

*Pastoral Letters  
of the  
Pilgrim Mennonite  
Conference*

*1993-2010*

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We are told that in the underground catacombs of Rome where early Christians spent time together to escape persecution there are pictures on the walls showing women with the hair part of their heads almost totally covered. Presumably, the corners of their coverings were used to tie the coverings on the head.

Eighteenth century pictures show coverings on the head tapering down over the ears with strings attached to the corners which were used for tying the coverings on the head.

In the twentieth century strings were required on coverings by some of the more conservative Mennonite conferences but without a requirement that they be tied.

Today for most Mennonite women strings on coverings are useless as far as being a means to help keep the covering on the head.

Covering strings continue to be worn today by some sisters in honor of the past traditional practice. By some it is also considered to be a symbol of conservatism and a protection against the size of the covering becoming smaller.

Covering strings that are not used to hold the covering on the head but hang loose on the covering are often looked upon by worldly people as something superfluous or a fancy addition to the covering. This likely does not add any significance to the testimony of the veiling.

Since the original purpose of the covering strings was to keep the covering on the head and that purpose has largely become obsolete we believe that what is most important is the adequately covered head. This has always been the Scriptural requirement. Any one wearing strings could feel at ease eliminating the strings provided the covering is kept the same size, or better yet is made larger.

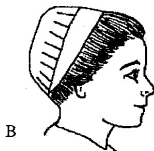
The tendency of churches related to the size of the covering seems to be toward smaller and smaller sizes until the process of elimination has completed its work. Practically every professing Christian church since the birth of the church practiced and lost the practice of the veiling through the process of gradually lessening the covering size.

The Pilgrim Mennonite Conference Church has no problem with the elimination of the covering strings but we do have a serious problem with any lessening of the size of the covering. Any trend toward smaller coverings should be reversed and replaced with a trend toward larger coverings.

Sisters should follow the very best pattern examples and seek to exemplify the best possible example. If we follow the best examples and seek to always be the best examples we will never lose the practice of the Christian Woman's Veiling as taught in 1 Cor. 11:1-16

May God bless us to this end and may this be a reality for the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference body until Jesus comes again.

Prayerfully,  
The Pilgrim Mennonite Conference Bishops



### *"Let Her Be Covered..."*

The Bible teaches us that God wants women to cover their heads. (1 Corinthians 11:1-16) This signifies His unchanging plan of order in headship. Any church which intends to be of "the churches of God" (v16) must have a consistent application.

This doctrine and its application have been under some attack in every age. However, there are reasons to believe God's standard is more widely ignored by nominal Christendom today than it ever has been before. In just one generation its application has been adulterated or disregarded by much of the Mennonite church at large.

As leaders accountable to God, we desire to see our sisters obeying God's will. In the illustrations above, some of the steps in the weakening of the application are displayed. We believe Illustration "A" to be a suitable and consistent application of a covered head. Illustrations "B" and "C" display more hair out from underneath the covering, and therefore a trend toward something less than a covered head. While the covering is still noticeable, it often begins to slide up on the head, diminishing in size and allowing the hair (which God says He wants covered) to be the more prominent feature of the head. As more hair is displayed it becomes more of a temptation to arrange it in a way that is inconsistent with 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3.

In an effort to apply this teaching in a way that honors God and His Word, we would like to see some continued strengthening of this practice. The following statement is taken from the Decrees for to Keep.

*Every sister shall be appropriately veiled at all times for a constant testimony that she accepts her position as a Christian woman. The Bible teaches that it is the properly covered head (not just the wearing of an article labeled "covering") which is the sign of the Christian woman in God's divine order.*

*The covering application to be honored at all times is a two piece type of sufficient size so the bottom comes below the bun to the neck and the front comes forward to a position (on top of the head) in front of the ears. The front piece shall be at least 1 1/2" wide. The hair shall not be cut and shall be free from current worldly arrangements which do not express a spirit of meekness and sobriety.*

We also request that the hair be arranged in such a way that it is obvious that the sister intends it to be covered. Combing it into the face by bringing it in front of the natural hairline, swooping it down over the ear, or other extra arranging may indicate the wearer is reluctant to have it covered. (Illustration "C" shows some of this.) This speaks of a heart not in tune with the revealed Divine will as taught in 1 Peter 3:3.

Another aspect to consider is that the head and hair often increase in size as our young sisters grow into womanhood. This will call for an increase in covering size to keep the proportion the same.

Mothers, help your daughters honor Christ and His church. Fathers and husbands, encourage your family members to a consistent application. Church leaders, let us not hesitate to urge all members to a whole-hearted practice of this doctrine. Surely Christ smiles in approval when His daughters love to fulfill His will.

Your Pilgrim Bishops  
February 1993

*This document is modified from a similar document given in January of 1988, and illustrates some of the challenges the church is currently facing.*

July 1, 1993

### The Car Lot

Purchasing a car consistent with Bible principles may not be difficult if we can clearly identify the Bible principle and the styles and features available today.

The Bible principle of stewardship should direct us away from higher priced cars. Some cars, makes and models are designed to give the expensive classic looks and impression. This principle would also eliminate paying extra for features that are not needed for basic transportation needs. Electrically controlled seats with various tilting options, electrically controlled mirrors, electronically controlled air conditioning, expensive sound systems, and moonroofs are features in the upper class vehicles that we do not need. Our vehicles should give a testimony to the world that we do not spend money beyond what is needed to acquire a basic cost efficient car. Look for the area of the car lot that has basic cars that do not cost extra to buy nor operate.

Sports cars and sports car features on standard cars are not in keeping with the calling and simple lifestyle of the Christian. The higher powered engines, 16 and 24-valve engines, spoilers, and sports styled wheels are designed for sports minded people, not spiritually minded people.

As Christians guided by Bible principles, we should center our attention on the economy model cars. A simple car that gets a good gas mileage and does not have a high initial cost nor a high maintenance cost is the class for which we should be looking. Sports car features on economy model cars eventually place the "economy" car too close to the sports class.

The world makes a variety of cars for a wide range of people who look for either luxury, sports or economy. If we only look for the cars that emphasize economy, we will do ourselves and our testimony to the world a favor. The world does not expect us to drive their luxury and sports cars. Our spiritual life can not afford the cars that appeal to the desires of our carnal man.

The next time you need a car or truck, simplify the process and safe guard your spiritual man by restricting your interests to those on the lot that emphasize simplicity and economy.

The Pilgrim Conference Ministry

September 22, 1993

**Statement Regarding Fellowship With Those  
Divorced and Remarried**

According to 1 John 1:7, Christian fellowship is based on walking in the light, which means ordering one's life in harmony with Christian principles. 2 John 8-11 would direct that fellowship lines should be drawn on the basis of sound doctrine and anyone not teaching and obeying the truth should not be received in Christian fellowship.

In order to harmonize our position of fellowship lines with the Scriptures and in order to acknowledge the fact that the Bible teaches that living in a remarried state with a former partner living is adultery, (Mark 10:11-12, & Romans 7:1-3) we submit the following statement.

**We request that our membership not be in support of or knowingly maintain Christian fellowship with anyone who they know plans to continue in a state of adultery. (1 Cor. 5:9-13)**

**There would be a place to cultivate a personal relationship with individuals in this state for encouragement toward Scriptural obedience.**

**We also request that a warm and positive welcome and aid be extended to any person in such a situation who desires to live single in order to free himself from an adulterous entanglement.**

Because of what the Bible teaches, we request that any members of our fellowship who cannot give support to these doctrines not commune after Spring Communion 1994.

For the Sake of Truth in Christ's Body  
The Pilgrim Conference Bishops

# CLARIFICATION OF THE PLAY ISSUE

October 29, 1993

As a bishop board, we have sensed a need to clarify how we understand our Decrees relate to some play activities of which we have become aware. We do not see the need for more guidelines, but apparently there has been a difference in the understanding of the guidelines. The following is an attempt to share with you how we understand the Decrees in light of some activities this summer.

As a part of this clarification we are quoting (in boldface type) from the Decrees for to Keep, and making comments as we go along.

## 2. Social Activities

***Luke 8:14 "... and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."***

***1 Cor. 13:11 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."***

**In light of the fact that excessive social activities will choke out spiritual growth and productivity, and play activities primarily are for children, we present the following guidelines:**

### **a. Parents shall give direction in their young persons social interests (Eph. 6:1-4).**

This guideline was given because we did not want to make the church responsible for establishing youth leaders to give direction to play activities. We believe it is more of a parental responsibility.

We believe that parents should determine the frequency of their

children's play involvements. We should not hesitate to keep our children at home if we feel our youth are going too much or the closeness of our home life is being disrupted, even though the activity may be legitimate in itself.

We also believe there are safeguards in parents being directly involved in the organizing and supervising larger gatherings. Youth should be able to inform us as parents who is sponsoring a certain activity, and from time to time direct communication between parents would be in order. If as parents we sense inadequate supervision we should not permit our youth to be involved. In mixed settings we generally urge the parents to be present for all activities.

### **b. We discourage group use of public athletic facilities.**

This standard is intended to keep our social activities family and home related. This is to protect the family ties and also preserve our testimony in the community.

In order to keep our play activities home based, we should avoid gathering for play activities at public play facilities.

Public play facilities would include such places as the public school grounds, and facilities that are made available to the public for play purposes. This would include places such as Blue Lake Builders ball park, Earl Martin's barn, Bernville ball diamond, Lebanon Valley school gym, etc.

If a larger facility is needed than what can be provided at our homes, then we would recommend using our own Christian school grounds.

**c. In preparation for the Lord's day, we should refrain from late Saturday evening social activities. Because of the sacredness of the Lord's day we should refrain from gatherings for group play activities on Sunday.**

How late Saturday night is too late? We feel that may vary depending upon the occasion. Our concern is that we are all prepared and alert for the Sunday morning service. Terminating play and social activities should be at parental discretion, but we would suggest that 9:30-10:00 would certainly be late enough.

In the Old Testament days, the Sabbath was for rest. In the New Testament era, the example is left of worship and witness. We desire to honor these principles.

We do not have a problem if some playing occurs when families gather to fellowship on Sunday. However, we believe it detracts from the sacredness of the Lord's day for us to make the day a day of sports or recreation.

If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause

thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. Isaiah 58:13-14

**d. Late night and after church service gatherings for physical play activities are discouraged.**

First, it should be emphasized that play activities should not conflict with our scheduled church services.

Again the question surfaces, "How late is too late?" What parents think is too late and what youth think is too late often varies. This point again emphasizes a former point that parents would say when it is time for activities to cease. We certainly would expect that parents would not retire for the night until the youth have dispersed.

Playing after church tends to minimize the truth that has been shared. If youth gather in a small way for fellowship or singing, we believe the truth of the service may well be emphasized and reinforced in the young people's minds.

As church leaders, we want to give our support to parents who are endeavoring to help our youth to properly relate to these concerns. We appreciate the cooperation we have sensed though the years, and desire this would continue. May God help us to raise youth that are sober minded, being an example of the believer in word, in conversation, in charity in spirit in faith, and in purity for the testimony of His Holy Name.

The Pilgrim Conference Bishops

February 1, 1996

*The question has often been raised, How far should a brother use the brotherhood assistance to underwrite his business ventures? As the Pilgrim Conference Ministry we have discussed this issue, testing the question against various Bible principles. We offer the following document as a summary of our discussion.*

## ***The Brotherhood and Commercial Insurance***

This statement is prepared to address the question of commercial insurance in light of our brotherhood assistance program. As a result of teaching within our brotherhood, we have developed Biblical conviction against depending on commercial insurance for financial security. It is our desire that this conviction would be maintained and even strengthened, since we believe it honors God. However, we also feel there may be instances where other Bible teachings would actually raise some caution about obligating the brotherhood in matters of finances. We believe that as we are careful in our commitments and obligations we will preserve the practice of a brotherhood assistance program.

We do not believe that there would be any situation that would warrant taking out commercial insurance for personal protection, but rather would encourage faith and trust in God.

We believe there may be several instances where rather than to obligate the brotherhood it may be appropriate for our brethren to give consideration to some alternative to our brotherhood assistance program.

**1. Violation of the Principle of Unequal Yoke** (2 Cor 6:14-18) At times we may have a situation where we have individuals working in our businesses and operating our vehicles on a regular basis for business purposes who are not a part of a brotherhood that has similar convictions on the insurance question. Should there be a loss in a situation like this, we do not believe the brotherhood should become liable for the actions of non-members.

**2. The Principle of the Borrower becoming a Servant to His Lender.** (Proverbs 22:7) When a person borrows money from another person or lending institution, he becomes a servant to his creditors. Today many creditors insist on commercial insurance (especially where large sums of money are involved), in order to protect their own investment. It is our recommendation that our brethren seek to take precaution to avoid these situations by choosing as much of debt free lifestyle as is feasible (Romans 13:8).

**3. The Principle of Not Being Surety for a Debt.** Proverbs 22:26 "*Be not one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.*" There may be instances when a business related project demands a liability coverage beyond the member's own financial strength, we believe the church should not become a surety for such potential liability. In such cases securing liability coverage for the benefit of the other party would be considered appropriate. Because of this

principle the church will not issue guarantees of brotherhood assistance to third parties for its member's financial obligations. While the PA auto self-insurance plan would require the church to be legally liable for \$15,000 per accident, the benefit to the brotherhood of being free from commercial insurance outweighs this minimal potential obligation.

**4. Principle of Fiscal Responsibility.** In today's business world it is easy to create obligations (due to accident, carelessness etc.) which exceed the member's ability to pay. In keeping with Rom 13:8, ("*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*") we believe would be the part of wisdom to either inform prospective customers of one's uninsured status, or else purchase liability insurance as the client may require. *If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. (Exodus 22:6)*

## **Conclusion**

Having shared these concerns, we would also give the caution that we dare not lose our trust in God mentality because of the liability scare. It is entirely possible that a situation could arise in the course of everyday life where one of our members could be sued and lose all his wealth in a brief period of time. Should our Heavenly Father allow this to happen we should accept it cheerfully (Hebrews 10:34) and learn the lessons He may have for us through those experiences.

Approved by the Ministerial body of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference February 1, 1996.

## COVERINGS ON LITTLE GIRLS

1 Cor. 11:1-16 constitutes the biblical basis for our practice of the ordinance of the Christian Woman's veiling.

Many of the Biblically separated churches who practice this ordinance begin the observance of wearing the veiling at the time of conversion and church membership. There are some groups, however, who sincerely believe that little girls should wear the veiling prior to becoming members of the church. Possible reasons for this might be the biblical injunction to "Train up a child in the way he should go." Another reason would be that little children are taught to and do pray in their childhood days before they unite with the church. It is possible this practice has some value in helping the child to wear the right kind of covering and to wear it consistently.

Our group of Mennonites has not traditionally followed this practice which we would support for a number of biblical and practical reasons.

1. We believe that until children come to the age of accountability they are safe under the atonement of Calvary and therefore do not need baptism or church membership. Jesus declared that God receives perfected praise from little children. Since they are unconditionally covered by the atonement they do not need to meet the conditions of salvation to be in a saving praying relationship with God. Since little children are in a state of innocence they do not need veiling for the same reason that adult or accountable women do.

2. The Christian ordinances that are for regular practice are intended for observance by the church. While little children are in a saved state and when dying in innocence will doubtless be a part of the glorified church in heaven they are not yet established members of the church on earth by personal confession, commitment and responsibility.

3. When the apostle Paul introduced the ordinance of the veiling he addressed his message to adult men and women. He declared that every Christian woman was to be veiled. The ordinance of the veiling is enjoined upon adult or accountable women and is not said to be for innocent children.

We respect those groups who conscientiously follow the practice of little girls wearing veiling.

However due to the above named reasons, and in order to avoid confusion among our children we would encourage any families seeking fellowship with the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference churches to discontinue the practice of little girls wearing coverings. Any such children should be assured of their belonging to Jesus and to heaven in their childhood without practicing the ordinance of the church.

However, if a father would feel it would constitute a violation of his conscience or would cause offence to others, we would accept his decision to veil his daughters. If someone feels their little girls should wear a veiling, we would ask they would wear it at all times and not just for church services. We will not accept any contentiousness arising from this matter.

May the Lord be glorified through His will being done through His Church on earth.

The Pilgrim Conference Ministry per AMS

# ADDRESSING MODERN COMMUNICATION AND ENTERTAINMENT CONCERNS

*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,  
but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

*John 17:15-17*

## **BIBLE PRINCIPLES**

1. TECHNOLOGY IS NEITHER RIGHT NOR WRONG IN ITSELF.

Present day advancements in modern technology relating to communication and information continue to illustrate the ancient truth given in Ecclesiastes 7:29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

Many of man's inventions are not evil in themselves, and may serve as a tool for godly men or evil men. While we do not consider electricity or electronic technology (such as the computer and its related devices) with superstition, yet we do reckon with the temptation it brings to the human nature. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9*

Bible principles alone can help us relate to the changing issues and temptations of today's world.

2. THE PRESENT "INFORMATION AGE" EMPHASIS MUST BE APPROACHED WITH DISCERNMENT.

1. Some knowledge available in the world is evil and we should seek to avoid such information.

*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou*

*shouldest keep them from the evil.*  
*John 17:15*

*...I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. Romans 16:19.*

2. Some things may not be evil, but crowd out the place that should be reserved for reading and meditating on God's eternal Word.

*Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:7*

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33*

Even though we may find ourselves being left out of some of the latest in this world's information and learning, we do well to focus on learning and knowledge that will lead to life everlasting.

3. PLACING ONESELF IN TEMPTATION WEARS DOWN SPIRITUAL RESOLVE.

Exposure to evil lusts has a way of bringing spiritual hardness and blindness even to individuals who would consider themselves spiritually mature.

*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 1 Corinthians 15:33*

*For that righteous man dwelling*

*among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds; 2 Peter 2:8*

#### 4. OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY SAFEGUARD FROM TEMPTATION.

When we find ourselves facing the possibility of temptation there is a safeguard to have all our actions open before our brethren.

*... light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. John 3:18-21*

#### 5. CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP SHOULD GUIDE OUR ELECTRONIC PURCHASES.

One goal of advertising is to create dissatisfaction with what one has and a desire for something that is not really needed. The child of God will choose to reserve the resources entrusted to him for God's glory, and not his self-centered interests.

*And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Luke 12:15*

#### 6. THE CHURCH SHOULD ADDRESS SPIRITUAL CONCERNS AND RAISE STANDARDS TO SAFEGUARD THE PURITY OF HER MEMBERS.

The scripture and the church will continue to call the saint to *as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 1*

*Peter 2:11* and raise up standards against evil temptations.

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

#### 7. PLAY SHOULD BE LOOKED AT FROM A GODLY RATHER THAN WORLDLY VIEWPOINT

Children's play should help prepare them for adult responsibilities either socially, physically or emotionally. Play that simply amuses the mind, involves activities which would violate Biblical principles, or creates a desire for the pleasures of this world should be avoided.

Adult's play activity should generally be to help children or others entrusted in their care. Playing to gratify personal lusts or ego should be eliminated.

*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 1 Corinthians 13:11*

*Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 1 Corinthians 10:6-7*

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

These principles cause the church to ask her members to:

1. Refrain from using computers and related technology for entertainment and use with discernment what is

needed for one's livelihood or legitimate service.

2. Refrain from all open ended communication wherein one is repeatedly exposed to communications that are vulgar and impure.

3. Refrain from communication done in secret and maintain an openness when communicating with unbelievers.

#### **SUGGESTED CHURCH STANDARD**

1. We encourage the position some of our parents have chosen in eliminating computer game playing. We support the idea that children's energies should be directed in work and play that promotes wholesome personal development.

2. Use of multimedia is restricted to occupational, instructional or research use. Open ended communications such as the World Wide Web and commercial online services with entertainment content may be used for occupational, instructional or research purposes only, and in an office environment where others may observe what is being done. Even with the above guidelines, spiritual discernment must be exercised to avoid the objectionable. We believe parents should not allow their children to have access to open ended communication.

3. Because of the open ended conversation danger of the CB, we recognize the temptation to spiritual life it represents. We also are aware of the usefulness as a tool it may provide in certain occupational settings. Therefore we will implement the following standard to be reviewed within two years.

The CB radio shall be generally reserved for occupational use and is not intended for personal diversion or amusement. Channel 19 may not be used except in temporary emergency settings. Also, the CB shall not be used to listen in on other's conversations. We also request the CB antennae and hardware be kept inconspicuous, and not be displayed in a way to feed one's ego or pride .

We recognize that presently in some of these areas we may be only on the threshold of technological advancements. A few years may make some of these issues more clear where a safe line can be drawn between good and evil. We suggest all these standards be reviewed within two years.

Prepared for Ministerial Body Review 2/1/96  
Presented to Conference Body for Review 2/18/96  
Approved with modifications by the Ministerial board 12/3/96

## OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

"And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."(Titus 3:14)

In recent years our nation has given much attention to physical hazards individuals may experience on their jobs. A concern of this nature is really not new since the Old Testament law addressed physical safety in a number of areas.

As a church body, we have a more weighty issue to address, the matter of spiritual hazards that may be encountered in one's occupation.

Through the years, the church has spoken to the need to be employed in services which would not conflict with Bible principles. The concern addressed here is a bit different because these occupations may provide a legitimate service, but have spiritual dangers associated with them. These dangers may threaten the individual, or threaten his family.

Lot is an example of a man who was righteous, but chose an environment which vexed his soul, and brought ruin to his family.

The job scene of America has changed significantly since the turn of the century. With increased technology has come more specialized occupations, some which violate values which the Christian will hold dear. Of course on the other hand, there is also a greater diversity of occupations the Christian may choose from as well.

The following concerns are raised about a few occupational hazards which militate against Biblical values, and consequently should be avoided by the Christian brotherhood.

### **LONG DISTANCE TRUCK DRIVING**

The occupation of local truck driving has some hazards, but we believe with commitment to obedience to the laws of the land, and honesty this can be an acceptable occupation.

Long distance trucking (spending on an average more than one night a week away from home) is a different matter. The schedule of long distance trucking requires a man to be away from his home, his church and his community for extended periods of time. It is impossible for a man to husband a wife when he must spend nights away from home. It is impossible for a man to teach and train his children in the way the Bible teaches when he cannot spend time with them.

Temptations often become more intense when one is away from home. Mingling with ungodly men and strange women has snared many from the way of moral purity.

With these snares in mind, it is our desire that our membership be free from this occupation. Members not presently employed in this vocation should not enter into it. Those who are involved are requested to seek to free themselves as soon as possible.

We feel it is only fair to apply the test of not spending an average of more than one night a week away from home to more than just truck drivers. Traveling salesmen, and even church leaders would fit into this matter of concern.

## **SISTERS WORKING IN THE PUBLIC WORKPLACE**

We see a danger whenever men and women work together in a close environment. We likewise encourage our sisters who must work to support themselves to choose occupations which lend themselves to feminine modesty and reserve.

We do believe our wives should find themselves being keepers at home. (1Tim 5:14, Titus 2:5) In preparation for this, we encourage our teenaged sisters to find some area of service which would prepare them for home life rather than to work in full time public works. When a woman who has worked at a job outside the home setting marries, she should give up her job and serve in her house to make it a home. We further believe as a couple they should accept and welcome children into their home if God would choose to bless in this way as He has planned for the human family. Keeping a job and postponing having children in order to become more financially secure are all ideas which come from the world and do not belong in the Christian church.

We also believe children need to be nurtured by their own mothers. Children ought not be regularly placed with baby sitters or with other child care arrangements.

## **HEAVY BORROWING FOR BUSINESS LIFE.**

Many of our traditional occupations such as farming, have through modern advances seemingly become major investments. The simple family farm has largely become a thing of the past. Other businesses have been affected in

a similar way.

We encourage our brethren who maintain businesses to take a conservative outlook when it comes to borrowed money. We believe businesses can grow, and many times do grow far beyond the humble original expectations of those who started the business.

Rather than to borrow large sums of money in order to prime a business into full or maximum output right away, we encourage brethren to limit their spending to within their budget and wait until their business capital grows for a more extensive operation. A covetous attitude often spurs individuals to a greater optimism about their future abilities than is realistic. How much better it is to be surprised by God's unexpected blessing on a venture, than to be surprised by His unexpected discipline.

We likewise raise the concern that major investments in business life, whether farming or otherwise can so burden a man or home until family life suffers. It is not the part of wisdom to place financial gain above human relationships. Rather we encourage our members to place a priority on maintaining a spiritual and warm atmosphere in home relationships, and allow their business ventures to fit into the background.

## **NETWORK MARKETING**

There is a relatively new method of marketing being advocated today which has some snares involved with it of which we feel our people should be aware. We do not find it to be unscriptural to market goods to persons, or to purchase one's own

goods in what ever way one chooses. However, we believe the same spiritual guidelines which regulated the traditional ways of buying and selling or the exchange of goods and services should also regulate this newer method.

There is a longer document which gives the Biblical basis for these guidelines to regulate this occupation. However, since this document addresses other vocations, we will simply state these guidelines in an abbreviated form.

1. Our brethren shall refrain themselves from seminars, whether live or recorded, where the following features are a part of the overall program:

1. A strong emphasis of appeal of entering the program to accumulate wealth.

2. Testimonies are given of the great financial gain acquired through such a program (this is a direct appeal to the covetous nature of man).

3. Entertainment that would not be permitted by the church because it is carnal in nature.

2. Our brethren shall not solicit others into any program by using stories of how others were able to accumulate wealth through such a sales program.

3. Our brethren shall not miss church services and shall give diligence to support their local congregational and conference activities. Members who absent themselves to attend seminars place their church relationship in jeopardy.

4. Our brethren shall not turn to worldly associates for instruction regarding areas where the Bible gives direction. Rather, as brethren we should incline our hearts to other brethren in the fellowship who will help us find our way. This would include working with people, handling personal finances etc.

5. In general, we make a difference between selling a product and selling a program. Where individuals are endeavoring to make a living selling goods or services we believe this fits in with the biblical direction to "maintain good works for necessary uses that they be not unfruitful." Titus 3:14 We do not believe it to fit into the servant mentality of the Christian to enroll others in a program to make financial gain off of them.

#### **IN CONCLUSION**

All of our occupational pursuits are only for a brief moment of time. How true the old poem, "Only one life twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last". We strongly appeal to our membership to choose occupations which not only provide for the financial needs of the immediate, or provide personal satisfaction to one's personality, but especially those jobs which are compatible with the glory of the kingdom of heaven.

Reviewed by the Conference membership Fall 1996.  
Adopted with modifications as the official position of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference by the Ministerial Board on December 3, 1996.

12/12/96

## Consistency in the Wearing of the Christian Woman's Veil

There are four basic reasons given in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 for Christian women to wear a covering of spiritual significance on their heads.

1. It is to signify a divine order of headship in divine and human relationships. v.2.
2. It is to be worn for the privilege of prayer - communicating with God. v.5.
3. It is to be worn for prophesying - communicating with man, "speaking unto edification, exhortation and comfort." v.5 & ch 14:3
4. It is to be worn because of the ministry of angels. v.10

These four basic reasons all lend themselves to a consistently continuous wearing of the covering.

Since the Bible does not designate a definite pattern for the covering it becomes the responsibility of the earthly headship of the church to give direction in designing a consistent and practical covering pattern.

While we believe there may be some consistent variation of pattern between differing conservative church groups we also believe it will be a help in preserving the practice of the ordinance if the prescribed pattern of a given group is consistently adhered to by its members at all times and under all circumstances.

We therefore request that our sisters stay with our church prescribed pattern for traveling in car, van or bus. Older coverings may well be utilized for special or abnormal situations such as relaxing or sleeping in vehicles, etc.

To deviate from the church's given pattern may well constitute a denial of the first basic reasons for the use of the covering - a respect for God's divine order of headship.

The keeping of this ordinance, like all other New Testament ordinances is praise worthy, v.1. May we continue to keep the ordinance of the Christian woman covering as it has been delivered unto us. We want to be "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6) until He comes again for His faithful followers.

The Pilgrim Conference Bishops  
per AMS

# Home Schooling

## From a Biblical Perspective

### Pilgrim Mennonite Conference

In May of 1992, the ministry of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference proposed a document at a special member's meeting outlining a position on the home schooling issue. At that time the plans were to receive counsel from the membership and make a final approval at a later ministerial meeting. Minutes of subsequent meetings indicate this was somehow overlooked and our position was never officially finalized.

The issue of home schooling had surfaced because we had individuals expressing an interest in membership in our fellowship with that practice. When we addressed the issue in the original document, a plan was laid out to accept home schooling as a cooperative effort with the Christian school. We made no difference between how we would relate to those who originally had home schooled from outside our settings and those desiring to home school who had been using our church schools.

Now five years later the issue of schooling at home has surfaced again. When the ministerial body "dusted off" the old proposed policy, we found the intervening years had given us some experience and revealed some new considerations which in turn is causing us to look differently at the issue.

#### **Part I What is the issue?**

Many people in America today teach their children at home rather

than send them to a public or "Christian" school. Some reasons given are the poor morals of the general school populace, and the secular humanism often taught in schools. God honoring parents simply do not trust the custodians which society in general chooses for children.

As a ministerial body we understand and support such a reason for home schooling. Our congregations all maintain our schools for similar concerns. Also we appreciate the privilege we have found to minister to home school parents in the home school conventions where we help to distribute sermon tapes and Rod and Staff literature. We have learned to respect the great sacrifice many of these families make to ensure their children are raised in a godly environment.

We do not believe people who find themselves in such a setting are somehow inferior, or are expressing unholy individualism. We believe these families should be supported in their spiritual vision.

However, there are some reasons given to support the home school which we believe are based on faulty information or logic, or undermine higher Scriptural principles. We will examine them at this time.

The first is the idea that collective schooling takes a child out from under

the influence of his parents and places him under the influence of a peer group and a non parental instructor, creating a setting that is contrary to God's will for fathers to teach and train their children, as taught in scriptures such as Eph 6:4. This argument indicts the Christian school as a flawed concept, and calls for all fathers to do their God given duty to educate their own children.

The second is when parents desire to home school because they do not trust their local school to provide a safe environment for their children. Perhaps it is the failures of a board, teachers, or of other children, that these parents feel they can better educate their children by themselves.

#### **Part II What does the Bible say?**

The Bible directs that parents should give spiritual teaching to their children.

De 6:6 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.*

7. *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

Eph 6:4 *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

The Bible also implies the practice of schooling for children and the historical record links the establishment of schools for children with the establishment of local

synagogues under the exile. The following verses show it was normal for children to receive academic instruction in a school setting.

Ac 22:3 *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.*

Gal 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

25 *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

29 *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

1 *Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;*

2 *But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.*

3 *Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*

(John 7:15 and Acts 4:13 also refer to the secondary education which Jesus and the Apostles did not receive.)

Historians document and explain how children were schooled in Jesus' day. The following quote is taken from *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* — Alfred Edersheim

"The regular instruction commenced with the fifth or sixth year (according to strength), when every child was sent to school. There can be no reasonable doubt that such schools existed throughout the land. We find references to them at almost every period; indeed, the existence of higher schools and Academies would not have been possible without such primary instruction...

For a long time it was not uncommon to teach in the open air; but this must have been chiefly in connection with theological discussion, and the instructions of youths. But the children were gathered in the Synagogues, or in School houses, where at first they either stood, teacher and pupils alike, or else sat on the ground in a semicircle, facing the teacher, as it were literally to carry into practice the prophetic saying: 'Thine eyes shall see thy teachers.' The introduction of benches was at a later date...

Care was taken not to send a child too early to school, nor to overwork him when there. For this purpose the school-hours were fixed, and attendance shortened during the summer months."

### **Part III What position should we as a brotherhood take?**

We desire to underscore the command of God's Word that parents are to teach their children. Certainly parents will find it takes much time and energy to teach their children spiritual truths in all of their daily walk and life. But how can this best be done? How can a father have the time to give quality instruction to his children?

Parents who send a child off to school give him up for approximately

12% of the waking hours of his first 20 years. When a father works away from home at a job with a forty hour work week, he is absent approximately 40% of those same hours. Therefore the command for fathers to teach children can be much better answered by fathers considering the family when choosing an occupation rather than by keeping children from the Christian school. It is our observation when individuals maintain that fathers are to school their children, they usually mean the mother is to do the teaching. When a family chooses to accept God's blessing of a full quiver family, doing full time teaching often places an unrealistic demand on mothers in the home.

Our main concern relates to the second reason when parents do not trust the other families to influence their children in school. The Bible teaches that congregations are to work together as a body. It warns against developing an attitude of feeling like one does not need other parts of the body.

1 Cor 12:21 *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

We have observed that often an attitude of isolation and independence accompanies home schooling proponents. Interdependence and cooperation are sacrificed. When a family does not need the other families' sacrifice and labors, but

pulls off to the side to better do their own project, the Christian concept of brotherhood of believers and community of fellowship is jeopardized. Indeed one does not always know if home schooling simply reflects the individualism its adherents feel, or if it contributes its undermining effects.

Is not the Christian school in a Christian congregation a wonderful opportunity for brotherhood relations to develop? Is it not a wonderful testimony when brothers in the faith blend their gifts and resources and carefully nurture their children in the ways of faith?

Wouldn't a family forced to home school because of a truly negative environment (like public school) consider it a real blessing if their home schooling curriculum led them to the Lord and beyond that to a brotherhood, a church fellowship that endeavored to provide a safe environment for academic education? Shouldn't a Christian setting offering an affordable "freewill" tuition that doesn't exclude anyone while freeing the father to be the provider the New Testament calls him to be, and freeing the mother to be a "keeper at home" with ample time for the developing preschoolers, ample time with cooking, making clothing, and filling her husband's emotional needs, be valued as a premium and a privilege

to have their children benefit from the positive disciplined structure that comes with a collective schooling effort?

#### **Part IV Summary**

With the above mentioned Biblical principles and practical considerations in focus, we ask our families to patronize the church school. The local ministry and school board may grant permission to home school for special needs. It is our endeavor to graciously relate to those coming from other settings and time will be given for them to adjust to the brotherhood concept with its practices.

Likewise we encourage our brethren to give more consideration to developing work activities where fathers and children can have the privilege of being together. We encourage those whom the Lord has given more wealth to use their resources so our struggling young families can realize these goals. We encourage our families to live simply and frugally so the more valuable wealth of relationships and a godly seed can be given to the Lord and His Church.

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# MAINTAINING UNIFIED NONCONFORMED PRACTICES

## **Introduction: Keeping The Faith**

The New Testament teaches that church leaders have a responsibility to see that the direct commands and the basic principles of the Holy Scriptures are properly understood and faithfully practiced within the Christian brotherhood (Matt 16:18; Heb 13:7,17).

It is rather significant that in both the Old and New Testament, the consistent practice of nonconformity to the world in bodily appearance is associated with the preservation of the total body of biblical truth.

In Numbers 15:38-41, a distinct mark of separation in dress is commanded Israel so that they would remember and do all God's commandments and be holy unto the Lord. In Romans 12:1&2, the New Testament Church is commanded to practice nonconformity in order to prove (understand, discern) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect (complete) will of God. It is also historically significant that as churches have given up their nonconformity in dress, other basic Bible standards have been discarded and the total structure of truth has crumbled.

The purpose of the following statement is to more perfectly familiarize ourselves with the church's applications of biblical nonconformity as set forth in our established Decrees For To Keep. It is also to call attention to those areas of failure among us and to inspire a new love and loyalty for the continued practice of the undying principles of the undying and changeless Word of God. We want a Biblical church preserved for ourselves,

for our children, and our children's children until Jesus comes. We will need strong personal convictions and purpose of heart to realize these goals.

## **Defining Clothing Selections**

Formal Wear - Clothing worn for dress-up occasions. It would not be respectable to go to a service to worship God without dressing in our best. Other occasions that warrant respect and dignity would be included in our formal wear. This is consistent with God's Old Testament call for sanctification in preparation for worship.

Informal Wear - The clothing that is not for dress-up nor for work would fit in this category. When this area of life includes styles and patterns that has a different language than our formal wear, it may well represent the language of the world. This area of dress should also express the principles of nonconformity to the world.

Work Wear - Clothing worn for the rigors of work justifies different fabrics but not different principles and styles. Fashionable or immodest clothing is not justifiable because it is in the work category.

## **FREQUENT VIOLATIONS OF THE DECREES**

1. Sleeve length on dresses "shall extend below the elbow." Wearing the sleeves above the elbow in public life violates this standard.

2. "Footwear worn for casual wear shall meet the color standard of black." Shoes for recreational purposes and shoes worn in a dress up work situation are to be black. Little incidentals not seen from a distance do not violate the

standard.

3. Our standards for dress shirts states that "we encourage dress shirts to be of a solid modest color." Our counsel in the past has been that shirts that have any stripes or tone on tone should be hardly noticeable from a distance of 20 feet. This would keep us free from all bolder stripes.

4. There have been questions raised about the color of men's dress socks. Some have understood the black color standard for shoes but not socks. Why should our brethren need matching colors of pants and socks if our sisters are not allowed an equal color scheme? It would be the most consistent to understand footwear to include shoes and socks for brethren and sisters.

5. The hosiery for our sisters "should be black for all areas of public life." This would include all of life away from home and would also include our home life if it is a place of frequent public traffic. Hosiery should be understood as including both nylons and cotton type stockings. It has been understood that exceptions are given for health reasons.

6. Coverings and hair arrangements. Our Decrees state that "coverings should be of sufficient size so the bottom comes below the bun to the neck..." Some have wondered where that bottom line is. We believe the neck usually is at an imaginary line even with the bottom of the ear. Coverings which meet this standard will also come very close to the ear.

7. The issue of bobby socks is another current issue. Our Decrees states, "Members who choose to wear immodest types of clothes and footwear, anklets, low necklines ... are subject to censure." The Dictionary

defines an anklet as being "a short sock reaching above the ankle." Likewise bobbysocks are defined as "socks reaching just above the ankle." Consequently bobbysocks are already addressed as a violation to our standards. We therefore request they not be worn in public life.

8. Our Decrees also states members having "low necklines... are subject to censure." Loose, square, or other necklines that expose the area below the base of the neck are considered immodest.

9. Likewise the Decrees state "choices we make concerning outer garments for cooler weather need to also follow the Biblical principles of nonconformity to worldly fashion and without ornamentation. These are becoming more difficult to find as clothing designers usually appeal to the "lust of the eye and the pride of life." Seek prayerful guidance from God in these clothing choices."

10. Our Decrees state that "materials ... shall be of subdued modest colors and patterns avoiding the shiny, shimmering fabrics which draw attention to the wearer." The modesty principle applied to dress print patterns will keep us from large and bold prints. Modest colors would eliminate the multicolored non-pastel prints that tend to create bold contrasts. Shiny materials or materials with shiny prints do not reflect a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price.

11. Parents who purchase (even at yard sales) or make fashionable or ornamented clothing for their children place themselves under question as to their own convictions for Bible principles and appreciation of church

applications. Children belong to heaven and should not be associated with the world by the clothing they wear.

## **FREQUENT VIOLATIONS TO BIBLE PRINCIPLES**

### **Without Ornamentation**

1. The broadening variety of dress collars suggests an unrest with simplicity. Why must a collar be much more than 2" wide? Why the endless variations and styles of lay-down collars, stand-up collars and turtlenecks? The scallops, gathers, long points, and big collars are designed for eye appeal and ornamentation. Let's come back to a simple neck arrangement. Beautifully simple is simply beautiful.

2. Why the bows and tassels on shoes? These non-functional extras are for show and violate the principle "without ornamentation". Is it consistent to put contrasting laces in black shoes?

3. Embroidery on sweaters represents a "soft" ornamentation that violates the Bible principle. Sweaters that tend to be of the ornamental or fashionable nature should not be worn.

### **Non-Conformed to Fads and Fashions**

1. Changing shapes and dimensions of shoe heels are often a result of the fashion world. Narrow heels have a similar destabilizing effect as the spikes of the past. Shoe heels with less than 1" base width are an unwholesome worldly fad and should not be worn.

2. Boots style shoes for formal or informal wear when not needed for weather or occupational use, represent a prideful image that militates against

the humble appearance. Work boots should not be of a western or fashionable design.

3. Light colored trousers with dark colored shirts for formal and informal wear represents being influenced by the fashion world rather than having an appreciation for the accepted standard of a nonconformed church. Trousers worn for formal wear should represent an appearance compatible with a plain suit coat.

4. We encourage our brethren to wear the plain suit for more than church going rather than replacing it so readily with a jacket or sweater.

5. Rather than sport shirts, we ask our brethren to wear dress shirts with the top button closed for church. Shirts with two pockets, colored buttons, wrinkled looks and coarser fabrics usually fall into the sport shirt category. Shirts worn for informal wear should be of a subdued nature consistent with nonconformity.

### **Modesty**

1. All trousers shall pass the Biblical test of modesty. Most jeans for men are designed to fit snugly; and if worn, need to be chosen with special caution.

2. Since our standards forbid brethren to wear pullover shirts, pullover sweaters for brethren and sisters are an inconsistent practice. Pullover sweaters tend to violate the standard of modesty. Therefore, we request that they not be worn as formal or informal wear.

Formulated by the Ministerial Board of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference Feb 1998

## **Wedding and Reception Guidelines**

The New Testament teaches that the Christian will make many every day choices which will make him different from the society in which he lives. Weddings are no exception to this different lifestyle, but rather an illustration.

Our society:

1. treats the occasion as a mere social function,
2. glorifies the bride, and
3. magnifies countless pagan practices.

The Christian on the other hand, regards the occasion as a sacred holy day to be treated with reverence and respect, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and diligently shuns all pagan practices.

In a sincere attempt to glorify God rather than worldly heathen practices, we submit the following guidelines.

### **I. Standards of Attire**

1. All persons who are asked to have part in the wedding or the reception shall conform to the church standard of attire. Any exception for the reception shall be approved by the bishop.
2. The Bride's and attendant's dresses shall not be of a special design, but shall be cape dresses, according to the direction given in the *Decrees for to Keep*.
  - a. No special ornamentation of attire (such as pearly buttons or ornamental pins) is permissible. Sleeve endings shall be a simple hem, cuff, or gathered ending without a ruffle.
  - b. The wedding dress material shall not be of a shiny, shimmery nature, but shall be of simple, practical fabric.
  - c. Elaborate collars, scalloped necklines and all other ornamental arrangements shall be avoided.
  - d. Sleeves shall be full for modesty but puffy or baggy sleeves for ornamentation or fashion are not permitted.
3. The groom shall be attired according to the specifications given in the *Decrees for to Keep*.

### **II. Directions for the wedding service**

1. Share with the bishop in charge the names and responsibilities of all individuals who will have a part in the wedding and reception. All personnel must be in communing relations in their congregation. These individuals may be contacted after the bishop gives his consent.
2. There shall be no picture taking during the wedding service, or the reception. After the reception is over, time will be given for pictures to be taken. The photographer shall not be listed in the program.
3. Ushers shall seat the waiters and waitresses as they come. This avoids the distraction created when a group is brought in all at once.
4. The bridal group shall find their place in the church auditorium before the

service begins. The bridal march image shall be avoided when entering or leaving the service.

5. Only congregational singing is permitted, and all songs chosen shall focus on worshiping God and faithful Christian living rather than being of a sentimental or romantic nature. All songs shall be cleared with the bishop in charge.

6. We believe two couples are sufficient to serve as honored witnesses for a wedding reception.

7. We request that all individuals in the bridal party carry and use their Bibles in the service. White Bibles and a handkerchief used for display are not permitted.

8. Since marriage vows are made to God, the couple shall not repeat the vows to each other in the marriage ceremony.

9. There shall be no holding hands or hooking arms in public.

10. Vehicles used by the bridal party shall be parked in a convenient place in the parking lot.

### **III. Directions for the reception.**

1. The bishops shall give their approval before a facility may be used for a reception.

2. Special singing or recorded music is not allowed.

3. Flowers or arrangements may be used on the tables but should be kept within Christian stewardship principles. Candles shall not be used. The overall decor of the reception shall not express lavish or plush living, but rather Christian simplicity and frugality. Color decor shall be restful rather than loud or for show or style.

4. Food shall be served in simple practical ways instead of with a lot of decoration and show.

5. Ushers and waiters shall be asked to keep their shirt collars buttoned while fulfilling their responsibilities.

6. The bride and groom's table shall be governed by the same principles of simplicity as the rest of the group. For example, water glasses shall be used instead of goblets.

7. Feeding each other cake is not allowed.

8. The bridal table cake shall be a single layer cake with only edible decoration. Decoration shall reflect simplicity and moderation.

9. Any wall hanging shall be approved by the bishop in charge.

July 1999

## PASTORAL CONCERN - THE CHRISTIAN AND THE MOVIES

Years ago movies were only seen in theaters in town. The technology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has changed the movie industry. Television has placed the movies in the living room of most American homes. With the cheaper means of making moving pictures, the business and educational world has also increased their usage of movies. Today, movies are common place in America.

When a movie is produced, the tastes of a carnally minded audience are considered. Movies of entertainment are full of carnality. Movies that are primarily for education often have some features mixed in to appeal to the tastes of the carnality of men. Even religious movies are mixed with scenes that appeal to the carnality of mankind. Today's movie industry knows a "righth mix" is needed to make movies that attract people and make money. Since most movies present information and scenes that militate against Bible Principles, Christians need to stake a stand on the movie issue.

What scriptural principles give the Christian his moorings when "everybody else" is going to the movies?

*"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." (Psalm 101:3)*

*"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." (1Corinthians 15:33)*

*"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm 1:2)*

**1. The eye gate is a means Satan uses to war against the spiritual man.** Movies are one of the means Satan uses to corrupt

the mind thereby saturating the mind with carnal artillery that will war against the soul. We need to have a personal commitment with ourselves that the things we behold will not produce the battlefield for present and future mental warfare between righth and wrong.

**2. There are subtle influences that affect spiritual character.** Many times we are tempted to argue against the negative influence of something because immediate results are not realized. Even the acceptance of a little bad with a lot of good will place a leaven within that has the ability to grow and contaminate the good.

**3. A spiritual man delights in mental activities that strengthen spiritual values.** Spiritual minded individuals will have their first interest in spiritual activities. Any activity that militates against this first interest will need to be rejected. Too often, the Mennonites that have a passion for movies are Mennonites that have lost their hunger and thirst for righteousness. That is why there is a greater interest in going to a picture show than to a service where the Word of God is preached. If we do not have spiritual values a priority among us, no amount of regulations will keep our hearts from desiring the forbidden fruits of this world.

Does this mean that motion pictures are sinful and have no place in the Christian's life? There may be some vital information and instructions in the business and medical world that are necessary for us to know. Does this justify viewing all the films that can be seen in these fields? The answer is clearly, "No."

Our first question should be, "how

much do we need the information?" Sometimes the quest for knowledge has been a cloak for a carnal appetite for movies. Our need for the information should be the first question, but certainly not the only question.

If the information is pertinent to our work or responsibilities, the next question should be, "What are the objectionable features associated with the film?" Since films produced by the world will not be governed by Bible principles, it is no surprise that there will be features which appeal to tastes of a worldly minded man. Since there are dangers associated with these films, the benefits must warrant the risks. Will the good we gain by seeing the film justify the evil we are exposed to by the rest of what is seen on the screen?

Since there are so many dangers associated with films, children and youth should have the privilege of being shielded from the evils of the screen. They need a development in a resistance of the evils of society, not a conditioning acceptance of the pipelines of the world's corruption via the motion screen.

The Mennonite Church has generally

held to the position that movies and Christianity are not compatible. As a church group, we have drawn a line that does not permit the television and non-business related VCR tapes. This excludes TV use in the home and motel. The non-business VCR tapes would exclude all rentals from local video rental shops.

What about travelogue films? Do these films illustrate the kind of interests that we should be promoting? What about the negative features that may be associated with the film? As bishops and ministry, it has been our position that we discourage our people from supporting these programs.

What about films in museums? While these may be educational, they still need to be judged consistently with the principles stated above.

If we fail to take a firm consistent stand on these issues, we may well feed a nature within us that will destroy the nature God desires to have us develop. *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."* (1Thessalonians 5:21)

## CHANGES IN DRESS PATTERNS, IN WHICH DIRECTION WILL WE GO?

The people of God have always faced challenges regarding change. God and His Word

and His principles never change. Each generation is simply passing through, we will not endure forever. As we pass through and off the scenes of time we must recognize the fact that we are not larger than the principles that guide us. They remain constant. We are the ones who are changing.

However, we cannot freeze applications and expect to make no change. Technology makes some things possible and practical and people change their ways of solving their problems. Cultures determined to make no changes sometimes make the changing process more complicated than it would need to be, even sometimes ending up with unreasonable conclusions. What we must do as we come to change is to test, "How can we best honor God's Word with the resources at our disposal?"

Our Decrees directs regarding the patterns our sisters choose for their dresses with the following statements ...

Our application for modest apparel for the sisters is the basic cape dress. Jesus taught that a man is not to look upon a woman to lust after her. While the man bears the responsibility for his thought life, the woman bears the responsibility to properly clothe herself. We therefore request that our sisters' dresses are not tight-fitting and reach to at least midway between the knee and the ankle. The sleeves shall extend below the elbow. Materials shall not be transparent, and shall be of subdued modest colors and patterns avoiding the

shiny, shimmering fabrics which draw attention to the wearer.

We ask our sisters not to follow the worldly fashion designers or today's pattern companies. The fashions in dresses are ever changing and are not designed by men and women governed by God's standard for clothing the body. The basic dress pattern with a cape satisfies the fashion dilemma and God's standard of modesty. Patterns should be chosen with Godly wisdom "not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance." Fashionable headaddress shall not be worn.

In the mid 1980's, a change in dress patterns began to come into our conservative Mennonite circles. Recognizing that the fitted and a-line bodices and skirts often made a tight fitting waist, the idea came into vogue to make the waist with elastic. This created a bodice and skirt that was full and modest whether the sister was sitting or standing, or even if she put on a little weight.

Some leaders responded to these changes with resistance. Their thought processes tended to follow these lines ... "Let us not make changes, because changes tend to follow fashions, and when fashions change again then our sisters will desire to change with them." This thinking defended dresses that were tighter and shorter than their counterparts, because they felt change was an enemy to be resisted in order to preserve truth.

Other leaders, and as was the thinking of the Pilgrim Conference ministry, felt the change brought much needed modesty

to many of our sister's appearance. We welcomed the change and even allowed the belt to be discarded, since the elastic found and formed its own waist.

Now Mennonite churches in our time and settings are facing a change in waist patterns again. The elastic waist is being replaced with a shift type sewed in bodice and skirt. Sometimes the waist is short waisted or long waisted, but many times it is about where the waist would normally fall. This change seems to be influenced by the lean, gaunt and even wasted look presently in style. It goes along with hair that is pulled tightly back, even sometimes greased to give a special effect. As far as the modesty issue, when these women change posture as in sitting or stretching, immediately undergarments or body form is revealed. The smoothness of the fit is designed for something other than modesty.

Is this a change that we should accept in our Pilgrim Conference churches?

On one hand we can raise the question, "Have we ever decided that elastic waist dresses is all we will ever accept?" The

answer is obviously no.

But the question we should be raising, is this a change toward modesty and godliness?

The answer is obvious. We cannot afford to give up the beautiful and modest patterns that have come to identify our Pilgrim Conference sisters.

Also, mothers, think about it. Why would you dress your pre-teen girls in these fashions.

Is it because you value something more than modesty and simplicity? Would it not communicate deeper values to stay with a simple elastic waist dresses and refuse to chase after changing fads?

As the Pilgrim Conference ministry, we request that our sisters not accept the beltless shift type dress patterns as described above. These are not to be worn in our church wear, at our Bible Schools or for casual or everyday wear.

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls ... " (Jer 6:16)

## POLICIES FOR SENDING ORDAINED ON SHORT TERM SERVICE

September 16, 2004

To the brethren and sisters of the Pilgrim Conference,

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world . Amen Matthew 28:19-20

As a Conference, we strongly believe that an important part of this commission is to provide a dual, permanent leadership team for churches as they are established. However we recognize that there are situations where temporary leadership is needed, sometimes on very short notice. Up to this point, we have had no written procedure for addressing these temporary needs. In the past, we have generally sought congregational approval for even very short-term leadership assignments to another congregation.

Acts chapter; eight records the story of how the Gospel came to the city of Samaria. As the work grew in the city, the apostles saw the need of sending additional short-term leaders. They sent Peter and John to Samaria to help to establish the work. The Bible does not say how long they labored there; it simply says that when they had testified and preached the Word, they returned to Jerusalem.

In our ministers' meeting yesterday, we voted to give the bishop board similar authority. The bishop board with the approval of the local ministry will have the authority to ask an ordained brother to relocate to assist the work in another area. Such assignments could be for a maximum of a single six-month term without first seeking congregational approval. A longer period of service, whether a single term or multiple terms, would require congregational approval as well as the approval of the local ministry. We are presenting this matter to you as a conference body for your evaluation. As a ministerial board, we will again vote on this issue in our December district ministerial meetings. If this vote is favorable in all the districts, we will consider this to be our working procedure for supplying short-term leadership needs. If the December vote does not carry in one or more districts, the issue will again be addressed at the spring ministerial meeting. There is no immediate plan to use this method for any existing situations. Neither do we intend to use temporary leadership in the place of providing permanent leaders for any work. We covet your prayers and your counsel as we seek to spread the Gospel in these last days.

The PMC Ministerial Board

Note: the vote referred to in this document in the district ministerial meetings was taken and passed in each district. This therefore has become the working platform of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference.

Dear Sisters,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us unto a Living Hope. May His joy and peace be in your hearts always.

We as ministry thought it good to give some encouragement and direction on a few dress issues. First we would like to commend you for being willing to stand out and be different from society around us, and apply Bible principles to the dress issue. It is so refreshing to see Godly women dressed modestly. It is like a breath of fresh air to be able to see a woman and have your mind turned to God. You are respected and appreciated in the church and community for it. May God Bless each of you.

We also recognize that we will not keep what we have and want if we do not speak out on 'small issues' from time to time. We realize that some will accuse us of 'majoring on minors', but we will accept that. We will dare to speak out on issues that detract from the principles in God's Word. Someone has said, "the winds that blow in society usually move the curtains in the church". There is a lot of truth in this statement.

One of the areas that is causing the 'curtains in the church' to move, is the area of necklines. Granted, designers know what to do to appeal to the senses, and we are nowhere near the norm of society. Yet there are subtle changes that may seem to make little difference, but yet move towards the trend of society and away from modesty. It is understood by designers that anytime you have a point in a pattern, this is where the eyes of the beholder will be drawn. That is why we stay away from V waists and also why we ask our sisters to stay away from necklines that come to a point. We also ask that we do not have the 'square neck', as it is a step away from Biblical modesty. We are asking that we keep the simple modest necklines (to the neck) and collars that are pleasing to our Holy God. Remember that the need for clothing in the garden was to take attention off of self, and if we remember this principle, it will help us and our children answer our questions on the subject.

Another reminder we would like to give is in regards to sleeve length. It is understood that at Jewish synagogues there are three bones that need to be covered to be considered decent for the service. These are the collar bone, elbow and the knee. We remind you that the sleeve length is to be below the elbow in public life. We are asking that the sleeves on all dresses be able to come below the elbow, and of course it is only practical to push them above the elbow as you go about your work. Please remember the above mentioned principle of taking attention off of self when you are making cuffs also.

The last area to mention is the 'Mennonite Fad' of making the waist without elastic. The practice of using elastic was a change a number of years ago that was felt to be a move to more modesty. Now the trend is to go back to the old way except not to have a belt, which lets the dress hang, which detracts from modesty. Many times the tube skirt is used with this design. We simply ask you not to use this pattern.

Again, we would like to express our appreciation for your decency in an indecent world. We hope you sense our burden that our changes be ones that take us closer to

Godliness, and that we do not want to harp on insignificant details, but that we want to give Godly direction on such an important subject. If God's people don't give direction to the dress issue, someone else will, and when that happens, our move away from Godly principles will usually be done with little steps. May God's blessing be on us all.

In Christian Love,  
The Pilgrim Conference Bishops Per SRY

## Approved Maternity Dress Pattern



*"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;" 1 Timothy 2:9.*

From the Scriptures we understand that God is concerned with what women (as well as men) wear. It is for the purpose of desiring to please God, that as a Conference we raise standards in relation to dress.

There continues to be some question concerning what is considered acceptable in our Conference for maternity wear. This document is prepared to give some direction to this question.

The following statement is what is given in the Decrees For To Keep.

"God has planned a beautiful time of motherhood for His created woman. The full cape maternity dress shall follow the same principles as the cape dress meeting the Biblical standard of modesty in being a loose fitting garment."

Since the form changes during the time of expectancy, we recognize the need for adjusting the regular cape dress so there can be continued modest coverage. Therefore we accept that some changes may be in order and would give the following:

1. We require the wearing of a cape type dress with an opening at the sides near to where the waist normally is. (We suggest the "v" design so the cape does not hang open.)
2. We suggest that the cape piece be made longer than normal, coming well below the waist.
3. A yoke in the front is considered appropriate for extra fullness, but it is our request that this seam be kept in a straight line. The material for the entire cape shall be of the same fabric and run in the same direction.
4. Care should be given that the color or the print of maternity wear would reflect the Biblical direction for modest [orderly, decent; well-mannered, honorable], shamefacedness [modesty] and sobriety [self-disciplined in one's desires, passions or conduct].

May it ever be our desire to dress in a way that brings honor and glory to God and His Word.

The Pilgrim Conference Ministry  
Revised 4/15/09

## Toys, Tools or Eternal Treasures?

*A Pastoral Letter from the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference Ministry*

A bumper sticker of bygone days proclaimed, “*The Only Difference Between Men and Boys is the Price of their Toys.*” While this adage sadly is true for the children of this generation, disciples of our Lord Jesus have a higher calling. Our Master lived a life of simple frugality as an example for us to follow.<sup>1</sup> He had a stern warning concerning materialism and the ability of “things” to cause those who have named His Name to lose their way.<sup>2</sup> The apostles took up this concern.<sup>3</sup> The Bible makes it clear that resources spent on living in pleasure will eternally vex the consumer<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, those who give to the Lord may invest their resources and reap eternal treasure<sup>5</sup>

Since the Industrial Revolution, each rising generation in America has seemingly been able to afford a higher standard of living. Our homes and businesses have given evidence of this wealth. Anyone with a perspective in history can confirm the astounding rise of the middle class and the corresponding surge in living standards. A bumper sticker seen more recently proclaimed, “*Don’t Let the Car Fool You, My Treasure Really is in Heaven!*” The worst deception is self deception, and riches are

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<sup>1</sup> “And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.” (Luke 9:58)

<sup>2</sup> “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” (Luke 12:15)

<sup>3</sup> “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:2) “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15)

<sup>4</sup> “Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.” (James 5:3)

<sup>5</sup> “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.” (Proverbs 19:17) “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:” (Matthew 6:20)

a catalyst<sup>6</sup>.

How does the Church of Jesus live out the ideals of Her Master in this generation? We deeply appreciate the many appeals to a sacrificial lifestyle that go out across our pulpits. We appreciate the response to this teaching as reflected by visible choices made in personal lives of our brethren. It is refreshing when we see our brethren genuinely endeavor to live simply and be examples in giving of their living to spiritual ministries.

Another way the Church has endeavored to maintain this vision is to prohibit the ownership of possessions that would be used for superfluous or leisure activities rather than to serve the needs of our fellow man.

There is some difficulty in making these guidelines. One reason is what may serve a legitimate need in one part of the country may be unnecessary somewhere else. What is quite necessary in one vocation is unnecessary in another. A snowmobile that serves a legitimate need in the sugar bush is not needed in most of our communities. The disciples owned fishing boats, but for most of us owning a boat or a jet ski would be a status symbol and an invitation to a lifestyle of selfishness. We recognize the responsibility of the local ministry to make evaluation in some of these settings. Latitude given in one area of the church for need does not justify carnal gratification in another locality.

In the recent spike in gas prices there was a surging interest in motorbikes. It seemed to some a way to maintain mobility without such exorbitant fuel prices. As ministry serving in the States, after discussion regarding the practicality and safety of two wheeled travel even with higher fuel prices we agreed we generally would rule out traveling on motorbikes.

Four wheelers is another example of something that may either be a toy or a tool depending on the use.

Rather than adding more rules to our lives, we would like to remind our members of the seriousness of life and our accountability at the judgement seat of Christ. When we stand before Him, what will we wish then we would have done with the material resources He has entrusted into our care now? Also, in what direction will our influence nudge the rising generation as they face the tests of materialism and affluence?

May God give us grace and wisdom to be His Children in this generation.

The Pilgrim Mennonite Conference Ministry 04/15/09

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<sup>6</sup> “And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” (Mark 4:19)

## ~INTERNET CLARIFICATIONS~

"O where are kings and empires now of old that went and came?  
But, Lord, Thy church is praying yet, A thousand years the same.  
We mark her goodly battlements, and her foundations strong;  
We hear within the solemn voice of her unending song.  
For not like kingdoms of the world Thy holy church, O God!  
Tho' earthquake shocks are threatening her, and tempests are abroad  
Unshaken as eternal hills, immovable she stands,  
A mountain that shall fill the earth, a house not made by hands."

The sentiments of this hymn from the 1800's talk about the "earthquake shocks" and "tempests" facing the church. Every age has had its challenges, but surely the perilous times of the last days are pressing upon us as a church, especially in the area of technology. It seems that there will be no end to new and appealing gadgets, features, and opportunities that modern media continues to produce. How can some of the most effective tools also present such a great snare? It is very important that we keep our hearts with all diligence as we live in this present evil world.

We have become aware that some of our members are involved in the social networking sites that the internet has made possible, and the world has made popular. In our research into these sites such as Facebook and Xanga, we have become very uncomfortable with the use of these mediums, for a number of reasons. We see these sites as very dangerous to the spiritual and moral safety of our young people in particular. The semi-private world of these sites and the almost unchecked possibility of finding objectionable materials make this type of network something that we believe is not safe.

We also believe that the use of these sites is inconsistent with our position on the Internet. The conference has granted permission for internet usage where it is needed for business use. We would like to encourage our members who have internet access to use it as a tool and not for entertainment or social networking.

We are asking those who have social networking accounts to close them and discontinue the use of this type of communication. We realize that some individuals view these sites as a way to keep in touch with friends and family, but we are asking you to revert to safer and perhaps, less time consuming methods of communication. Another challenge we are facing is the issue of internet access with cell phones. There are more and more plans and phone options that are directly geared to internet use. We believe that accessing the internet through cell phones and these types of devices are a clear violation of our internet standards and ask our members not to do so. We are appealing to parents to give direction to cell phone usage in their homes and to protect their children from the flagrant immorality that is so prevalent in the world's systems. We are asking parents to use extra precaution by contacting their cell phone provider and having internet access blocked on their cell phones.

We are also aware of the increased use of laptop computers among us with their

wireless capabilities. At spring conference, we are planning to discuss the current challenges we are facing with the internet.

Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

May we continue to be a church with "goodly battlements" and "foundations strong" as we continue our journey from earth to glory. May the principles of the Word continue to guide us and may the Lord Jesus Christ be magnified in our churches.

~The PMC Bishops