

CORINTH AND PAUL: THE ISSUES OF I CORINTHIANS 11:2-16, WOMEN,
AND THE WIDER SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION: ORIENTATION, THESIS, PURPOSE OF STUDY

Feminism is breaking rich ground in religious studies, as it is in other fields. In relation to the thesis study, scholars are making the attempt to reconstruct the social status and the religious participation of women in early Christian communities. Feminist movements throughout history have made tremendous change in the process of bringing women on an equal social plane as men. One prime example of change was the Suffrage Movement where women demonstrated their intense passion to become voting citizens, to rise to a new society where exclusion could no longer withhold. "On August 26, 1920 Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby proclaimed the Suffrage Amendment a part of the federal Constitution. Thus women obtained suffrage in the United States".

¹ As we have seen with this movement in history, it took many years for women to reach their full participation as equal partners in the male dominated world. In the 1990's, the Suffrage Movement fills the pages in the history books and only serves as an example of what the power and spirit of women can achieve, fighting for a common cause. It may take women many years to reach their full level of participation in a patriarchal religious society as well. However, the movement has begun and many

ingenious feminist scholars have taken on the mission that will evoke change.

Feminist scholars as well as women in general who express "women's experience" in the patriarchal dominated religions of Christianity and Judaism are fighting a similar battle. Women are still fighting for the process of bringing themselves on an equal spiritual plane as men-exercising equal participation in churches, administrative positions, and pastoral occupations which women have been denied in the past based on scriptural misinterpretations.

Feminists are now exploring Old and New Testament texts, along with other religious and historical sources, to uncover past voices that have been suppressed and denied equal opportunity in a relationship with the God/Christ Figure. With the Suffrage Movement as our paradigm, one day it will be certain that a tremendous change will occur in religious studies where women will revitalize voices from the past, reconstruct male-dominated language into a more inclusive language, understand the influence of a male-dominated canon, and the realm of religion will ultimately become what God intended: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

As a Religion Major, I have great interest in

the work of feminist scholars in the field and have had experience in dealing with feminist writings, their significance to religious communities, and their promise of increased understanding of biblical texts. Feminist scholars hold in common a general perception of the influence of the social construction of gender on society and culture, yet there are different voices, varying methodological frameworks, and different strategies for change. Feminist research holds a promise for reshaping our conceptions about the past in order to understand the importance of women's place in history, society, and religion. With the continuation of research, new conceptualizations about old ideas, and the unity of feminist voices, changes will occur. With this research, I am on my quest to be part of that change. New interpretations are welcomed, they are ways of shedding possible light on the heart of the (Pauline) Christianity movement. This Religious Movement must start not only with those in the field of religious studies, but with those women whose voices are now being suppressed in our churches, communities, and society on issues that are in conflict with their belief system.

METHOD OF STUDY

The biblical translation used consistently

throughout this thesis is The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version. The theoretical model that I am going to use focuses primarily on the sociological perspective of the Corinthian community within the context of the wider society and Paul's struggle to maintain what he felt were proper social constructs. Paul's theology in I Corinthians resists discontinuities, dissensions, and conflicts formed in the community. My central thesis is that dissensions formed within the community were based on social status, gender being an important conflict within the wider concern as well. When women are addressed in I Cor 11:2-16, it is in the context of a social issue, and a gender-specific issue. The issue is relative to the relationship that women have within the community in connection with propriety, using the head as a social symbol.

The issue relates specifically to the dissensions that were formed in the community based on the issues which depicted the member's status-such as veils or hairstyles.

In my survey and exegetical work, emphasis will be placed on examining what these social factors and gender claims mean in the context of the Scripture studied and in the theological underpinnings of Paul's message that are dominant within the Corinthian community.

ST. PAUL'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES AND CORRESPONDENCE
WITH CORINTH

This thesis centers on the chief figure that contributed significantly to the New Testament, St. Paul of Tarsus. The Pauline letters that are extant show his position of authority in the early Christian community, especially as leader of the Gentile Mission. What we have of his letters to his communities gives us insight into the personality, intellect, and activity of Paul. Out of the letters that Paul wrote to his founding early churches, the church and letter of the Corinthians will be the focus of this thesis, specifically centering on the role of women and Paul's response to their participation in worship found in I Corinthians 11:2-16.

Pauline chronology and his specific missionary activity in Corinth needs to be detailed to give background information about this authoritative figure in early church history. The most detailed picture of Paul, outside of his own letters, is found in The Acts of the Apostles, which traces the story of the Christian movement in its earliest form. However, even though Acts does contain a thorough account of Paul's activities, Paul's own letters will be drawn on to detail the bibliography of the historical Paul and his missionary journeys.

Paul's theology outlines the proper response to a certain circumstance that is happening within the community. Specifically looking at Corinth, women prophesying in the church meetings is the circumstance that Paul must address. Women are apparently worshipping with their heads uncovered or their hair unbound, either practice seen as dishonorable for a woman. Paul's response to this issue leads him to set guidelines on worship practices for women to keep control during the service. This is how Paul works in his letters. He visualizes a problem in that community, knows its idiosyncrasies, then responds to the issue with his gospel of the correct and proper manner in which the problem should be dealt with.

The central gospel that will be examined in this thesis is his travel and correspondence with Corinth. After leaving Athens in early 50 A.D., he came upon Corinth. His letters were written to the community around 55 A.D. Paul's fervor with the Corinthian congregation is demonstrated in his strong authoritative voice rising against the practices of the Corinthians to promote his view of proper social and religious structures.

Based on the readings of I Corinthians 5:9, Paul has written an earlier letter to the Corinthians on the issue of sexually immoral persons in the community. This letter is lost to us today, but a safe hypothesis

is that similar issues were addressed as found in I Corinthians. The fact that there was an earlier letter proves that Paul's battle with the Corinthians was great and continuous. The correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians was reciprocal. Paul also received a letter from the members of the church at Corinth on matters of sexually immoral members (I Cor 7:1) and possibly many other conflicting issues that caused dissensions within the community. This shows that his first letter to the Corinthians must have raised conflict and questions among the early converts. Their need to have reassurance from Paul is an example of Paul's authoritative position in that church as leader and resolver of conflicts. It also gives insight into the ethos of the community. His stay with them and his first letter must have been unsuccessful in the attempt to ease all members into a Christian lifestyle. The community itself must have felt a power that promoted them to make their own decisions about how a community should conduct themselves. A strong willed community against a strong willed leader will cause conflicts. It also shows how the diversity of the community and the growing numbers of converts played a major role in the social shaping of the church among themselves and in relation to the wider society.

In Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period

A.D. 30-150 Johannes Weiss defines the situation more clearly:

During Paul's absence from Corinth, the church obviously grew with great vigor. We observe how the new views are set in violent conflict with the old. The Gospel works like leaven, the fermentation starts. But the old dies hard and the new can only prevail by entering into strange connections and compounds. The new ideas are distorted; misunderstandings and doubts, disagreements and personal collisions, schisms and cliques arise. All this makes it necessary for Paul to intervene. ²

The terminology that Weiss uses is found in the text itself. Paul speaks of how yeast leavens the dough, and that one must clean out the old leaven before becoming a new batch (I Cor 5:6-7). Possibly the first letter to the Corinthians did not work effectively because of the newness of the message and its conflict with the dominant society. The Corinthians may not have been fully prepared to sacrifice their way of living for this new way that Paul preached to them.

Then the need arises to send a second letter to the Corinthian community (I Cor) in hopes of clarifying apparent problems and reinforcing the Pauline message. He writes this second letter from

Ephesus and tells the church that he still has much more work to accomplish before coming to stay with them (I Cor 16:8-9). It is not enough for Paul to write this second letter, he must feel that they need immediate spiritual guidance on the issues they are in conflict over because he hopes that Timothy and Apollos come to them. He strongly urged his two disciples to join the community because they have done great work in the name of Christ. Not only does he instruct these men to help build a stronger foundation in Corinth, he asks the people to send Timothy back to Ephesus so that Paul can become aware of the situation in Corinth after reinforcement (I Cor 16:11). The news that Timothy brought to Paul must not have been an encouragement about the practices of the community.

Paul states in a later letter, II Cor 2:1, that he had to make a painful visit to them. Paul had to resort to visiting them himself to try and clear up the problems in the community. He also must make a third visit to them (II Cor 12:14). Paul makes it clear that on this third visit he will not be as lenient with the church as he was on the second visit.

AN OUTLINE OF PAUL'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES AND
CORRESPONDENCE WITH CORINTH

The most accurate sources that should be drawn upon to sketch the life of Paul should be his own letters. We can gain insight into what Paul's missionary activities were by outlining them from two of his letters in particular, Galatians and Romans. In Chapters in a Life of Paul, John Knox details Paul's activities and movement using these two letters. The outline is as follows:

- I. Conversion in Damascus-Gal 1:15-17
- II. Three years or more, spent largely or entirely in Syria and Arabia-Gal 1:17-18
- III. First visit to Jerusalem after the conversion and departure for Syria and Cilicia-Gal 1:18-21
- IV. Fourteen years, presumably passed in activity as an apostle-Gal 2:1
- V. Second visit to Jerusalem ("conference")-Gal 2:10
- VI. Activity in churches of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Greece, especially in connection with raising the offering for the poor at Jerusalem-Gal 1:10; I Cor 16:1-4 (also II Cor 8-9); Rom 15:25-32 (68).
- VII. Final visit to Jerusalem ("offering")-Rom 15:25-32

This outline is a general format that serves as a guide for his activities, however it is not a detailed one. This format should be kept in mind when examining the next outline which has proven to be the more detailed of the two. In the commentary The Anchor Bible I Corinthians, Orr and Walther thoroughly use the letters of Paul to sketch what we know of his Pre-Christian background and his missionary journeys:

ORDER OF EVENTS IN PAUL'S LIFE

FROM HIS LETTERS:

Birth and Childhood

Born a Hebrew of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1;

Philip 3:5)

Circumcised on the eighth day (Philip 3:5)

Education

Instructed in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages

(inferred from II Cor 11:22; Philip 3:5)

Instructed in the Greek language (inferred from his letters; cf. Gal 6:11; Philem 19)

Educated fully in the law (Philip 3:5-6)

"Extremely zealous" in Jewish traditions (Gal 1:14)

A member of the Pharisaic party (Philip 3:5)

Early Public Career

Engaged in persecuting the church (I Cor 15:9; Gal

1:13, 23; Philip 3:6)

Perhaps a Zealot (Gal 1:14)

Christian Career Before the Conference with the
Apostles

Revelation of the risen Christ to Paul (I Cor 9:1,
15:8; Gal 1:15-16)

No conference with human authority (Gal 1:16-17)

Trip to Arabia (Gal 1:17)

Return to Damascus (Gal 1:17)

Escape from Damascus through the wall (II Cor 11:33)

Trip to Jerusalem "after three years"; saw only Cephas
and James "the Lord's brother" (Gal 1:18-19)

Preached in the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal
1:21)

The Conference with the Apostles at Jerusalem

Trip to Jerusalem "according to revelation" with
Barnabas and Titus "fourteen years later" (Gal 2:1-10)

Private conference with "the esteemed persons" (Gal
2:2)

No compulsion to have Paul's converts circumcised
(Gal 3:3-5)

Full recognition by James, Cephas, and John of Paul's
right to go to the gentiles (Gal 2:7-9)

Paul's instructions to remember the poor (Gal 2:10)

From the Jerusalem Conference to the Ministry in
Greece

Confrontation with Peter at Antioch (Gal 2:11-21)

Establishment of the church in Galatia (Gal 3:1-2,
4:13-15)

Post-Asian ministry

*New plan to expedite collection a year after the first effort (II Cor 9:2)

Continuation of ministry in Illyricum (Rom 15:10)

Offering made by the Macedonians and Achaean completed and received by Paul for transmittal to Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-28)

[Intention to visit Spain via Rome (Rom 15:24, 28)]

Writing of the letter to Rome (Rom 16:21-23)

Trip to Rome and Imprisonment There

Paul thrice shipwrecked (II Cor 11:25)

(*Corinth; 124-131) ⁴

WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Christianity appealed to women. In Women in Early Christianity, Susanne Heine gives reasons why women joined the community. Gentile women who could not enter into Judaism were called godfearers. These women were not completely converted into all aspects of Jewish life. The first reason why women found themselves in the midst of Christian missionaries was because "the opening up of the Christian mission to Gentiles resulted in the surrender of many Jewish elements which were impossible for godfearers...".

⁵ Women could now involve themselves in the Christian movement becoming patrons, missionaries, workers, prophets, etc. They could feel like full members in the community, which their role in the Jewish godfearing sect did not allow them to feel.

Another benefit for women in joining the new community was the early baptismal formula that Paul adopts in Gal. 3:28 and in some form in I Cor 12:13-"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Heine states that

This formula declares that the classical human points of conflict-ethnic differences, social status and the sex war, all fields of tension

which were a particular occasion for the formation of prejudice and discriminatory behavior-are irrelevant to the Christian community.⁶

Using this formula frees women from their discriminatory category of the lesser or weaker sex. The baptismal formula which Paul uses clearly states that women are equal to men if baptized into Christianity. This aspect alone may have been reward enough for women to join into the community, so that they may be looked upon as being equal to men.

Heine goes on to address the issue as to where did these women come from. She elaborates on Jewish godfearers and claims that independent women of high social status were chiefly among the group. Heine states that "...the Christian community could become a homeland which did not require them to give up anything that they were. And conversely, what they were and possessed served to build up the communities".

⁷ Paul depended upon women in his communities and used them for several purposes. First, he used their households for their meetings. An example of this is found in I Cor 1:11, where Paul receives a message, either written or oral, about the happenings in Corinth. This message was given to Paul by "Chloe's people" or members of her household. Chloe can be considered to be one of those benefactors of Paul's mission that keeps him informed of the quarrels at

Corinth. Secondly, Paul gives praise to a deacon of the port of Cenchreae, Corinth's seaport to the east, who is a woman. Phoebe is not only a deacon in the church, she is a benefactor for Paul, and a missionary for Christ as well. In Romans 16:1-2, Paul commends her by saying "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well". In this greeting he also mentions Prisca and Aquila, a husband/wife team worked together as missionaries to spread the Pauline gospel. Not only does Paul have a need for women in his congregation to show that Christianity accepts all members of society-Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, he needs women for their contributions to the community. With women being such an important part in the earliest stages in Christianity, no wonder they were drawn to its message and hope for inclusion into a society that thanked God that they had not been born a woman.

Women were also drawn to Christianity because of the household being the designated meeting place for converts and travelers. Heine states that "Christian women did not have to leave their home for the sake of the gospel; on the contrary they made

it the center of Christian praxis..."⁸ As we see in I Cor 16:15, Stephanas and his whole house were baptized into Christianity, "...members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints...". Stephanas and all of the members of his house included his wife, children, extended family members, servants, etc. Heine says that with this new practice of baptizing members into the community this was another reason why women were so influenced by Christianity.

The Christians in the community did not have to give up

house, occupation, possessions and family - and this was a decisive change from the hostility to the family in the Jesus tradition. Families were no longer torn apart over belief. Even where the whole family was not baptized at the same time, but baptism was given to just one member of the family, the family nevertheless remained intact.⁹

Women in the Christian community had an identity separate from the view that was held of them in Jewish practices. A Jewish man prayed "A person must say three praises a day: Praised be Thou who hast not made me a Gentile, praised be Thou who hast not made me a woman, praised be Thou who has not made me a

slave".¹⁰ This connotation is so degrading to women for what it implies—man prays to God for these things and God accepts such a prayer as this, man feels that they were the chosen sex or the greatest sex, and that anything other than a Jewish male is a lesser being. In Christianity, this is washed away and women and men, slave and free, Jew and Greek, are seen with equal eyes. That is an underlying message behind the Christian faith, and it is one of the main reasons why women found Christianity so appealing. All of these reasons that I have detailed are factors in why women were attracted to the faith, but their acceptance and equality that they found in the community was the force that attracted women to Christianity.

SOCIAL WORLD OF PAUL

Why such opposition, questions, and problems in this community? Paul spent more time living, communicating and visiting the Corinthian church than any other church he founded and nurtured. The background of the Greco-Roman port city is necessary in order to tell the personality of the community.

In The First Urban Christians, Wayne Meeks gives an account of Corinth, the capital city of the Roman province of Achaia.

In 146, during Rome's campaign against the Achaean League, Lucius Mummius destroyed the city, and it lay desolate until Julius Caesar refounded it as a Roman colony, Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis, in 44. Rebuilding began at once, and by the time of Nero the public center of the city was one of the largest and handsomest of Greece. ¹¹

With the reformation taking place, one can imagine a grand port that opened its doors to all walks of life, traders, merchants, slaves, from any cultural background. The city that Paul worked the hardest at to build a strong foundation of Christianity, may have been his grandest victory in his missionary activities. At Corinth, the opportunity for Christianity to spread was tremendous. Paul knew

this location would be a ground for new ideas and acceptance of a new religious practices, and he also knew of the possibilities for his gospel to spread. Corinth with its diverse population, was a challenge for Paul. With many attempts by Paul to create his Christian environment, his challenges grew.

In the Encyclopedia International, Corinth is described by the remains excavated by the American School of Classical Studies. They found that it "...is almost entirely Roman...the city walls, connecting Corinth with its harbor Lechaem, have been traced; and an impressive agora with shops and stoas, the great fountains of Pirene and Glauke, a theater, and a sanctuary of Asclepius have been uncovered".¹²

In The Encyclopedia Americana, Corinth is seen as one of the most advantageous cities of antiquity because of the location and trading possibilities.

In ancient Corinth great exchange of Asiatic and Italian goods took place. The duty paid on these goods afforded a great revenue to the state; and the citizens accumulated such wealth, that Corinth became one of the most magnificent, but at the same time most voluptuous, cities of Greece. Aphrodite was the goddess of the city, and courtesans were her priestesses, to whom recourse was often had, that they might

implore the protection of the goddess in times of public danger...¹³ The city would become wealthy with flourishing commerce.

Tambasco gives us information about the population of Corinth in the book, In the Days of Paul. The Social World and Teaching of the Apostle. The population consisted of

...some descendants of former Corinthian exiles, but not much local aristocracy. That afforded the opportunity to rise in rank, but also engendered strong competition and flaunting of achieved social status. This commercial center was a magnet for foreigners of every class of society and from every direction....¹⁴ We are also aware that once this port-city was established there was a large population of Jewish settlers, enough to form a synagogue (Acts 18:4). Slaves were also in great numbers depending on the newness of the refounded city to make their place in society. The diversity of this populated city will indeed be the source of conflict in the community simply because of social-status claims, culture, and tradition.

However, Paul does not discriminate between rich and poor, slaves or free men. Not many of the community in Corinth was of high social class and prominence. In fact, Paul addresses the letter to the Corinthians as follows:

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God (I Cor 1:26-29).

This gives us insight into the majority of the people in the community. Not many of the converts had an educational background, wealth, and social status. Those that did have all of this supported those that did not. The wealthy hosted the church in their homes, opened their doors to the slaves of the city.

The location of the city gave way to many cultures, ideas, and free thinkers. The community was probably growing immensely during the time of Paul's visits and letters. This could easily cause dissensions in the church, disagreements on how the congregation should associate with the wider society, and how it should relate itself to this new-found message.

Religious and social formations were not stable in the time of Paul's visit. Foreigners were a steady presence because of the wealth of commerce and trade

that the city produced. I Cor 8 shows us that idol worship played a significant role in the religious aspect of the society, where Paul faces the issue of idol food. With idolatry present in some form within that society, and with the diverse population within the community, this gives a clearer picture why Paul must continue to be an active participant in the early formation of the community. He must portray himself as a father figure that has the authority to set the foundation of rules for this community.

In Corinth, Paul also writes his letter to the Romans. In Chapter 16 of Romans, Paul mentions those who are with him at Corinth. It is in his plans to send Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, to be with them and to help her in whatever she needs, because "she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well". Paul has made a connection with a prominent woman in Cenchreae, which is a seaport to the east. Meetings were probably held in her household. Priscilla and Aquila are also mentioned and Paul asks the Romans to greet the church in their house. Priscilla and Aquila apparently also have a household large enough to hold the community during services. Then, Paul gives a list of men and women who are involved in building the foundation at Corinth. Timothy, his co-worker in the mission, is also with

him while he is writing his letter. Paul mentions Gaius, who is his host along with the whole church. We find another prominent figure in society who hosts the members of the congregation. Erastus is also mentioned. He is the city treasurer and holds a high social position. Paul does connect himself with influential members of the community, which greatly aids him in his time spent with the Corinthians (Romans 16:1-23).

In Social Aspects of Early Christianity by Abraham Malherbe, a lot of valuable information can be used to describe the social characteristics of the early communities. In explaining about joining household churches, Malherbe states that:

When they spoke of 'outsiders', early Christians revealed their minority group mind-set. They believed that they had been called to a higher quality of life than could be expected of their society, and they took measures to safeguard it through their communities. ¹⁵

The converts of Christianity felt that they had found the key to the social ills of their time. They could adhere to a religious practice that was opened to all parties: Jews, Greeks, women, men, slaves, poor, higher ranking members-everyone was a participant in the Christian communities.

In The Social Origins of Christianity by Case, another valuable resource will be drawn to map out some of the social ramifications of being a member of the Christian community. First, Case details about Jewish practices and how the majority of early members were godfearers. This concept was introduced in the previous paragraphs. Case gives this as a reason why members readily joined the communities. He also answers the following question:

What satisfactions had Christians to offer in answer to the religious cravings of their contemporaries?...It is perfectly clear that members of the Christian group or at least the leading advocates of the movement affirmed without hesitation that membership in their society would relieve one from all imminent dangers, would guarantee a full satisfaction for all the worthy quests of life, and would insure an ultimate triumph over all misfortune, both in this world and in the world to come. ¹⁶

These are reasons why Christianity was so appealing to all walks of life, the lowly and the rich. Case goes on to show that Paul appealed to the common man not the intellectual class,

He was done with the wisdom of the world and henceforth his preaching would be concerned with divine wisdom expressed in the mystery of the

death and resurrection of the Christian savior. The Gentiles, accustomed as they were to the phenomenon of the mystery religions, would have no difficulty in understanding Paul on this point. His statement meant for them, to use modern imagery, that he did not advocate a religion which man had worked out for himself through the exercise of his own rational power...[but] through revelation.¹⁷

His theology had some appeal for Gentiles, and what the message spelled out—new body, protection, etc. was what the early Christians clung to. Idolatry was the wider societies method of religious protection—prayer to many different gods. New converts looked at the wider society practice as being evil. Case gives information on the idolatrous nature of the wider society in the view of early Christians.

While idols and images were declared to be only the futile creations of man's hands, Christians entertained no delusions regarding the supernatural beings that were thought to infest the whole of heathen life. These demonic powers were dreadful realities that threatened humanity with terrible ruin. Christians were safe, not because there were no dangers nor because the demons were powerless, but rather because Christians were under the protection

of a greater power, the heavenly Christ.

Possessing this supernatural safeguard they were able to rest in confidence. Sometimes new converts, after receiving the assurances of Christ's protection, mingled in their former pagan associations. ¹⁸

We see evidence of this in I Corinthians in Chapter 8. Just because the converts had joined the Christians communities, does not mean that they abandoned all of their social responsibilities and duties. "From the point of view of Christians, membership in their new society was the only way to safety. Outside one lived amid the constant perils of a social order that was demon-inspired and demon-infested..." ¹⁹, but within the community they found a new hope that would give them strength to stand against the wider society and its varied cultural, religious, and cultic practices.

As stated earlier, there was no way that the Christians could totally separate themselves from mingling with the wider society. Case adds that:

Socially and emotionally it was quite impossible for the Christians as individuals to break with their environment. They must earn their living by accustomed means...Thus most Christians as individuals must continue to live in the pagan life of association with demons, but the

new strength and power which they carried away from their experiences at the meetings of the Christian groups enabled them to go forth with full assurances of safety. 20

That is why it was imperative that Paul built a strong foundation within the church community at Corinth because of the wider societies diversity and the influence it might have on converts.

New converts of the faith must have still associated themselves with the wider society if the pagan meetings where the idol food was distributed is an issue found in I Cor 8. It would have been impossible for the Christian community to totally exclude themselves from the wider society. Yes, they could have formed a surviving community with only a few contacts with the society, but that would not have been a practical decision made by Paul or the members of the Christian community. Paul designed his paths of missionary activities around portcities, cities with vitality and possibility not only for the spreading of the word or for the challenge a diverse community gives, but he chose specific locations based on his own occupation. Paul, a tentmaker, a maker of sails for ships needed the support of the wider society just as much as his converts. Corinth was an excellent location for Paul to build a foundation for a community while at the same time serving his own needs in his trade. However, this interaction with such a diverse society could have been a standing problem within the church at Corinth and there are specific examples that show the converts were indeed being swayed by the wider society's demands.

Paul admits to the Corinthians that they are still weak in their spirituality because of dissensions

within the community. He tells them in I Cor 3:2-4, "...Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?" The group is still not fully aware of the significance of belonging in a community of Christ is like because of their jealousy and fighting.

An example of how Paul sees his foundation threatened by the wider society is found in I Cor 5:1-5. A member of the church (possibly a member of Chloe's household) has informed Paul that there is a person who is committing a sexually immoral act. Paul states that the kind of act "...is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife". This type of act in a Christian community must have been reviling for Paul, especially to understand the consequence that this type of act has on the community itself. If members of the wider society were to know of such happenings in the Christian communities, it would destroy the reputation that Paul was trying to build by making the community look vile and evil. If it were to travel to Jerusalem, the Council would especially denounce Paul as being an effective missionary altogether and denounce his contribution to the spreading of the gospel (which, they may have ultimately done anyway). In any case,

Paul must reprimand any type of evil act occurring in the community immediately. Paul goes on to say in v. 8, "Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth". In this verse, he is speaking of the past state that the Corinthians were in before they were converted. Members of the community may have done many vile and evil acts before their conversion, and Paul clearly states that either the acts diminish or the evil doers be removed from the community. Paul, at this point, was frightened of what influence such acts would have on other converts as well. So, he wanted the "old batch" not to form with the new in hopes of creating a society that did not accept any vile acts that members of the wider society may be practicing with no remorse. Then his community would be seen in the same light as that of the wider society, which Paul tried to avoid.

Another example of Paul's fear of the wider society's influence is found in I Cor 6:1. Paul does not want the members of the community to take problems to an "unrighteous court". "When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead of taking it before the saints?". Notes to this passage found in the bible used, state that "Christians ought to

settle their differences outside of Roman courts, for they will participate with Christ in the final, eschatological judgment of pagan magistrates; how absurd them that they should now abide by the judgments of outsiders!" This requirement that Paul has given the Christians shows an example of how Paul wants to separate the converts as much as possible when dealing with the wider society. It is also a connotation that now converts have new laws that they must abide by, the laws of "outsiders" are of no consequence when it can be settled in Christian courts. Pagan courts are no place for Christians to settle differences. Throughout this letter, we see many problems occurring in the community, the courts in the community must have been filled with complaints and civil suits of the converts knowing the present divisions or problems among members.

Again we see evidence of some of the pasts of the converts, found in I Cor 6:9-11.

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the

name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The description that Paul gives us of some of the converts shows that not all were Jews, or God-fearers. Some of the members were pagans, committing violent sins, having no social or moral cares, probably fitting into the structure of the wider society comfortably. However, now that they are converts, the spirit of Jesus has set them free of all of their past sins. They have been washed of their past, but that does not mean that they still are not weak persons who may be easily influenced because of their past desires and associations with the wider society. This is a significant reason why Paul tried to build a firm foundation with this specific church more than any other community that he founded. He knew of the situation, the backgrounds of his converts, and the temptation of the diverse and voluptuous society, as it has been described. It is important that the converts have strong religious convictions because of their continued existence within the wider society. However, a threat of the influence of the wider society on converts in the community is still there and Paul must be sensitive to it and forceful at the same time.

We find evidence of two extremes in the Corinthian community. First, we have those who are still committing wrongful acts, and then we have overly

pious converts who have taken the message to the extreme. An example of this is found in chapter 7:5. This verse alludes to the fact that some of the converts were even holding out relations with their husbands or wives because they felt that it was their religious duty. Paul says that this should not be so. This is an example of the dynamics within the community at Corinth.

One of the most dominant issues on how the wider society acts upon members of the Christian community is found in I Cor 8 dealing with idol food. In this chapter, Paul does a mini sermon on how idols do not exist, and how God is the only God to be worshipped, etc., but he does touch on a more specific situation that has occurred within the community. Paul states in vv. 7-10 that:

Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled...For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols?

Paul addresses a few points in these verses. First, he admits again that many of the converts have weak spirits or consciences because of not being

knowledgeable about idol food or about being knowledgeable of it and being deceived by other members of the community. He also states that some of the members of the community are so accustomed to eating idol food, which suggests that they participated in the ritual in some way before they were converts or they at least associated themselves with people who did sacrifice to idols. Paul's underlying theme throughout this letter deals with how Christians must be aware of the evils that exist in the wider society and how it can affect them and the whole community. For example, if a convert with a weak conscience sees a convert eating idol food with a strong conscience, that weak member may feel that the practice is acceptable and being weak and ignorant of the position that the strong convert is in, may defile themselves based on another members actions. Paul is informing the community that they must be responsible members, looking constantly for the betterment of the whole community. A member has a strong influence on another member, just as much as the wider society has a strong influence on the members at Corinth. Paul also makes another interesting point in this passage, "For if others see you..." leads one to assess that Paul is constantly looking out for the reputation of the community. Paul wanted to control the environment that the community existed

in while also trying to maintain a standing relationship with the wider society.

This task was not an easy one, but it is clear that this is the intent throughout the letter to the Corinthians.

MEN AND WOMEN: VEILS AND HAIRSTYLES

Focusing on I Corinthians 11:2-16, we find that Paul is dealing with veiling of women while praying or prophesying or the issue of proper hairstyles. In "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Cor 11.4", Richard Oster gives the social and historical context of head coverings. He makes it clear in his article that Corinth was under heavy Roman influence in all aspects of life, even with its diversity. Oster stated that

...those colonists sent by Caesar to Corinth, whatever their social status and racial and national heritage, were basically advocates of Roman values and culture. It should be remembered in this connection that cultural mores and devotional habits are not essentially expressions of one's social pedigree. ²¹

Oster said that "...it is not difficult to imagine the tenacity displayed by those of Roman heritage regarding the nature and propriety of head coverings

during prayer and prophecy".²² Only a fraction of women may have unveiled themselves during worship, and Paul may have been addressing these women if that was the case at all. Veiling practices in this community were too common and accepted during Paul's time to be a major problem.

In "The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman Cults of Women" Catherine Kroeger states the situation of veiling amongst all members of the community. She details this situation by noting that:

...head-covering was expedient for Jewish women, among whom properly bound hair and veiling was obligatory unless they wished a divorce. Speaking to a man without a head-covering was a sure sign of a woman's promiscuity, and to participate in a service unveiled would be a flagrant defiance of her husband...Upper-class Roman women might go uncovered, but the lower-class women in the provinces usually wore a veil. The women of Paul's home town Tarsus were routinely veiled...[And] Since the congregation at Corinth met next door to the synagogue and was composed of both Jewish and Gentile women, universal veiling of women would certainly cause the least offense.

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If Paul was ultimately speaking against women covering their heads because their hair was given to them as

a natural covering (I Cor 11:15), then he was speaking against common custom. If Paul accepts the unveiling of women, then lower-class Roman citizens may rise from their social distinction and become like that of upper-class women and become unveiled. It would cause the least offense if women wore veils since their location was beside the synagogue, but that does not mean that Paul based his restrictions or abandonment of tradition (whichever hypotheses is correct) on that fact.

Many scholars have taken the position that Paul was addressing hairstyles* instead of veils. Greek and Jewish women wore their hair in a braided twist then pinned to the top or back of their head. This type of style was very fashionable among the women, and those who chose not to wear their hair in this style may have been seen as culturally unacceptable.

Women did hold prominent positions in the early Christian communities. Women are listed in Paul's letters, and are found in Acts as well. These women served the role as hosts to the church community. In the early development of the church, all members met in houses. This is where Paul and missionaries would preach the gospel, pass on oral and written traditions, and form the foundations for the church. Women were not only the hosts for these meetings,

they provided the atmosphere for growth of the community. Therefore, women were seen as major contributors and respected members of the community. In "Women in the Pre-Pauline and Pauline Churches", Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza speaks of the importance of women in the connection with the communities' meeting place, "Since women were among the wealthy and prominent converts (cf. Acts 14:4.12), they played an important role in the founding, sustaining and promoting of such house-churches".²⁴

With all of this in mind, it would seem easy to consider the situation where a woman may confuse her role in the public and private realm. The home is considered a public meeting place for converts where more than worship service takes place. The women must serve two functions during the meeting, hostess and worshiper. If veiling is the issue presented by Paul in I Cor 11:2-16, then women may have abandoned the veil so that they may have freedom to move about without constraint because of the function of the hostess role. Once the private act began, women assumed the role of worshiper without donning the veil.

Whichever position, hairstyles and/or veils, many scholars have given interpretations on the text of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The exegetical work of I Cor 11:2-16 will present an awareness of Roman

cultural mores, cultic practices, and the reputation of the city while trying to reach the heart of the Pauline message.

Research will be reviewed at length for testing purposes. This testing will be carried out by the examination of what scholars have presented on the issues at hand. While my own proposals will serve as an aid in following the scholarly debate, the range of scholarly treatments of this text will also serve to test the soundness of my arguments and the cogency of my formulation of the issues.

The hypothesis, to give a general overview of the direction that I will take, that will be tested in this thesis is one that has a new interpretation of the reading, as well as problems in the text itself when reading it in this manner. I will propose that what Paul is in fact doing is only presenting the problem that the Corinthians are faced with in vv. 2-10, and he then gives his own teachings of the issues in vv. 11-16. This break between the sections is formed at this point because of the obvious break in the text itself-v.3 beginning with a hierarchy based on Genesis, v. 11 beginning with a new relationship between God and humankind found in the Christian movement. Then proposals will be made to show that Paul indeed removed the veil from women and released them from their submissive role. The

only problem with my proposed hypothesis will be on how to deal with v. 3, which I will try to do to show ways in which it can be read. This hypothesis along with many other scholarly interpretations will be presented to shed light on the possible message that Paul was presenting to the Corinthians.

MEN AND WOMEN: VEILS AND HAIRSTYLES

A. I Corinthians 11:2-16

In v. 11:2, Paul commends the Corinthians for following the traditions he taught them. If the Corinthians were so true to his message, why would he have to address this upcoming argument? What traditions has Paul taught the Corinthians and to what extent were they based on Jewish thought of women's position in society? Were these Jesus' Traditions or the cultural traditions that Paul had been taught since birth? More than likely there could be a connection between the two.

Paul did stay with the Corinthians for one year and six months. During this time, we know that Paul was not only founding the church and gaining a following, he was preaching to the congregation every sabbath. The message that he gave the Corinthians is the tradition that he has formulated as his gospel. Over this period, a significant amount of teachings probably were conducted on moral conduct, social obligations, religious practices, etc. We have the more detailed problem areas that arose from Paul's message in the letters themselves. So, we know that Paul did try to establish these traditions in the church during his visits and letters.

The issue that is addressed in the chapter deals with either veils or hair. From the introductory work,

it was found that veiling was a common Greek and Roman custom during the time of Paul's mission at Corinth. If Paul is discussing free-flowing hair in the text, it was Greek social custom to wear a stylish coiffure described as hair braided and twisted in a bun-style on top of the head. Women wore their hair in this style not for religious purposes, but for social acceptance. In either case, Paul seems to focus on women veiling themselves or keeping appropriate hairstyles, and uses men only as a reference. It is not necessary to study the roles of men or their proper dress and hairstyle since the main focus of the thesis is on woman's position during the time of Paul.

An insightful approach on 11:2 is discussed by the scholar Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza in her classic In Memory Of Her. She states that the men and women of Corinth were actively participating in worship and were publicly "under the influence of the divine Spirit. Paul affirms that in doing so the Corinthians have followed his teaching and example (11:2), and he does not disqualify this 'spiritual' self-understanding and practice of the Corinthian pneumatics".²⁶ This leads one to interpret this reading of v. 2 to mean that Paul applauds his teachings on ecstatic worship, yet goes into a discussion on how to go about his method of worship

in a more appropriate manner.

Another question about this tradition that Paul speaks of deals with the passage found in I Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:28. In Gal 3:28, Paul says "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." However, when he speaks in Corinthians he does not use this same order and uses it for another purpose. He says in I Cor 12:13 "-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-", and most importantly does not address the equality found in Christ with respect to gender. Paul may be deliberately excluding this freedom of equality found in Christ. He may feel that the situation is too touchy to express the formula in this way because there may have been problems that occurred in the church because of this new-found freedom.

Another possible reason why Paul may have avoided including the male-female equality in 12:13 is because the Corinthians may have easily misinterpreted the tradition. Women may have understood Paul to mean that with this new-found status, social roles could be discarded, women could be free from all authority which would ultimately cause them to rebel against society and the constraints that were placed on them. Paul may have been trying to avoid a women's liberation movement in the name of Christ.

Barton reaches the same conclusion in "Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth", he states:

Paul is acutely aware of these gnostic innovations and views them with intense anxiety. This anxiety is most tellingly revealed in 12.13, where the traditional baptismal formula...is modified by the complete omission of gender categories.

Paul shows here that he does not want to remind the Corinthian women, as well as men, of the ideology of equal status through the dissolution of gender differentiation which their baptismal rite signified. His memory of the tradition is itself sociologically determined, so that he is able to forget those aspects which might weaken his cause, his authority. ²⁶

These gnostic innovations that Barton says that Paul is aware of are predominantly found in I Corinthians in gender-related behavior. Paul must attempt to form a tradition for this community that speaks of a separated gender. There is no equality found in the sex alone. Male is male, and female is female, contributing two sets of rules of practice along with this separation. So, Paul also makes a different chronology for this specific community based on scripture in Genesis.

Charles Talbert brings out a point on the Galatian

tradition: "It seems likely that in Corinth also, because of their religious experience, certain women were discarding the social symbols of their sexuality. This may have been due to their misinterpretation of Paul (e.g., Gal 3:28)...".²⁷ This may be the very reason why Paul excludes the formulation of gender equality in Corinthians because of a misinterpretation of the tradition.

Fiorenza has expressed her view of the Pauline reading of Galatians 3:28 and compares I Cor 12:13 to show why he made these modifications in the baptismal formula that he has adopted. First, Fiorenza has broken the elements of Gal 3:28 by stating that there has been a misinterpretation of the text following Talbert's conclusion as well. However, this misinterpretation goes much further than the release of symbolic sexual practice, it entails a misinterpretation of reading into the tradition in an androgynous sense. Paul did not intend to make a point in stating that there was a literal change of gender status or biological change but that there was only the new relationship between male and female dealing with patriarchal marriage and sexual relationships in the new creation of Christianity. Without the proof of why Paul purposefully excluded the "male nor female" formulation, it is a point that he may have done this deliberately. I agree with

Fiorenza that there was a purpose for his exclusion based on the noticeable tension within the community, and that Paul did not know how to deal with the misinterpretation so he took away that point of his argument that caused gnostic interpretation or enthusiastic consequences.

In v. 3, Paul says, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ." This formula does show hierarchy among gender relations in connection with God. This hierarchy permeates power in the community. The formula is as follows: God/Christ/[Paul/Church]/Man/Woman. Paul can gain for two reasons if he uses this structure. First, he is forming a separation among the male and female members of his community, which some scholars hold that it is a clear sign of subordination. Secondly, Paul can use this structure to his own advantage. He can prove his authority of leader of Church/Man/Woman through direct association to Christ. Through Paul the converts find Christ. Paul is also dealing with an issue in Corinth—a power struggle between himself and other apostles/disciples found in I Cor 1:12 and since that is not an issue directly related to my thesis, there will be no further study on this topic just to introduce that he can use the hierarchy for his own

purposes.

The introduction of the hierarchy God/Christ/Man/Woman is similar to the the creation story found in Genesis. In Genesis 1:26-27 God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." In this passage there is no discriminatory act of God placing men over women, they are both equal, both made in the image and likeness of God. In Gen 2, this chapter shows how man was formed from the dust of the earth then woman was made from the rib of the man. God made man first then He decided that "It is not good that a man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." God then created all of the animals of the Earth and He was not satisfied because he had not made a helper for man. After God had taken the rib out of the man and made the woman, the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken". Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen 2:18-24). In these passages, especially the first one cited, there is no subordination theme expressed. It is only an order of events that God planned and perfected.

He created humankind (male and female) in His image and blessed them in the first creation story. In the second creation story, He made a human being first, it happened to be male-in his image, then He made a woman to be man's helper, not his subordinate. Paul's use of his hierarchy may only be to show the order of the creative events, not the power over the woman who is on the lower end of the spectrum. There is no indication that Paul is relating this passage to Chapter 3 in Genesis where man and woman suffer the consequence for eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil which may be some support to show that God may have placed women under the subordination role.

Robin Scroggs states a position on the hierarchy that Paul presents in v. 3 that is represented by many other scholars. His position does not follow with the hypothesis that Paul is indeed laying ground for subordination. Scroggs states, "Here no subordination of woman to man is intended; what is expressed is the order of creative events".²⁸ Scroggs has developed this emphasis on Gen 2-, and he concludes that the logic of the argument cannot be evaluated and that "Since in the created order man has assumed...a dominating role based on his priority in creation, but since in the eschatological age there is no such priority, woman must show by the head

covering that she has left that old order and now lives in the new". 29

It is plausible to take on this more detailed description of v. 3. If Paul is referring to creative events as a basis for veiling, then he is likely referring to creation as representative of human relations. If Paul is to accept women on equal terms then he must look to this new age of eschatological freedom and modify the old approach to give women a "true" equality.

To take on the position that this hierarchial formulation is in fact promoting the theme of subordination, Dennis MacDonald, in "Corinthian Veils and Gnostic Androgynes" presents a detailed presentation of v. 3.

Paul objects that the undifferentiated appearance of men and women prophesying violates natural order and dishonors the woman's 'head', that is, her husband, by breaking with socially approved fashions ...Furthermore, a woman cannot symbolize authority by removing her veil, because the veil itself is an authority...A man, on the other hand, because he is more fully participant in the image of God, dishonors Christ, his metaphorical head, if he covers his head, for by so doing he denies the authority of God's image.

This presentation of v. 3 leads one to interpret that women were in fact violating social order or rule. Because men are on a higher spiritual realm than women, they must not be veiled because this would deny the image of God. With this reading, one can assume that women should be more concerned with their position in society than their spiritual role as an equal participant in worship. If a woman must be more aware of her husband, and her role in society concerning fashion, how could this possibly lead one to suspect that there was freedom and equality when the natural order legitimated by God is a symbol of that subordination.

What was Paul trying to gain by introducing man into his discussion on veils or hair? Paul says in v. 4 "Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head..." The something that Paul is referring to could describe a veil, but this seems highly unlikely. A possible position that v. 4 may elude to would be Paul using man as an illustration to complete his argument. Paul may have strictly used this to say that just as we know that males should not be covered, women should, drawing a distinction in how males are to worship in another manner than females. Paul may try to stress the point that just as it would be disgraceful for a male to cover his head with something during prayer, women

would also disgrace their head without a veil. This does not show inequality because there are different terms in how gender prayed or prophesied, it shows more the social constructs that early Christians held about men and women's differences.

Kraemer also states a position on v. 4 relating to a social issue using hair as her interpretation of what Paul is trying to address. She argues that:

...hair amply illustrates the use of the human body as a metaphor for the social body, offering a particularly effective medium for the expression of social constraints...[and] tightly bound styles seem to reflect tight social control; wild, uncontrolled hair is expressive of relaxed social control and protest. ³¹

This thesis that Paul could be more concerned with the social body or class is a sound one. Women who let loose their hair were expressing that they abandoned any type of authority or any social hold that caused them to feel as a restricted class. Paul would not want the women of his communities to protest against the wider society, where in fact forming a Christian community was in contrast to the wider society. He wanted the members of his communities to shine a positive light on the Christ movement, not one of protest. So, the hair which illustrates the human body, must be kept appropriately bound to

maintain an image of social control and propriety. However, there is no clear evidence that Paul is directly taking on the issue of unloosed hair because it is not clearly found in the text itself.

If one notes what Paul says in the first verse of Chapter 11 then a question arises. Paul states "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ". Paul was not restrictive of social class and was known for his loose manner or style of preaching his word in public. Paul's letters reflect his beatings, punishments, and imprisonments for his mission as seen in II Corinthians 1:21-29. This leads one to believe that Paul was not a man to be concerned with social constraints or protesting attitudes. On the opposite view, Paul should have seen this as a way of releasing social tensions caused by unequal status of gender relationships. It is difficult to place Paul with such concerns of social reverence to be his main issue in this letter to the Corinthians. But, this is an important issue because even though Paul had to violate certain social constraints to establish communities, he was very concerned in maintaining social control in the communities he established. Social reverence had an influence on the functioning of the community in relationship to the wider society that was discussed in detail in the introductory work.

In vv. 4-5 Paul says, "Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head-it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved". Paul's use of head in these verses are unclear. If man covers his head he disgraces his head alludes to two possible positions. Either man will disgrace his own head in the eyes of the community, or he will disgrace his head-Christ. It seems more likely that Paul was again speaking to a social concern. If man does cover his head, he is going against the practice accepted in the community for men, therefore causing a stir or problem in the whole community. If dissensions are found in the community itself, it will not survive. Paul realizes this and must handle this matter not to limit women or condone the submissiveness of women by introducing the word "head", but to control a social crisis that has occurred within the boundaries of the community by using men only as an example.

Paul must then say that if a woman does not veil herself she disgraces her head. However, there are also two possible references to this verse. Either woman will disgrace her own head in the eyes of the community, or her husband's. If Paul uses the term "head" to refer to her husband, this shows that woman must be careful not to place any disgrace on her

husband from her actions in the church community. Since Paul may have been addressing a social issue, it is very likely that Paul was speaking towards the disgracing of community as well. If women do not veil themselves in their role of worshiper, they may have been seen as denying the social and religious custom of that time which was veiling/or proper coiffure-to form a new type of religious cult-like practice that was not accepted by Paul. This may not have been Paul's only concern. The women may have been viewed as prostitutes, women who loosed their hair or unveiled themselves in the public realm. Taking the social context of the wider society into consideration, Corinth is known for its wickedness and prostitution. Paul may have used the male-female issue to raise a more important issue at hand concerning the wider society.

He may use man as a symbol of how the community itself can fall into separation, disagreement, and dissension among members that destroys the foundation of the community that he has tried to build with the tradition of unity in Christ, not a community of social class. He may use woman as a symbol of how the wider society might view the community-nonauthoritative, disgraceful, and practicing religious beliefs with no honor. Paul sees the woman unveiled during worship as a symbol of Corinth's prostitution or pagan cult

Fiorenza also addresses the problem in vv. 4-5 by looking into what type of act Paul was countering. It is apparent problem that Paul must reconcile and Fiorenza states:

...Paul is speakin here about the manner in which women and men should wear their hair praying and prophesying. It seems that during ecstatic-pneumatic worship celebrations some of the Corinthian women prophets and liturgists unbound their hair, letting it flow freely rather than keeping it in its fashionable coifure. 32

It would seem that if this was the case then Paul would have been pleased with the enthusiasm in worship. The key issue that Paul may be addressing here is proper attire or hairstyles for the sake of propriety. Letting loose hair during worship, if this was the case, would be a socially unacceptable practice for Christian communities to partake in.

Witherington takes a different approach to vv. 4-5, and does not agree that Paul is addressing the issue of hairstyles at all.

What is proper apparel for the man is the opposite of what is proper for the woman. Clearly, the reason for this is gender. Hair in itself cannot dishonor the male head, so it is unlikely that hair is in view in v. 5. A woman with unloosed hair falling down on her shoulders still has

her head covered with hair. Thus, Paul is not referring to a natural head-covering of hair in vv. 4-5. It follows that v. 5 means the effect of the uncovered head is the same as if the woman were shaved, a clear sign of disgrace for a woman.

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Therefore, with this argument, one can assess that Paul was simply referring to veils in worship in vv. 4-5. The man should not worship with a veil, and the woman should not worship without a veil. Paul does address social order in the context of this reading. He gives a specification on when women should wear a veil to protect the social order within the community during worship. Paul does clearly talk about hair in the later verses, but not so clearly in the context of the beginning of the chapter, where he may strictly refer to the covering or the opposite of that which is unveiled hair. This can lead one to hypothesize that Paul may not have clearly understood the problems in the church at Corinth. One method of his communication is through Chloe's people (I Cor 1:11) and Paul may have misunderstood the picture that the messenger painted for him. This is a sound hypothesis as to why there is confusion in the text.

In v. 6 Paul states that "For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut of her hair;

but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil". This verse seems to be a circular argument. In this case, it is just as disgraceful for a woman to go without a veil as if her head were shaven. We see in v. 15 of the text that Paul states that long hair was given to a woman as her glory, her ornament. Therefore, it should not be worn short or shaven. This verse leads one to weigh evidence of the actual point of Paul's intent, to show that he was discussing veiling not proper hairstyles. The proper hairstyle for those times was braided coiled hair, not loosed hair. There is evidence found that loosed hair shows a sign of wild pneumatic worship found in cults such as Isis, Dionysus, etc. Many scholars have reported that loosed hair shows signs of uncleanness or adultery in Jewish circles and this could be a reflection of Jewish tradition. However, I will not quote specific scholars who state this hypothesis because I do not find this in the verse. In this verse, and in the context of the chapter, Paul does not mention anything that would lead a scholar to believe that he is denouncing unloosed hair. In fact, he speaks of long hair being a woman's glory in v. 15. In v. 6, Paul states that it is disgraceful for a woman to have short or shaven hair, as well as to go without a veil. But, I believe that Paul is only stating arguments

that the Corinthians have made to restrict women to the veil, to free women of this limitation by stating that there is no need for a woman to wear a veil because her hair was given to her as a natural covering.

In vv. 7-10, one hypothesis would be that Paul is restating the same statements that he made in vv. 3-6 to clarify the problem for the Corinthians. Paul now states in vv. 7-10, "For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels." Paul is drawing from Genesis 2:21-23, not 1:26-27. Paul may restate the problem as he views it to strengthen the claim that the members of the community felt that women were indeed subordinate to men. The key to that statement is that it is what Paul felt that the community was faced with-members in the community demanding the subordination of women. Some members in the community may have felt that women must wear the veil to show man that they are weaker, where man holds the authority over women. Therefore, since man was created directly in the image and reflection of God there is no need

for him to veil himself. Since woman was created from man and for man, she must show her submissiveness by donning the veil, showing respect for her husband who serves as leader. Since woman was created for the sake of man, she should have a symbol of authority, a veil which expresses her submissive and inferior nature. Women are last in the creative order of events, and what does this mean? It means that in this new eschatological age some members still claimed that women still must not be seen as equal partners. Women must still play the subordinate and limited role, not only restrictive to society, but to religious practices as well. However, we will see later that Paul does not accept this view for himself. He may only restate the problem and the voice of the messenger or the community to give a clearer picture of the situation before he clears it up. Paul may be adamantly trying to focus the attention of the Corinthian congregation on the hierarchy legitimated by God in the new eschatological age in the upcoming verses. He is repeating himself only for the purposes of stressing the situation that was told to him through another source.

Witherington argues against the position that some scholars take on the issue of vv. 10. Some scholars state that Paul is allowing women to chose their own manner of worship-either

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veiling/unveiling/binding of hair, therefore having authority over their own heads. The text does not give evidence for this claim. Witherington states that "...Paul says women ought to have authority on or over their heads. He is not talking about exercising control, but having authority...".³⁴ Women do not have any control over the appearance of their own heads because society has deemed what is appropriate dress and hairdo for women. Not only does society have this authority to dictate what is proper, the Christian community demands propriety. If Paul is only restating the problem, which seems very plausible, he is stating that the Corinthians believe that a woman must wear a veil because of the angels, not only because of women being subordinate. Most scholars hold that angels in this text refer to demonic, cosmic powers that women must protect themselves against by covering their heads with a veil in worship. (bible footnote)

To take the second hypothesis further, which is the notion that vv. 3-10 are only what Paul viewed as the problem in the Corinthian community and is writing to them in a problem-response format is a plausible hypothesis. We know that Paul did have correspondence with the members of the church at Corinth because he states that in his second letter to the Corinthians (I Cor). As mentioned earlier,

Paul had contact with Chloe's people. Another example where we find this is in 7:1 where he says, "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote". Paul did have some type of written correspondence with the congregation. One hypothesis would be that 11:3-10 follows this same line. The Corinthians may have written Paul or sent an oral message concerning the issues or problems of veils, hairstyles, and hierarchy that the community had. Since the issue is important for the continuation of the community, Paul may have restated how he thought the Corinthians saw the problem and details their support for this problem.

The Corinthians were aware of the social tensions in the community. The Greeks wore a particular hairstyle, the long braided hair coiled on the top of their head in a bun style. Some of the members of the church felt that it was disgraceful for a man to cover his head, and a woman to have her head unveiled or to have a different hairstyle from their own. Some members of the church felt that Genesis 2:21-23 was the justification needed for a hierarchy of membership in the church, showing that males have the power over females and that they should be submissive.

In Hurley's article "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Cor 14:33b36" he supports the view that

Paul was ultimately addressing the proper hairstyle and not the use of a veil during worship service and speaks of the controversy that would arise in the church. He states that:

A controversy could then arise in which both a hair-up and loosed-hair party might cite Paul for support. One can also envisage an ultra-conservative party arising which would argue that not only the putting up of the hair was proper, but also the wearing of a shawl. Such a party could be designated a pro-shawl party. ³⁵

With this in mind, Hurley then goes through the text showing support for this type of division on this issue. He states that "Paul must answer the three groups...he does not directly attack any of the groups but rather seeks to instruct them further in that which we taught". ³⁶ From this it is clear that the foundations that he tried to build, new members tried to undermine. With the congregation steadily increasing, it is natural to see groups forming in response to issues in the community. Therefore, Paul counters this confusion and misguided religious practices with statements against what they are practicing and begins his own theology in vv. 11-16.

I hold the hypothesis that while scholars find this chapter problematic and a justification for the

inequality of women, it is in fact only misinterpreted by the readers. In this chapter, Paul's message is not purposefully trying to show how the creative events legitimated by God prove that women must therefore be under the authority of men and take up an inferior position. It is also easy to recognize that factions have formed in the community at Corinth over other pertinent issues besides hairstyles. This is found in the same chapter, 11:17-34. Paul states in v. 18-19, "For to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine". Paul realized that there would arise some divisions among the members and with the party members forming factions over what is proper apparel or hairstyle is just one instance where this occurs. In v. 19 he says this will help the congregation understand who is genuine in the service in the name of Christ. If any of the members are contentious with what Paul directs of them, then they are not true members of the faith.

Overall, this hypothesis that I will present seems to be the most plausible hypothesis to account for the issue at hand in this diverse community. The reason that I have initially proposed this hypothesis is because of the contradictions in the

chapter if one would take vv. 2-16 to be a cohesive unit. In fact, it can be easily noted how there is a clear break between vv. 3-10 and 11-16. There must be some reason why this break happens in the text. Either Paul realizes his own mistake in forming an old hierarchy in a new eschatological age, or his purpose is all together different from what scholars present. So far, scholars have taken vv. 3-10 to be the message that Paul is delivering to the Corinthians. The scholars have taken on the issues put forth in vv. 3-10; misinterpretations of Gal 3:28 to disregard sexual distinctions, hierarchy, hairstyles or veiling, submissiveness based on the use of "kephale", and how man only is in the image of God. Now it is time to break away from all of these scholarly hypotheses and shed new light on what this text may be trying to convey.

Paul says in vv. 11-12 "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God." Paul pronounces that woman did come from man, but man comes from woman also. It is a reciprocal process, dependent upon each other for life, ultimately dependent on God for the existence of humankind. The new hierarchy is God/humankind. Even with the old hierarchy God/Christ/Man/Woman, each member of

this hierarchy serves a purpose in the totality of the universe. Woman and man are not independent, they are dependent upon each other. This does not say that men are greater than women because they were created first in the hierarchy. However, it does not say that women and men are equal either. Women and men are not "truly" equal, but they are equally important in the whole schemata. There cannot be woman without man, and there cannot be man without woman. Verses 11 and 12 clarify the meaning of hierarchy for the reader that Paul addressed in vs. 3 and 8-9.

Robin Scroggs also takes a position on why Paul included vv. 11-12 into the Chapter. He says that Paul took this stand to say that:

"Man's dependency on woman for birth neutralizes the original priority of man in creation. This is not quite the kind of argument one would have expected in this place, but it does have a common sense appeal and Paul is then able to conclude,...with an appeal to God...".³⁷

Scroggs even goes further to state that this proves that "In the eschatological community, where liberation reigns, woman no longer stands chained to the subordinate roles of the old creation".³⁸ Therefore, in his response a pattern is formed. He appeals to God, sensible judgment, nature, then tradition (vv.

11-16). Paul is speaking out against the negativism found in the community concerning human relationships. It is apparent that the Corinthian men thought of women to be inferior in their roles in society as well as in their religious functions. Paul must then focus their attention on the equality found in the new age, Christ-equality. Paul's first response to the Corinthian problem stated in vv. 3-10 is important in that he starts with the hierarchy of creative events in v. 11. He must show the new relationship that male and female members of the community have risen to in a clarified way. That issue is more important than the dress or style of hair.

After Paul states the new hierarchy, God/humankind, he then goes into the appeal to nature. This is a typical rhetorical argument. The more that Paul can appeal to will make his argument stronger. In vv. 13 Paul says "Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled?" It is not shocking that Paul appeals to their human nature to tell them what is right, even when it seems to be such a controversial issue within the church. He uses the same appeal in I Cor 10:15, "I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say". Again he is in the midst of another significant issue in the community-the sharing of idol food with members in the wider society. Paul must feel that some of

the members of the congregation must know what his response would be on these issues based on traditions that he has taught them earlier. Paul is not giving his members a choice in the matter, he is appealing to what he feels is a common sense approach or their sense of propriety. The proper action for women to take would be to be uncovered since their hair is given to them as a natural covering.

Not only does he appeal to their sound and sensible judgment, he also appeals to nature. He says this in vv. 14-15 "Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair was given to her as a covering." Here is where we can know with certainty what the concern is in the community. By these verses, we can see that veiling is the issue in the community because he uses hair to counter why women should not wear veils. Paul states that "For her hair was given to her as a covering." This covering or natural veil will take the place of a garment over the head. In this verse, Paul frees women from wearing a veil in worship practices. A woman's hair was given to her as a natural covering, therefore another covering would not be necessary. This is another reason why one must look back in v. 5-10. Paul now states that woman does not need the veil because of her natural

covering-whereas before he stated that it would be dishonorable for a woman to be unveiled. This is evidence that Paul may have been presenting the problem as he saw it through communication with Corinthian members, now giving his response he lays out the new worship practice for women-to go unveiled.

Not only should the Corinthians take into account Paul's teaching, social norms, and their own judgment, they should depend on nature as well. A man should not wear long hair because it is degrading. Here Paul makes no reference to men veiling themselves or covering their heads during worship, he specifically says that long hair is degrading for a man. Again this is another example of how Paul uses men as an example in his argument. In The International Critical Commentary: I Corinthians, the editors Robertson and Plummer state that "At this period, civilized men, whether Jews, Greeks, or Romans, wore their hair short".³⁹ Paul only made reference to men to show the Corinthians how men can be used as an illustration.

Another important distinction that Paul brings out in his statements in response to the Corinthian problem is that he clarifies the term "kephale". In vv. 4-5, scholars attempt to show that this is a metaphorical statement in reference to Christ as head, husband as head following the hierarchy that Paul laid as foundation in v. 3. However, if I

continue with my hypothesis that vv. 11-16 are Paul's own theological statements in response to dissension and disillusionment, he specifically states, "...if a man wears long hair it is degrading to him". He is not showing any disrespect to Christ and the authority over God's creation is not present in these verses. Scholars attempt to show that if men are covered during worship they may be openly stating homosexuality, or stating that they must not cover themselves because Christ is their head, or that men may show disrespect for the hierarchy if they are veiled during worship. Now it is clear that there is a new hierarchy formed in Christianity. It is also clear that Paul is simplifying the issue, saying "He does not degrade anyone but himself" based on the accepted social norms of the time. However, Paul is not appealing to creation at this time, as he did so in v. 12 and that could lead to one difference in the approach taken by Paul.

In v. 15, Paul says "Her hair was given to her as a covering". Here he is speaking to the converts who claimed that women must have their hair bound and covered. Since women were given a natural covering, the need for it to be covered is useless, the need for it to be bound is a social issue. Why cover something that is a glory to that person? A

woman's hair is her glory, it is her pride and as a natural covering the veil would be seen as a covering to what God had intentionally made as a distinction between man and woman. However, it is clear that Paul is talking about bound hair in the coiffure accepted by society and certain members in the Corinthian community. Hair free-flowing is not appropriate, hair bound fashionably braided and coiled on the top of their head in a bun is the appropriate hairstyle. This can be assessed based on what was culturally accepted at that time. There is no evidence in this letter that Paul felt that free-flowing hair was disgraceful and not practiced within the churches. In fact, that might have been an accepting practice at that time. It can only be assumed that Paul may feel that appropriate hairstyle was necessary to keep control of the community because of all of the research that points in this direction.

In The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament, Shaw recognizes the problem of this verse in connection with the context if in fact Paul's own theology is present throughout vv. 2-16. He states that:

"The argument seems to be that nature endowed women with long hair for a covering, and that this needs to be reinforced with a veil; but either it does cover, in which no case no further

reinforcement is necessary, or it is not such covering". 40

This issue is a major problem in the chapter. Either it clears up the whole issue in simple terms-women do not need the veil, or it is a confusing twist that makes the ending of the verses studied seem too complicated to understand exactly what Paul was addressing and concluding.

Following the course of my hypothesis, that 11-16 was Paul's response to the issues at work in the community, one can see the clarity of the verses in the whole context. One can also see how in fact the hair is used as a covering, "...in which case no further reinforcement is necessary". Since no added covering is now necessary during worship, one can conclude that Paul denounces the tradition that veils should be worn during worship.

Some feminist scholars see Paul as an enemy to women. Based on my studies, I have found that Paul stresses the interdependence of woman and man. God's hierarchy does not form discriminatory levels of authority, but all must be present to balance creation. God did not intend for a woman to veil herself in worship-her long hair was given to her by God as a natural covering. Paul did not create a wall of inequality, he voiced out the Christ-equality found in the new community of worshipers.

In v. 16 Paul says "But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God." The Corinthians are then subject to follow Paul's commandment by tradition. First, he appeals to creation, then to be sensible and use their wise judgment, then to nature, then to tradition. With this verse, it can be stated that v. 2 is a mockery to the Corinthians, in fact they did not follow the traditions that he set for them. In v. 16, after laying out the correct practice in his response in vs. 11-15, he then appeals to tradition. Paul tries to firmly ground his response to the Corinthians in vv. 11-15 as being what he expects of his other churches as well. The new Christian community is heavily dependent upon Paul's direct teachings, so dependent that he must be positive in setting firm foundations within the new converts hoping that in his absence his message will maintain its true content. Paul's intense relationship with the Corinthians shows how its members increased, causing problems to occur.

With this hypothesis, it can be shown that the Corinthians were so concerned with factions forming in the community that they wrote to Paul concerning the problems with the clear understanding that he could rectify the situation. The problem in the community is found in vv. 3-10 which is then answered

by Paul in vv. 11-16. Paul was only stating v. 3-10 as what was presently occurring in the church to outline his response in the context that the readers of the second letter (I Cor) could follow with ease. If Paul would have only presented his response to the problem as stated in vv. 11-16, it would have been confusing and may have led to more misunderstanding, which Paul was trying to avoid.

In "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16", Alan Padgett finds that the present way that scholars make claims about 1 Cor 11:2-16 fails in its attempt to show the drastic break between the first and last part of the section. So, Padgett details a new interpretation that falls in line with my hypothesis that this problematic chapter is not so vague, that it is only misinterpreted by scholars. Padgett states that:

Throughout this letter, Paul corrects the Corinthian praxis, opposing it with his own apostolic understanding of what it means to be in Christ. In many cases, Paul describes the belief or practice which he objects to, before proceeding to correct it. I should therefore like to propose the hypothesis that what we have called part A is Paul's description of Corinthian custom and that Paul's correction

of this custom on the basis of his understanding of what it means to be 'in Christ' (v. 11).⁴³

My hypothesis differs from Padgett's in that his break between the two sections A and B are vv. 3-7b/7c-16. His rationale for the separation at v. 7 is based on the process of exclusion. He denies the break at v. 10 because it shows a conclusive statement. He says that v. 7c is the candidate for the separation because from there he can make it connect with what follows. I disagree with Padgett's break between A and B, and make the separation from v. 3-10/11-16. Following my hypothesis, it is clear to see the relatedness of vv. 7-10 with vv. 3. It is repetitious, stating the hierarchy presented in v. 3. With the formation of a new hierarchy he begins with v. 11.

With this in mind, it still does not clear up the problematic verse- verse 3. Paul states in v. 3, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ". In an initial reading of this verse, one concludes that Paul is indeed passing on this statement of inferiority of women to the Corinthians because of "But I want you to understand". One possibility to this reading that would flow with my hypothesis would be that Paul is only using this formula in this chapter as he has

done in Chapter 7:1; "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote". From this verse to 11:2-16, Paul discusses critical issues from sexual immoral persons, eating of idol food, and the place and control of women. All of these issues were problems that the Corinthians could not work through as a community. They needed Paul's advice on how to approach these vital issues. Therefore, Paul received a letter from the Corinthians on all of these issues. Paul begins Chapter 7 by saying "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote", to include all of the issues including 11:2-16 (along with the rest of the chapter). He may have then used v. 3 to show how the Corinthians took what he said to them earlier through tradition (v. 2) and used their own ideas to say "this is what Paul wants us to understand" when in fact the earlier tradition was not used in its proper way. There is evidence that there are factions among the church in 1 Corinthians 1:12 among apostles, "What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ'". A group within the community may have claimed "I belong to Paul, therefore, this is what Paul would say about this issue and since I am a party member under his authority, I can claim that this is true". Then the Corinthian members would claim that Paul indeed was setting up the hierarchy

setting up the hierarchy to show that woman is inferior to man. However, Paul presents this argument in a way that includes v. 3 to show the Corinthians that he is aware that he did teach the Corinthians about this issue, however he begins v. 11 to show the true meaning of what he once taught them. This is a sound start on clearing up the problems that 11:3 has with the whole hypothesis that is being presented.

Padgett addresses this problematic verse because his hypothesis is also at stake because of the reading of v. 3. His work on this verse will be used at length to show another possible reading of the text.

The three-part formula of headship in v. 3 represents a Corinthian rephrasing of Paul's paradox (v. 2). Paul no doubt affirmed these things in one sense, but he would not phrase them in this way. Paul's typical phrase is not 'Christ is the head of every man', but 'Christ is the head of the church' (Col. 1.18; Eph. 1.22). And Paul nowhere else uses the phrase, 'God is the head of Christ' (cf. 1 Cor. 15.28)...The new aspect of this which Paul wishes to teach the Corinthians is that the headship of man over woman does not mean that men have a superior status. Yet Paul affirms the Corinthian three-part formula with the phrase 'I want you to know', even as he corrects and reinterprets

to know', even as he corrects and reinterprets it...An interesting parallel to the style of argument in our passage can be found in 1 Corinthians 8. The introductory phrase, 'I want you to know', at 11.3 is similar to the phrase 'we know' at 8.1,4. Both use the verb oida. Both affirm the statement that follows, which Paul then re-interprets in the body of the text."
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Padgett's position does not stray far from my own. However, he does give evidence to show a relationship between Chapter 8.1,4 and Chapter 11.3 that deals with the language of the text which I have no expertise in.

How one deals with v. 3 is important in making sense of the hypothesis as a whole. The way in which I have interpreted it, with addition to Padgett is a starting point for accepting this hypothesis as a plausible one. This hypothesis should be examined by other scholars in the field of religious studies, and with scrutiny from those in the field there may become a point when this hypothesis can gain enough support to be an accepted one. Now, it is at its beginning stages of trying to gain ground among the other solutions that scholars hold as being likely interpretations to this most problematic chapter.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has centered around a chief figure of the New Testament, St. Paul. I Corinthians 11:2-16 was the exegetical passage chosen not only because of the implications that it had on women in antiquity, but the effect that it still has on women today. In my opinion, this chapter is the most interesting, yet most problematic one in all of Paul's work. That is one of the reasons why I chose to tackle it for my Chancellor's Thesis.

The introductory work gives an account of the sociological factors that were at play in Chapter 11:2-16, and in Corinth. It also gives the implication of how the wider society affected the community, in which Paul himself needed yet resisted. This information, since given in detail in the introductory work, will not be the focus at this time. Now, the exegetical work itself and the conclusions made from it, will be used to show how interpretation can change the view of the community in relationship with the wider society.

Readers of the New Testament find I Corinthians 11:2-16 to be problematic, and many different interpretations arise on what was the underlying message that Paul was presenting in the verses. Scholars have given many different accounts as to the actual message, which have been viewed at length

in this thesis. At this time, I will take interpretations from the many proposed scholars in the field, to give a general description on how the interpretations would effect the community in relationship to the wider society.

IMPLICATIONS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

Some scholars and readers of the New Testament have shown evidence to support that Paul was forming a hierarchy based on creation which lay the grounds for women to be subordinate, and that they must cover their heads to show their inferior nature. A reader can interpret the text in this manner, and use it to this advantage. Molding Scripture to fit the needs of a society has been done in excess. Women, in some Christian communities, still have a covering over their head to show reverence while in worship service. If the passage is read in this way, the meaning is clear that a woman specifically wears a veil so she will not dishonor her head-which is her husband who is above her not only in spirituality but on the hierarchy of authority as well based on creation.

Not only does I Corinthians 11:2-16 play a role in how one worships today, it plays a role in how the Christian society views women on a whole. The text, if interpreted in this manner, forms a hierarchy. A hierarchy legitimated by God, given to man to

enforce. When a woman reads 11:3-9, it angers her to know that this hierarchy was put in place to make her the lesser sex, the weaker individual, the submissive character in contrast to her more superior husband who is in "the image and reflection of God", where "Christ is the head of every man". This type of interpretation also sets up the notion that Christ is not the head of woman, man is woman's authority, ruler. Therefore, woman cannot form a direct relationship with Christ. Any woman, with feminists views, will struggle with this type of reading.

Around 55 A.D. when this letter was written, it was a society in which women did not count. In 1955, it was a society in which women did not count. But looking back into antiquity at what an interpretation like this would impose, it seems to be more compounded. This was a time when Christianity made its roots. Christianity as a movement was just beginning, new converts of the faith were among the first converts of the mission. Women, even during the time of Jesus, found a peace in this religion that they could not find from society. In the introductory work, many reasons were given as to why Christianity appealed to women. In my opinion, the driving force that brought so many women converts to early Christianity was the acceptance and knowledge that they did count in a community. The community

opened its doors to all walks of life, rich-poor, slave-free, men-women, and did so with a slogan of "unity in Christ". "Unity" meaning equality, not separation.

The baptismal formula found in Gal 3:28, and adopted by Paul was the heart of the Christian message, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Of course, women in the communities knew of this slogan and saw with their own eyes how women partook in the community. Women played an active role in the development and nurturing of early Christianity.

With all of this in mind, the reaction of a female convert in the Corinthian community after reading Paul's letter is not a foreign picture. The women in the community would probably first feel angered at such underlying meanings that Paul wrote of, then the next stage of emotion would surface—confusion. "How could Paul, our founder, the one whom we trusted and supported during his stay, place us in such a role that will leave us virtually powerless?" One can only guess at the reaction that these women must have felt. Women supported, built up, and joined the Christian community because of their new-found role in the community. Now, the words of Paul would sting. Men, on the other hand, would agree with Paul

and would continue to expect women to be submissive just as the wider society expected of them. This interpretation would not have been in conflict with the wider society, in fact it would have only reinforced the attitudes of the male-dominated world of 55 A.D. (as well as the attitude of 1955). This attitude now had Scripture to back up the position that women must be inferior.

Scholars who hold that Paul was only addressing social control tend to state that Paul was not forming a hierarchy to show submissiveness, and that veiling was only a way for Paul to continue proper social roles and propriety during worship service. Any way that hierarchy is interpreted in vv. 3-9, the inferiority of women remains constant. It is only in v. 11 that it is neutralized or reinterpreted to show how the hierarchy no longer stands as God/Christ/Man/Woman, and a new relationship is formed-God/Humankind. It is likely that Paul was concerned with social control and propriety, especially within the community at Corinth. We find him addressing many issues that relate to the wider society. Paul was aware of the dangers that the wider society had on the Corinthians, as we see in Chapter 8-10. If Paul was imposing that women need to wear the veil to control their participation in the worship service, it is easy to connect this control with the

situation that Paul dealt with in the community. The diverse society that the Corinthian community found itself in was in fact what Paul did not want for his members. The community still had to form relationships and partnerships with the wider society. And even though we find evidence that Paul fervently denied members the right to participate in events in the wider society, such as eating of idol food and using civil courts, he still had the problem of trying to control his members within the context of his Christian enclave in order to meet the wider societal demands. The meaning of this needs to be addressed more clearly. It was a common practice, as we have seen in the introductory work, for women to be veiled. The community veiled itself in daily activities, not only in respect to prayer. Paul may have tried to continue the veiling practice in his community, to satisfy the wider society. However, the manner in which Paul tried to justify the need for women to be veiled was not done in the proper way. If this interpretation stands, he used the submissive nature of woman to place the veil over her head. He took on the wider societies view of women, and placed the same attitude in his communities. He erased the equality found in Christianity. He could have just as easily made the claim that women should be veiled because "everybody's doing it", and

could have taken on a bandwagon slogan and left it alone. He did not stop here! If read in this way, the implications deal much more with just the issue of veiling. It deals with how society views women, and how the Christian community should adopt the same views in accordance with the wider society. In this view, not only should women veil themselves to keep the control level of the worship service to a level of strict propriety, but to keep the submissive character that the wider society forced on its female members.

There are many different interpretations that scholars have presented on I Corinthians 11:2-16. All of these interpretations have a different implication on the Corinthian community and the relationship that it held with the wider society. The hypothesis that I have presented is among those interpretations that hold implications for how the community saw itself in relationship with the wider society.

The hypothesis that I have presented bears light on the situation at hand in Corinth. It spells out the attitude of some Corinthian members, as well as Paul's attitude about the issues at hand. My interpretation shows the prevailing thought of 55 A.D.-women are the lesser sex, only seen as weak and unimportant members of the society. Women must show

their submissive nature because of the hierarchy that God created. Women are seen as being equal to dogs. A man in that society prayed thankfully everyday that they were not made a woman. What a terrible time for a woman to live in. The shame and the hopelessness rings out between the lines of I Corinthians 11:3-9. The Corinthians view that Paul is only stating to show the problems and issues at hand (vv. 3-10), holds the haunting voice of women underneath the male voice that dominates the passage. Women cried out to Paul, "You taught us equality, unity through Christ, a new way of accepting women by allowing us to build and nurture the community! Why are men still forcing this role upon us, doesn't Christ free us of this role?" Indeed, the Corinthians took what Paul had taught them and interpreted it in such a way that destroyed the content of his message. It shows us how the men of antiquity could not let go of societal expectations easily, how they still depended on women being inferior to them in the Christian communities. With this reading, it is also apparent that the men had many problems with women contributing to the church at Corinth, just as in some churches today men still have problems with women being full participants during worship services.

Paul counters the Corinthian view by giving the true meaning behind Christianity, and also addresses

the issue of veiling as well. Paul tells the Corinthians that "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God". Paul is clearing up the hierarchy problem that the Corinthians were using to show why women must be veiled and submissive. He is saying, yes it is true that woman came from man, but woman is also in the image and reflection of God, because "all things come from God". The Corinthians were using the old hierarchy found in Genesis for their own advantage of setting up gender boundaries in the community. Paul broke down these boundaries by showing interdependence, not dependence. As for veiling, the Corinthians felt that women should be veiled to show submissiveness and respect to their husbands. Women should not be given the freedom to be unveiled because it is shameful for the community. Paul also denies this view by stating that women were given a natural covering-their long hair, and this is the reason why the veil can be lifted. God gave women a natural covering, and to veil a woman's glory would be unnecessary. Paul counters the belief that the Corinthians held in vv. 4-7, by stating his reaction to the issues in vv. 11-16.

This new interpretation of the text opens doors to the situation and attitude of Corinth in 55 A.D.

Paul understood the importance of women in his communities, he knew that they were equal members who could find the peace of the Christian message fulfilling. He was also aware of the wider societies attitudes about women and their place in the schemata of the community. Paul allowed women to join the community, but he did much more than that-he freed women of their role that had been theirs since the beginning of time. The implications that my interpretation has on women of antiquity and of today are inspirational. Here is a man who challenges the social role of women in relation not only to the wider society, but to his community as well. With my exegesis, his challenge not only brought acceptance to women, but hope!

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FOOTNOTES

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