

## CONCLUSION

If the covering of the head has nothing to do with the culture of Paul's day, then neither does washing of feet or the holy kiss. All must be kept by Christians today. If, on the other hand, these were ways of expressing Christian principles in the culture of that day we find ourselves with a different work to do. We must look for the application of the basic teaching in our own culture. Jesus warned the Pharisees, "*You are making void the word of God through your traditions*" (Mark 7:9-13). Let us not confuse culture and tradition with basic teaching. Let us look at the basic teaching and then see how it applies to our culture. This is what Paul did with the church at Corinth.

This passage can be interpreted from three points of view. The liberal will say it was completely a cultural thing in Paul's day and it has nothing that applies to us. The ultra conservative will say it is a direct command of God and must be strictly observed. I feel the intelligent way to understand this passage is to see the basic teaching that Paul is applying to the culture of his day and then make appropriate application of the basic teaching to our changing culture.

The application of this basic teaching to the Christians at Corinth meant that women covered their heads while the men uncovered their heads in the worship service. The use of the headtie was introduced to the African culture by the **Roman Catholic Church** and later by the **Pentecostal Church**. It is not the culture of Africa. The application of this basic teaching to the culture in Africa will be different. African leaders should examine their own culture and decide what is an appropriate way for their women to show they are under the authority of men. At the same time they must keep in mind the goals of Christian maturity and Christian freedom.

Are Africans going to make the same mistake as many others before them by taking cultural applications of basic teachings found in the New Testament and making them laws while ignoring the basic teachings? The weakness we have in the church today is the practice of rituals while we neglect the application of Christian principles. If the church is going to require women to wear headties, then it must inform its members that this is an application of a basic principle. It must also inform its members that this form of application is a matter of opinion and preference (custom or tradition) but not a law. We must teach the basic principles and make mature applications of them so that we can know real Christian freedom and maturity.

## MUST A WOMAN WEAR A HEADTIE IN WORSHIP?



by Bob Sheffler

*PREFACE: I have dealt with this issue in Nigeria and Ivory Coast. This booklet is a summary and a revision of what I have written on previous occasions.*

### INTRODUCTION;

We read in First Corinthians 11:5-6 these words of the Apostle Paul: "*And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.*" In verse 16 of the same passage, Paul writes, "*If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice--nor do the churches of God.*" Read the entire passage to get the full teaching - 1 Corinthians 11:3-16.

We must do several things in order to understand Paul's teaching in this passage. We must understand the meaning of the original Greek. We must understand the culture of the day. We must understand the context in which Paul wrote these words. We must understand the problems going on inside the church at Corinth. And we must understand the basic teaching that Paul is giving.

### THE ORIGINAL GREEK