have their ministry and ordination from her, have it from a false church, and then he says “Besides this, we may draw some conclusions from this song...” The first conclusion is an argument for national churches, and the second for baptizing of children. The third follows.”

Then Durham continues:]

Thirdly, from this it follows, that a people, or persons, renouncing the abomination of Antichrist, and accepting of, and submitting to the truth and ordinances of the gospel, *ipso facto* constitutes them churches of Christ, or members thereof, and is sufficient, as to essentials, to make them to be accounted so. This is clear here; for, that these nations do become the Lord's, says that they are churches to him. Yet is there no other way conceivable how they become his, but that the witnesses are taken up to heaven, and public preaching is again restored, the temple is opened, and the ark of the testimony is made visible; all which, supposes [presupposes] a people's quitting of Antichrist's way, and betaking them to Christ's, upon which they are so accounted, as is said. It is a great question to men, how they can be true churches that have arisen, as it were, out of Antichrist's dominion, without any accurate constituting of them, as to the members thereof? Also some are ready to think all the reformed churches to be as no churches, because to them, they and the ordinances which they possess, have been derived from Antichrist. Whereupon they are brought to look upon the world as having no church in it, and to be put to wait and seek for some new manifestation, as we may gather from Saltmarsh's description of the seekers smoke of the temple. And indeed if we begin to dispute this principle, whether the reformed churches be true churches, there can be no guard against this. For, if they are not

churches, there are none indeed in the world. And if there are none in the world, we cannot expect that a new church shall be begotten, except it be by some extraordinary means, whereof yet there is no warrant in the least from the word; beside, that the church of Christ is to endure here on earth to the end of the world, and the gates of hell is not to prevail against her. Now, this is the very place where that event is foretold of constituting new churches out of Antichrist's dominions; and therefore it cannot be unfit to inquire how this same is accomplished.

Concerning this, we premit, First, That there is a threefold way of entering, or being admitted to the church. 1. By conversion, that is, when one simply without [outside] the church, is, by the power of God accompanying ordinances, made to submit to the gospel. Of such we have many examples in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. A second, is by birth-right. This is the privilege which church members' children have. Thirdly, There is an admission of members for constituting of a church, not simply of these that are without, but of corrupt members, who pretend to be within. Such was the re-establishing of the church of Israel often after their defections, when indeed the people had fallen to heathenish idolatry, and, it may be, for sundry years continued in it. Yet was their re-admission to the use of ordinances and privileges of visible members, far otherwise gone about, than the admission of heathens, supposing them to have renounced their idolatry. The second of these we have nothing to do with, therefore we lay it aside.

Secondly, We premit, that there is great odds between the manner of constituting (to say so) a church, or a church member, out of a corrupt declined church, and the constituting of a church or member of such as are simply without. Neither is there such exactness to be required in the search of these particular members, nor so many things to be performed for the accomplishing of their membership in the former case, as in the latter. This is clear, by considering, First, The example of the Jews formerly mentioned. That was a very different thing to them, to admit declined members in respect of others that were without. Secondly, The one was under the initiating sacrament; for their circumcision was never questioned, which the other cannot plead. Thirdly, There is this reason also, because God having still a visible church as a mother, though not conspicuous, that in every time, or in every place, there can no Christian be

conceived to be pure in essentials, but must be supposed to be of her seed.

Thirdly, In sum, we say, that for constituting a church or persons to be true churches, or to be true members of churches out of Antichrist's kingdom, there needs no more but a public disowning of his abominations, and erecting of the ordinances of Christ, with a professed subjection thereto, according to the gospel, and that as to the essentials of a church, this is sufficient, though it may be there may be still some defects which yet do not mar the truth of the being of such a church. For making out of which we offer these considerations.

The first is, what might constitute a true church, or a member thereof, after defection and corruption in the church of Israel, or after Antiochus's abominations, that may be sufficient to constitute a true church after the defections and corruptions of Antichrist. But renouncing of former errors, erecting again of the ordinances, and professed subjection to them, was enough then. Therefore it ought to be so now. There can be no question of the minor, but that this was sufficient amongst the Jews, any who reads the reformation that followed the defections under Ahaz, Manasseh, and others, will be abundantly convinced of this. For Hezekiah opened the temple which his father had shut, [and] erected again the public ordinances to which the people submitted. If it is doubted if that will follow in our case, these things will confirm the consequence:

First, The unity of the church-catholic visible -- they and we being one church, it may well therefore be argued from the example of the one to the other, as what made them no church, will make us no church; and so what makes them a church, must also have that same weight with us. Secondly, The allusion to the manner of the Old Testament is so plain in this place, that it both confirms and illustrates the same. It confirms it, that it expresses how the kingdoms of the earth become the Lord's in the last verse, and it says, The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, etc. Which words allude to that defection of Ahaz (2 Chron. 30), where the temple was shut, the ark of the testimony was not seen until the days of Hezekiah, who opened the temple, and made the ark in due manner to be visible, and the word to be brought to public, whereby the face of the visible church was recovered. And so this remarkable event is illustrated by

this, that so the ordinances shall be obscured amongst many nations during Antichrist's height, as the temple was shut in Ahaz time, yet shall these clouds be blown away, and light be brought forth to nations by a public profession of the gospel, whereby they shall become visible churches to the Lord. This argument is from the very scope of the place.

Secondly, Consider, if renouncing of Antichrist's gross abominations, and a separate adhering to the truth of the gospel, with a subjection thereto, was enough to constitute a true member of the visible church, while Antichristian darkness was at its full height, then after reformation that is sufficient to constitute a true church, or a true member thereof. But the former is undoubtedly true, viz. there was not more to constitute a true member of the visible church, during Antichrist's height. Therefore, etc, the first cannot be denied. For, what must be sufficient then, must be sufficient now, seeing it is still this same church, this same woman, and the same door of entering. And, to deny this, would say that Christ's visible church, during that time, was not constituted rightly as to her essentials, and so, upon the matter, was none at all. Neither can the second proposition be denied; for, the woman, the church, but flees from his abomination, and, de facto, what more can be alleged during that time? Besides, this is certain, that any born and bred in Popery, who did afterward receive the gospel, and renounce these former errors, such were to be accounted members of the visible church of Christ, and not of Antichrist.

Thirdly, Consider such nations and churches as having renounced Antichrist in profession, and having submitted to the gospel, must either be churches of Christ, or they must belong to Antichrist, or to be accounted without as heathens; but neither of these last two can be said. Ergo, etc. To say that they are fit matter or materials for building of a church, will not satisfy. For 1, The scripture does not speak of fit materials among baptized person, so as to contra-distinguish them from the visible church. 2. This prophesy says that such as in this manner separate from Antichrist, shall not only be fit materials to make a church to the Lord, but they shall be his churches *de facto*. 3. If they have had ordinances and officers for many years, and have begotten children to the Lord by them, then there must be more than matter of a church. For these are the privileges and blessings wherewith his true church is privileged; and none can bring forth seed to

him but she. And 4, If these churches be but matter, and that as contra-distinct from churches, then it will, at once, strike at all the churches of Christ these many years, and put us to join with the Seekers, in their hopeless expectation of a new church.

Fourthly, Consider, that all nations and persons so reforming after that defection, do actually become members of the visible church, which formerly was more latent. For, they become one in hating the whore, one in acknowledging the truth, one submitting to the same ordinances. And therefore what reason can there be to account them no churches, seeing she, by these characters, has been justly accounted the church of Christ?

Fifthly, The consideration of this prophesy to be fulfilled in the reformation that has been these hundred years past, will strongly conclude that these reformed churches must be true churches, though it may be, that several of them be in many things defective. For, if by this prophesy, it be clear, that the event that follows Antichrist's height must constitute true churches, and a kingdom to Christ after a more conspicuous and visible manner than formerly; and, if it be true, that this reformation, which has come unto all the world in the generation last past, is the very fulfilling of this prophesy, and the very event foretold here; then it cannot but follow, that this reformation must be acknowledged to have brought the true visible churches unto the world. Otherwise the truth of this prophesy will be put in question. Now, we suppose, that by what has been said of this in the former lectures, that both the former will be seen to be true. Therefore this must necessarily follow. For, this reformation is either what is prophesied of here, or it is some other thing; but it can be applicable to no other thing. And, if it can be applicable to no other thing, then these great events must be understood to carry alongst with them the visible kingdom of Christ; and the event must be answerable to what is foretold. And, if it were not so, there were no such ground of a song, as is here insisted upon. This argument, from the event of a prophesy, being fulfilled, even as the Jews that lived under the second temple, were to account that dispensation to be the fulfilling of the many prophecies that went before, although many were not fully satisfied in their expectations; and, no question, several things were defective, though the essentials were there. Ω