

Foreword by Gwen Shorter

Covered

**Dressed
With the End in Mind**

Amy McKnight

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By Amy McKnight

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*This book is dedicated to God and to Mrs. B.
Neither gave up on me.*

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Why write a book about modesty and dress for Seventh-day Adventist?

**“Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out
the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion
is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches
and is doing more than any other power to separate
our people from God.”**

(Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, 647)

FOREWORD

Why do we dress the way we do? You will no longer wonder after reading, *Covered*. Amy McKnight leaves not a stone unturned in matters of dress. She crosses time, age, culture, and religious barriers to get to the bottom-line truth – how God's people should dress in these end times.

Point by point, nation-by-nation, culture-by-culture, Amy describes and meticulously delineates the changes in the dress over the years, which are as historically fascinating as the change from Sabbath to Sunday.

How did we get where we are as Seventh-day Adventist? How have we come to lag so far behind Biblical standards of modesty? Can we defend what we are wearing because we are not as bad as the world? Where did all these fashions come from and how will the clothes we wear affect our characters, spirituality, and eternal life? You will find the answers to these questions and more in the pages of this book.

Beautifully woven concepts of health and dress are well balanced with history, God's word, and our prophetic writings. These rediscovered truths will amaze and challenge you to rethink your position on the connection between dress and Christian living. I am over-joyed, and rejoicing that one so young has been chosen by God to share these important truths for these end times.

I feel honored and humbled to say a word for Amy and *Covered*. God has laid His hand upon her and given her a commission and she hopes and plans, by God's grace, to fulfill it. She is seeking to share these concepts as widely as humanly possible.

This is a must-read for those who realize that we are walking "billboards" for Who we serve and Who we worship! Christians can no longer argue whether or not there should be distinctiveness in the dress of God's people. *Covered*, is right on time! Will you help me join Amy spread this book far and wide?

Whatever you choose to do or not to do, I know this; you will never see the clothes you wear the same again!

May God bless you with His eyes as you read!

Sister Gwen Shorter, Author
Thy Nakedness, Lord What Shall I wear
Jewelry, The Spiritualism Connection

INTRODUCTION

As a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist, I attended Adventist school from second grade to academy to college. I've always loved Jesus and sought to live my life for Him. I was very active at academy: I served in student government, volunteered for mission trips, and worked with AmeriCorps right here at home. Why? Because I truly loved Jesus and wanted to show His love by helping others.

The reason I am telling you all of this is because I believe my heart was in the right place. The problem was, when it came to the way I dressed, I didn't understand how my presentation of myself (my clothing) affected how others perceived me (my witness) and what I professed (my faith).

THE CONVERSATION THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

At twenty-one years old, I returned to church after a somewhat prodigal leave of absence. Like many who have rededicated their lives to the Lord, I was reunited with my first love. I was eager to do whatever I could to serve Him, and that heartfelt desire led me to join an interdenominational prison ministry group.

On a cool Sunday evening, I was standing outside a juvenile correctional facility, waiting for the rest of the group to arrive. I had never been near any kind of detention center, jail, or prison. I didn't really know what to expect or even how to dress for the occasion, so I decided to wear an outfit I would have worn to church—assuming it is always better to be overdressed than underdressed.

As everyone began to arrive and we started to gather in a cluster, I was greeted by an older lady from one of the local Baptist churches. After the typical hospitable introductions and greetings, she shared something with me that would forever change my life. "Sweetheart, next time you come, you should wear a button-up shirt like mine, as well as a longer skirt. You really shouldn't dress like that to come here. If this were a real prison, they wouldn't let you in. Fortunately, since it's only a detention center, you should be okay."

I nodded that I understood. I don't remember the program, and I barely remember the drive home. What I do remember was how I felt. I was upset, angry, and betrayed by my lack of education. For the first time, I saw the connection between how I was dressing and Who I professed to serve; the two didn't match. The reality of that fact hit me like a ton of bricks. My heart was soft, and I desired with all my heart to do what was right.

I went home, changed into a looser, longer outfit, and drove to the store to look for something more modest. I had no idea what to get; I just knew I needed to find some shirts that weren't so tight and form fitting. When I found some on sale that I actually liked, I headed to the counter, rejoicing. That very day, I began to understand the importance of dressing with purpose.

DRESSING FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES

Fast-forward two years. I had gone back to school and, along the way, gotten involved with the literature evangelism program. By that time, I was an experienced student canvasser who had helped to train others in the work.

Student literature evangelists learn the importance of little things: smiling, how to walk from door to door, and how to present the books. We also learned what we should and should not eat as we worked, as well as how to dress in a way that would allow us to work efficiently while still giving off the right impression. When an evangelistic student says, "We are students working our way through Christian school," his or her entire demeanor must echo that fact.

Our goal was to do everything in our power to remove obstacles to reaching people. We could then trust the Holy Spirit to touch hearts and inspire them to get the books. We studied our canvass, smiled, prayed, and dressed with that end in mind.

THE OUTFIT THAT SAVED MY LIFE

I was home on a holiday and needed to earn some money. I had some books, a car, my *Colporteur Ministry*, and determination. I decided to try knocking on some doors in the neighborhood near my home.

It was cold outside, and after visiting many homes, I decided to stop by a large indoor apartment complex. Of course, hindsight being 20/20, I should have called my mother to let her know where I was going. In fact, I probably should have just skipped the apartments altogether and knocked on the doors of more houses. The cars in the parking lot weren't very nice, but I decided to go in anyway. It definitely wasn't the smartest decision I ever made.

I started from the top of the building and worked my way down. I sold some books and had some good experiences, but my experience at the last door on the ground floor totally overshadowed everything else.

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU

The lights seemed to be out on the first floor, and the hallway was dark. I knocked on the door and just waited. I heard some rustling behind the door and could see someone peeking out of the peephole. I smiled and waved, letting them know how friendly I was. The door opened wide, and a male voice said from behind the door, "Come in."

I had been so exhilarated by the other experiences that I was ignoring all of the warnings I'd learned in training. As I looked around the place, I didn't see any toys. I didn't see any signs of a woman or anyone else. I didn't even see the person who had opened the door. Still, I walked into the open living room, and seconds later, I heard the door shut and latch behind me.

When I turned around, I knew I was in the kind of trouble that only God could get a person out of. The man was standing by the door, dressed only in his boxer shorts and brandishing what looked like a knife in his hand. I took a quick look around and realized there was no way out. All I could do was send a prayer to Heaven, put on my biggest smile, and start doing what I'd come there for. "Hi!" I said cheerfully. "My name is Amy. I'm a student working my way through CHRISTIAN school. Instead of junk food or magazines, we decided we could give you something a little more special. Why don't you TAKE A LOOK?" As the last words left my mouth, I stretched out my arm to hand him a book.

He looked at me up and down and asked me to say it again, and I did. This time, I asked him what types of books he liked to read. "Magazines," he answered, so I pulled out a copy of *God's Answers to Your Questions* and started my canvass.

"God's Answers to Your Questions answers some of the most commonly asked questions about the Bible, like what happens when you die and if Jesus is really coming again?"

He looked interested, so I tried again.

"Here. Take a look."

He put the knife down on a table behind him and reached for the book.

Praise God! I eagerly gave it to him and started my close. "In bookstores, a book like that would sell for about fifteen dollars, but people have been helping out with about ten."

He started to say he didn't have any money, but I cut him off and told him that if he promised to read it, I would give it to him for free. He said he would. I asked for his name, told him I would pray for him, and he unlocked the door and let me be on my way.

When I got outside that building, I knew I had been really close to becoming some awful statistic. But I also knew that God was with me the whole time, and the sun couldn't have been shining brighter on that overcast day.

That day I wore my peacoat, but underneath I had on an ankle-length skirt and sensible brown shoes. My face bore no make-up, and my hair was simple. Looking back, I truly believe my appearance and attire, along with the help of my guardian angels, were what prevented that man from doing the wicked things that seemed to be on his mind. I made sure to mention that I was a Christian student working my way through school, and I looked the part because I intentionally dressed with witnessing in mind.

TO WHAT END?

Whether we like it or not, every action we take in life and every word we say has consequences, good or bad. Our choice of friends, music, recreation, and diet affects all aspects of life, both personal and interpersonal.

My goal with this book is to encourage you to think about how and why you choose to dress the way you do. Is your clothing witnessing for God or against Him? Every day we get dressed, go out, and meet the world. What we wear sends an unspoken message about who we are and what we believe.

I pray that this book will inspire you to see the issue of dress as an important one. Everything we do glorifies someone; by God's grace, we can live our lives with a heart to glorify Him.

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CHAPTER 1 - BRAND DILUTION

What do the following eight companies have in common?

- Coca-Cola
- Microsoft
- IBM
- General Electric
- Intel
- Disney
- McDonald's
- Nike

If you answered, “They’re worth millions,” you’d be right. If you said, “They are all globally recognized brands,” you gave me the answer I was looking for.

Branding (which Merriam-Webster defines as: “the promoting of a product or service by identifying it with a particular [brand](#)”) is big business. Corporate branders know they have done their jobs when the mere mention of a company name paints a solid, almost tangible image in the minds of potential buyers.

Why do companies spend so much on branding? It’s because they know that a solid brand equals steady sales. A solid company brand separates Nike from your average “no-name” sneakers, CNN from your everyday evening news, and Silk from store brand soy drinks.

THE POWER OF A BRAND

Not convinced? Play a little word association game. When you read the following list of several religions and faith groups, take a moment to think about the mental picture that comes to mind:

- Mennonites
- Haredi Jews (Orthodox)
- Quakers (Puritans)
- Catholics
- Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
- Buddhist priests
- Muslims
- Seventh-day Adventists

Was that a pretty easy exercise? Did you get clear pictures for most of the religious groups on the list? What about *our* brand—Seventh-day Adventists? What do you think of when you think of us? In all of these religions and faith-based groups, their way of dressing strengthens our perception of who they are, good or bad.

THE BATTLE FOR “BRAND RECOGNITION”

As for Adventists, many evangelistic campaigns and a lot of Bible work must be accomplished to take a person from ground zero to being a baptized member.

It takes a minimum of three consistent brand impressions before people start to notice who you are. Can we honestly say that if an average non-Adventist meets three members of local Seventh-day Adventist Christian churches, they would get three consistent messages on doctrine, recreation, or visual representations of dress? Instead of representing Christ in all the ways we live our lives, we have confused and reinterpreted our brand. In doing so, we have diluted our end results.

You might say, “You are making way too much of this brand thing.” Am I? Even though the term *branding* wasn’t used in this sense until 1970, the practice of it dates back to the Israel of God. God has always called His people to dress in distinctively holy ways.

BLUE RIBBONS: THE FIRST BRAND IDENTITY CAMPAIGN

We find the first example of religious branding in Numbers 15:37-41:

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I [am] the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I [am] the LORD your God.”

The Pen of Inspiration gives us this commentary on the verse:

“The children of Israel, after they were brought out of Egypt, were commanded to have a simple ribbon of blue in the border of their garments, to distinguish them from the nations around them, and to signify that they were God’s peculiar people. The people of God are not now required to have a special mark placed upon their garments. But in the New Testament we are often referred to ancient Israel as examples. If God gave such definite directions to his ancient people in regard to their dress, will not the dress of His people in this age come under His notice? Should there not be in their dress a distinction from that of the world? Should not the people of God, who are His peculiar treasure, seek even in their dress to glorify God? And should they not be examples in point of dress, and by their simple style rebuke the pride, vanity and extravagance of worldly, pleasure-loving professors? God requires this of his people. Pride is rebuked in His word.” (2 Selected Messages, 473)

So, now we understand that God does have a brand. For this last-day Church, that brand may not be as obvious as the blue ribbon of ancient Israel, but it is to be like Israel in its distinctiveness. Just like the Israelites, we are supposed to dress with the purpose of pointing souls to Jesus.

Are we distinguishable as representatives of Christ? Could we, as a body, be considered a safe and worthy example for others to follow? Would it be safe to say that somewhere along the line, the Church of God for this final age has lost her distinctive brand?

DOES BRANDING REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

There are so many excuses: “Maybe we could come up a little higher in the area of dress, but we have the truth in so many other areas that it more than makes up for the way we dress.”; “When people come to understand our message, they can see it as truth, and they are converted on the basis of the message. It’s our message that is our distinction.” or “Dress is just a side issue.”

Are you sure? I'd like to suggest that our brand is as important to the furtherance of the gospel and the hastening of Christ's second coming as all the public evangelism efforts combined. The Pen of Inspiration gives us these startling insights:

"Many a soul who was convinced of the truth has been led to decide against it by the pride and love of the world displayed by our sisters. The doctrine preached seemed clear and harmonious, and the hearers felt that a heavy cross must be lifted by them in taking the truth. When these persons have seen our sisters making so much display in dress, they have said: 'This people dress fully as much as we do. They cannot really believe what they profess; and, after all, they must be deceived. If they really thought that Christ was soon coming, and the case of every soul was to be decided for eternal life or death, they could not devote time and money to dress according to the existing fashions.' How little did those professedly believing sisters know of the sermon their dress was preaching!" (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, p. 641)

Can we honestly say we are representing Christ to the world through our dress? If not, might it be possible that we are actually *causing* sincere seekers to be turned away from the truth of our message because of our way of dressing?

We must also ask ourselves: Is the loss of new and potential converts the only effect of our losing our focus? No! We need to pay attention to this subject for the sake of those who are already a part of the Church. The apostle John tells us:

"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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

We are not to love the world, but rather, to love God. Does the way we dress affect our love for God? The Pen of Inspiration shares these insights:

"I have been shown that the main cause of your backsliding is your love of dress. This leads to the neglect of grave responsibilities, and you find yourselves with scarcely a spark of the love of God in your hearts. Without delay, renounce the cause of your backsliding, because it is sin against your own soul and against God. Be not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God." (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, p. 647)

This was not a specific testimony given to a particular individual; Sister White was speaking, here, to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a body. If what she says is true (which we believe it is), addressing the issue of dress is important to both revival and reformation.

How have we come to find ourselves in this situation? The answer comes from the strangest of places: a bedtime story you may have heard when you were young.

CHAPTER 2: EMPEROR WEAR, APPEARING AT A STORE NEAR YOU

If you take a look around you, you might begin to think you've somehow transported into some alternate universe. There are sparkly tops with plunging necklines; hip-hugging jeans with low-rise waists; tight-fitting shirts with sassy sayings like "Flirt," "Trouble," and "Made You Look" emblazoned across the chest; fishnet tights; and teeny-weeny shorts.

If you think I'm describing something out of Frederick's of Hollywood, Priscilla's Closet, or Victoria's Secret, you're dead wrong. These are just a few of the items you will find marketed to PRE-TEEN GIRLS! If you are a parent of a seven- to twelve-year-old daughter, someone is telling her that these are what she should be wearing to fit in.

Yes, I know. It's sick.

A BEDTIME STORY WE MUSTN'T SLEEP ON

It seems like the clothing designers have taken a page straight from a tale by Hans Christian Andersen. I'm sure you've heard it, but just in case you've forgotten the details, I'll give you a rundown to bring you up to speed.

There was once an emperor, an incredibly vain man. He spent more time worrying about his clothing and what people thought of him than he should have. When word got out about this weakness of his, it wasn't long before two enterprising, entrepreneurial-minded crooks decided to take advantage of it.

The scammers, pretending to be weavers, claimed that they had discovered the secret to weaving the most exquisite cloth. They told the naïve and conceited emperor that cloth had the property of only being discernable to those who were fit for their office; anyone who was stupid or incompetent wouldn't be able to see it.

They spun their story among the court officials until word of it made it to the palace, and the emperor promptly commissioned them to make the cloth for him. He planned to have a tailored suit made. With their large bag of gold and a room for their so-called "equipment," they went to work. They "worked" diligently, stopping only long enough to request more gold for thread.

Now, the emperor was vain and self-centered, but he wasn't a fool, at least not in his own opinion. He saw this as a perfect opportunity to find out which of his subjects should be let go from his court, so he sent them in to check the progress of the work.

Of course, none of them saw any cloth, but knowing what the weavers had said about the fabric being visible only to the worthy, for the sake of their office and their reputation, they pretended to admire the design and brought back glowing reports to the emperor.

The day finally arrived for the emperor himself to "see" where all that good money had gone. As the crooks ceremoniously presented the cloth, much to the admiring approval of the emperor's officials, the emperor was horrified. *I can't see anything!* he thought. *Maybe I'm stupid! Maybe it's ME who is not fit for duty!* Panic seized him until he realized that no one would know his secret if he went quietly

along with the charade. Without a missing a beat, he began to praise and admire the craftsmanship of the two crooked tailors, and the stage was set.

They convinced the emperor to let them make a suit for him, and then they coaxed him into parading himself in front of his subjects, covered only in their new robe.

The charade continues, all of his subjects singing the praises of the wonderfully crafted clothing. No one dared to appear stupid or ignorant in front of his neighbor. It was not until a small child, with nothing to lose, called the situation as it was and said, "But the emperor is naked!"

Not wanting to be made even more a fool of, the emperor decided to keep up the show, if only for the sake of appearances.

Now you remember? Good!

So, which are you? Are you the emperor, his subjects, or both? Be honest. How many times have you seen someone dressed in something you know is immodest but neglected to speak to them in love? How many times have you praised a skimpy, sensual, or questionable outfit for fear of seeming behind the times? Maybe you've even worn items of clothing yourself, not confident that they represented Jesus.

We look at the story of the emperor and his clothing and think, *How could he and the people put up with the charade for so long? I mean, everyone knows the difference between being dressed and being naked, right?*

It depends on your definitions.

As I have studied this subject, I have asked myself over and over again, "When did the standards drop? How did we come to resemble our culture more than our Creator? Who stole our clothes, and why didn't anyone try to stop them?"

The answer came as I reread this simple children's story. In one version, I read that the emperor sent in his wisest, most trusted counselor, fully believing that the wise old sage would know whether or not the alleged weavers were real or fakes.

I believe the rest of the story hinges on this man and his assessment of the situation.

BLINDED BY THE . . . ?

This trusted advisor had a retirement to worry about; he knew all the younger sages were eyeing his robes and cap. He also had a reputation to uphold. He, of all the emperor's counsel, should have been the wisest, most astute man in the land. He was short sighted, and he put his personal future ahead of the best interest of the empire.

Sadly, this is what has happened with the standards of Seventh-day Adventist dress. No, it was not as obvious to see as the story portrays. Still, though, at some point in time, wise men—men who understood their Bibles and had never before feared to call sin by its right name—decided it was more expedient to go along with conventional wisdom. At that moment, our collective eyes began to scale over, and we became blind to the fact that we were starting to take off our clothes.

HEALTHFULLY MODEST

From the earliest beginnings of this movement, health has played an important role in our Church, and the question of dress as a health issue has been part of our message. In the opening section *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 1, "Background of Volume One" we are given these insights:

"Immediately following the final steps in church order marked by the organization of the General Conference in May, 1863, came the memorable vision in Otsego in June, when Mrs. White was given a view of the principles of what was termed 'health reform,' with a revelation of the relation between obedience to the laws of health and the attainment of character necessary to fit the members of the church for translation. Closely associated with this was a reform in dress." (Testimonies for the church, Volume 1, p. 7)

During a Kansas camp meeting service in 1870, Elder James White reflected on how God had progressively led our Church in the development of the health message:

"The Lord also knew how to introduce to His waiting people the great subject of health reform, step by step, as they could bear it, and make a good use of it, without souring the public mind. It was twenty two years ago [1848] the present autumn, that our minds were called to the injurious effects of tobacco, tea, and coffee, through the testimony of Mrs. White. God has wonderfully blessed the effort to put these things away from us so that we, as a denomination, can rejoice in victory, with very few exceptions, over these pernicious indulgences of appetite..." (Councils on Diets and Foods, p. 495)

"When we had gained a good victory over these things, and when the Lord saw that we were able to bear it, light was given relative to food and dress." (Councils on Diets and Foods, p. 496)

Isn't it interesting that God considered the question of how we dress to be just as important as the avoidance of harmful substances like nicotine and caffeine, and the importance of eating a proper diet? Sadly, the message on healthy living, including how we dress, was not appreciated or applied by most as it should have been. The Pen of Inspiration writes:

"The work of educating in medical missionary lines is an advance step of great importance in awakening man to his moral responsibilities. Had the ministers taken hold of this work in its various departments in accordance with the light which God has given, there would have been a most decided reformation in eating, drinking, and dressing. But some have stood directly in the way of the advance of health reform. They have held the people back by their indifferent or condemnatory remarks, or by pleasantries and jokes." (Councils on Diets and Foods, p. 453)

It may have been funny to mock those "silly reforms," but it would seem that ultimately, the joke is on us.

LED BY THE CHILDREN

Stories abound of young children who, unencumbered by age or forced political correctness, cry out in horror and disbelief, "Mommy, that lady doesn't have any clothes on!" or "Daddy, there's a man running around the block in his underwear!" or "Look, that lady is only wearing a slip!" Sadly, these exclamations are becoming fewer and farther between, as our children are pushed to be "sexy" at younger and younger ages. Don't believe me? Take a look at all the scantily clad little children showing up in beauty pageants.

As discouraging as this is, we must remember that all isn't lost. Even the world is waking up to the awful state of mainstream dress.

In an opinion piece for *The New York Sun*, Celia Rivenbark shared her experience of trying to buy school clothes for her seven year-old daughter:

"I went into my second-favorite department store and was invited to peruse the awfulness that is Tweenland! A better name would be Lil Skanks!

"Sequins, fringe, neon glitter tank tops with big red lips on them, fishnet sleeves, scary dragon faces lunging from off-the-shoulder t-shirts. Whither the adorable seersucker? The pastel floral short sets? The soft cotton dresses in little-girl colors like lavender, pale pink, or periwinkle blue? This stuff practically screamed, 'SYRINGE SOLD SEPARATELY!'

"I get it. Now that my kid is practically of childbearing age (is six the new seventeen?), I must choose from ripped-on-purpose jeans and t-shirts that scream things like 'GIRLS RULE AND BOYS DROOL!' where an embroidered flower with a buzzing bee should be.

"When did this happen? Who decided that my six-year-old should dress like a Vegas showgirl? And one with an abundance of anger issues at that?"¹

The dozens of comments that followed the article echoed the mother's outrage and alarm. From the language and tone of the op-ed piece, it is probably safe to assume it was not submitted by a Christian, but rather an average, secular mother who was rightly upset at what was, and is being offered as clothing for her child. She wants something better, and she isn't alone.

We have the answers, but because we aren't living up to them ourselves, we are unable to share them. The twenty-first century is our opportunity to make important changes, just as we have been doing with our campaign for dietary reforms for the last sixty years.

For many years, we were the "weird" Church who ate veggies and tofu burgers, and some folks had a real good laugh at our expense. But no one is laughing now! With the rise in childhood obesity, lifestyle-related illnesses, and a society that is getting sicker every day, the world and other churches are coming to us for guidance and help.

Health is important—part of our brand. But we may have missed a major health issue: What we put on our body is as important as what we put in it. Dress affects our overall well-being—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. We have become accustomed to dressing like the culture we live among, and as a result, we dress in ways that would have been considered unhealthful, illogical, immoral, and un-Christian less than 100 years ago by people inside and outside the Church.

Think about it for a moment: We have been duped into walking around with no clothing, which is sinful, yet we are under the impression that we are covered. Are we blind? If the definition of *nakedness* is "to expose more than what God intended to be seen outside the marriage bed," aren't we naked? If we are suffering the emotional, physical, and mental consequences that come with immorality, aren't we wretched and miserable? Could it be that when Jesus was speaking to and of the seven ages of Christian history, He saw His end-time Church walking around in her underwear?

If this is the case, isn't the topic of dress as important to those seeking to prepare for the coming of Christ as marriage, salvation, or the other aspects of health reform? The package works together to

¹ Rivenbark, Celia. "Stop Dressing Your Daughter Like A...." Accessed July 31, 2011. <http://www.nysun.com/opinion/stop-dressing-your-daughter-like/66915/>

help us prepare our bodies and minds to better appreciate and understand heavenly things. They work together to help us to live holy lives. Inspiration tells us:

“Eating, drinking, and dressing all have a direct bearing upon our spiritual advancement.” (The Youth’s Instructor, May 31, 1894, Councils on Diets and Foods, p 57.2)

“Irregularity in eating and drinking, and improper dressing, deprave the mind and corrupt the heart, and bring the noble attributes of the soul in slavery to the animal passions.” (The Health Reformer, October, 1871, Councils on Diets and Foods, p 62.3)

“Whoever turns from the light in one instance hardens his heart to disregard the light upon other matters. Whoever violates moral obligations in the matter of eating and dressing prepares the way to violate the claims of God in regard to eternal interests...” Councils on Diets and Foods, p. 72.1)

We have an awesome and holy message to proclaim to the world, and the way that we dress will make a big difference in how we are able to proclaim it, as well as how it will be received. Would *you* take someone seriously who went around talking about Jesus, beasts, dragons, marks, changing days, apocalyptic plagues, or one world leadership very seriously if they, or their associates did so, dress in their underwear? Probably not, and we cannot expect the world to. There’s a place for people who act like that; it’s usually on the top floor of you local community hospital where the windows don’t open.

When people hear our message and compare it to the other brands of Christianity or other versions of theism, who can blame them if they pick the others over us? Yes, they may have golden tablets, weeping saints, and oppressive gender roles, and they may be proclaiming some really off-the-wall stuff—but at least their message is consistent with their clothes.

Of course, this hasn’t always been the case. From the beginning, our clothing was created to reflect our message and the light that comes from knowing the Son.

CHAPTER 3 - COVERED LIKE STARS

Glow-in-the-dark clothing is nothing new. However, LumiGram², a Paris-based fashion design company is taking glow-in-the-dark to a whole new level. The company uses a specially designed fabric that has luminescent lights woven through the cloth. This new cloth is then linked to a battery-powered light source. The result? Clothing that literally shines in the dark.

It's hard to say whether or not glow-in-the-dark clothing will ever become mainstream, but there was a time in human history when mankind wore clothing that glowed.

Contrary to popular belief, Adam and Eve were covered before the fall. Now, before you argue about that, bear in mind that they didn't wear garments *like ours*. Rather, they were gloriously covered with outfits that would dazzle even the most jaded fashionistas.

... AND IT WAS GOOD

Before we begin our in-depth study on exactly what Adam and Eve wore—and I'm not talking about fig leaves—let's take a moment to reflect on what God created.

When God created the world, He created everything good. That goodness—although dulled, misshapen, and marred by over 6,000 years of sin—can still be seen in the varied array of shapes and colors that can be found in nature.

If man was the crowning work of creation, wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that God would cover Adam and Eve a little better than He did the grass, flowers, birds, and animals? Wouldn't it make sense that the Divine Designer would give His son and daughter something that rightly represented their exalted state?

Not only does it make sense, but it is exactly what He did. He gave them coverings just like His.

And you ask, "What exactly does God wear?"

That is an excellent question! Let's see if the Bible can shed some light on that.

GOD'S GLORIOUS GARMENTS

When we see God represented visually, it is usually as some type of light or representation of light.

In Genesis 15:17, when God made the covenant with Abram, He appeared as "*a smoking firepot with a blazing torch.*"

When Moses first met God, he is drawn into His presence by the sight of "*a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.*" (Exodus 3:2)

As the Israelites journeyed from Egypt, "*the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.*" (Exodus 13:21)

² Lumigram, Light for Style. July 31, 2011. <http://www.lumigram.com/catalog/index.php?language=en>.

At various times during the sanctuary service when He was present in the tabernacle, it would be filled with a glorious light. (See: Exodus 40:34,35; 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chronicles 5:14; 2 Chronicles 7:2; Ezekiel 10:4; and Ezekiel 43:5)

Those are just a few of the most widely known instances of the manifestations of God. If you are unfamiliar with these stories or just want proof from the Bible that God is clothed in light, take a look at Psalm 104:1, 2.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain."

God is covered in light, but what, exactly, is that light composed of? We can thank Moses for exercising a bit of holy boldness and asking God for a peek at His heavenly attire. Moses wasn't satisfied to go back to the camp with just the Ten Commandments; He wanted to meet the Author.

God didn't rebuke Moses for his lofty request. Rather, he simply reminded Moses that man, in his sinful state, could not survive the sight of the unveiled glory of God. Nevertheless, God made a divine compromise with His earthly friend: He allowed Moses to see His back, and he would tell Moses His name.

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6, 7)

The name of God and the glory of God (His light) are inseparably interconnected. Space will not allow me to do an in-depth study on the matter here, but I challenge you to study character and Hebrew names. It will be more than worth your time.

DAY GLOW SAINTS

Now, let's get back to our friend Moses. What was the result of his forty days in communion with God? What happens when humanity is exposed to even partial wattage of heavenly light and God's goodness? They glow!

That's right...they absolutely glow! When Moses came down from off the mountain, the people couldn't look at him. He had to cover his face:

"And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him." (Exodus 34:33-35)

"So Moses glowed. So what? Does that one example make the case?" you ask. No...but here are a few more:

- Angels who live in the presence of God are generally described as being bright like flames of fire or wearing shining white robes. (See: Psalm 104:4; Matthew 28:3; and Acts 1:10.)
- When Jesus was transfigured, the apostle Peter described His garments as being white, bright white. (See: Mark 9:3.)

So, let's go back to our first parents. Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. In other words, they were created with His character. Before the fall, they were privileged to interact and be in intimate communion with God. God is described in the Psalms as being dressed in light. And, as we've already discussed, when Moses asked to see God's glory (His covering), God told him His name, the representation of His character.

So, it stands to reason that before the fall Adam and Eve, they were not running around naked; they were covered in light. They glowed. They were surrounded by the glory of God and made in His image, with the same character.

So we can see here that in the beginning, covering was a representation of character—a character that shines forth in light. As we continue this study, we'll see that the principle hasn't changed today.

But what happened when Adam and Eve sinned? They broke the law of God, the reflection of His character in principle. Their lights went out, their glow faded, and for the first time, they saw themselves as we all are. Without God, they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

COVERED WITH CHRIST

When God met with the pair, He asked them how they knew they were naked and if they had eaten from the forbidden tree.

Let the blame games begin! Adam blamed his wife, and God indirectly, for giving her to him. Eve blamed the serpent, and God indirectly for creating him. And that serpent? Well, it seemed he didn't have anything left to say.

So, what did God do with all this blame? Simple! He cursed them all in reverse order. The serpent was debased, the woman was demoted, and Adam was dethroned as ruler of the Earth. Yet, in the midst of all the curses, God provided a promise of a life restored. A sacrifice was made to cover the guilty pair, and that first sacrifice began the long and bloody process of the sacrificial system that would reach its completion when Jesus would shed his blood once and for all to redeem those who will come to God through faith in him.

Jesus took the skins of the sacrificed innocent animal as a representation of Himself. In essence, He covered their skin with a representation of His skin. He covered their temporary works with His enduring righteousness. It was a tangible act of spiritual sacrifice, as well as a tangible example of spiritual clothing.

Are you beginning to see why clothing isn't just an issue of Christian liberty? Do you understand why it is more important than what brand of soy milk you drink, whether or not you read labels, or if you are or are not vegan? What we wear has never been a morally neutral issue when it comes to the people of God.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LEATHER

When Jesus saw that Adam and Eve were improperly clothed, He didn't debate with them about the pros or cons of their chosen mode of dress. We really don't see Adam or Eve saying too much else after they blamed God for their fall. By the point when God sacrificed the animal, they stood and received their newly skinned garments in abject horror.

The Pen of Inspiration wrote that Adam and Eve wept over the fading flowers just like we weep over the loss of dear friends.³ Can you begin to imagine what it must have been like for them to see God sacrifice some type of huge animal, skin it, make coats, and put the barely cold flesh on their naked bodies?

Do you think Adam and Eve could flippantly wear those coats without a second thought about the sin that caused that death? Surely, every time they looked at their robes of skin, they remembered the animal, like a pet to them, that had to die because of their sin and disobedience. Don't you think they trembled in horror to think that someday, their God would die like that poor creature? From that day forward, they knew it was really His death that was foreshadowed in their clothes. ¶¶I believe they saw their clothes as holy, and every time they had to clothe one of their children, they had to tell the story of how they lost their light, sought to cover their sins, and were ultimately covered in clothes that foreshadowed the Redeemer.

Covering was never meant to be a flippant act—not before the fall, and not after it. Covering was, and always will be, a symbol of Christ.

Their coverings were also a promise of salvation and redemption. They pointed forward to the day when they would once again be covered in the robes of light representing their restored character. Like the moon reflects the sun, they would reflect Him, and once again they would glow. Clothing was meant to be an everyday, ever-present object lesson of our relationship with Christ.

The clothes Adam and Eve wore reminded them of Jesus, who created them after the image of Himself and His Father; Jesus, whose glowing character was reflected and reproduced in their radiantly glowing pre-fall garb. Jesus was represented in the coats of skin, and when they looked at each other they were to see Jesus.

Our clothing is meant to be a representation of Jesus, His character within reflected without. So, what does that practically mean for you and I today? The most important piece of clothing that any of us can put on is the robe of Christ's righteousness.

LIVING A PRINCIPLED LIFE FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST

If you keep the picture of Jesus and His sacrifice for us on the cross at the forefront of our minds, it will make it easier to put the principles in this book into practice. There may be some things in this book that you have never heard before. The Bible is clear that if you don't know, or are not aware, God will not hold you accountable. The Bible tells us, *"And the times of this ignorance, God winked at."* (Acts 17:30a)

I believe you love Jesus and want to grow in that love. It is possible that when you look back on the way you have dressed, you may feel deeply sorry for the ways in which you may have

³ *"As Adam witnessed the first signs of decaying nature in the falling leaf, and in the drooping flowers, he mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead."* (Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 1, p. 58)

misrepresented Christ and caused others to stumble. But take heart! If you didn't know any better, you couldn't do any better. But that was just the first part of the verse. It goes on to say, "...but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30b)

Once you see the importance of dressing more inline with what truly represents Christ; once you see how vital it is to be conscious of how our dress affects other, our witness, our health, and our ability to fully prepare for the Second Coming, you will have a choice. You can continue to dress in ways that are hurtful to yourself, your witness, and the cause of Christ, or you can rededicate your life to Christ. You can repent of your past poor or uninformed clothing choices and give Him everything, including any article of clothing that is harmful to your physical, mental, relational, or spiritual health. The choice is and always will be yours.

DRESS AND THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

As we look around at what is happening in the world, there is no question that we are living at the end of the end of time. As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that, since 1844, we have been living in the antitypical Day of Atonement. Right now, Jesus is ministering in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. He is looking for those who love Him so much that they would rather die than do anything in any way to prove themselves unfaithful to Him. Inspiration tells us:

"One wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel...The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful." (Maranatha 82.5)

But what does this have to do with dress? Inspiration goes on to say:

"Those who, having had the light upon the subject of eating and dressing with simplicity, in obedience to moral and physical laws, still turn from the light which points out their duty, will shun duty in other things. By shunning the cross which they would have to take up in order to be in harmony with natural law, they blunt the conscience; and they will, to avoid reproach, violate the ten commandments. There is with some a decided unwillingness to endure the cross and despise the shame." (Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 159, 1890, Councils on Diets and Foods, 49.2)

When we prove unfaithful to God in the area of eating and dressing, we open the door to being unfaithful to Him in other areas. Ultimately, this will lead to the development of a character flaw that will not stand the most important tests.

But by God's grace, I believe this doesn't have to be. This book is written under the assumption that you are seeking, through the indwelling power of the Spirit, to live the life of faith. It is written under the belief that you, like the majority of Christians, have no idea of the lengths the devil has gone to erode the means by which Christ's character could be represented by His people to the world—by the way they dress.

WARNING AND APPEAL

If you know in your heart that you are not totally sold out to Jesus, and if you are satisfied with how you are, STOP! Read to the end of this chapter, follow the instructions there, and then come back to this book.

Prayerfully, take some time and answer the following questions:

- Have you ever disrespected your parents?
- Have you ever hated anyone? Have you done anything to reduce the quality or quantity of another person's life?
- Have you ever had an impure thought about anything or anyone?
- Have you ever taken anything that doesn't belong to you, whether it was time, possessions, or talents?
- Have you ever misrepresented the truth in any way at any point in your life?
- Have you ever been dissatisfied with what you have and unhappy when others are blessed?

If you answered "Yes" to any of those questions, I have to tell you that you have convicted yourself as a sinner. (See: 1 John 3:4) You are guilty before God, and you deserve to die. (See: Romans 6:23) But the good news is that Jesus has stepped between you and the fair punishment, which would be a death sentence. He died for you! (See: John 3:16-17)

If you haven't read about His great sacrifice lately, take a moment and reread what He suffered on our behalf:

- *His struggle in Gethsemane*
Matthew 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-50; Luke 22:39-53; John 18:1-12
- *His Mock trial before the Jews*
Matthew 26:57-75, 27:1; Mark 14:53-72, 15:1; Luke 22:54-71; John 18:13-27
- *His Trial before Pilate*
Matthew 27:2, 11-31; Mark 15:1-20; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-40, 19:1-16
- *His Crucifixion at Calvary*
Matthew 27:31-53; Mark 15:20-38; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:16-30

If your heart isn't broken, then I encourage you to find your copy of *The Desire of Ages* and read the chapters that cover Christ's passion. As you read, remember that it was the Lord of Glory, the Creator of the universe, who subjected Himself to that awful method of death. And why? To save *you*!

Ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins. Ask Him to justify you before God and begin the work of sanctification in your heart. He has promised to answer your prayer!

CHAPTER 4 - LEGALISM, LICENSE, OR LOVE

Which of these statements could you relate to best?

"Is dress important? Of course it is. You can't go to heaven looking like a whore. I always strive to make sure my dresses are well below my knees sitting or standing. I am so glad you are writing a book like this. I tell you some of the ladies come to church looking like they just came straight from the club. Short skirts, low-cut blouses, deliver us! By the way you might want to button one more button . . ." ~ Lucy Legalist

"It really isn't anyone's business how I dress. God knows what's in my heart. He loves me for me not for what I wear. I think all this talk about dress is just putting us back into bondage. Jesus came to set us free. What I wear is between me and Him." ~ Libertine Linda

"Are you serious? Men really are thinking those thoughts about me when I wear tops like that. Wow, I had no idea. So what about . . ." ~ Honestly Ignorant Helen

"You know, I really don't spend too much time worrying about what I wear. Don't get me wrong, I try to look neat and presentable, but that is just a part of the way I'm seeking to glorify God. I really just try to keep in mind what effect my clothes might have on my relationship with God, my health, and my witness to others. I appreciate what Jesus did and is doing for me. I'm just trying to grow in Him in all the areas of my life, so that includes what I wear." ~ Modest Marie

Before we jump into the topic of modesty, let's take some time to look at the mindsets behind the above fictional responses.

THE LEGALIST

Our first respondent, Lucy, is a legalist. Legalism is the belief that we can work our way to heaven. It is the Jesus plus works mentality. It is creating rules and making ourselves or others believe that obedience to those human invented rules will help us to get in better with God.

If you tend toward legalism you may compare yourself with others and get a feeling of satisfaction from appearing better or more able to keep rules and standards. You may trust in your works to save you. Or you may want to give Jesus a helping hand.

If you are a modest legalist, you may dress the part. People can't fault you for what you wear. And if they could, they would be in for a fight.

You may be trusting too much in yourself, your good works, your judgments, your conception of what is righteous. But you may be leaving Jesus out of the picture. If you are, you are forgetting the following verses:

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, (Matthew 23:1-5)

To others we may look the part. Unless our clothing is covered by the righteousness of Jesus, nothing we do or wear will get us any closer to heaven. Clothing is an outward manifestation of an inward commitment; anything less is Pharisaism.

Legalists look modest on the outside but they lack Christ on the inside. If you struggle with legalism ask Jesus to come in to your heart and give you a true picture of who you are. When you see that all the good you think you are doing and the right way you think you are dressing will account for nothing, ask Jesus to cover you with His righteousness. Ask Him to create within you a clean heart and renew a right spirit in you.

As you read this book try to hear what God's message is for you. Resist the temptation to use it to congratulate yourself for what you may be doing right. Nor should you use it as ammunition to attack someone who may not be dressing in the ways you think are best. You may be surprised to find new information that challenges you to come up to higher standards than where you currently are.

THE LICENTIOUS

Lucy's sister, Linda, is licentious. Licentiousness is taking the grace of God for granted. It is taking the death of Christ for granted. It is saying that since God is love "I am free in Christ therefore, I can dress as I please." Or, "God loves me no matter what I do, so I can wear I want". Is that really true? The apostle Paul gives us this answer:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Romans 6:1 – 7)

We will see that dress is not an amoral issue. It has never been. So there are God glorifying ways to dress and there are unhealthful, inconsiderate, selfish and sensual ways to dress. (See: 1 Corinthians 10:31) When we learn better but still choose to dress in the those ways, we are "continuing in sin." James tells us that true faith in Jesus will manifest itself in our actions. James 2 tells us:

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (Vs. 17)

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (Vs. 19, 20)

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (Vs. 24)

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (Vs. 26)

This licentious I-can-wear-what-I-want-and-it-is-none-of-your-business attitude was foretold in the Bible. Paul warned Timothy:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Under the guise of trusting God's love, licentiousness disregards His holiness. When we dress in ways that are selfish and self-centered we show that we really don't love God and we don't care about our fellow men. Some will say that the way a person dresses has nothing to do with their heart. Inspiration tells us something quite different:

There are few who understand their own hearts. The vain, trifling lovers of fashion may claim to be followers of Christ, but their dress and conversation show what occupies the mind and engages the affections. The outside appearance is an index to the heart. True refinement does not find satisfaction in the adorning of the body for display. A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. Simplicity of apparel always makes a sensible woman appear to the best advantage. A refined, cultured mind will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. In the sanctified heart there is no place for thoughts of needless adornment. (Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, p. 93)

If you know that you struggle with sinful licentiousness take some time to study the death of Christ. Think about what he had to suffer in order for you to obtain your salvation. Ask God to give you a greater appreciation for what Jesus has done for you. As you read this book ask God to give you a deeper love for Him as well as a love for others. If you are willing to be made willing God can help you to die to your selfishness so that you can live a life truly for Him.

THE HONESTLY IGNORANT

Like Helen, you may be honestly ignorant. Because of the lack of teaching on this topic combined with the standards-don't-matter approach to Christianity, you may be one of the many women who is trying to live up to what she knows. Like them, you may never have given how you dress the first thought.

For a lot of women this information may be totally new. If this describes you, then as you read, ask God to show you how to best apply these principles. Ephesians 5:10 encourages us to prove what is acceptable to the Lord. Some other versions say, "...find out what pleases the Lord". Ask him to help guide you on the path that keeps you out of both license and legalism.

It is easy to become overwhelmed with new information and go to either of the extremes. You can say, "this is too much, I can't do this. God knows I love him and that is all that matters." In doing that you will fall in to the ditch of license – that is you presumptuously take God's grace for granted; God winks at ignorance. Doing things that we know to be wrong is iniquity.

Or you can jump in feet first, make a ton of changes to yourself, and feel like everyone else around you needs to change too. That isn't the answer either. After the initial shock is gone, if you try to make changes in your own strength you will fail. Whatever you do, do it for love. Love for Jesus and love for the world for which He died.

THE MODEST

If you are seeking by the grace of God to let your outward dress reflect your inward convictions, praise God! May this book be an encouragement to you as you continue to seek the Lord's best in all the areas of your life, including you the way you dress.

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CHAPTER 5 - BIBLICAL “WARDROBE MALFUNCTIONS”

It was Sunday, February 1, 2004. The Carolina Panthers were playing the New England Patriots for the NFL Super Bowl XXXVIII matchup, and the score was ten to fourteen. Both teams filed off the field to their respective locker rooms, and for spectators at home, it was time to use the bathroom, grab some fresh drinks, and gather around for the halftime show.

The performers were Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson, and considering that it was the Super Bowl and both of them were mega-stars at the time, the performance began with the usual fanfare and screaming crowd. During one of the duet's numbers, Justin reached over and ripped off part of Janet's top, revealing nearly everything that was under it. It only lasted for a second before CBS cut to an aerial view of the stadium, but it was long enough for the damage to be done, and a new phrase was born: *wardrobe malfunction*.

By the next morning, even those who hadn't seen the actual event (like myself) had either read about it, heard about it, or seen it replayed on TV. Instantly, the whole world knew what a wardrobe malfunction was. In case you aren't quite clear on the definition of the term, Wikipedia defines a *wardrobe malfunction* as: *"...a euphemism for accidental exposure of intimate parts. It is different from flashing, as the latter implies a deliberate exposure. There has been a long history of such incidents, though the term itself was coined in the mid 2000s and has become one of the most common fashion faux pas."*⁴

Wikipedia goes on to say in the section on *linguistic*:

*"The American Dialect Society defines it as 'an unanticipated exposure of bodily parts'. Global Language Monitor, which tracks usage of words on the internet and in newspapers worldwide, identified the term as the top Hollywood contribution to English (HollyWordie) in 2004...The dictionary defines it as 'the temporary failure of an item of clothing to do its job in covering a part of the body that it would be advisable to keep covered.'"*⁵

Isn't it interesting that despite 6,000 years of degradation and sin, the common consensus is that this "the temporary failure of an item of clothing to do its job in covering a part of the body that it would be advisable to keep covered"? This shows that even secular commentators, editors, and pundits agree that the job of clothing is to cover the body, and some parts are particularly advisable to cover. Hmm...I can't help but think I've heard of that before, and I'm pretty sure it was before Super Bowl XXXVIII.

BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNINGS

On more than one occasion, I've heard pastors and evangelists say that in order to truly understand anything in the Bible, you need to go back and look at when it was first mentioned.

⁴ Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. "Wardrobe Malfunction." Modified 20 July, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wardrobe_malfunction. Accessed 19 May, 2011.

⁵ Ibid. "Wardrobe Malfunction: Linguistic Phenomenon."

Other teachers have said that we can trace all of our doctrines as Seventh-day Adventists back to the book of Genesis in general, and to the first ten chapters in particular. Let's look at a few:

- The Three Personhood of the Godhead
- The Creation of the World
- The Sabbath
- The Institution of Marriage and the Family
- The Plan of Salvation
- The Ultimate Triumph of Good over Evil
- Guiding Principles of Christian Lifestyle:
 - The Optimal Diet
 - The Importance of Useful Labor
 - God's Pattern for Clothing

The topic at hand falls under that last heading: God's pattern for clothing—a sermon you won't hear very often from the pulpit. But it was the first gift that was given to Adam and Eve after the fall.

If we are going to learn anything about the purpose of clothing and what is advisable to keep covered, we'll have to begin at the beginnings of artificial clothing, the time right after the fall.

LEAF BIKINIS AND OTHER CLOTHING THAT DOESN'T COVER

After Adam and Eve ate the fruit, that initial high of forbidden knowledge was short lived. As I mentioned in the third chapter, in eating of that tree, they broke the law of God, the transcription of His character. Also, the glorious light they had been clothed in disappeared, and they were forced to find something else to cover themselves.

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (Genesis 3:7)

Sometimes we breeze over this text, but today we are going to take a close look at it. If you'll notice, they made "aprons". Now really, how much does an apron cover? Would you be okay strolling down Main Street wearing nothing but an apron and a smile? I sure hope not! Nevertheless, the Bible says that this is what Adam and Eve made. Many pastors and Bible teachers have made note of the fact that those aprons were their BEST attempt at covering themselves.

We don't know what time of day it was when Adam and Eve fell, but we do know it was sometime earlier than evening. So, let's give them a few hours. Most decent seamstresses and tailors can whip up a passible outfit in two hours; give them half a day, and they can do wonders. I'd like to suggest, though, that Adam was a lot smarter than your average tailor.

Only a short time before, Adam had named all of the then-known animal life IN A DAY! We only use a small portion of our brains these days, but Adam was working with all the pistons firing. Still, the best he could come up with was aprons? In the Hebrew, the word *apron* translates to "belt"! It is not getting any better.

Basically, Adam and Eve covered their private parts. There is no reason to believe that they were wearing tops. They just made belts—two of the smartest people who would ever lived, walking around in nothing but leaf bikini bottoms!

The interesting part is that even though they tried to cover themselves, they still realized that their clothing was insufficient. ¶ When Jesus came to them (as it may have been His custom to visit them in the cool of the evening), they were not in their usual spots, so He went looking for them. “Adam! Where are you?” He called.

Adam's reply is so revealing: "I heard Your voice and hid because I was naked."

Despite having covered what he considered to be the most important parts, Adam still knew he was not properly covered to be in the presence of God.

PARTIAL NUDITY: NAKEDNESS.

Skip forward a few chapters in your Bible to Genesis 9:20-27, to the story of Noah's nakedness and Canaan's curse.

“And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.” (Genesis 9:20, 21)

As the story goes, Noah's youngest son, Ham, discovered his father lying in some state of undress. Instead of covering his father up and keeping the incident between himself and God, Ham left his father as he found him and went to tell his brothers.

When the older and wiser brothers heard of their father's state, they did the honorable thing: They took a blanket, put it over their shoulders, and walked backward to cover their father in a way that would preserve his dignity as well as their innocence. As a result, they were blessed, while Canaan, Ham's son, was cursed.

Let's take a look at two more examples before we get back to our main story. ¶ First, we'll look at the story of David dancing before the Lord at the return of the Ark of the Covenant. Then, we'll investigate the rumor that Peter and his buddies were fishing in the buff.

DAVID'S SHOW

When the Ark of the Covenant was recovered from the Philistines and was returned to its rightful place in Jerusalem, David was understandably overjoyed. During the festive music and the sacrifices of gratitude, he was so overcome with happiness that he stripped off his clothes and started to dance naked before the Lord—or at least that is what some would have us to believe.

Why is it that so many people are under the impression that David was naked? Perhaps they base their assumption on the fact that his wife Michal angrily rebuked him when he returned home:

“Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!” (2 Samuel 6:20, KJV)

The Douay-Rheims Bible puts it more explicitly:

“And David returned to bless his own house: and Michol the daughter of Saul coming out to meet David, said: How glorious was the king of Israel to day, uncovering himself before the handmaids of his servants, and was naked, as if one of the buffoons should be naked.”

So there you have it! Some will say the Bible tells us that David was naked in public while he was praising and honoring God, but this is exactly why we must never take Bible passages out of context. Just six verses earlier, we read:

"And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod." (2 Samuel 6:14, KJV)

Hmm. That paints quite a different picture than the idea of a naked man running down Main Street like some would have us believe.

David may have been indecently dressed for mixed company, as he was wearing only a linen ephod without his outer robes, so to some extent, Michal may have had a point. Still, her spirit was wrong. David's response to her revealed that she was speaking more from her own wounded pride than a true desire to preserve his modesty. God seconded that judgment, and she never had any children.

PETER'S DRESSED UNDRESSED

The last example I'll give is that of Peter. You know the story: He and his brethren had decided to go on a little fishing trip a short time after the resurrection of Christ. ¶ They didn't have any success until morning, when a Stranger on the shore encouraged them to cast their nets on the other side. They took His advice, and immediately their nets overflowed with fish; there was no question as to who to attribute the miracle to. Peter grabbed his outer cloak, put it on, and jumped in the water to swim to Jesus. ¶ The Bible tells us that Peter was naked.

Does that mean Peter and his fellow fishermen were out on the lake of Galilee as naked and free as the day they were born? No! ¶ Historians and Bible commentators tell us it was very common for men when working in areas, or at tasks, outside of mixed company to take off their outer cloak and work in their undergarments, which were lighter and fit a little bit closer to the body than their outer coats. ¶ Bible commentator Albert Barnes makes this very clear:

*"His fisher's coat—his upper or outer garment or tunic—in distinction from the inner garment or tunic, which was worn next to the skin. In the case of Peter, it may have been made of coarse materials such as fishermen commonly wore, or such as Peter usually wore when he was engaged in this employment. Such garments are common with men of this occupation. This outer garment he probably had laid aside...He was naked - He was undressed, with nothing on but the undergarment or tunic. The word does not require us to suppose a greater degree of nakedness than this. See the Mark 14:51 note; also 1 Samuel 19:24 note."*⁶

Peter, in order to appear more presentable when meeting his Savior, didn't want to be seen in his underwear. ¶ So let's bring his all together. After the fall, our first parents made coverings for themselves; soon after, they realized their coverings were insufficient for meeting with God. ¶ Noah's sons realized that whatever the state of undress their father was in, it was inappropriate to look at him in such a state, and they took pains to preserve his modesty and theirs. ¶ David's dancing experience shows us that underdress or wearing undergarments in the presence of mixed company is considered the same as being naked. Michal's complaint was that the

⁶ Barnes, Albert. "John 21:7 – Commentary" Online Parallel Bible: Weaving God's Word into the Web 18 May 2011. Weaving God's Word into the Web. 4 August 2011. <http://bible.cc/john/21-7.htm>.

maidens saw their king improperly clothed. ¶¶ Finally, in the New Testament, the Edenic definition of partial clothing as nakedness is repeated as Peter seeks to cover himself in front of the risen Christ.

So, to recap, partial nudity or improper clothing is considered nakedness. Being improperly clothed in front of God or persons of the opposite sex is also considered nakedness. This is a biblical standard.

CHAPTER 6 - TOO HOT TO HANDLE

In the last chapter, we saw that clothing that doesn't properly cover the body can be considered inappropriate, at least from the standpoint of modesty. In this chapter, we will find that by God's standard, clothing can be considered inappropriate if it proves to be harmful to our health.

In this look into the history of clothing, we often find ourselves peering into the moments right after the fall. It did not take Adam and Eve long to realize the magnitude of what they had done and that they were, in fact, naked.

We don't often think or talk about it, but their nakedness didn't just embarrass them. Rather, their loss of their garments of light left them a bit chilly. The Pen of Inspiration writes:

"The air, that had been of a mild and even temperature, seemed to chill them...To relieve the sense of lack and nakedness which they realized, their attention was directed to seek a covering for their forms; for how could they meet the eye of God and angels unclothed?" (Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 1, p. 41; Signs of the Times January 23, 1879, par. 5, The Story of Redemption, p. 38)

Adam and Eve realized their need for clothing to ensure their warmth, as well as to conceal their bodies. But, as we saw before, what they found to cover themselves could not achieve the desired results.

So God found the guilty pair and saw them in their inefficient outfits. He knew that what they were wearing would not protect them from the new harsh realities of a varying climate, so He gave them something better. The Bible tells us:

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Genesis 3:21)

Sometimes we breeze by what God gave to Adam and Eve. We may not say it out loud, but in the back of our minds, when we think of the *coats* God gave them, we likely think of the kind we wear in the winter. But that picture isn't exactly true. The word for what God gave them is transliterated as *kēthoneth* in Hebrew, and it is defined as a "tunic or shirt-like sleeved undergarment that varied in length from knee to ankle."⁷ In the Old Testament, KJV, it is translated as "coat", "garment", or "robe". In the New Testament, the Greek transliteration *chitōn* is also defined as a "tunic or undergarment worn next to the skin"⁸; this is translated "coat", "garment", or "clothes".

So, to put it into context, the first things God gave Adam and Eve to wear were what we might call long-sleeved tunics. These full-coverage undergarments were the foundation on which the rest of the Hebrew wardrobe rested.

⁷ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search: *Kēthoneth* (Strong's 3801)" 1996-2011. Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H3801&t=KJV>

⁸ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search: *Chitōn* (Strong's 5509)" 1996-2011. Accessed Jul 10, 2011. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G5509&t=KJV>

Here are just a few of the references to the fully coverage undergarments being worn by the followers of God in the Old (*kēthoneth*) and the New Testaments (*chitōn*):

- Adam and Eve: *"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."* (Genesis 3:21)
- Joseph: *"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors."* (Genesis 37:3)
- Aaron and the priests: *"And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office."* (Exodus 28:4)
- Samuel: *"Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."* (1 Samuel 2:19)
- Job: *"By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat."* (Job 30:18)
- The three Hebrews: *"Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."* (Daniel 3:21)
- The disciples: *"Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."* (Matthew 10:10)
- Jesus: *"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout."* (John 19:23)

But just why were these undershirts so important to the people of God? It had as much to do with health as it did with modesty. Remember, in the quote above we learned that not only did Adam and Eve experience shame for the first time, but they also experienced being cold. Therefore, God gave them garments to cover their same and help their bodies to better regulate their temperatures. Inspiration tells us:

"The atmosphere was changed. It was no longer unvarying as before the transgression. God clothed them with coats of skins to protect them from the sense of chilliness and then of heat to which they were exposed." (Spiritual Gifts Volume 3, p. 46; Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 1, p. 49; Signs of the Times January 30, 1879, par. 8: The Story of Redemption, p. 46}

Those full-coverage undergarments were not the only thing that were worn. In Bible times, the wardrobes of men and women were composed of five basic items of clothing:^{9 10 11 12}

1. **The inner tunic.** For men, this full-coverage undergarment reached anywhere from the knees to the ankle. For women, it was ankle length. The inner garment fit closer to the body than the outer one, but all were loose.
2. **The mantel, cloak, or robe.** This long, blanket-like garment was worn over the inner tunic. It was a wide and long poncho-like garment that doubled as a blanket at night. Like their

⁹ Tim Dowley, *The Kregel Pictorial Guide to Everyday Life in Bible Times*, (Kregel Publications, 1999) pp. 4-5.

¹⁰Brian Schwertley, "Modesty in Apparel: Bringing a Believer's Attire into Subjection to the Word of God" Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/Modesty%20in%20Apparel.htm>.

¹¹Fred H. Wight, "Manners And Customs of Bible Lands" Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://baptistbiblebelievers.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4Yj30A2xK%2FM%3D&tabid=232&mid=762>.

¹² Wayne Blank, "Coat and Tunic." Accessed July 10, 2011 <http://www.keyway.ca/htm2001/20010710.htm>

inner tunics, the women's outer garments were longer than those of men, reaching past the ankles to the feet.

3. **The girdle.** The girdle was made of leather or linen. It tied around the waist to keep the long, flowing garments together and make it easier to walk. It was also used by men, fashioned into makeshift shorts for heavy labor or battle.
4. **The headdress.** Both men and women wore something on their heads to protect themselves from the sun.
5. **Sandals.** Both men and women wore simple leather sandals.

The original long-sleeved tunics (*kēthoneth*) were the foundational garments given to protect Adam, Eve, and their descendants from the heat, as well as the cool. If that sounds a little far fetched to you, it may not sound so strange when you consider what our nation's leading health experts are recommending to combat the latest killer disease.

DYING FOR A TAN

A recent health epidemic has led to an increase in the demand for so-called "protective clothing". They are not talking about bulletproof vests to protect from the rise in violent crime or the Kevlar backpacks kids might need because of the rise in school shootings.¹³ The major health epidemic we're talking about here attacks the body's largest organ, the skin.

Our skin is responsible for a host of various processes. It protects our bodies from injury and germs. It regulates our body temperature and fluids. It communicates sensations such as pain, temperature, and pressure, to the brain. When the skin is compromised, other health issues are soon to follow.

So, why have scientists, doctors, and researchers encouraged the general public to put on more clothing? The answer is simple: the rise in skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer.¹⁴ There are more new cases of skin cancer than cases of breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancer combined.¹⁵ It affects young and old. Melanoma accounts for one-third of all pediatric cancers, and 90 percent of those cases occur in ten- to nineteen-year-old girls.¹⁶

Not only does it harm people of all ages, but it also affects people of all races and nationalities. Although melanoma is relatively rare in minority groups, it is frequently fatal. Minorities are more likely to be diagnosed with an advance stage of cancer.¹⁷

What makes skin cancer all the more dangerous is developing a non-melanoma skin cancer (basal or squamous cell). These are very curable with early detection,¹⁸ but they still greatly increase your risk of developing other forms of cancers later in life.¹⁹

¹³ Back Pack Shield. Home Page. Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://backpacksheild.com>

¹⁴ American Cancer Society, "Skin Cancer Facts." Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/CancerCauses/SunandUVExposure/skin-cancer-facts>

¹⁵ American Cancer Society, "Cancer Facts & Figures 2010" Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsfigures/cancerfactsfigures/cancer-facts-and-figures-2010>

¹⁶ Skin Cancer Foundation, "Skin Cancer Facts." Accessed July 10, 2011 <http://www.skincancer.org/Skin-Cancer-Facts/>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ American Cancer Society. Skin Cancer Facts

FIGHTING CANCER WITH CLOTHING?

The American Cancer Society offers a list of things we can do to lower our risk of skin cancer. These include avoiding the sun during peak times, seeking shade, wearing sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats, and, of course, slathering on the sunscreen. Most of these are common knowledge and generally practiced, but one is seldom considered, particularly during summer months:

“Slip on a shirt: Cover up with protective clothing to guard as much skin as possible when you are out in the sun. Choose comfortable clothes made of tightly woven fabrics that you cannot see through when held up to a light.”²⁰

In the twenty-first century, guarding as much skin as possible seems to be a counterintuitive idea. Most of us start taking off our layers of clothing as soon as the mercury starts to rise. Nevertheless, if you remember back to our story, when God made clothing for His people, full-coverage undergarments were the foundation piece.

The American Cancer Society isn’t the only major organization that is encouraging us to put on more clothes to combat the effects of sun damage on our skin. Here are a few more explicit recommendations from some of the most widely trusted organizations:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

“Loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and long pants made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection from the sun’s UV rays. A wet t-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry one. Darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors.”²¹

The United States Department of Health and Human Services:

“Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants or a long skirt.”²²

The National Institute of Health (NIH):

“Protect your skin from the sun when you can. Wear protective clothing such as hats, long-sleeved shirts, long skirts, or pants.”²³

The Skin Cancer Foundation gives additional insights into the types of fabric that are best and why:

¹⁹Medscape Education. “Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer Increases Risk for Subsequent Cancers” Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/579740>;

Journal of the National Cancer Institute. “History of Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer Is Associated with Increased Risk for Subsequent Malignancies” Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://jnci.oxfordjournals.org/content/100/17/1191.2.full.pdf>,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Skin Cancer.” Accessed July 10, 2011. http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm

²² Health Finder. “Protect Your Skin from the Sun” Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopicFull.aspx?topicID=44>

²³ American Cancer Society. “Skin Cancer Melanoma: Can Melanoma be Prevented?” Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/SkinCancer-Melanoma/DetailedGuide/melanoma-skin-cancer-prevention>

*"As a rule, light-colored, lightweight and loosely-woven fabrics do not offer much protection from the sun. That white t-shirt you slip on at the beach when you feel your skin burning provides only moderate protection from sunburn, with an average ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 7. At the other end of the spectrum, a long-sleeved dark denim shirt offers an estimated UPF of 1,700, which amounts to a complete sunblock. In general, clothing made of tightly woven fabric best protects skin from the sun. The easiest way to test if a fabric can protect your skin is to hold it up to the light. If you can see through it, then UV radiation can penetrate it – and your skin."*²⁴

Why is it that wearing long sleeves, long pants, or long skirts is so important? In a nutshell, they cover the skin. Dr. Lee Cranmer, a Tucson, Arizona oncologist and director of the Arizona Cancer Center Skin Cancer Institute at the University of Arizona, uses two photos to demonstrate this.

*"The first, taken in the 1930s, shows people at the beach in long dresses, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants. Very little skin is exposed. In the other, from the 1980s, beachgoers dressed in skimpy swimsuits soak up the rays."*²⁵

A recent study by the Stanford University School of Medicine Department of Dermatology, published in the medical journal, *Cancer Causes & Control*, supports the idea that what we wear impacts our likelihood of being overexposed. The article was entitled, "Hat, Shade, Long Sleeves, or Sunscreen? Rethinking U.S. Sun Protection Messages based on Their Relative Effectiveness." It found wearing protective clothing to be more effective in reducing the numbers of sunburns than using sunscreen.²⁶

As Christians, we didn't have waited for science to confirm what the Bible had already given us to do. God gave us something better so we won't have to suffer with the heartache that comes with a cancer diagnosis.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

Protection from the sun is not the only benefit of properly covering your arms. The following article was taken from *The Review and Sabbath Herald*, published on November 25, 1862, and written by one of the doctors in our church:

"One of the gravest mistakes in our dress is the very thin covering of our arms and legs. No physiologist can doubt that the extremities require as much covering as the body. A fruitful source of disease: of congestion in the head, chest, and abdomen, is found in the nakedness of the arms and legs, which prevents a fair distribution of the blood.

"A young lady has just asked me what she can do for her very thin arms. She says she is ashamed of them. I felt of them through the thin lace covering, and found them freezing cold. I asked her what she supposed would make muscles grow? Exercise, she replied. Certainly, but exercise makes them

²⁴ Skin Cancer Foundation. "Protective Clothing." Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.skincancer.org/sun-protective-clothing.html>

²⁵ AZ Central. "Skin-cancer experts tout Don't Fry Day" Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2011/05/27/20110527phoenix-skin-cancer-memorial-day-weekend-warning.html#ixzz1Rc24wAaA>, <http://yourlife.usatoday.com/health/medical/cancer/story/2011/05/Skin-cancer-experts-tout-Dont-Fry-Day/47721750/1>

²⁶ Linos E, Keiser E, Fu T, Colditz G, Chen S, Tang JY. Accessed July 10, 2011. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21637987>.

grow only by giving them more blood. Six months of vigorous exercise would do less to give those naked, cold arms circulation, than would a single month were they warmly clad.

"The value of exercise depends upon the temperature of the muscles. A cold gymnasium may be considered unprofitable. Its temperature should be between sixty and seventy, or the limbs should be warmly clothed, I know that our servant girls and blacksmiths, by constant and vigorous exercise, acquire large, fine arms, in spite of their nakedness. And if young ladies will labor as hard from morning till night as do these useful classes, they may have as fine arms, but even then it is doubtful if they would get rid of their congestions in the head, lungs, and stomach without more dregs upon the arms and legs.

"Perfect health depends upon perfect circulation. Every living thing that has the latter, has the former. Put your hand under your dress upon your body. Now put your hand upon your arm. If you find the body warmer than the arm, you have lost the equilibrium of circulation. The head has too much blood, producing headache or sense of fullness; or the chest has too much blood, producing cough, rapid breathing, pain in the side, or palpitation of the heart; or the stomach has too much blood, producing indigestion; or the liver has too much blood, producing some disturbance; or the bowels have too much blood, producing constipation or diarrhea. Any or all of these difficulties are temporarily relieved by immersion of the feet or hands in hot water, and they are permanently relieved by such dress and exercise of the extremities as will make the derivation permanent. "Again I say, the extremities require as much clothing as the body. Women should dress their arms and legs with one or two thicknesses of knit woolen garments which fit them. The absurdity of loose flowing sleeves and wide-spread skirts, I will not discuss.

"Do you ask why the arms and legs may not become accustomed to exposure like the face? I answer, God has provided the face with an immense circulation, because it must be exposed.

"A distinguished physician of Paris declared, just before his death, " I believe that during the twenty-six years I have practiced my profession in this city, twenty thousand children have been borne to the cemeteries a sacrifice to the absurd custom of naked arms." When in Harvard, many years ago, I heard the distinguished Dr. J.C. Warren say, "Boston sacrifices five hundred babies every year by not clothing their arms." Those little arms should have thick, knit, woolen, warm sleeves, extending from the shoulder to the hand."²⁷

More than 100 years before the CDC and the NIH were championing the benefits of wearing covering, we, as a Church, recognized the importance of it. It can take some time to break the health-diminishing habit of walking around with our limbs improperly covered. It is easier to do when the weather gets cooler, but it can be accomplished in warmer months and climates. Remember the Italian proverb: "What keeps out the cold keeps out the heat."²⁸ There is a reason why desert dwellers don't wear tank tops and shorts.

TRENDING MODEST

If you are worried about looking strange wearing long sleeves in the summer months, take heart. The rising awareness of the connection between skin exposure and skin cancer has prompted many

²⁷ D. Lewis, M. D. "A Word About Dress." Review and Herald, November 25, 1862, page 26.
http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18621125-V20-26_B.pdf#view=fit

²⁸ World of Quotes. "Italian Proverbs." Accessed July 10, 2011.
<http://www.worldofquotes.com/proverb/Italian/52/index.html>

mainstream clothing retailers to add lightweight, long-sleeved tops to their summer offerings. In addition to this, there is a fashion trend toward more conservative fashions, as this *Daily Mail* article brings out:

"This spring, it's time to cover up. Seriously.

"A more reserved style is set to become so avant-garde that even the supercool Kate Moss was spotted wearing a modest floor-length, long-sleeved number on her recent trip to Rio.

"The Valentino 2011 Spring/Summer collection saw models looking demure and dainty, with high necks and long sleeves, prissy polka dots and embroidered daisies.

"The modest look is already a hit with celebrities such as Kate Bosworth and Alexa Chung — who often says the image she strives to achieve is that of a French librarian. If it's good enough for her..."²⁹

Of course, the world's version of modesty may be a far cry from actual modesty as the Church would define it. Nevertheless, the fact that more people will be wearing higher necklines, longer sleeves, and maxi dresses makes it easier and more acceptable for those of us who want to dress better for the sake of health and modesty.

²⁹ Amber Bayliss. "Cover up for the New Modesty." Accessed July 10, 2011.
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1360270/Cover-new-modesty.html>

CHAPTER 7 - DRESSED TO KILL

For the past six or so years, tight clothing has had a strangle hold on fashion. From super-tight tees to body-hugging skinny jeans, the trend in fashion seems to be two sizes too small. That sucked-in look has taken its toll, and there is a growing list of health problems that can be directly attributed to tight under- and outerwear.

But before we look at some of those health problems, let's first go back and look at God's original designs for the clothing of His people and see what lessons we can learn from it.

FREE-FLOWING CLOTHING

From 1930-60, the girdle was a popular item of clothing (or perhaps better defined as an instrument of torture) for women. This elasticized garment wrapped around a woman's lower abdomen, hips, and thighs to reshape them into what was considered by society at the time to be more pleasing.

The purpose of a girdle has always been to gather something together; the only difference is when they first came in to use they were more like our modern belts. Biblical girdles gathered clothing to make them easier to move. They were not used to gather skin and accentuate the human body.

In the last chapter, we saw that the basic garments of the Bible players were full-coverage undergarments, outer tunic, robe (or mantle), the girdle, headdress, and shoes. Both men and women wore these elements of clothing. The length and style was what differentiated the garments of men from the garments of women.

The original garments that were worn were loose and flowing, so girdles were utilized by both men and women, especially when traveling or working. The girdles kept other clothing from getting in their way or tripping them up while they were working.

Loose, flowing clothing was not the standard for all nations. As we will see, many early nations perfected the "art" of creating body-revealing clothing. Their skill at using clothing to reveal what should be concealed can be seen in the sculptures and pictures that have been left to us as records—granite, clay, and stone reminders of what was considered fashionable and appealing.

We saw that the original full-coverage tunics protected the people of God from the hot Middle Eastern sun and the corresponding diseases resulting from overexposure. Let's look at some of the problems we are facing today because of the way we've abused our bodies. In doing so, we can see what miseries loose-fitting garments can save us from.

PUTTING A SQUEEZE ON YOUR HEALTH

In recent years, there has been a rise in research and reporting on the effects of wearing tight clothing. This corresponds with the rise in the popularity of body-compressing clothing. In this chapter, we will look at seven of the major health issues that arise from wearing super-tight clothing.

FEELING FAINT?

Although less common now than in the Victorian era, fainting is still a problem associated with wearing tight clothing. The corset, used as part of formal and evening wear, is as much of a culprit now as it was then, though most women don't wear corsets on a regular basis. Long-line bras and other upper body-shaping undergarments can constrict your lungs, depriving you of oxygen and leaving you feeling breathless and a little faint. Do you have to suck in your stomach and hold your breath to get it on? If so, it's probably too tight, and you are putting your health at risk.

FOGGY BRAINS AND BLURRED VISION

Feeling faint is not the only problem that comes with body-hugging fashions. If you tend to suffer with headaches or have trouble with your eyes, the source of the problem could be as simple as your neck-cinching choker or vice-like headband.

Wearing items of clothing that constrict the blood vessels around the neck and head can decrease the blood flow to the brain and increase the pressure in your eyes. This leads to a host of problems including dizziness, lightheadedness, vision problems, and increased intraocular pressure, which is a risk factor for glaucoma,³⁰ a potentially blinding eye disease.

That headband or collar may look cute, but if it is cutting off the blood to your brain or giving you a headache, it really isn't worth it.

ACID REFLUX AND HEARTBURN

If you regularly suffer from heartburn, you may want to rethink what you are wearing as much as what you are eating. Clothing that is tight around the stomach or midsection can negatively affect digestion. This happens as acids are pushed from the stomach up the esophagus, resulting in that horribly uncomfortable feeling known as acid reflux or the burning of heartburn.^{31 32}

So before you pop Tagamet®, Tums®, or Rolaids®, consider changing into something a little looser. Your stomach and pocketbook may thank you.

STOMACHACHES, CRAMPS, AND OTHER ABDOMINAL DISCOMFORTS

Abdominal issues and Western women seem to go hand in hand, but research published at the turn of this century questioned whether that really needs to be the case. Professor John Dickinson, of the Wolfson Institute of Preventative Medicine in London, found that tight clothing could force endometrial cells in to the ovaries, leading to abdominal pain and endometriosis.

The professor found that much of the abdominal pain suffered by Victorian women could be explained by the constricting ways in which they dressed. His theory is further supported by the fact that in countries such as India and central African countries, where the native dress is loose flowing and non-constrictive, they experience very few incidents of endometriosis.³³

³⁰ C Teng, R Gurses-Ozden, J M Liebmann, C Tello, and R Ritch. "Effect of a tight necktie on intraocular pressure." Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1771792/>

³¹ Jutta Schulze. "Overtight clothing – a trigger for heartburn?" Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://press.bayerhealthcare.com/en/press/news-details-page.php/10381/>

³² Columbia University Medical Center. Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/student/health/pdf/E-H/Heartburn%20GERD.pdf>

³³ The Guardian. "Dressed to Kill." Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/1999/nov/23/healthandwellbeing.health3>

Endometriosis is just one of the potentially debilitating conditions that comes from wearing tight, body-shaping clothing and undergarments. Constrictive clothing can lead to poor digestion, as well as constipation.

So if you find yourself suffering during that time of the month, or throughout the month, the problem could be what you are wearing.

A PAIN IN THE BACK

Almost everyone has suffered from back pain at one time or another. But something you may not realize is that what you are wearing could be wearing out your back. Improper bras that do not stabilize the bust correctly can lead to upper back and shoulder pain.^{34 35} Tight-fitting pants and skirts that squeeze the nerves can lead to lower back pain.

According to Dr. Richard Brassard, president of the American Chiropractic Association, "Tight clothes restrict a person from moving comfortably, resulting in poor posture and misalignment of the spine."

³⁶

MERALGIA PARESTHETICA (TINGLING THIGH SYNDROME)

Do your legs ever feel numb, tingly, or have a pain running down them, especially along the sides? If they do, you could be experiencing meralgia paresthetica, also known as tingling thigh syndrome. The cause might be something as simple as your girdle, Spanx, or skinny jeans.

Tingling thigh syndrome (TTS), true to its name, is a condition that causes your thighs to feel numb and tingly. It has historically been seen in middle-aged men, but the rise in the use of "foundational garments" and skinny jeans has led to the rise of the syndrome in otherwise healthy, athletic teenagers and young adult women.³⁷

TTS is the result of compression of the lateral femoral cutaneous nerve (LFCN), which carries messages to and from your brain. This nerve runs from your lower back through your pelvis and attaches to your groin and the muscles of your upper thighs. When this nerve is compressed or damaged, you experience numbness in your thighs.³⁸

The remedy for this syndrome is very simple: Simply stop wearing constricting pants, Spanx, or girdles, and the pain should subside in a few months.

URINARY AND YEAST INFECTIONS

³⁴ The Independent. "Is Your Bra Making You Ill." Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/is-your-bra-making-you-ill-1044078.html>

³⁵ The BBC. "Ill-Fitting Bras – A Medical Perspective." Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A54207425>

³⁶ The American Chiropractic Association. "Today's Fashion Can be Tomorrows Pain." Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.acatoday.org/content.cfm?CID=73>

³⁷ Nancy Shute. "Doctors to Teen Athletes: Skip Spanx" Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2011/03/28/134854281/doctor-to-teen-athletes-skip-spanx>

³⁸ Drugs.com. "Meralgia Paresthetica" Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.drugs.com/cg/meralgia-paresthetica-aftercare-instructions.html>

No list of the problems caused by tight clothing would be complete without a look at the various infections that are nurtured or caused by it.³⁹ Urinary tract infection (UTI) and yeast infections are two of the scourges of womanhood.⁴⁰ While there can be many causes for these, both conditions can be directly linked to wearing tight undergarments and pants.⁴¹

When you consider that frequent UTI puts you at risk of the more serious kidney infection, as well as the cost of treating yeast infections, you might think twice about the perceived benefits of tight undergarments and pants.⁴²

These seven are some of the common problems caused by following modern fashion's demands, but this is by no means an exhaustive list. The sad part is that most of these problem are preventable, just by changing what you wear.

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³⁹ Mayo Clinic Staff. "Urinary tract infection." Accessed May 18, 2011.
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/urinary-tract-infection/DS00286>

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ National Kidney & Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse. "What I need to know about My Child's Urinary Tract Infection." http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/kudiseases/pubs/utichildren_ez/

⁴² National Kidney & Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse. "Urinary Tract Infections in Adults." Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/kudiseases/pubs/utiadult/>

CHAPTER 8 - DISTINCTIVELY DIFFERENT

When God covered Adam and Eve, He covered them completely, just as He saved them completely when he saved them. But, just as there were different curses after the fall, there were different degrees of covering for men and women.

Did Adam and Eve have matching coats? Careful study of the Bible indicates that they didn't. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He sees the end from the beginning and is always in the present. That is why He can be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God of the living.

If God knew He would need to make an injunction against women wearing men's apparel and men putting on women's garments, why would He cause confusion by not making a distinction from the start?

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." (Deuteronomy 22:5)

If there is no such thing as a man's garment, how could a woman wear it? If there are no items associated with women's apparel, how could a man put them on?

God created the garments of Adam and Eve as a means of covering their nakedness. To get an idea of what the minimums of those garments were, we would need to see what God considers nakedness to be for men and women – who are distinctively different.

GARMENTS FOR THE GODLY MAN

Exodus 28:42 gives us more than a clue as to what God considered nakedness for men:

"And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:"

God was speaking of the coverings for the priests in this passage, but it still gives us insight into what God considered to be nakedness when it comes to men. Now, we must remember that the priests were not doing a paper-pushing type of job; rather, they performed hard labor like lifting lambs, bulls, and other heavy livestock on and off the altar of sacrifice. They also had to go in and out of the sanctuary. Because of this active labor, God insisted that they wear breeches to cover the nakedness under their ankle-length robes.

GARMENTS FOR THE GODLY WOMAN

What about Eve? Was she given a similar garment? Eve wore full-coverage undergarments as well, but hers was approximately ankle length or a little longer. In the next chapter, we will look at the garments of the nations that were contemporary with the Israelites throughout history. We will see that until less than 200 years ago, women wore long, skirted garments.

In Isaiah 47:1-3, we see a negative perspective of what God considers nakedness for a woman. God spoke figuratively of the degradation of Babylon:

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man."

She would have to work as a slave in the dust, with bare legs and uncovered thighs. In the passage above, we see that nakedness for men was the uncovering of the area between the loins (waist/private area) and the thighs (area from the waist to the knees). God extended that area for women to include the leg (knee to the ankle).

THE REASONABLY DRESSED WOMAN

We get our final clue as to how God wanted His daughters to dress when we see Paul's councils to Timothy on order in the church. We'll look at I Timothy 2: 1-10 for context:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 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; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Verses 1 and 2 remind us of the need for praying for everyone in general and people in authority in particular. The second half of verse 2 tells us why: *"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."* We would all agree that it is important for us to pray for people, especially government officials. And we would agree that it is necessary to pray that God will continue to have the angels hold the winds of strife so we can have time to do God's work in peace.

Verses 3 through 6 put the focus on Jesus. It pleases God when we pray, for He would have everyone to be saved, and that is why He gave us Jesus. This is one of the reasons He ordained Paul to preach to the Gentiles (Verse 7).

With the above in mind, we come to Verse 8. Paul admonishes men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands (pray in a manner of supplication with a heart that isn't defiled by sin), without wrath (a spirit of contention or anger), and doubting (a spirit of faithlessness). We would all agree that it is still important to have the right spirit in prayer. We would agree that it is still important to come to God in the proper attitude. So we can see that this is still relevant for our worship today.

Finally, we come to Verses 9 and 10, which reaffirm the mode of dress for women and the reason why this mode was introduced: *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."* Women are instructed to wear *"modest apparel"* and conduct themselves with *"shamefacedness and sobriety"* and adorn themselves *"with good works."*

The Greek translation of *modest* is *kosmios*, which means “well arranged, seemly, or modest”. It comes from the root word *kosmos*. Do you recognize that word? It is where we get our English word *cosmology*, “the study of the universe,” and even *cosmetology*, “the study of applying beauty treatments”. That gives us some insights into how we are to be dressed.

Our dress should be orderly, well arranged, and beautiful – just like the universe and the world God has created for us. We can’t believe that the same God that created all the beauties of nature would have just nonchalantly thrown together something for His daughters to wear; nor would it be right to believe that it is pleasing to Him for us to dress in a way that is sloppy or slovenly. That isn’t modest.

Our orderliness in dress is a reflection of the God who created us, His spirit who indwells us, and His Son whose likeness we are seeking each day. This is important. You can be covered, but if you are mismatched and tacky, you are not rightly representing God nor Christ.

Let’s look at the next word. Apparel is translated from the Greek word *katastole*, a feminine noun defined as “to send or let down, to lower (kata: ‘down,’; stello: ‘to send’), primarily a garment let down; hence, ‘dress, attire,’ in general (cp. stole: a loose outer garment worn by kings and persons of rank, Eng., stole).”⁴³

As we can see, *katastole* is a compound word. It is interesting to see that the second part of the word, *stole*, is the word used for the garment worn by kings and people of rank. In the next chapter, we will see that almost across the board, the higher a person’s rank in society, the more clothing they wore. Lower-class people wore less clothing than upper class, and slaves ran around naked, or pretty close to it.

This tells us how highly God thinks of us and how highly He wants us to think of ourselves. We are His children. We are no longer slaves to sin, but we are free. We have been adopted into His royal family, and our clothing should represent this royal relationship to Him.

Fire Extinguishers – not Flame Throwers

The word *katastole* is taken from the root word, *katastellō*, which is a verb. *Thayer’s Lexicon* gives us these insights into the word: “1) to send or put down, to lower; 2) to put or keep down one who is roused or incensed, to repress, restrain, appease, quiet.”⁴⁴

This Greek word, *katastellō*, is used twice in the New Testament, both times in Acts 19, during the story of the riot that took place in Ephesus over the preaching of Paul.

Demetrius and the other silversmith had riled up the city, purporting that Paul and his associates were going to abolish the worship of the goddess Diana. They grabbed two of Paul’s associates and rushed into the theater. They could not be calmed down and shouted, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” for two hours straight.

⁴³ Blue Letter Bible. “Vine’s Expository Dictionary on New Testament Words. “Strong’s G2689 – Katastolē.” May 18, 2011. <http://www.blueletterbible.org>.

⁴⁴ Blue Letter Bible. “Strong’s G2687 – Katastellō.” Accessed May 18, 2011. <http://www.blueletterbible.org>.

Finally, the town clerk came in. In his speech to the unruly mob, we see the word used twice: t part of his speech, Act 19:35-36:

"And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly." (Acts 19:35-36)

The town clerk *appeased* the people and told them to be *quiet*. They were angry and upset, but the vast majority didn't even know why (Verse 32) and were just taking part in the spirit of the day. They needed someone who could see the situation as it was and work to quench, and not fan, the flames of their irrational passions.

Going back our main verse for this section, I Timothy 2:4:

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

That is God's desire for all men. In the context of this text, how does God expect Christian women to help Him attain this goal? The answer is by dressing modestly. Paul was writing in a very sensual and sexualized age – the age of the original Olympics, the worship of the naked form, a time of unbridled lust and lasciviousness. Is the time we are living in any better?

Men are bombarded day in and day out by images of sex and sensuality. Sexuality is used to sell everything from cars to toothpaste. So the question must be asked, do we want to dress in a way that excites those passions in godly and ungodly men, or do we, as women, want to do as much as is in our control *"to put or keep down one who is roused or incensed, to repress, restrain, appease, quiet"*?

Seventeenth-century Puritan preacher Richard Baxter paints a vivid word picture of this idea:

*"If it [your immodesty] tend to the ensnaring of the mind of the beholders in procacious [pert; petulant; forward; saucy], lustful, wanton passions, though you say, you intend it not, it is your sin, that you do that which probably will procure it, yea, that you did not your best to avoid it. And though it be their sin and vanity that is the cause it is nevertheless your sin to be the unnecessary occasion; for you must consider that you live among diseased souls! And you must not lay a stumbling block in their way, nor blow up the fire of their lust, nor make your ornaments their snares; but you must walk among sinful persons, as you would do with a candle among straw or gunpowder; or else you may see the flame which you would not foresee, when it is too late to quench it."*⁴⁵

Believe it or not, this text was written almost 400 years ago! If reformers were encouraging Christian women to dress in a modest and God-honoring way four centuries ago, in a day and age that we can only presume was relatively more modest in many areas than ours, how much more important is it for us to dress in a way that doesn't ignite the fires of lust today?

There is another reason why we don't want to walk around careless of the impact of our dress on the people we come in contact with. That reason is given to us by our Lord Himself in Matthew 5:27- 30:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his

⁴⁵ Richard Baxter. "Christian Ethics." *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*. Vol. 1. London, 1838. 392.

heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

We know what that means for men, but what does it mean for the woman who is striving to be godly? We should be careful not to dress in any way that would insight lust in the hearts of others or give others a bad example. Is it really Christ-like to say, "It's his problem. He just shouldn't be looking" or "Men just need to have more self-control."

Jesus was a man. He was tempted at all points, but He didn't sin. That didn't mean the devil didn't try. Would we want to have been used as satanic instruments to tempt Christ? If the answer is a resounding "No way!" as it should be, then why would we want to be used to tempt men who are seeking with all their hearts to follow Him? Why would we want to be used to fan the perverted passions of men who are still lost in the world? If we are doing that, even unknowingly, aren't we hindering instead of hastening the coming of Jesus?

But Jesus has more to say about this issue, just in case we don't get the underlying inference of that passage. He is clear about how he feels about people who cause others to sin:

"Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Luke 17:1,2)

Did you notice the common implement of death? It is a millstone tied around you while you are thrown into the midst of the sea. A woman we find in the book of Revelation also suffered such a punishment:

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." (Revelation 18:21)

Jesus wants us to be clear. He wants us to understand how important it is to Him that everyone has a fair opportunity to be saved. He doesn't want us to be associated with anything that will in any way cause others to be lost. Jesus set the standards of dress from the beginning; He affirmed it in the Old Testament. And that is why He reaffirmed it in the New Testament. To undermine the affirmations of Jesus, and cause many to be lost, satanic agencies have been working to tear down those standards. Those evil agencies use women and their modes of dress (and undress) as the one method for tripping up men in general, and the people of God in particular.

It would be one thing if the Bible were the only place for us to find evidence of this standard, but like the Sabbath and other principles (such as health), we can find evidence of the truthfulness of the biblical claims when we study the histories of the Jewish nation and the nations that interacted with them.

CHAPTER 9 - DEFINING STYLES OF DRESS

If you happen to need the restroom while you are out in public, how do you know which door to go in? Most of us look for the signs. A stick person in pants is for the men's room, and a stick person in a dress is for the ladies. Those are the universal signs – or at least they used to be.

There are those people who hate the thought that men and women are different in any way outside of physiology. In those instances where there is rebellion against the major defining aspects of men's and women's dress, you will find varying degrees of vulgarity. For the sake of decency, I'll not describe them here. Generally, they are signs that depict one's posture when using the facilities or the actual body parts that differentiate us.

Is that really all there is to it? Is dress really just some sort of social construction, as evolutionists would have us to believe? When we look around, it would seem that there are no guiding principles outside the misguided and frivolous dictates of fashion trendsetters to direct the style of Western dress. But that hasn't always been the case.

For more than 6,000 years, there was a definite, distinct manner of dress for people in all cultures. This continuous lineage of dress design points to a common descent in clothing design.

It is interesting to note as we go back and look down through history that the mode of dress God created in the garden was generally followed by the other nations as well.

THE EGYPTIANS⁴⁶

The Egyptians are mentioned very early in the story of history. By the time Israel and his sons moved to Egypt to escape the famine, the Egyptians had a very advanced, thriving culture.

The Egyptians had learned to make linen cloth from the flax plant, so linen was the main material used in Egyptian dress. Since flax doesn't take vegetable dyes very well, the material was left natural or bleached white in the sun.

The higher-class men wore kilt-like skirts that covered the waist to the knees, and their chests were left bare. The Egyptian women wore ankle-length dresses that were very fitted and sheer, even by today's standards. On top of the dresses, they sometimes wore a shawl-like garment that covered their shoulders and upper arms. Statues of ancient Egyptian women reveal that they were indeed covered with cloth, though the folded and wrapped outfits were snug – so tight that absolutely nothing was left to the imagination. In this way, they were dressed but still uncovered. This is quite similar to many of today's fashions.

⁴⁶ Information for this section was gathered from the following sources:

Henny Harold Hansen. *Costumes and Styles: 685 Examples of Historic Costume in Color*. New York: Dutton, 1956.

Ancient Nile. "Ancient Egyptian Clothing." Accessed June 22, 2011. <http://www.ancientnile.co.uk/dress.php>;

Reshafim. "Garments." Accessed June 22, 2011. <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/timelines/topics/clothing.htm>;

Slaves dressed much differently, if at all. Male slaves went naked, and female slaves lived in varying degrees of undress. Their dress ranged from panty-type garments with nothing covering the breasts, paired with a collar-like article over the shoulders, or they wore long, snug dresses that started below the breasts, leaving them exposed, and reached all the way to the ankles.

ISRAEL'S DISTINCTIVE DRESS

Did the Israelites adopt the same dress during their sojourn in Egypt? We have no reason to believe so. In fact, we have plenty of evidence that it was quite the opposite.

Joseph was a slave, but in the story of his encounter with Potiphar's wife, he left his coat with her. (Genesis 39:12). Egyptian men didn't wear coats, much less slaves. Somewhere along the line, Joseph had the courage to ask for a different set of clothing, just like Daniel and his friends asked for different types of food.

When the Israelites moved to Egypt, did they take off their clothes or change their distinctive manner of dress? Hardly.

In Exodus 12:11, the Israelites were instructed to eat the Passover in a certain manner. The men were to have their shoes on their feet, their staffs in their hands, and they were to gird their loins to keep their long, loose robes in place while traveling.

The Egyptian men, on the other hand, wore a basic wrapped garment around their waist, and male slaves went naked. Nevertheless, even at the end of an incredibly hard time in Egypt, with work piled on work, the Hebrew women found time to make sure everyone in their large families wore proper attire that would not be an insult to their God.

FULL-COVERAGE HEALTH INSURANCE

Before the fall, every aspect of Adam and Eve's world was perfect and suited for their health and well-being: they had a perfect diet of a variety of fruits; they lived in a perfectly climate-controlled environment; and they wore the perfect coverings that represented the righteousness of Christ.

After the fall, things were far from perfect, and we see God working to help the pair compensate for the less-than-ideal situation their sin brought them to. Their diet, which had previously consisted of fruit, was changed to include the plant of the field, i.e., greens and other vegetables Genesis 3:17-19. As we saw above, God gave them full-coverage garments to preserve their modesty, as well as their health.

The Pen of Inspiration builds on this concept of the importance of having covered limbs. We are told in no uncertain terms that perfect health is dependent on perfect circulation, and that in order to achieve perfect circulation the limbs and extremities need to be thoroughly clothed.

"The limbs, which should have even more covering than any other portion of the body, because farthest from the center of circulation, are often not suitably protected; while over the vital organs, where there is naturally more warmth than in other portions of the body, there is an undue proportion of covering...This fashionable attire is one of the greatest causes of disease among women. Perfect health depends upon perfect circulation." (CTBH 89.1)

"True dress reform regulates every article of dress worn upon the person. In order to equalize the circulation of the blood, the clothing should be equally distributed upon the person, that equal warmth may be preserved in all parts of the body." *Health Reformer*, January 1, 1877, par. 7.

If that principle is a true principle, then it would be as true today as it was in the time when it was written. Using the concept that perfect circulation leads to perfect health, let's compare the health of the children of Israel, who we know wore full-coverage clothing, to the health of the nation of Egypt, whose inhabitants wore considerably less on their bodies.

THE DISEASES OF THE EGYPTIANS

After their great deliverance from Egyptian bondage and their walk through the Red Sea, we find God making a promise to the children of Israel in Exodus 15:26:

"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

When we see this promise, we generally think of diseases caused by improper eating. When we look at the list and compare it with what we know today, we find that many of the diseases were also caused by improper dressing. In his last speech to the children of Israel, Moses restates the promise. He lists all the blessings they would receive if they were obedient to the voice of God, as well as the curses and diseases that would plague them if they were disobedient. These diseases can be found in Deuteronomy 28:

- Consumption, fever, inflammation, burning (Verse 22)
- Emerods (hemorrhoids), scabs, an itch that will not heal (Verse 27)
- Blindness (Verse 28)
- Knee and leg problems, sores that will not heal (Verse 35)
- Fertility problems, lingering diseases and sicknesses (Verse 59)

Many of these diseases can be caused by diet, but all of them can come as a result of poor circulation.⁴⁷ In an earlier chapter, we read that Egyptian men went shirtless, and Egyptian women wore shawls. The other nations were also conspicuously underdressed in short sleeves, or no sleeves.

When we look through the writings of Ellen White, we find a list of diseases and conditions that the church members of her time suffered because they did not practice the principles of properly clothing their limbs to promote circulation:

- Cancer
- Constant cold
- Heart problems
- Heart palpitations
- Headaches

⁴⁷ Live Strong. "Signs & Symptoms Of Poor Circulation In Arms." Accessed June 22, 2011.
<http://www.livestrong.com/article/160858-signs-symptoms-of-poor-circulation-in-arms>.

Health Articles 101. "Top 10 Poor Circulation Symptoms." Accessed June 22, 2011.
<http://www.healtharticles101.com/top-10-poor-circulation-symptoms>.

Healthier Tomorrow. "How To Recognize the Symptoms of Poor Circulation." June 22, 2011.
<http://www.healthiertomorrow.org/symptoms-of-poor-circulation>.

Juliet Wilkinson. "Alternative Ways To Help Blood Circulation" Accessed June 22, 2011.
<http://www.livestrong.com/article/82940-alternative-blood-circulation>.

- Inflammation and congestion of the lungs
- Inflammation and congestion of the brain
- Irritation and restlessness in babies and children
- Nosebleeds
- Shortness of breath
- Swellings on the face and neck

Many of these are problems we still suffer from today.

When the Israelites left Egypt, Psalm 105:37 tells us that they had this to say:

“He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

What a testimony to the power of practicing the entire health message which includes the dress message! Millions of people were spared from the ravages of disease because of their continued obedience to all the principles that they were given – dress and health included.

Continuing on, let’s look at the dress of the major nations of Daniel 2 that interacted with the people of God.

THE BABYLONIANS⁴⁸

The basic articles of clothing for Babylonian men and women were short-sleeved tunics and shawls. The men wore knee- to ankle-length tunics with round necklines and short sleeves. Over this, they wrapped one or more shawls of various sizes and shapes. The shawls were held in place by large wide belts. The shawls had fringes along the edges and were usually wrapped so that the fringes fell diagonally across the body.

Babylonian women wore ankle-length tunics with slightly longer sleeves. They were also wrapped in long, fringed shawls. The dress of both men and women were highly decorated with embroidery and rich colors.

⁴⁸ The information for this section was gathered from the following sources:

The Fashion Encyclopedia. “Mesopotamian Clothing.” Accessed June 22, 2011.
http://www.fashionencyclopedia.com/fashion_costume_culture/The-Ancient-World-Mesopotamia/Mesopotamian-Clothing.html;

Old and Sold. “Clothing Of The Babylonians.” Accessed June 22, 2011.
<http://www.oldandsold.com/articles09/clothes-6.shtml>;

Tara Maginnis, Ph.D. “Timeline.” Accessed June 22, 2011.
<http://www.costumes.org/history/100pages/timelinepages/timeline.htm>;

Pauline Weston Thomas. “Ancient Costume - c800 B.C. Early Assyrian Costume History & Pictures.” Accessed June 22, 2011. http://www.fashion-era.com/ancient_costume/assyrian_clothing_pictures_assur.htm

The Babylonians' dress screamed, "Stop and look at me! Admire me!" This was in direct contrast to the dress ordained by God for His people. Their clothing was to turn minds and hearts to the God Who saved them, and their clothing was about glorifying Him and not themselves.

THE THREE HEBREW BOYS' UNUSUAL OUTFITS

When we think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we usually praise them for holding to the principles of diet, but it seems they were sticklers about the way they dressed as well.

We know the story well. After God gave Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation of his dream, Nebuchadnezzar decided he was going to try to rewrite history. He wanted to go beyond just a head of gold; he would have an entire image of gold. His kingdom – at least in his mind – would last forever.

So he set up the image, played the music, and everyone bowed down – everyone but three guys in the back. They stood out like sore thumbs, and it wasn't just because they were standing and refusing to bow.

The king tried to be reasonable, but the men respectfully declined the offer of a second chance. The king grew angry. He ordered that the furnaces be made hotter, and he prepared to have a royal roast of the men who dared to defy him. Daniel made a point of telling us how they were dressed in Daniel 3:21:

"Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire." (NASB)

"Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace." (KJV)

Did you catch it? The three Hebrew boys were wearing several things that were not standard-issue Babylonian garments, beginning with trousers (hosen) and coats.

The Babylonians wore shawls instead of coats, and the men didn't wear pants, trousers or hosen. It seems that in addition to asking for different food, Daniel and his friends wore different sets of clothing as well.

The fact that they were highly exalted didn't make them forget the One who enabled them to have favor with the king. They were known as Hebrews because they ate like Hebrews and dressed like Hebrews. They were walking billboards for the God they served. They honored Jesus, and in the midst of their fiery trial, Jesus honored them with His presence.

THE MEDES AND THE PERSIANS⁴⁹

It seems the Medes and Persian wore a mishmash of clothing, with elements of other nations and cultures. They were one of the first of the pagan nations to wear visible trousers.

⁴⁹ The information for this section was gathered from the following sources:

Htoo, Naw D. "Persian Dress Through the Ages." *Iranian Women: The Community for Women of Iran - IranDokht.com*. Web. 22 July 2011. <<http://www.irandokht.com>>.

<http://www.costumes.org/history/100pages/timelinepages/timeline.htm>

The Persian men are sometimes pictured wearing long, colorful robes, with large, long sleeves and lots of folds. Sometimes the clothing fell straight, and other times it seemed to be girded between the legs. The Mede men wore tunics and tights-like trousers, but they are also pictured wearing long robes and tunics.

The dress of the women was more of the same. They are sometimes described and pictured in long robes, as well as the harem pants they are known for today.

THE STORY OF ESTHER: HOW CHARACTER OUTSHINES CLOTHING

The book of Esther is set during the reign of Persian king Ahasuerus/Xerxes I (486-465 BCE). Although we don't find too many insights into clothing in this story, we can see an Old Testament example of the New Testament exhortation to wives to win their husbands by their meek and quiet spirit more than their outward charms. (1 Peter 3:1-6)

The story of Esther is a lesson for us all. Good character and a wise head will get you farther and help you to achieve more long-lasting accomplishments than just a pretty face will. The story is also a reminder that God can bring good out of circumstances that are not ideal.

THE GREEKS⁵⁰

There were two basic types of garments for the Greeks: a tunic-like garment (either a *peplos* or *chiton*) and a cloak (*himation*). The *chiton* was worn by both men and women. It consisted of a large, rectangular piece of wool or linen fabric. It was folded in half, and the edges were sewn or pinned together. It was then secured over the shoulders with pins, buttons, or other fasteners. A girdle or belt was used to shape and secure it at the waist. Men generally wore their *chitons* at knee length, and women always wore theirs to the ankle.

The *peplos* was a sleeveless, draped garment worn by women. It also consisted of a very long piece of fabric that was folded in half and secured at the shoulders, with broaches on either side of the neck. It was belted at the waist, and the top was bloused over the belt. The side seam was left open; depending on the amount of cloth, it might expose the wearer's entire leg as she walked.

The Greeks are known as much for their nakedness as they are for what they wore. Much of their artwork and sculptures depict athletes, warriors, and workers, all completely naked. For them, the

⁵⁰ Information for this section was gathered from the following sources:

Henny Harold Hansen. *Costumes and Styles: 685 Examples of Historic Costume in Color*. New York: Dutton, 1956.;

Wikipedia contributors. "Clothing in ancient Greece." Accessed July 1, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing_in_ancient_Greece;

Ancient Greece. "Culture and Society: Clothing." Accessed July 1, 2011.
[http://www.ancientgreece.com/s/Clothing/;](http://www.ancientgreece.com/s/Clothing/)

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. "Ancient Greek Dress." Accessed July 1, 2011.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grdr/hd_grdr.htm;

Rich East. "Clothing of the Ancient Greek Women." Accessed July 1, 2011.
<http://www.richeast.org/htwm/Greeks/costume/costume.html;>

Pauline Weston Thomas. "Ancient Greek Costume History Greek Dress - The Chiton." Accessed July 1, 2011.
http://www.fashion-era.com/ancient_costume/ancient-greek-dress-chiton.htm

naked male body was a thing to be worshiped. When clothing impeded action, the Greeks had no qualms about taking it off completely.

The Greeks have come to be associated with sports and physical pursuits in general and the Olympics in particular. The word *gymnasium*, “the place where one exercises naked”, aptly describes what the Greeks enjoyed doing most. They saw the sense of shame that other cultures attributed to nakedness as backward and prudish.

We don’t have a biblical record of what happened to the Jews during the Grecian age, which took place during the inter-testamental period, between Malachi and Matthew. We do know that it was during this period of time when there was a rise of the various sects of Judaism and the fall in standards among many in its society.⁵¹

It was during the inter-testamental period that the sect of Pharisees came into being. Holding true to their name, which means, “separate ones”, they actively sought to keep themselves and their religion free from the pagan influences of the Greeks and later the Romans. At first, they were the people’s party, but as time progressed, they became so concerned with upholding their rules and traditions that they began to see themselves as too good for the common man.

The Sadducees were more interested in politics and keeping up appearances for the sake of gain. They were all members of the high priestly family and were closely associated with the aristocracy of the day. In order for them to participate fully in Greek and Roman society, which required participation in athletics, the Greek gymnasium, and the Roman baths, all conducted in the nude, Jewish men had to remove the mark of their separation. They had to become uncircumcised via a surgery called epispasm. The apocryphal books written during the inter-testimonial period recount how some of the high priests’ sons had this surgery done in order to be able to participate in gymnastics. (1 Maccabees 1:14-16)

So, what we see are two extremes. On one hand, the Pharisees were trying so hard to keep themselves pure and undefiled that they forgot the reason God allowed them to be dispersed in the first place, which was to evangelize their captors. They were totally covered, but they lost sight of why. Then there were the Sadducees and other secular Jews who literally threw off all coverings, along with their shame and modesty. They sought to look like the world, in the most intimate ways, in order to secure the benefits that those associations bring.

THE ROMANS⁵²

⁵¹ Al Maxey. “The Silent Centuries Religious Groups of the ‘Intertestamental’ Period” Accessed July 1, 2011. <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/Inter7.htm>.

Ken Briggs. “Inter-Testamental Period.” Accessed July 1, 2011. <http://www.kenxbriggs.com/id64.html>.

Bible.ca. “The New Testament Jewish Sects: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots.” Accessed July 1, 2011. <http://www.bible.ca/d-jewish-sects-pharisees-sadducees-essenes-zealots.htm>

⁵² Information for this section was gathered from the following sources:

Hansen, Henny Harald. *Costumes and Styles: 685 Examples of Historic Costume in Color*. New York: Dutton, 1956.;

Wikipedia contributors. “Clothing in ancient Rome.” Accessed July 22, 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing_in_ancient_Rome;

The basic Roman garments were simple and similar among men and women. Roman men wore tunics, which could reach anywhere from the knees to the ankles, depending on social class. Soldiers, workers, and slaves wore a shorter knee-length tunic, belted at the waist. Government officials, politicians, and priests wore ankle-length tunics. The Romans are most widely associated with the toga, a huge woolen sheet, measuring between twelve and fifteen feet in length. There was a complicated system of colors and types of togas, used to distinguish between offices and classes. Only Roman citizens could wear togas.

Roman women's garments were quite similar to the garments of the Greek women. They wore long tunics called *stolas*; these sometimes had sleeves and were ankle- or knee-length. Over the *stola*, they wore a *palla*, a long, sleeveless garment that reached to the floor. More commonly, they wore items similar to the Greek *chiton* and *peplos*.

THE DRESS OF JESUS AND HIS TIMES

Did Jews in Christ's day wear the style of dress of the Romans? No! They hated the Romans and worked to keep themselves separate and distinct, mostly in accordance to Pharisaic law. There was some Grecian influence in the rabbinic dress, but it was intended for classification and distinction and didn't require the removal of any clothing.

During this time in history, our Savior was born. So, what would Jesus have worn? As a baby, we know that He was swaddled. As a toddler and through childhood, He likely wore a simple tunic – a new one each year to accommodate growth.

As a man, He wore the simple garments of the working class, with one exception: The dress for those men who were allowed to read from the scrolls was more modest and had to be ankle length.⁵³

It is interesting to note that Christ came to this Earth at a time when the dress of His people was still consistent with the pattern He had laid out for them in Eden. Jesus dressed very simply and modestly during His time here. That loveliness that was evident to all who came in contact with Him came from that beautiful character radiating out, and not his apparel.

DRESS IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

United Nations of Roma Victrix. "Ancient Roman Clothing." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.unrv.com/culture/ancient-roman-clothing.php>;

Crystalinks. "Clothing in Ancient Roman." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.crystalinks.com/romeclothing.html>;

Roman Empire. "Roman Dress." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.roman-empire.net/society/soc-dress.html>;

VRoma. "Roman Clothing." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/clothing.html>;

Classics Unveiled. "Clothing of Men and Boys." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.classicsunveiled.com/romel/html/clothmen.html>;

⁵³ Jeff Pollard. "God, the Designer of Clothes." *Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America*. San Antonio, TX: Vision Forum, 2002. 27-28.

So far, we have taken a quick tour of the dress of the Jews from ancient Israel to the time of Christ. We have also looked at the modes of dress of the nations that interacted with them, and we are still in the time of Rome. Did the standard of dress, at least for women change?

We saw in the last chapter that Paul, in his pastoral letter to Timothy, ranked the necessity of women dressing modestly right up there with men having the right spirit in prayer. The reason for women's modest dress and men's prayers was to bring as many souls as possible to Christ.

But did the standard of dress change? Not in the New Testament, and it doesn't look like it will in the foreseeable future.

REVELATIONS ON DRESS

We saw earlier that the standard for dress was set in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, after the fall. We shouldn't be surprised to see those principles of dress restated in Revelation, the last book of the Bible.

We mentioned earlier the major doctrines of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church can be found in the first ten chapters in Genesis, and all of the doctrines of our Church can be taught from the book of Revelation; we find at least seven of our major doctrines in the first chapter of Revelation alone. The biblical standard for dress falls among those seven.

As we look at some of them, we will see that dress is not only mentioned, but it is also part of the expression of each of the doctrines.

The Scriptures (Revelation 1:2)

The scriptures, the Word of God, are the foundation of our faith and the guide to knowing God's expressed will. Even nations who professed themselves as unchristian turned to them for standards of right and wrong, even if they didn't follow them.

The author of *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History* makes this revealing statement about how biblical standards impacted nineteenth-century Parisians' view of women in pants: "If a woman were to wear trousers at home, friends or members of her family who came to visit would have to conclude that she was expecting a lover – and one, moreover, so jaded that he required his mistress to wear the most shocking clothing imaginable. After all, didn't the Bible say that it was 'an abomination' for a woman to wear man's clothing, or for a man to wear woman's dress?"⁵⁴

Salvation (Revelation 1:5)

It is from the Bible that we learn the story of Jesus, and we have already seen how, from the beginning, our manner of dressing was to be an object lesson of what He did for us and is doing in us.

The Priesthood of Believers (Revelation 1:6)

Because of Christ's death, we have been made kings and priest. First Peter 2:9 reminds us:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light:"

⁵⁴ Valarie Steele. *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History*, (London, Berg Publishers, 1998), 165.

In the sanctuary service, the priests ministered in simple linen garments. Those garments were specially designed for “*glory and for beauty*”. (Exodus 28:2). Our dress is to show the glory and beauty of the God we serve, as well as our relationship to the Heavenly King. Remember, the higher one’s position was, the more clothes they wore. We have a double reason to dress with modesty and decency.

The Sabbath (Revelation 1:8-10)

John was given the Revelation on the Lord’s day, the Sabbath.⁵⁵ The Sabbath reminds us of creation (Exodus 20:11) and our redemption (Deuteronomy 5:15). Dress also reminds us that we were originally created to reflect the glory of God, as well as to represent our redemption.

The Sanctuary (Revelation 1:12)

The doctrine of the sanctuary is the only doctrine that we, as a Church, have contributed to Christianity, but it is a doctrine that is pivotal to all that we believe as a Church. John saw Jesus standing in the Holy Place among the seven candlesticks.

We understand that we are living in the antitypical day of atonement. Jesus has long since left that apartment and is now ministering the judgment in the Most Holy Place. In our time, as in biblical times, we must search our hearts and put off anything that might be offensive to God.

The Standard of Dress (Revelation 1:13)

John sees Jesus ministering in the heavenly sanctuary. Notice how he is dressed:

“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

We are told that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. From the beginning, He gave His children garments that represented being completely covered in Him. When He walked this Earth, He wore the long, flowing garments of the teachers of His day. When John saw Him glorified in Heaven, He was wearing long, flowing⁵⁶ garments as He ministered there. It would seem that the standard of dress – at least for Christ – has remained consistent.

There are more doctrines that can be found in this chapter. These include the State of the Dead (Verses 17-18), The Spirit of Prophecy (Verse 19), and The Saints of God (Verse 21), but we will stop at dress.

THE CLOTHING OF THE REDEEMED

Jesus wasn’t the only one wearing special garments in Revelation. Notice the type of garment that was spoken of and given to the redeemed:

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 6:11)

⁵⁵ The only day that Jesus specifically has claimed as his own is the Sabbath. (See Matthew 12:8 and Mark 2:28).

⁵⁶ Clothing was girt to keep the flowing folds out of the way while working.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" (Revelation 7:9)

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" (Revelation 7:13)

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:14)

The word for *robe* in each of these passages is the Greek word *stole*, which is the same Greek word that is part of the compound word that describes appropriate women's clothing, *katastole*. It is the word for the garments worn by kings and people of rank.

It looks like God really is consistent. That begs the question, if the way we dress today is far from the pattern set out by God in Eden and contrary to the way we will dress when we get to Heaven, what changed and who changed it?

The answer to that question and the history behind it is fascinating, almost as fascinating as the change from Sabbath to Sunday.

CHAPTER 10 - OLD FASHIONS, NEW DESIGNS

Unless you sew, you probably haven't given much thought to how ideas in a designer's head end up in your local clothing store. It doesn't happen overnight.

First, the designer comes up with an idea, and that idea is turned into a pattern. Samples of the pattern are made, and the pattern is tweaked as needed. The new samples are made and shopped around to potential wholesalers. If the design shows sales potential, it is made into different sizes and is ready for mass production.

GOD'S WEAR

When God designed our first parents' clothing, He got it right the first time. He set the standard, and as we saw in the last chapter, most of the clothing worn throughout history consisted of variations of that design.

But from the beginning, the devil has been busy trying to alter, deconstruct, and rearrange God's designs to suit his own diabolical purposes. The Pen of Inspiration writes:

"Satan is constantly drawing the people from saving light, to custom and fashion, irrespective of physical, mental, and moral health. The great enemy knows that if appetite and passion predominate, health of body and strength of intellect are sacrificed upon the altar of self-gratification, and man is brought to speedy ruin." (Review and Herald, September 8, 1874, par. 3)

"Satan has invented manifold temptations to divert the minds of mothers from their most important work. The matter of dress holds the larger share of women in the veriest bondage." (Health Reformer March 1, 1877, par. 3)

"Satan is constantly devising some new style of dress that shall prove an injury to physical and moral health; and he exults when he sees professed Christians eagerly accepting the fashions that he has invented. The amount of physical suffering created by unnatural and unhealthful dress cannot be estimated." (Councils on Health 599)

Before we look at how the devil has worked through history to reorder God's designs, let's recap what we've discovered so far.

First, the clothing of Adam and Eve served a dual purpose. It was created to cover their physical nakedness and also to remind them of their spiritual nakedness. That spiritual nakedness, left uncovered would result in death. But would be covered through the promised death of a Redeemer Christ.

We saw that there were no changes in the garments of men and women for the Israel of God before or after the cross, and both the Apostle Paul and Peter reaffirm the Edenic dress design for women in the New Testament.

So, God had a set pattern, but it wasn't long before the devil started tampering with it.

DO WHAT THOU WILT: THE DEVIL'S ONLY RULE

If the coverings of God were an expression of the principles and standards of His government, then the counterfeit coverings of Satan would represent his. Does Satan have a rule that he and his followers live by? You might be surprised to know that he actually does. The one rule of the government of darkness is this: "Do what thou wilt."

We can thank Aleister Crowley, Satanist and founder of the satanic Thelema religion,⁵⁷ for codifying it for us, but we can see the principles at work from the beginning.

When the devil tempted Eve to sin, he proposed a new law that was contrary to the law of God. Instead of putting God and others first, he posited that Eve could have all she wanted if she would only follow her own will. He led her to believe since she had a pure heart, her will would lead her right. In choosing to eat the forbidden fruit, Eve bought into the idea of this new law. She did what she wanted to do and led Adam to do the same.

For a season, Adam and Eve felt the pleasures of sin, but before long, they realized that their coverings were gone, and they were overcome with another new sensation: shame.

Yet, instead of attempting to re-create the complete coverings that their previous attire had afforded them, they showed by their actions that they had completely bought into the devil's law. They covered only what they thought was most important.

Although the law of the devil, "Do what thou wilt", was written down many thousands of years after the law of God, it has been alive and well since Satan rebelled in Heaven.

We saw this law in action in the sacrifice of Cain. In bringing produce instead of a lamb, wasn't he doing as he would? When he disregarded the worth of his brother's life, wasn't he putting this law and his will above the law of God? We also see this law at work in his descendants.

Lamech, for example, added adultery to murder. (Genesis 4: 19, 23-24). The daughters of Cain threw off the coverings of God and remade their garments into coverings that drew eyes to themselves instead of redirecting them to God. (Genesis 6:2).

There are many different examples we could point to of the dress that represented this law of lawlessness, but the best example is found in the dress and practices of the Baal worshipers.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the examples of the children of Israel were given to us so we can learn from their mistakes. (1 Corinthians 10:11) One of the biggest mistakes Israel made and continued to make until they were finally taken captive, was the sin of having pre-marital or extra-marital sex.

In Revelation 2: 14, 20, we are reminded of this sin in two of the seven churches, Pergamum and Thyatira.

THE DEVIL'S DRAFTS

The sin at Baal Peor will always stand out as one of the darkest blights on the history of Israel. Both Old and New Testament writers mention it at least seven times in the Bible. It marked the beginnings of Israel's ongoing affair with Baal. The sin was all the more heinous because it took place right on the borders of the Promised Land.

⁵⁷ Thelema 101. "What is Thelema?" Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.thelema101.com/intro>

But the devil didn't come up with that one overnight. It took him several drafts and revisions and a few hundred years to perfect all the elements; but when it all came together, it led Israel into apostasy as nothing else could.

BEGINNING SKETCHES

We all know the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, but there is one part of the story that is rarely preached about: the incestuous incident between Lot and his daughters. We find this revolting tale in Genesis 19:30-38.

Here it is in brief: After being saved by the angels from the doomed city of Sodom and seeking refuge in the "little city" of Zoar, Lot and his daughters moved from Zoar into a cave in the mountains. After a while in the cave, Lot's daughters were convinced that the only way for them to ever have children would be to have them by their father. Clearly, they had become totally corrupted through their associations in Sodom. They got their father drunk, and both daughters had intercourse with him, resulting in conception.

When their sons were born, they named them Moab, "son of my father", and Ben-Ami, "son of my people". The two boys grew up to be the fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites, the cousins of Israelites. The Ammonites were known for their cruel religious practices. They came to be known for their worship of the god, Moloch, and child sacrifices – a practice Israel was later involved with, after they settled in Canaan.

The oldest daughter's son, Moab, and his descendants played the biggest role in our discussion of dress. His descendants were polytheists and worshiped Baal Peor. The word *Baal* was a generic term for "lord". In that culture, there were various Baals, and they were often names for the towns or areas where their worshipers were located. Baal Peor was worshiped on Mount Peor.⁵⁸

The word *Peor* is connected to the Hebrew word for "open or opening", as it has to do with the mouth or the bowels. So, in essence, Baal Peor could be called "the lord of the opening." In addition to the sexual aspects, Baal Peor worship was associated with exposing oneself and excrement.⁵⁹ "He was sometimes depicted as a phallus, cone, pillar, or tree branch. 'As a male, he was the sun god. As female, a moon goddess associated with Ishtar. As Baal-Peor, he was androgynous.'" ⁶⁰ As the generative and productive power he was worshiped under the form of the phallus, Baal-Peor; and youths and maidens, even of high birth prostituted themselves in his honor or service. As the creator, he was represented to be either or both sexes; and Arnobius tells us that his worshippers invoked him thus: 'hear us Baal! Whether thou be a god or a goddess.' At the licentious worship of this androgyne, or two sexed god, the men on certain occasions wore female garments, whilst the women appeared in male attire, brandishing weapons."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "Baal." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba%CA%BFal>

⁵⁹ Wikipedia contributors. "Heresy of Peor." Accessed July 22, 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heresy_of_Peor

⁶⁰ Monstropedia. "Belphegor." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.monstropedia.org/monster/Belphegor>

⁶¹ Thomas Inman, and John Newton. *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism. Rev. and Enl. With an Essay on Baal Worship, on the Assyrian Sacred "grove," and Other Allied Symbols* (Kennebunkport, Me.: Milford House, 1970), 119.

The worship of this deity was unspeakably gross, but the Israelites were sucked in. Why? It is my opinion that it had something to do with the way the women dressed for the services, like men of war. Short skirts and tunics were associated with masculine attire thousands of years before the introduction of pants. The dress for warriors was generally a knee-length, short-sleeved tunic. For a Hebrew man who was used to seeing women completely covered in long tunics with sleeves and veils, it was probably easy to be a bit taken by the sight of 24,000 women dressed in short skirts, even if they were brandishing weapons.

From the beginning, both God and the devil have been aware that men are visual, and both have designed clothing to accommodate that fact. The difference is that God uplifts a woman by covering her beauty, as you would something valuable. The devil uncovers women and encourages her to give herself away little by little and to use her beauty as a means to trap and entice a man to sin.

PROPHECIES OF DEGENERATION

Throughout the New Testament, we are reminded of the dangers of sexual sin, especially as it has to do with the Church. Second Peter 2 and the Book of Jude both warn of the immorality that would like to make its way into the Church, but the most striking predictions come from Jesus' messages to the seven churches.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF UNDRESS

In Revelation, we see the history of the Church of God throughout the ages, down to the end of time. We can also trace the history of the decline in the standards of Christian dress.

EPHESUS, THE COVERED CHURCH

The church of Ephesus (31-100 AD) still had the benefit of direct communication with the apostles. Although there were some churches that needed reminders on avoiding ostentatious dress and conformity to worldly standards, Ephesus held on to the standards, though maybe not always for the right reasons.

Historically, the dress of Christians during this time had not changed from that of the time of Christ.

SMYRNA, THE CHURCH WITH MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO THINK ABOUT THAN DRESS

The church of Smyrna (100-313 AD) suffered greatly because of persecution, and many people laid down their lives for the sake of Christ.

As they were hiding and running for their lives, still living their faith, a preoccupation with dress or adornment just didn't fit. Historically, their dress, and the dress of their persecutors, hadn't changed since the time of Christ.

PERGAMUS, THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

The church of Pergamus (313-538 AD) is the church that opened its doors to a host of compromises. When we think of Pergamus, we think of doctrinal compromises with paganism: image worship, veneration of the dead, and Sunday worship, to name a few. We especially think of the false conversion of Constantine and his river-baptized army. What many haven't realized about Pergamus is that the same entity that brought in pagan worship was the one that introduced pagan dress.

An event took place in 496 AD that helped to set the tone for the decline in dress for the next 1,260-plus years: "[In 496] Clovis, king of the Salian or Merovingian Franks, became the first of the pagan barbarians to adopt Catholicism. The Anglo-Saxons were still pagan, but other Germanic kingdoms had accepted the Arian form of Christianity. In the conversion of Clovis, the Catholic Church acquired a champion upon whose military might would hang the theological future of Europe."⁶²

Clovis is remembered for three main accomplishments: 1) the Unification of the Frankish nation; 2) The Conquest of Gaul; and 3) his conversion to Christianity. With the first act, he assured the influence of his people beyond the borders of Gaul, something no petty regional king could accomplish. By the second, he laid the foundation of a later nation-state, France. Finally, by the third act, he made himself the ally of the papacy and its protector, as well as that of the people, who were mostly Catholics.⁶³

The Gauls were not a nation of God-fearing Christians. Rather, they were a pagan nation who worshiped pagan gods and participated in soul- and body-defiling practices. We can gather some insights about them by looking at the culture they were a part of – the Celts.

The Celts were notorious for homosexuality. "According to Aristotle, most 'belligerent nations' were strongly influenced by their women, but the Celts were unusual because they openly preferred male lovers (Politics II 1269b)."⁶⁴

Another historian wrote, "Celtic women were beautiful, but men preferred to sleep together," and he went on to say, "the young men will offer themselves to strangers and are insulted if the offer is refused."⁶⁵

That last comment is reminiscent of the wickedness of the Sodomites toward the angels. It was from this culture that the Gaulish nation sprung. As we will see, these barbaric and licentious influences started the trend that manifested in the church that started taking off her clothes.

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⁶² Patmos Papers. "What Happened in A.D. 508?" Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://www.patmospapers.com/daniel/in508.htm>

⁶³ Wikipedia contributors. "Clovis I." Accessed July 22, 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clovis_I

⁶⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "Celts." Accessed July 22, 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celts>

⁶⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER 11 - TRENDING SOUTH

In 2007, in an effort to help Internet publishers better optimize their sites for online readers, the *Online Journalism Review* did a study. The participants in the study wore special glasses that tracked their eye movements as they visited various websites online. The glasses tracked when, where, and for how long the participants' eyes stopped on a particular object on the screen.

When the study tracked how men and women viewed full-body photographs of people, they documented a particularly strange phenomenon: "When photos do contain people related to the task at hand, or the content users are exploring, they do get fixations. However, gender makes a distinct difference on what parts of the photo are stared at the longest. Take a look at the hotspot below...Although both men and women look at the image of George Brett when directed to find out information about his sport and position, men tend to focus on private anatomy as well as the face. For the women, the face is the only place they viewed. Coyne adds that this difference doesn't just occur with images of people. Men tend to fixate more on areas of private anatomy on animals as well, as evidenced when users were directed to browse the American Kennel Club site."⁶⁶

These findings make a good argument for why you do not want to draw unnecessary attention to that area. If you think about it, the area between your legs forms a sort of pyramid, triangle, or arrow when you wear pants, with the apex, top angle, or point going straight for your groin area. Could it be that men's eyes unconsciously follow the arrow more so than women's?

Over the past several chapters, we've learned that the pattern of dress for men and women were skirted garments without a division between the legs. This was true almost universally across nations and in different cultures. For men, the length of the skirted garments varied from knee to ankle. For women, the length was a relatively constant ankle or longer. Any short skirts and bifurcated (divided) garments were generally associated with men, with some notable exceptions. One of these exceptions was the nation of Gaul.

"The Gauls were a Celtic people living in Gaul, the region roughly corresponding to what is now France, Belgium, Switzerland and North Italy, from the Iron Age through the Roman period . . . They were conquered by Julius Caesar in the Gallic Wars in the 50s BC, and during the Roman period became assimilated into a Gallo-Roman culture."⁶⁷

It was from the Gauls that the Romans – and Western civilization by extension – were introduced to uncovered trousers.

"Braccae is the Latin term for trousers, and in this context is today used to refer to a style of pants, made from wool. The Romans encountered this style of clothing among peoples whom they called Galli (Gauls)...Braccae were typically made with a drawstring, and tended to reach from just above the knee at the shortest, to the ankles at the longest, with length generally increasing in tribes living

⁶⁶ Laura Ruel and Nora Paul. "Eyetracking Points the Way to Effective News Article Design." Accessed May 21, 2011. <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/070312ruel/>

⁶⁷ Wikipedia contributors. "Gauls." Accessed May 31, 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gauls>

further north. When the Romans first encountered the braccæ, they thought them to be effeminate (Roman men typically wore tunics, which were one-piece outfits terminating at or above the knee). However, braccæ eventually became popular among Roman legionaries stationed in cooler climates to the north of southern Italy.”⁶⁸

Those Roman legionaries didn’t abandon their new types of clothing when returning to Rome. Slowly, this article of clothing was adopted into the Roman attire, but it was far from being seen as a sign of progress; rather, it was seen as a sign of the end. “Republican Romans viewed the draped clothing of Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Minoan (Crete) culture as an emblem of civilization and disdained trousers as the mark of barbarians.”⁶⁹ Also, “trousers – considered barbarous garments worn by Germans and Persians – achieved only limited popularity in the latter days of the empire, and were regarded by conservatives as a sign of cultural decay”.⁷⁰

Isn’t it interesting that up until the fall of Rome in 476 AD, God’s original design for dress, which was undivided skirted garments, was considered to be the mark of culture and civilization. It would take some time for that mark to be erased, but satanic powers were able to do it in about 1,260 years.⁷¹

THYATIRA, THE CHURCH THAT STARTED TO STRIP⁷²

The seeds of compromise that were sown during the time of the church of Pergamus began to sprout and bear fruit in the church of Thyatira 538-1798.

At the beginning of this period, the standards of dress for the average man and woman remained relatively unchanged, but as the age began to draw to a close, the standards began to plummet, and the idea of fashion as we know it began to come into its own.

400-1100 AD

The changes during this period took place very gradually. Most changes in the basic Roman costume revolved around the influence of the invading nations. The most noticeable changes took place in the male costume. The invaders wore short tunics with visible trousers, hosen, or leggings. While the Roman citizens and the church remained true to the knee- to ankle-length tunics, by the end of the

⁶⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "Braccæ." Accessed May 31, 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Braccæ>

⁶⁹ James Lever. *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History*. (Thames and Hudson, 1995), p. 50.
Wikipedia contributors. "Trousers." Accessed May 30, 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trousers>

⁷⁰Wikipedia contributors. "Clothing in ancient Rome." Accessed May 31, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing_in_ancient_Rome

⁷¹ Note: The question could be asked, “Then is it wrong for modern men to wear uncovered pants in 2011?” The answer would be no, based on the writings of the *Spirit of Prophecy*. Over and over again pants are denoted as “men’s apparel.” God never showed Sister White that it was wrong for men to wear pants. He only showed her it was wrong for women to wear them. Also, even in Bible times men, most notably the priest and the Three Hebrew Boys, wore pants.

⁷² The information for the history in this chapter was gathered from the following sources:

Wikipedia contributors. "History of Western fashion." Accessed July 22, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Western_fashion

Henny Harold Hansen. *Costumes and Styles: 685 Examples of Historic Costume in Color*. (New York: Dutton, 1956).

Jack Cassin-Scott. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Costume and Fashion: from 1066 to the Present*. (London: Brockhampton, 1994).

period, only the clergy's mode of dress remained relatively unchanged and has remained so even to this day.

During this time, the dress of women was a simple ankle-length tunic with long, loose sleeves.

1100-1200 AD

For the 100 years between 1100 and 1200 AD, upper-class men wore long tunics with hosen and cloaks. Other men in society wore knee-length tunics and leggings or hosen.

Women wore ankle- to floor-length layers of tunics. Upper-class people of both genders wore clothing that fit closer to the body. Women of the French court wore clothing with the tightest fit. This consisted of a form-fitting over-tunic, with tight sleeves and a flared skirt.

1200-1300 AD

There were not many changes in the garments of the lower-class men's or women's clothing. The changes were mostly seen in the dyeing of textiles. The rich were able to wear a more colorful wardrobe, and blue was the color of choice for kings of France.

Women's dresses were still simple; the only change was tighter sleeves worn across classes. Rich women indulged in fine embroidery.

1300-1400 AD

This century marked the beginning of major fashion changes. Clothing became more tailored, and buttons and fasteners began to be used to achieve a snugger fit to the body.

Women's gowns could be loose or quite fitted, and sleeves came in a variety of lengths and fits. A new sleeveless coat was added toward the end of the century.

1400-1500 AD

The fifteenth century was marked by extremes in upper-class fashions for both men and women. Women wore large, wide gowns with floor-length sweeping sleeves. Men wore short tops called doublets, and tight, revealing hose that revealed their private areas, which had been hidden up to that point. Ostentatious headgear with feathers, jewels, and draped fabric became important. As the economy grew, so did the middle class, and their fashions followed closely behind those of the rich.

For women, the high waist was in, as was the new V-neckline, which replaced the shallow scooped necks of the past. The V-neck in the gown was often low enough to reveal the decorated under-tunic beneath.

Another type of gown had tight sleeves and a smooth, tight fit from the shoulders to the hips, where it flared into the skirt. This snug fit was achieved through lacing and buttons. This style soon faded from the scene and was replaced by a gown with a high collar and full sleeves that were snug at the wrists, forming a sort of bag. Sometimes the sleeves were slashed to reveal the lower arm.

Around the mid-1400s, other innovations in women's dress came on the scene. In Northern Europe, V-necks showed the top of the square-necked undergarment. We also saw interchangeable sleeves for garments.

Italy brought low V-necklines in the back and slashed sleeves that revealed the under-tunic, which was sometimes pulled through the slashes, a style that would last for the next 200 years.

1500-1550 AD

The pace of changing fashion was beginning to pick up. Clothing began to be embellished with new ornamentations such as contrasting fabrics, applied trims, and more slashing. The silhouette for women became wider, and sleeves were cuffed, puffed, turned, and slashed.

A change in gowns took off in different directions all over the continent. In the German states, it was a short-waisted, tight look, achieved through lacing, with puffed, slashed, and cuffed sleeves. France featured V-pointed waists and large, elaborately cuffed sleeves. Hoops began to spread across Europe, and the corset made its debut.

Other interesting innovations of the period were open-front gowns, jeweled busts, skirts pulled up to show the under skirts, fitted gowns with full skirts, square necklines that revealed the under-tunic, slits in the front of the skirt to reveal the underskirt, long, wide sleeves that revealed the under-sleeve, girdles worn on the outside with a purse or prayer book as an accessory, and low necklines filled in with sheer fabric.

1550-1600 AD

As people became wealthier, clothing became more lavish. Women's dresses became wider, and the codpiece that drew attention to the man's genitals disappeared. The new focus for women was on the shoulders making them high or wide. The slashing of the sleeves moved to the upper arm. Soon, this changed to rows of loops and then to rolled, jeweled prominences around the shoulders.

Bodices varied, as did necklines, but there was a general use of stiffening or a corset to hold the body in a particular shape; a woman's bodice was to be styled like the man's doublet.

Gowns were loose and then fitted. The trend of slashed skirt front with petticoat revealed continued, and the inner petticoats were decorated since they were going to be shown. Skirts were held wide in a variety of ways.

Are you seeing a pattern? Low, revealing, or fitted. It seems as if Satan was working to break down the barriers and get women accustomed to wearing less and showing more.

SARDIS, THE CHURCH OF STYMIED REFORMS⁷³

The church of Sardis (1560-1790s) marked the beginnings of dress reforms. As more and more people gained access to the Bible, many came to realize that the immodest, ornate, and costly styles of dress were not in harmony with Bible principles. The most notable of these groups were the Puritans, but although they shunned some of the ostentations of their day, some felt they needed to distinguish between rank and class.

⁷³ The information for the history in this chapter was gathered from the following sources:

Wikipedia contributors. "History of Western fashion." Accessed July 22, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Western_fashion

Henny Harold Hansen. *Costumes and Styles: 685 Examples of Historic Costume in Color*. (New York: Dutton, 1956).

Jack Cassin-Scott. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Costume and Fashion: from 1066 to the Present*. (London: Brockhampton, 1994).

The work of the reformers could be seen in Holland during the late 1700s, as they kept the more modest styles and higher necklines.

While the reformation was going on, the fashion world was continuing its dance with indecency.

1600-1650 AD

Lace became an 'in' thing for men and women alike. Sleeves were full for both and were slashed to show the equally large sleeves of the shirt for men, and under-tunic and chemise for women. Poets and artists distinguished themselves by dressing in melancholy collars, with open or unbuttoned collars and gowns.

It was fashionable for the wealthy to have their portraits painted in exotic or historic places to evoke a certain mood. The clothing in the photos was not necessarily the clothing that was actually worn during the time.

Women's fashions continued to change. The choice for necklines was high or breast-baring low. Sleeves became shorter and looser. Skirts that were split down the front to reveal the petticoats were closed around 1630 in favor of carrying them or looping them up – to reveal the petticoats.

1650-1700 AD

The late 1700s ended with more changes in fashions. Men's fashions closed out the century with coats, waistcoats, and breeches, a combination that would be around for the next 150 years.

The new look for women was long, vertical lines. Sleeves had risen to just below the elbows, and the new neckline was broad and wide, exposing chest and shoulders. Everything was firmly held in place with tight corsets.

The latest risqué trend was to have one's picture painted in only a loosely laced gown over a slip, with the hair loose and tousled – an undressed kind of portrait.

The riding habit, a type of horsewoman's sportswear, made its entrance. It consisted of a coat, doublet, and hat styled like a man's – so much so that aside from the trailing skirts from the top up, the women's outfit was almost identical to men's.

1700-1750 AD

A new distinction was made between clothing for formal occasions and clothing for everyday wear. As the century progressed, there were fewer and fewer occasions that required formal wear.

The women's fashions of "undress" were becoming the new daywear. It was still fashionable to have one's portrait painted in "undress." Sleeves were narrower and came to the elbows. Corsets gave the appearance of having an extremely erect posture and high, full bust. Skirts were worn over small domed hoops and hoops that stuck out from the sides of the hips.

Ladies added masculine-inspired men's shirts and hats to their already masculine riding outfits.

1750-1795 AD

This time period was the height of ornamentation among European and European-influenced countries, especially among the high-class French. It was the calm before the American and French Revolutions.

In women's fashions, hoops were traded in for wide protrusions called panniers; these held skirts out at the hips. They fell out of fashion in the 1780 in favor of false rumps. By 1790, skirts were not held out in any particular way. The riding habit was beginning to influence general fashion. Waistlines were raising, and sleeves were lengthening.

The gown of choice was a low-necked robe worn over petticoats; it was open in the front. Fitted bodices held gowns close to the figure.

PHILADELPHIA, THE CHURCH SEEKING SIMPLICITY⁷⁴

The church of Philadelphia (1790s – 1840s) marked an effort to return to a simpler, more rational style of dress. For a time, corsets and hooped skirts fell out of fashion. The dresses were less cumbersome, if not more modest – but that didn't last for long. Almost as quickly as the new rational styles came, they departed again. They were replaced by even more extreme styles, setting the stage and backlash that would birth Laodicea, the contentedly naked church.

⁷⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "History of Western fashion." Accessed July 22, 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Western_fashion

CHAPTER 12 - HE SAID, THEY SAID

You don't have to be a fashion historian to notice that fashions seem to be in a constant state of motion. One style is in, and the next year, it's out. This principle is not new. In 1937, James Laver, an author, art historian, and museum curator set to compress the attitudes toward the complex fashion changes into a simple timeline:

Indecent – 10 years before its time
Shameless – 5 years before its time
Daring – 1 year before its time
Smart – Current fashion
Dowdy – 1 year after its time
Hideous – 10 years after its time
Ridiculous – 20 years after its time
Amusing – 30 years after its time
Quaint – 50 years after its time
Charming – 70 years after its time
Romantic – 100 years after its time
Beautiful – 150 years after its time⁷⁵

We have seen this timeline played out as we've looked at the changes in dress during the church of Thyatira. But although fashion may have changed, we will see that God's ideal for the dress of His people has remained the same.

His principles were set in the Bible, and the Pen of Inspiration supports the consistency of scripture.

The change in Western women's apparel didn't happen overnight, nor did it take place in secret. It is documented in world history as well as fashion history.

When dealing with this issue we are often told that we really don't know what was actually worn. Or what we wear really doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things. Or we are told that there are objects of clothing that we wear today that have somehow been baptized over time and they no longer hold the same meanings now that they did in ages past.

Those are all interesting arguments. But they are arguments that are extremely dangerous for any Seventh-day Adventist to make. One of the last warnings that Jesus gave to his church in the book of Revelation can be found in Revelation 16:15. It says:

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Revelation 16:15)

It is a warning that is pretty straightforward. But in this day and time we have a tendency to spiritualize its directness away. When you look up the Greek words that were translated 'watcheth',

⁷⁵ James Laver. *Tastes and Fashion: From the French Revolution Until today*. Quoted in Johnson, Kim K. P., Susan J. Torntore, and Joanne Bubolz. Eicher. "Fashion as Change." *Fashion Foundations: Early Writings on Fashion and Dress*. (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 117; and Stanley Marcus. "Deep in the Heart of Fashion." *Minding the Store: a Memoir*. (Denton: Univ Of North Texas, 2001), 320.

'keepeth', 'garments', 'naked', and 'shame' you see that verse was indeed written for those of us living in this day. Because this book is written primarily for women, we will feminize the pronouns.

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is she that gives strict attention to, takes care of and guards what she wears, lest she walk without clothing, wearing only her under garments, and they see something that is not in accordance with established standards of good form or something that is not suitable for the time or place such as her private parts." (Revelation 16:15 with expanded definitions)

Jesus said that we would need to watch what we wore in this last age so that we wouldn't be wearing something that was not suitable for the time that we are living in. He didn't want us exposing areas of our bodies that were supposed to remain covered.

In the last chapter we saw how women in the Western world were led to become comfortable with literally showing their underwear. In this chapter we will see how explicitly the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy has spoken against dressing in ways that are not in accordance to established Biblical principles.

THE RISE AND FALL OF CHRISTIAN DRESS STANDARDS SUMMARIZED

Over the last two chapters we tracked the rise and fall of the standards of dress through six of the churches in Revelation. Just in case you were bogged down in the history and/or skipped that section, here is a summary of what was covered:

The standard of dress remained pretty consistent through the first two churches. The apostles were still around during the church of Ephesus. And Smyrna was the persecuted church. They were being chased and slaughtered by the likes of Diocletian and other. They had more important things on their minds than dress.

We see things start to slide around the time of Pergamus. God's church wasn't careful to keep her clothing. The devil was first able to bring in compromise through the same entity that brought in Sunday worship. Then he got society accustomed to wearing less and less clothing during the Papal reign of the Church of Thyatira.

During the age of the Church of Thyatira the devil focused on undressing women from the waist up and getting them used to showing their underwear. Some of that morally debauched dress was corrected in the church of Sardis but like other issues the reformers only went to a certain point and then they stopped. There was a bit of a revival during the period of the Philadelphian church. That was short lived.

Our church was blessed to have the ministry of Ellen White at the beginning of this age. If we would have studied the Bible and studied her counsels we would not be reaping the physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences that have come with neglecting this issue.

There are many items of clothing that we wear today that we cannot make an argument for without stepping out on slippery ground and opening the door to reject some of the major principles of our faith, including the Sabbath. Hard to believe? Believe the Pen of Inspiration:

Those who have had the light upon the subjects of eating and dressing with simplicity, in obedience to physical and moral law, and turn from the light which points out their duty, will shun duty in other things. If they blunt their consciences to avoid the cross which they will have to take up to be in harmony

with natural law, they will, in order to shun reproach, violate the Ten Commandments. There is a decided unwillingness with some to endure the cross and despise the shame. Some will be laughed out of their principles. (Testimony to the Church, page, 68; Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, page 51; Healthful Living, page 121; Councils on Health, page, 105 and in Lift Him Up page 159.)

But how could ignoring this point set us up to violate the Ten Commandments? The same rationale that is used to justify dressing in ways that are directly opposed to Biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, and historical standards of dress, is the same rationale that is often used to justify worshiping on Sunday instead of Sabbath. So, before we look at how we have gone against counsel, let's first deal with the rationale that we are accustomed to using to justify our modern ways of dressing.

REASONS USED TO JUSTIFY THE WAY WE DRESS TODAY

When you bring up the topic of dress you are bound to hear all sorts of arguments used to justify why Christians can and should dress the way we do today. We don't have space to cover them all. Let's look at the three that seem to come up most often:

ARGUMENT #1 OF TRADITION:

"We have always dressed this way, our mothers dressed this way, and many good and godly women have died happy dressing this way. If they were right, so are we. Changing the way we dress would throw us out of harmony with the world, and we would have no influence over them."

ARGUMENT #2 OF INTERPRETATION:

"My pastor, (Bible teacher, professor, parent, friend, etc.), said that the verses that you are using really don't mean what you are saying they mean. When it comes to dress there really aren't any clear-cut principles as to what is right or wrong. This is really an issue of Christian liberty."

ARGUMENT #3 OF POPULARITY:

"If what you are saying is right, why don't the popular Adventist pastors and teachers preach this? There are only a very few people who actually practice dress reform."

So what are the answers to those arguments? I will quote them from the same source that I found the arguments themselves.

ANSWER FOR THE ARGUMENT OF TRADITION:

"We have always dressed this way, our mothers dressed this way, and many good and pious women have died happy dressing this way. If they were right, so are we. Changing the way we dress would throw us out of harmony with the world, and we would have no influence over them."

The answer:

"It was by similar arguments that the Jews endeavored to justify their rejection of Christ. Their fathers had been accepted of God in presenting the sacrificial offerings, and why could not the children find salvation in pursuing the same course? So, in the time of Luther, papists reasoned that true Christians had died in the Catholic faith, and therefore that religion was sufficient for salvation. Such reasoning would prove an effectual barrier to all advancement in religious faith or practice. (The Great Controversy, p. 454)

ANSWER FOR THE ARGUMENT OF INTERPRETATION:

“My pastor, (Bible teacher, professor, parent, friend, etc.) says that the verse that you are using really doesn’t mean what you are saying it means. When it comes to dress there really aren’t any clear cut principle as to what is right or wrong. This is really an issue of Christian liberty.”

The answer:

“[T]hose who did not search the Scriptures for themselves were content to accept conclusions that were in accordance with their desires. By argument, sophistry, the traditions of the Fathers, and the authority of the church, many endeavored to overthrow the truth.” (The Great Controversy, p. 455)

ANSWER FOR THE ARGUMENT FROM POPULARITY:

“If what you are saying is right, why don’t the popular Adventist pastors and teachers preach this? There are only a very few people who actually practice dress reform.”

The answer:

“To refute such arguments it was needful only to cite the teachings of the Scriptures and the history of the Lord’s dealings with His people in all ages. God works through those who hear and obey His voice, those who will, if need be, speak unpalatable truths, those who do not fear to reprove popular sins. The reason why He does not oftener choose men of learning and high position to lead out in reform movements is that they trust to their creeds, theories, and theological systems, and feel no need to be taught of God.” (The Great Controversy, p. 455)

All of these arguments were paraphrased from arguments found in chapter 26, “A work of Reform”, in *The Great Controversy*. All of these arguments have and are used to support Sunday worship as opposed to the Sabbath. Now can you see the truth of the above statement?

If we use these arguments to justify dressing in ways that are out of accordance with the Bible we are likely to fall for the same arguments when it comes to violating the Ten Commandments. That would include the Sabbath.

So as people who hate this topic are quick to point out, dress is not the last test. However, principled obedience is the practice test. If we are unfaithful in the “little things” because it suits us, we are preparing to be unfaithful when it counts.

With that in mind, let’s look at what the Bible, the Pen of Inspiration and secular fashion historians have to say about the way we have come to dress and the items of clothing that we have come to regard as normal Christian attire.

INSPIRATION AND FASHION HISTORIANS ON: FOLLOWING CHANGING FASHIONS

We got in trouble because we followed worldly fashions. What does inspiration tell us about following customs of the world?

God said in His Word:

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; (Exodus 23:2a)

The Pen of Inspiration reiterates that fact:

"There is a growing disposition to sacrifice health and the favor of God upon the altar of ever-changing, never-satisfying fashion." (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, p. 638)

"No one can tell what freak fashion will take next. Worldlings whose only care is, 'What shall we eat, and what shall we wear?' should not be our criterion." (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, p. 640)

It would seem pretty clear. If fashion is trending in ways that are unhealthful or immoral, we have been told that we should not follow those trends. Do fashion historians back up the concept that fashion has a tendency to trend away from the right? They do.

In the book, *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, the authors make the point that when a new fashion comes out it is rarely an extreme change from the fashions of the past. Why? Consumers like to get used to wearing new features of clothing gradually.⁷⁶

James Laver, the fashion historian who was quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was more explicit. He proposed that a female body was made up of sexualized and sterilized zones. The sterilized zone was the area that the outgoing fashion had exposed. The new sexualized zones would be exposed by the new fashions. He sums it up like this:

*"It is obvious that if you really catch it up you are immediately arrested for indecent exposure. If you almost catch it up you are celebrated as a leader of fashion."*⁷⁷

Wouldn't you say that would throw out the argument that certain items of fashion can be reclaimed as modest? What is provocative today may be demure tomorrow as we become more jaded.

INSPIRATION AND FASHION HISTORIANS ON: UNISEX STYLES

Dressing in unisex styles is so common that most of us don't even think about it. Items of clothing look so similar that it is hard to tell which sex an item was meant for without looking at the labels in the back. Until recently most of the imitation was coming from the side of women. But now it truly goes both ways. But what did God have to say about wearing androgynous clothing?

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." (Deuteronomy 22:5)

The Pen of Inspiration supports that concept:

"God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women, and has considered the matter of sufficient importance to give explicit directions in regard to it; for the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime." (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, p. 460)

That seems pretty clear. It is interesting that the Pen of Inspiration links "increase of crime" with dressing in unisex ways. In their book *Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls, and Other Renegades*, the authors bring out the point that *The National Police Gazette* ran numerous stories of

⁷⁶ Claudia Brush Kidwell, Valerie Steele. *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian, 1989), 141.

⁷⁷ James Laver. *Tastes and Fashion: From the French Revolution Until today*. Quoted in Johnson, Kim K. P., Susan J. Torntore, and Joanne Bubolz. Eicher. "Fashion as Change." *Fashion Foundations: Early Writings on Fashion and Dress*. (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 117.

women “dressed as men in public”. The authors say that this was done so the women could “paint the town” and see and experience things that were “known only to ‘the boys’”.⁷⁸

In the 1920s cross-dressing had become open and mainstream in areas like Harlem and Greenwich Village. The gender lines were so blurred that many women were mistaken for men. These women took advantage of the blurred gender lines so that they could pursue immoral relationships with women “as well as overtly express their equality with men”.⁷⁹

As mentioned above we are now seeing pronounced blurring of the lines in the way that men dress but as recently as the 1980s, when much of the unisex ways of dressing became more mainstream, women were copying men in everything from their clothing to their physique. Women may have wanted to look like men but at that time, most men were not trying to dress like women.⁸⁰

To sum this up, we were warned against cross-dressing and dressing in unisex apparel. Yet we can see that as we have followed fashion much of the clothing worn by women today is unisex or masculine inspired.

INSPIRATION AND FASHION HISTORIANS ON: WOMEN WEARING SHORT ABOVE THE ANKLE SKIRTS AND DRESSES.

For 6,000 years women everywhere and in almost every culture have worn ankle to top of the foot length garments that were not split between the legs. We would call them dresses or skirts. Egyptian women would walk around almost topless but they had on a long dress thousands of years ago. The French, in the 1700 and 1800s who were the embodiment of Egypt and Sodom, wore dresses to their foot as they flashed the world with their below the nipple necklines.

So who wore short garments that were not split between the legs? Again if we look across the board we find that short garments that were not split between the legs were always associated with masculine attire. Men had the option of wearing long clothing. *Women didn't have the option or – as we will see – desire to wear short dresses.*

We have to remember the purpose of clothing. In the chapter “Wardrobe Malfunctions”, we saw that clothing that does not cover a person’s nakedness could be considered to be malfunctioning. The purpose of clothing is to cover nakedness. So to understand why some lengths of clothing was allowable for men but not for women, we would need to understand what God considers nakedness for men, and what He considers nakedness for women.

COVERING NAKEDNESS

We need to get a baseline as to what is considered nakedness in order to understand what we, as women, should keep covered. Exodus 28:42 says:

“And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:

⁷⁸ Catherine Smith and Cynthia Greig. *Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls, and Other Renegades*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 103.

⁷⁹ *Women in Pants*, p. 105.

⁸⁰ *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, 9.

This is God speaking to Moses about the garments for the priests. Notice the area that if revealed would be considered nakedness in God's eyes. It is the area from the loins to the thighs – the area above the knee. It would stand to reason that if God didn't want men to show that area, He probably wouldn't want us women to show that part of our bodies either. But let's not go with our human reasoning. The Bible is plain.

We will see that God doesn't change His view of what constitutes nakedness. He actually broadens it when it comes to women. Isaiah 47:1-3:

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man."

The Babylonian woman would have to uncover her hair which was shameful and considered revealing in the Old Testament. That regulation was taken away in the New Testament. As Christians we understand that a woman's hair is her covering and there is no need for other artificial coverings. (See 1 Corinthians 11:15)

The other two elements of nakedness for women – the uncovered lower leg and bare thighs – were never taken away. For 6000 years women across all races and cultures wore long flowing dresses. Across the board Babylonian, The Medes and the Persian, the Greek and Roman women all wore dresses that were ankle length or below. Now they did all sorts of things from the waist up, but from the waist down there was consistency.

With that in mind let's look at what the Pen of Inspiration has to say about the exposure of the lower leg –that is the area between the knee and ankle:

The most common exposure is seen upon the streets in light snow, or wet and mud. Both hands are required to elevate the dress, that it may clear the wet and filth. It is a common thing to see the dress raised one-half of a yard (18 inches), exposing an almost unclad ankle to the sight of gentlemen, but no one seems to blush at this immodest exposure. No one's sensitive modesty seems shocked for the reason that this is customary. It is fashion, and for this reason it is endured. No outcry of immodesty is heard, although it is so in the fullest sense. (HR May 1, 1872, par. 18)

In their book *Paris Fashions: A Cultural History*, the authors discuss the work of the 19th century painter Constantine Guys. Guys' paintings were often detailed portrayals of women's clothing. Some of the sketches were of prostitutes. The authors bring out the point that it wasn't *what* the women were wearing that marked them as a prostitute as much as *how* they were wearing it.

"The deliberately raised skirt, for example, and the apparently prolonged exposure of the lower legs, was a part of the prostitute's body language, and differed in significances from the ordinary woman's raising of her skirts to cross a possibly muddy or dusty road."⁸¹

In their book *Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls, and Other Renegades*, the authors point out that the hoop skirt was provocative because as the skirt swayed it would reveal glimpses of the ankle

⁸¹ *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History*, 170.

and sometimes the calves.⁸² But it was not only the provocative nature of short skirts that lead Victorian society to oppose them, short skirts were considered masculine and low class.⁸³

Now many will say that we live in a day and age where men can see almost any part of a woman's body with out being aroused. We have become used to it. That is exactly the point that fashion historian James Lever brings out:

"[M]en have become so accustomed to seeing certain parts of the female body exposed that they no longer get any excitement out of the spectacle at all. In the 1900s old gentlemen used to faint when they caught a passing glimpse of a female ankle. The modern young man can contemplate without emotion the entire area of the female leg and considerable portion of the female stomach. In the nineteen-twenties, for the first time for many hundreds of years the female leg was exposed to general view. The bust, however, also for the first time for many centuries, was not supposed to exist at all, and women who did not mind in the least exposing their lower limbs would have been embarrassed if called upon to wear a deep décolletage."⁸⁴

So yes, it is true that we have become used to seeing women's legs both inside and outside of the church. But does that make it right? As we mentioned above, most of the Christian world has gotten used to breaking the Fourth Commandment. But does that make it right?

How can we call other Christians to a higher, and Biblical, standard? How can we tell them that they are to follow the Bible, and the Bible only, when we disregard God's commandments in this area?

By the way, when God took away the reform dress, the short dress with pants, He also took away the option of wearing above ankle skirts. In 1897 The Pen of Inspiration wrote:

"I beg of our people to walk carefully and circumspectly before God. Follow the custom of dress in health reform, but do not again introduce the short dress and pants unless you have the word of the Lord for it." (Letter 19, 1897. (To J. H. Haughey, July 4, 1897) Manuscript Release, Volume 5, p.405)

Ellen White died in 1915. At the time of her death the length of the dress in mainstream Western society was just below the ankle. Within ten years it rose 18 inches from ankle length to the knees. Here is a quote from an encyclopedia of fashion:

"Because of public antipathy towards bared legs, designers fought against rising hems with elaborated creations that drew attention away from the bared ankle. In 1921, Vogue wrote, 'One cannot help wishing for a less independent, less hard, more feminine product than the averaged twentieth century girl.' The reactionaries were disappointed in their hopes but it wasn't until 1924 that the female knees showed itself for the first time. Skirts jumped from the floor to knee-length and the flapper, coined earlier in the century for a young woman whose hair flapped free rather than being neatly pinned, took on her new role as a nightclub habitué with a taste for Martini cocktails and

⁸² *Women in Pants*, 22.

⁸³ *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, 14

⁸⁴ *Fashion Foundations*, 117.

an ear for jazz. The new length caused a hemline controversy that would only be superseded by that of the mini forty years later.”⁸⁵

We never received a word from the Lord to tell us to raise our hemlines. The Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and history are clear. The area above the ankle is considered nakedness for a woman. And we have already seen that God considers exposing one’s nakedness sinful.

INSPIRATION AND FASHION HISTORIANS ON: SHORT SLEEVES

We saw earlier in the book that from the beginning God provided His people with full-coverage health insurance in the form of long-sleeved garments.

Our own church advocated the wearing of long sleeved clothing year round in our denominational health journals to promote good circulation. We saw that even today there are various governmental health bodies that are calling for a revival of wearing long sleeved clothing – year round – for the sake of cancer prevention.

The issue of leaving the limbs (arms and legs) exposed was as much of a problem in Sister White’s day as it is in our own. Only in her time, parents, left their children’s limbs exposed while keeping their own covered as the following quote expresses:

“Another great cause of mortality among infants and youth is the custom of leaving their arms and shoulders naked. This fashion cannot be too severely censured...[Mothers] know that if their own arms were exposed without a covering, they would shiver with chilliness. Can infants of a tender age endure this process of hardening without receiving injury? Some children may have at birth such strong constitutions that they can endure this abuse without its costing them life; yet thousands are sacrificed, and tens of thousands have the foundation laid for a short, invalid life, by the custom of bandaging and surfeiting the body with much clothing, while the arms—which are at greater distance from the seat of life, and for that cause need even more clothing than the chest and lungs—are left naked. Can mothers expect to have quiet, healthy infants, who thus treat them?” (Review and Herald, January 2, 1900, Art. B, par. 1)

So is this quote saying that it is ok for mothers to wear short sleeves as long as they cover the arms of their children? Or is it saying that mothers who would readily protect their own arms from cold should do the same for their children? It would seem to be the latter. Then why is it in the twenty-first century, Seventh-day Adventist women and children are routinely dressed in short-sleeves almost year round? The answer is in the first two sentences: custom and fashion. The Pen of Inspiration tells us plainly where these fashions come from:

“Satan invented the fashions which leave the limbs exposed, chilling back the life current from its original course.” (*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*, 531)

To some that would seem far-fetched. But history shows it is true. Early in the 1260 year reign of the Papacy the medieval style of dress was quite similar to the dress of the ancient Hebrews in that men and women wore long-sleeved undergarments. The sleeves on the outer garments were generally full

⁸⁵ *The Fashion Book* (London: Phaidon, 2008), 509.

length but as time progressed fashions were introduced that exposed the undergarment to different extents.^{86 87}

Yet despite all of the changes in fashion, the extended exposure of ones arms was considered indecent, if not unhealthful, in America less than 400 years ago.

"In 1639, the General Court made another order prohibiting the wearing upon garments 'any manner of lace', and in the same order it was provided 'that hereafter no garment shall be made with short sleeves, whereby the nakedness of the arm may be discovered in the wearing thereof and such as have garments already made with short sleeves shall not hereafter wear the same, unless they cover their arms to the wrist with linen or otherwise'."⁸⁸

As Adventists, we early opted to wear long sleeved clothing on moral as well as health grounds.

INSPIRATION AND FASHION HISTORIANS ON: WOMEN IN UNCOVERED PANTS OR TROUSERS

This discussion would not be complete without a few words about pants. It seem that even the most conservative among us cave-in when it comes to this issue. But when we look at it from the light of inspiration as well as from a historical context we will see that there is no precedent for any Christian woman to wear pants as an outer garment. There are a lot of non-Adventist, Bible believing churches that reached the same conclusion on pants from the Bible alone.

So let's start with the Bible:

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 22:5)

It has become popular to try to mince words or take this passage and make it apply only to women wearing military garb. Since we believe the Spirit of prophecy complements the Bible let's see how it defines what this texts means:

"There is still another style of dress which is adopted by a class of so-called dress reformers. They imitate the opposite sex as nearly as possible. They wear the cap, pants, vest, coat, and boots, the last of which is the most sensible part of the costume. . . In this style of dress God's order has been reversed and His special directions disregarded. Deuteronomy 22:5: 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.' God would not have His people adopt this style of dress. It is not modest apparel, and is not at all fitting for modest, humble women who profess to be Christ's followers. God's prohibitions are lightly regarded by all who advocate doing away with the distinction of dress between males and females. The extreme position taken by some dress reformers upon this subject cripples their influence." (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, p. 459)

⁸⁶ Ragnar Torfason. "A History of Sleeves." Accessed June 20, 2011.
<http://www.thewebsite.com/sewing/sleeves/history.html>

⁸⁷ Claymore Slinger. "Fashion in the Middle Ages" Accessed June 20, 2011.
http://www.claymoreslinger.com/medieval_fashion.asp

⁸⁸ Daniel Wait Howe. *The Puritan republic of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*. (Indianapolis: Bowen – Merrill, 1899), 98.

The Spirit of Prophecy would seem to be in line with the pre-twentieth-century view of the text. So what does fashion history tell us about how society saw women in pants?

“The most obvious division in clothing today is between trousers and skirts.”⁸⁹

In the 1900s “trousers were so identified with men, women wearing them were accused of looking like men.”⁹⁰ And early women’s rights activists were accused of being dressed like men with a list quite similar to the list that Sister White gave above:

“When Elizabeth Cady Stanton Attended a woman’s right convention in 1852 wearing bloomers, one journalist accused Mrs. Stanton of being dressed like a man down to boots, pants, a dickey and a vest.”⁹¹

Historically, women in pants were associated with cross-dressing, elicited sexuality, erotica and transvestitism.^{92 93} Yet, the argument could be made that culture norms would over rule Biblical standards. It is interesting that in the French culture – a culture prophecy foretold would be infamous for its atheism and immorality, and the culture where the Bible was openly burned and religion mocked – there was recognition of the immorality, baseness, and perversion associated with women wearing pants. Speaking of 18th century French society, the author of *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History*, writes:

“If a woman were to wear trousers at home, friends or members of her family who came to visit would have to conclude that she was expecting a lover – and one, moreover, so jaded that he required his mistress to wear the most shocking clothing imaginable. After all, didn’t the Bible say that it was ‘an abomination’ for a woman to wear man’s clothing, or for a man to wear woman’s dress?”⁹⁴

Writing about the acceptance of trouser wearing in America the authors of *Men and Women Dressing the Part* write:

“Trousers were only very gradually accepted after World War I...Even so, we forget how restricted most trouser-wearing really was during the Jazz Age. Trousers were acceptable in the form of beach pajamas, lounge wear, riding jodhpurs, and eventually blue jeans. But it was only in the 1940s and 1950s that casual trousers-wearing became common among teenagers, college coeds, and suburban housewives...Trousers were still unacceptable as urban street wear or for work. As late as 1960, Harper’s Bazaar ran an advertisement showing a woman, first in a black shirtwaist dress and again in a white (bifurcated) jumpsuit, with the captions: ‘First we stole his shirt...now we steal his overalls’ – indicating that both the button-down shirt and trousers were still regarded as masculine articles of clothing, no matter how long women had worn them.”⁹⁵

⁸⁹ *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, page, 13.

⁹⁰ *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, 148.

⁹¹ *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, 148.

⁹² *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History*, 164.

⁹³ *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History*, 164.

⁹⁴ *Paris Fashion: a Cultural History*, 165.

⁹⁵ *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, 15.

It would seem that the 'culture trumps Bible' argument for wearing various articles of clothing doesn't stand even among non-Christians. As we mentioned before, the same rationale that must be used to justify trouser wearing could easily be used to justify breaking the Sabbath.

We have no precedent for wearing pants as an outer garment of clothing. We were told to wear them under our clothes for warmth, but neither God nor the Pen of inspiration ever told us to take our skirts off.

There are a lot of sincere women who have never heard this information. The Bible is plain that if we didn't know something then God doesn't hold us accountable if we don't do it. The Bible tells us:

"And the times of this ignorance God winked . . ." Acts 17:30a

If we didn't know better, we couldn't do better. But that verse doesn't stop there. It goes on to say:

"... but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts 17:30b

We can choose to continue to dress in ways that are hurtful to ourselves, our witness, and the cause of Christ, or we can choose to rededicate our lives and our closets to Christ. We can choose to repent of our past poor or uninformed clothing decisions and give Him everything, including any article of clothing that is harmful to our physical, mental, relational, or spiritual health. The choice is and always will be ours.

CHAPTER 13 - THE GREATEST HEIST IN HISTORY

Paris, France, December 5th, 2008: Four armed men rob an upscale jewelry store. Their take? A total of \$108 million. The team, three of whom were dressed like women, were able to subdue the staff and clean out the entire store, all without firing a single shot.

Many infamous robberies have taken place in this century, but one of the greatest heists of this millennium took place when the vast majority of Western countries had their clothing stolen right off their backs.

It is important for us to keep in mind that the changes that have taken place in the world of Western fashion over the last 160-plus years are unparalleled by anything that had ever been seen in culture or history.

But we must remember that the changes in fashion have not been made in a vacuum. As we have seen in the fashions since the church of Pergamum, the devil has been making a consorted effort to undress Western society and, by extension, the people of God.

The Adventist church was born in the Laodicean age, the age that would begin to undress. In the last chapter, we saw the graciousness of God in giving us divinely inspired counsels to reaffirm the mode of dress for Christian women. We saw that when the exhortations of the Bible and the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy are laid alongside the historical views of fashion, it all lines up perfectly.

So what happened? Why is it that today's styles of dressing, which are universally seen as immodest, improper, and immoral, are almost universally embraced as decent modes of dress by Seventh-day Adventist women? They are even encouraged and supported by the pastorate! Inspiration makes it clear that instruction on dress was to be a part of the training that all new converts receive:

"One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need instruction is the subject of dress. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress." (Evangelism, 268)

Those directions were not followed, and those who rebelled against the biblical injunctions and Spirit of Prophecy counsels while Sister White was alive did not have a change of heart after her death. The decline in dress that started in the church of Pergamus was not halted in our day. In the twentieth century, Western civilization began to take off its clothes, and true to our Laodicean nature, the Church blindly followed suit.

We will begin our look at the decline in twentieth century Western dress after 1915, the year Ellen White died. It wasn't long before fashions started to change dramatically.

In their book, *Men and Women Dressing the Part*, the authors offer illustrations from Sears and Roebuck catalogs from 1904-52 to show the rapid changes in men's and women's silhouettes over that time frame.

In 1904, women were still wearing corsets and long, shoe-covering trailing dresses. By 1911, the hem had risen to the ankle, and the corsets were gone. In 1917, two years after Sister White's death, the hemlines rose to just below the calf.

The stage was being set for the new and daring fashions of the 1920s, which were characterized by shorter hemlines. In less than a decade, hemlines rose eighteen inches from ankle length to right below the knees. As we saw in the previous chapter, this length was considered daringly short by most of society, and the attire was associated with those of loose morals.

The wars brought lowered hems to mid calf, where they stayed until the mid 1940s. The period between 1945-60 brought us "easy care" fabrics such as nylon, acrylic, polyester, triacetate, and spandex. During this time, children began to remain home with their parents through high school and college, and the new stage of childhood development – the teenager – was born. The fashion industry soon began to target teens as a new market segment in the 1940s.

The major turning point in fashion took place in the 1960s. It had taken almost 1,300 years from the church of Pergamus to the Laodicean church for the Western world to become comfortable with women exposing their bodies to greater and greater degrees. We can see that during the Dark Ages, the devil worked to undress women from the waist up. It was in the 1960 that his work was completed and he was finally able to begin undressing women from the waist down.

The sixties brought us bikinis, mini-skirts, hippie clothing, bell-bottom jeans, low-cut tops, Capris, skinny jeans, and mainstream sleeveless. The late 1960s brought us the androgynous look, with men and women dressing in similar styles of clothing.

The 1970s continued many of the styles of the sixties, and the fashions began to emulate what rock stars were wearing. In the late seventies, there was a rise in the use of spandex in trousers and tops, as well as spaghetti-strap tops, leotards, and one-piece swimsuits.

There is really no need to recount history any further. The ways in which we dress now are just variations on the undressed Dark Ages that was finally completed during the 1960s and 1970s.

It is understandable that most pastors and leaders misunderstand and misrepresent the clear counsels of the Bible and the Pen of Inspiration. All of them came of age, grew up, or were born during this Laodicean age. It is all we have ever known. So when we compare ourselves to the world and think we are fine because we don't look exactly the same, the sad truth is, we are far from fine.

The majority of Seventh-day Adventist women go to work, church, and school dressed in ways that would have gotten them arrested less than a century ago. It may be a sin of ignorance, but it is a sin nonetheless. If the Bible is true and God is changeless, then the way we are dressing is nakedness in the eyes of God. There really isn't any way around it. When Jesus said His last-day Church was naked, He was calling it as He divinely saw it.

In the next chapter, we will see that some of the wretchedness and misery is, to a great extent, a result of us becoming like the world; we have grown comfortable walking around in this state of undress. What was once vulgar has now become vogue, and we are all worse off for it.

CHAPTER 14 - VULGAR: THE NEW VOGUE

A trip to your local shopping mall may make you want to check the signs to make sure you haven't entered a night club. Super-tight pants; exposed underwear; tight, low-cut shirts; and mid-thigh dresses are just a few of the common items you will see on pre-teen girls. Does it strike you as at least slightly perverse that many of those items would have only been worn by club-hopping adults fifteen years ago?

Young girls are no longer allowed to be girls. They are being encouraged and often pressed into behaving like immoral adult women. Why is this happening? It seems that some women see this as progress.

WAVES OF CHANGES – HOW VULGAR BECAME VOGUE

Meet third-wave feminism. First-wave feminism, which began in the late nineteenth century, sought equality for women in marriage, parenting, and property rights, as well as political rights for women. Its most notable accomplishment was helping women get the right to vote. Second-wave feminism began in early 1960 and worked to "level the playing field" at home, in the workplace, and in the bedroom. The feminists of the sixties are infamous for helping to legalize abortion.

Third-wave feminism, which came about around the early 1980s, sought to correct what they saw as second-wave feminist failures in achieving full equality with men. There is more than one type of third-wave feminist, as they are a mixed group with varying agendas, but the one thing they all agree on is the idea that being sexually free equates to being equal with men.

It is this push for sexual freedom and equality that has given us the morally debauched culture that we find ourselves in. If men can be free to enjoy their sexuality, then women should be able to do the same. If men could objectify us, we would do one better to objectify ourselves. We could be one of the boys and enjoy the freeness to indulge in our sensuality, with little concern for consequences. That was the idea, but things didn't quite work out that way.

In her book, *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, Ariel Levy explores the rise in raunch culture as it can be attributed to third-wave feminism. Her summary of the movement states, "[R]aunch feminism is not only a rebellion. It is a garbled attempt at continuing the work of the women's movement. 'Whether it's volunteering at a women's shelter, attending an all women's college or a speak-out for Take Back the Night, or dancing at a strip club,' write Baumgardner and Richards, 'whenever women are gathered together there is great potential for individual women, and even the location itself, to become radicalized.' They don't explain what 'radicalized' means to them, so we are left to wonder if it is their way of saying 'enlightened' or 'sexually charged' or if to them those are the same things. In this new formation of raunch feminism, stripping is as valuable to elevating woman kind as gaining an education or supporting rape victims...According to Baumgardner and Richards, 'watching TV show (Xena! Buffy!) can...contain feminism in action.' Based on these examples, it would seem raunch feminism in action is pretty easy to achieve: The basic requirements are hot girls and small garments."⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Ariel Levy. *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*. (New York: Free, 2005), 75.

In the back of our minds, we all know that this perversion of womanhood has to be taking its toll in some way, but many of us may not fully realize how much of a toll it is taking on the future generation of young women in and outside the church.

THE TASKFORCE

The American Psychological Association's (APA) Committee on Women in Psychology (CWP) set out to find how much of an impact our culture was having on young women and girls. They established the Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls in February, 2005.

This chapter will summarize some highlights from their report, and you can read the entire report (forty-two pages) on the APA website.⁹⁷

THE MESSAGE OF THE THIRD ELIJAH

I hear you saying, "Do we really need to know what that report says? What does that have to do with dress or our end-time message?"

The information covered in the APA report helps us to see that indecency and immodesty is as much of a serious health issue as obesity and heart disease. We are health reformers, right? This report will show us that some of the problems we have been trying to fight with diet and exercise cannot be completely fixed until we start to educate others on God's ideals for dress. Furthermore, we cannot begin to educate people on an issue if we are ill informed and sick ourselves.

More than that, our message is an Elijah message; it is a message of judgment, as well as a message of healing. In I Kings 17:1, we learn that Elijah was from Gilead. Do you remember what came from Gilead? That old spiritual tells us it was balm, a healing ointment for soothing and restoring.

The three angels' messages that we are called to preach is as much a message of healing and restoration as it is a message of judgment. God is calling people out of Babylon, out of confusion, and out of deception. He is calling people to a new life of true hope and freedom that can only be found in Him.

Jesus is the true Balm of Gilead. He is the only One who can truly fix what is messed up in this world. The women in our culture are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked – just like us. We have to listen to the counsels of the True Witness and buy the gold, the white raiment, and put the salve on our own eyes. We have to ask Jesus to get us straight so we can be more effective in helping to save others. Women and young girls are in a mess – a serious, nasty mess – and it is only the grace of Jesus that can get them out and clean them up.

THE SEXUALIZATION OF GIRLS: DEFINING THE TERMS

So when we say girls are being *sexualized*, what are we saying? The report begins by providing us with several examples and instances of the problem, but first they are kind enough to give us an example of what they refer to as sexualization of girls:

⁹⁷ American Psychological Association. *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*
<http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf>

“Sexualization occurs when a person’s value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics; a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy; a person is sexually objectified – that is, made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and/or sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person. All four conditions need not be present; any one is an indication of sexualization. Much of the evidence that we evaluate in this report is specific to the third condition – sexual objectification. The fourth condition (the inappropriate imposition of sexuality) is especially relevant to children. Anyone (girls, boys, men, women) can be sexualized. But when children are imbued with adult sexuality, it is often imposed upon them rather than chosen by them. Self-motivated sexual exploration, on the other hand, is not sexualization by our definition, nor is age-appropriate exposure to information about sexuality.”⁹⁸

Although the report was focused on girls, much of the information is relevant to women as well.

THE EVIDENCE

It is one thing to say girls are being sexualized, but it is quite another to actually prove it. So the first task of the writers was to prove that there is, indeed, a major problem facing our culture that needs to be investigated and addressed.

As you read on (and if you are so inclined to read the actual report), keep in mind that we all live in this culture. Seventh-day Adventist Christians are not immune to this sexualization. Indeed, if you look at many of our churches on Sabbath, church picnics, camps, socials, and other activities, it would seem that many of the girls and women of our churches have unknowingly fallen victim to this shaping of the culture.

The report shows that girls and women are sexualized through culture, through their interpersonal relationships, and through their own self-perceptions.

CULTURAL SEXUALIZATION

Most of us would not be surprised to hear that the media and TV play an integral role in sexualizing girls and women. What might surprise you is the degree to which it is happening, as well as the other forms of culture shapers that come together to paint distorted pictures of women.

It is really hard to get around the media and its impact on our culture. The average child views six hours and thirty-two minutes of media a day.⁹⁹ This exposure comes in the form of TV, Internet, music, social networking online and via phones, playing videogames, etc. This gives ample opportunities for children to be exposed to and absorb distorted messages about women and their roles.

TELEVISION

The report on media starts at the first place most of us would look to find inappropriate portrayals of women – television. The amount of sexually-charged content that can be found on primetime programming is absolutely staggering.

⁹⁸ *Sexualization of Girls*, 1.

⁹⁹ *Sexualization of Girls*, 4.

A study on sexual harassment in primetime programming showed that 84 percent of the analyzed episodes contained incidents of sexual harassment with 3.4 incidents per program being the average. Sexist comments were the most frequent form, followed by degrading comments and demeaning behaviors (leering, staring).¹⁰⁰

MUSIC VIDEOS AND SONG LYRICS

If you find yourself in the mall or even in a store, you are bound to catch some bits of the noise masquerading as music. There are some incredibly vile songs, and if you happen to catch the words, you might wonder how they get so much air play in a so-called Christian nation. The truth is, those are just the tip of the iceberg.

There is sexual imagery in 44 to 81 percent of music videos. Of that imagery, an overwhelming majority of it objectifies women. They are presented scantily clothed, as decorative objects, appearing in ways that connote sexual readiness. While 4.2 percent of men in music video wear revealing clothes, 37 percent of women are barely covered.¹⁰¹

This is not restricted to hip-hop music and can be seen in other genres such as country as well. Of 164 songs analyzed in a study on pop music and sexual behavior, 15 percent contained degrading lyrics. However, when rap and R&B was separated out, 70 percent of those artists' songs had degrading lyrics.¹⁰²

MOVIES, CARTOONS, AND ANIMATION

Children are heavy consumers of movies in general, and cartoon and animated programming in particular. We realize that watching R-rated movies is bad for kids, but the study showed that the subtle messages sent by G-rated films and cartoons isn't a whole lot better.¹⁰³

A study on the 101 top-grossing G-rated films between 1990 and 2004 showed a disproportionately high representation of male characters to females. More than 72 percent of all characters, extras, and narrators with speaking parts were male, and the spectrum of female characters was narrow.¹⁰⁴

Recent animated movies by Disney have more sexualized female heroines that wear less clothing and show more than characters of the past (compare the Little Mermaid or Pocahontas to Snow White or Cinderella).

MAGAZINES

No matter where you go, if you have to wait in line or in a waiting room for any period of time, you are bound to come across magazines, a popular pastime. Bearing the popularity of print periodicals, we shouldn't be too surprised at the rise in teen-focused magazines. In the ten years between 1990 and 2000, the number of these rose from five to nineteen.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ *Sexualization of Girls*, 5

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ *Sexualization of Girls*, 6

¹⁰⁴ *Sexualization of Girls*, 7

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

One study found that the average girl between the ages of eight and eighteen reads magazines for fourteen minutes per day.¹⁰⁶ The messages they are consuming are generally not geared to build up their character. On the contrary, most of the messages are focused on external improvements. Almost all self-improvement articles studied, including articles on dieting and exercise, were for the goal of gaining male attention – not for the mental or physical health improvements.¹⁰⁷

ADVERTISING

One of the most prominent forces in the sexualization of women and girls is advertising. Even if you are able to avoid the majority of the above cultural outlets, you can't miss the signs and billboards that line our roads and litter the visual space of most cities.

There are many forms of advertisement. The section on advertising was one of the longest sections in the report, so the following examples are just a handful of the ways sexualization of women occurs in advertising.

Women are often featured as appendages and decorative objects, used to enhance the appeal of products instead of as consumers or users of products. This portrayal has steadily increased with time.¹⁰⁸

In a study on ads in fashion and fitness magazines, female models are more likely than males to be portrayed in exploitive or violent positions. They are also more likely to be dressed provocatively, and more likely to be photographed in ways that make them look “dismembered”.¹⁰⁹

There is an increasing blurring of the distinction between young girls and women. Girls are made to look like adults, and women are dressed down to look more youthful. There is an increase in advertising adult-sized, girl-styled clothing, leading to some critics to denounce it as “pedophilic fashion”.¹¹⁰

PRODUCTS

Any parent or grandparent will tell you that there are a lot of products aimed at children. The products children are exposed to can shape their perception of the world as they mature. Sexualization can be seen in dolls, clothing, and beauty aids that are marketed to young girls. Here are just a few examples:

There has been a rise in dolls marketed to four- to eight-year-old girls that promote objectified adult women's sexuality. The best examples are the popular Bratz dolls; these “baby dolls” are marketed doing adult activities, lounging in hot tubs, mixing drinks etc., and come clothed in short skirts and fishnets stockings.¹¹¹

These are just a few examples of how much importance culture places on sex and sexiness when it comes to women and girls. Although culture plays a large part in shaping the way girls and young

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ *Sexualization of Girls*, 7, 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Sexualization of Girls*, 10

¹⁰⁹ *Sexualization of Girls*, 11

¹¹⁰ *Sexualization of Girls*, 12

¹¹¹ *Sexualization of Girls*, 13

women view themselves, it is not the only factor. Interpersonal relationships between family, friends, authority figures, and peers have a huge impact on the way girls and young women see their world.

INTERPERSONAL SEXUALIZATION

The way parents view themselves and relate to their own bodies will greatly impact how their daughters see themselves as developing women. Parents who have internalized some of the messages and ideas that are presented in culture will pass those messages on to their daughters, oftentimes unconsciously. For example, mothers who are preoccupied with their own weight or talk about their own bodies as “fat” are more likely to raise daughters with eating disorders who view themselves as objects.¹¹²

Parents who enter their toddlers and preschool girls in pageants can contribute to their sexualization and the sexualization of other children by proxy as the media reports on the trend.¹¹³

In 2005, 77,000 plastic surgery procedures were performed on girls under eighteen. Minors can’t pay, or consent to such surgeries.¹¹⁴

Girls tend to police themselves, and many equate popularity with sexiness and attractiveness to boys. Boys often engage in sexual harassment of their peers, and girls as young as ten report being sexually harassed; the problem increases as girls mature into puberty.¹¹⁵

INTERNAL AND SELF-SEXUALIZATION

The combination of cultural and interpersonal sexualization can lead girls and young women to sexualize themselves, and as a result, they will dress and act in ways that portray themselves as sexual objects.

An examination of adolescent girls’ diaries over a 100-year period showed that while girls in earlier times focused on doing better in school and having better manners, the diaries of girls in the last 20 years focused almost exclusively on the changes in their bodies and how to enhance their physical appearance.¹¹⁶

Girls and young women tend to model the ideals and images that are seen in culture. This leads to inappropriate sexual behaviors such as inappropriate advances, compulsive sexual play, and so on. Some of this behavior can be attributed to sexual abuse, as the girls begin to see themselves as good for nothing but the sexual pleasure of another.

WHEN VULGAR IS VOGUE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUALIZATION OF GIRLS

In the introduction of this chapter, I mentioned that ours is a message of restored health of mind and body. Having read thus far into this chapter, I am sure you can already imagine some of the consequences that are bound to occur because of our incredibly sexualized culture.

¹¹² *Sexualization of Girls*, 15

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Sexualization of Girls*, 16

¹¹⁶ *Sexualization of Girls*, 17

The APA report looks at several theories as to how the messages influence the ways in which women perceive themselves, but the bottom line is that no matter how the damage is being done, it *is* being done.

Sexualization affects girls and women in every aspect of their lives: development, health, well-being, and the way they are perceived by others and by society as a whole. Since dress plays such a vital role in the process of sexualization, it cannot be considered a trivial topic.

THE EFFECTS OF SEXUALIZATION ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

Up to a certain age, children have problems distinguishing advertising from reality. When girls see advertising and marketing that sends highly sexualized messages, they are not as able to understand or separate the messages.

As children grow, their identities and characters are being shaped, and they are more susceptible to being pushed into conforming to varying ideals. When they are not able to meet those ideals or perceived expectations, they are prone to suffer from issues of low self-worth.

THE EFFECTS OF SEXUALIZATION ON HEALTH

It's tempting to think that sexualization only affects sexual health in the area of promiscuity. Promiscuity is just one of the many areas of health that is affected when girls are sexualized.

Impaired Cognitive function. In one study, college students were asked to try on a sweater or a swimsuit. While waiting alone, they took a math test. The young women who were wearing swimsuits did significantly worse on the math test than those who took the test in a sweater. There was no difference for young men. Other studies showed that impairment extends to other cognitive areas, including reasoning and spatial skills. It seems it is harder for girls to think when they are worried about how they look.¹¹⁷

Impaired Motor Function. The degree to which a girl views herself as an object will affect her motor skills. Girls who see themselves as objects are more likely to limit their physical activities.¹¹⁸

Increased Body Dissatisfaction and Appearance Anxiety. Tight, low, revealing clothing requires girls to constantly check their appearance to make sure everything is in place. Girls who constantly monitor their appearance begin to view themselves as observers would, and become body- and self-conscious.¹¹⁹

Mental Health. Sexualization is linked with eating disorders, low self-worth, depression, or depressed moods. The more an individual is exposed to the cultural ideas in the media, the more likely they are to suffer from those disorders.¹²⁰

Physical Health. Sexualization is linked with the early onset of smoking in adolescent girls as a means of weight control.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ *Sexualization of Girls*, 21

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Sexualization of Girls*, 22

¹²⁰ *Sexualization of Girls*, 23-24

¹²¹ *Sexualization of Girls*, 24-25

IMPACT ON OTHERS

Sexualization doesn't work in a vacuum. Rather, it affects men, boys, and grown women as well as girls.

Exposure to idealized images of women make it a harder for some to find a partner, and lessens their satisfaction with their partner, if they have one, making relationships more difficult.¹²²

Women who sexualize themselves in the way they dress are perceived as less intelligent and are less likely to get managerial positions when looking for jobs.¹²³

The cultural standard of youth equaling beauty pushes many women to do everything in their power to look as youthful as possible. This leads to dissatisfaction and depression as a woman ages and is no longer able to live up to the youthful ideal.¹²⁴

IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Finally, sexualization impacts society as a whole. It raises sexism, bias, and sexist attitudes. It curtails the abilities and aspirations of girls and young women. It increases sexual harassment on all levels, and encourages violence and exploitation against girls and women.¹²⁵

JESUS: THE ONLY REAL CURE FOR THIS CULTURE

The report outlines several alternatives to the sexualization of girls. Some include education on critical thinking, more athletic programs, better sex education, exposure to better media, encouraging girls to empower themselves, etc.¹²⁶ What they seemed to be missing was the point that dress contributed to sexualization.

How can a girl be taught to think critically when her reasoning and logical skills are impaired because of the way that she is dressed? How are they supposed to see themselves and others as valuable for things other than their bodies when they continue to dress in ways that accentuate those bodies instead of their other attributes? How are they supposed to empower themselves when the new age of feminism equates power with sexuality? It seems like a crazy merry-go-round, and we are in no position to help anyone unless we first jump off the merry-go-round ourselves.

I hope you are beginning to see why being examples in dress, and dressing in ways that counteract cultural influences, is so important. Jesus was able to give hope and healing because He could raise the people from where they were to where He is. Even though He was holy, sinless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, they still sought Him out for help and healing. Jesus proves that you don't have to dress like publicans or sinners. You don't have to look like a hooker or a hustler to be their friend and to be a benefit to them.

The Pharisees were always accusing Christ of hanging out with the undesirables. People generally don't hang out with people they don't like. Jesus loved them, and they felt that love, and were drawn to Him in response. Shouldn't it be the same with us?

¹²² *Sexualization of Girls*, 28

¹²³ *Sexualization of Girls*, 28 - 29

¹²⁴ *Sexualization of Girls*, 29

¹²⁵ *Sexualization of Girls*, 30 - 34

¹²⁶ *Sexualization of Girls*, 35 - 41

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CHAPTER 15 - HEAVEN'S BEST DRESSED

If you ask your average guy or gal on the street, "What is true religion?" their answer may surprise you. Before 2002, you may have heard answers like *"Doing kind things for people"*, *"Reaching out to others"*, or *"Living out the Golden Rule"* – something along the lines of what was taught by Christ and His followers.

If you aren't in the habit of keeping up with the latest fashions, the new answers may surprise you. In 2002, a California-based company decided to redefine "true religion" in light of this society's ever-growing sense of fashion consciousness, and the True Religion Brand of jeans was born.¹²⁷

True Religion is just one of several brands of high-end designer jeans. Other brands include Seven for all Mankind, Citizens, and Hudson. They can be purchased from high-end department stores like Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Macy's. With prices starting at \$100 or more and averaging \$300, these jeans are more of an investment than a simple clothing purchase, and the purchasers treat them accordingly.

You can find site after site on the proper care and conditioning of these high-end jeans. Many articles are amusing (like how to get around washing them until they are broken in), though they are really more sad than anything else. The obsession that many people have with clothing in general, and these jeans in particular, only accentuates the empty narcissism that has come to engulf our failing society.

So what is true religion? It isn't being fixated on clothing, whether that clothing is high-priced skinny jeans, super-conservative thrift store finds, or anything in between.

Jesus reminded us in His timeless sermon on the mount that the body is more than clothes, and we are to seek first His kingdom, and all these things will be added unto us as well. (Matthew 6:33)

We live in a very selfish, egotistical world where even the least amount of service is hailed as a high achievement, but it must not be that way for Christians.

In the next chapter, we will summarize all that we have covered in this book and look at the Bible-, history-, and Spirit of Prophecy-based guidelines that should direct our ways of dressing in the twenty-first century. As you think about how to bring your clothing into obedience of Christ, beware of falling off into the fashion ditch on the other side. Don't stress about how to replenish your wardrobe! The devil will happily settle for you stressing about being modest, as long as it occupies your mind and keeps your focus off Christ.

As you evaluate your spending habits and time, look for ways that you can redirect them to supporting the cause of God and working to hasten the coming of Christ.

When we get to Heaven, God isn't going to ask us how closely we resembled the world or what we think of the latest fashion trends, right? Right! When get to Heaven, it's going to be all about Jesus. The best-dressed of the redeemed will be those who spent their lives seeking to save a lost and dying

¹²⁷ True Religion. "Who We Are..." Accessed May 28, 2011.
http://www.truereligionbrandjeans.com/company_profile.html

world; it will be those who were able to point people to the Savior; it will be those who lived a life covered completely in His righteousness.

In the end, if you have a star-filled crown and the robe of Christ's righteousness, you can be sure that you will be one of Heaven's best-dressed, but before we can get there, we need to figure out how to rightly represent Him here on Earth.

It is time for us to reclaim our brand!

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CHAPTER 16 - RECLAIMING OUR BRAND

If you do an online search for “modesty guidelines”, you will find that there is no shortage of suggestions. Some guidelines are long and detailed. Some are in the form of checklists, and others offer gentle suggestions.

One concise, popular, and often-quoted set of advice comes from Michael Hyatt, CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers. It is the same advice he gave his five daughters, his “Four Guidelines for Modesty”:

1. If you have trouble getting into it or out of it, it is probably not modest.
2. If you have to be careful when you sit down or bend over, it is probably not modest.
3. If people look at any part of your body before looking at your face, it is probably not modest.
4. If you can see your most private body parts, or an outline of those parts under the fabric, it is probably not modest. If you think these guidelines are helpful, you might want to pass them along to the young women you know. Evidently, not many are getting the message elsewhere.¹²⁸

These are all very good guidelines that will go a long way in helping raise the standard of dress for many Christian women. Guidelines are good, but when guidelines aren’t based on solid biblical principles, they can break down into personal preferences and whims and fall prey to the cultural argument and we feel we have to change with the seasons and fashion trends. When it comes down to it, most of the modesty guidelines you find are based on human opinions and traditions. They are loosely grounded in the scriptures, if at all.

A REASONABLE FAITH: THE FOUNDATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BRAND

One of the main and distinctive features of Seventh-day Adventism is the fact that our doctrines are based on the Bible and supported by the Spirit of Prophecy. Ours is a well-reasoned faith. It is that reasonableness backed by a solid foundation in prophecy, with our understanding of our place in history, that has made true believers out of the most ardent skeptics.

For example, many of our churches are finding that they can move participants in health programs, straight into Daniel and Revelation or prophecy seminars. Why? Because the participants have experienced the results of living out a Bible-based healthy lifestyle. They can see that science and the Bible are not at odds. The Bible is shown to be reliable in the practical parts of their life, so they are willing to trust it to the spiritual parts.

When it comes to prophecy, we are singular amongst the Christian community for our historic views. We are not preterists or futurists. We are historicists, and we are not lulled into a false sense of security because we know that time is truly wrapping up and the coming of Jesus is closer than any of us can imagine.

¹²⁸ Michael Hyatt. “Whatever Happened to Modesty?” Accessed May 28, 2011.
<http://michaelhyatt.com/whatever-happened-to-modesty.html>

Our faith, our beliefs, and our reasons for doing, or striving to do, what we do as Seventh-day Adventists are rooted in the Bible and informed by the Spirit of Prophecy. We trust a God who loved us enough not to leave us without direction. In our lives, we seek to follow Him because He knows what's best.

With this in mind, should the issue of what we, as a Church, and what Seventh-day Adventist women in specifically should wear be any different? Is it really safe to switch from a clear "thus saith the Lord" to a buffet type of religion where customs and traditions control what we wear? Inspiration is clear:

"The fact that worldliness and pride bear almost universal sway is no excuse for one Christian to do as others do. God has said: 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.'" (Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, page 647)

"Christians should not take pains to make themselves a gazing-stock by dressing differently from the world. But if, when following out their convictions of duty in respect to dressing modestly and healthfully, they find themselves out of fashion, they should not change their dress in order to be like the world; but they should manifest a noble independence and moral courage to be right, if all the world differ from them. If the world introduce a modest, convenient, and healthful mode of dress, which is in accordance with the Bible, it will not change our relation to God or to the world to adopt such a style of dress. Christians should follow Christ and make their dress conform to God's word. They should shun extremes. They should humbly pursue a straightforward course, irrespective of applause or of censure, and should cling to the right because of its own merits." (Testimonies for the Church, page 458)

THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY ADVENTIST BRAND

The following principles are quite straightforward, and they line up with all that we have seen in the Bible and what has been recorded in history. The guiding principles for the clothing of Seventh-Day Adventist women living in the twenty-first century should be:

Covered Principle #1: Climate-appropriate long sleeves with climate-appropriate leg coverings to protect from sunburn, maintain proper circulation, and prevent other health issues.

Covered Principle #2: Simple, loose-fitting dresses or skirts ankle length or longer – but not dragging the ground.

Covered Principle #3: Loose-fitting tops.

SOME SIMPLE TIPS AND TRICKS FOR TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY DRESS REFORM

We live in a period of time when we can follow the above three principles without having to go out of our way to find clothing.

- Ankle and maxi dresses have been in style for several years now. You can find them from J.C. Penney to J. Crew, from K-mart to Kohl's. If you cannot find dresses in stores near you, a quick search online will yield a wide range of results.
- It is true that most maxi dresses are sleeveless, spaghetti strapped, or low cut. Wearing a climate-appropriate top or jacket will take care of the sleeve problem. The tip below will help raise the neckline.
- Low-cut tops and dresses can be easily fixed by investing in a set of modesty panels (also known as "cleavage covers"). They do the job of maintaining modesty without adding extra

layers over the torso. There are several companies that market these under a variety of names.

- Covering our arms doesn't have to make you stand out. As mentioned earlier in the chapter "Too Hot To Handle", long sleeves for summer and spring are the in style. So if there ever was a time to find current long-sleeved tops, that time is now.
- There are a variety of long-sleeved summer and spring mini dresses. Many are so short that they are just about top length.
- Although fashion designers are tending to move away from the Saran Wrap look, clothing still runs snug. Forget about what the label says. If it looks too small or fits too snugly, go for a bigger size. This is especially important if you are well-endowed.
- Think 'even layers,' but remember that your legs and feet are more likely to get cold more quickly than your arms.
- Natural fibers regulate temperature and allow your skin to breathe much better than synthetics. A lightweight wool garment will keep you cooler than the same garment in polyester.
- Pray to God for wisdom and grace. He will lead you and help you to dress in ways that will be a benefit you personally, and will glorify Him in the world.

There really are a lot of options out there that meet the above guidelines. Many stores carry these items, and some carry all of them.

You will find that as you seek to dress in line with God's ideal, He will open doors and help you to find items of clothing that look nice on you and bring glory to His name. He has done it for thousands of women of our faith and in other fellowships, and He will do it for you as well.

A MODESTY MANIFESTO

Understanding the shortness of time and the desire to live and dress in ways that rightly represent Christ, we reject the whimsical and changing fashions and seek to be examples to the world in our God-glorifying means of dressing. Because of this:

WE WEAR LOOSE-FITTING CLOTHING

- Throughout the Bible and history, people wore robes and fully covering tunics.
- Elasticized materials are a modern invention.
- God gave our first parents coats. Those tunics fit in a way that didn't draw undue attention to the form.

Our Rationale for Wearing Loose-Fitting Clothing: We understand that tight-fitting clothing leads to a host of health problems. We avoid tight-fitting clothing because it is in line with our desire to promote proper health.

Beyond that, we understand that body-hugging, revealing clothing was the mark of the Egyptian's God-defying culture; the sexually-charged, body-worshiping Greeks; as well as the French embodiment of Sodom and Gomorrah. We are set free from Egyptian slavery, the bondage of sin, through the death of Jesus and His life lived in us. We desire to point others to Christ, and not dress in a way that accentuates our bodies. We seek to lead others to focus on the cross, and not our curves.

WE WEAR LONG DRESSES AND SKIRTS

- Above ankle un-bifurcated (skirted, not divided between the legs) clothing was historically worn by men.
- Knee-length un-bifurcated clothing was associated with men in every culture for most of the known history of mankind.
- In the Old Testament, the exposed lower leg was considered naked for women.
- In the New Testament, women were exhorted to wear "modest apparel" that is long and flowing down.
- Before 1911, even worldly women and men considered a skirt at, or above, the ankle as short. God showed Ellen White that knee-length dresses or skirts, even with pants, were too short.

Our Rationale for wearing long skirts and dresses: God never changed the length of clothing for women. We wear long skirts because God ordained it in Eden, and long un-bifurcated garments will be the attire in Heaven for everyone, including God.

WE WEAR COVERED PANTS

- For 6,000 years, women of all races and in every nation did their labor in long dresses and skirts.
- Uncovered pants were worn primarily to men.

Our Rationale for wearing Covered Pants: We wear pants under our skirts as a means of promoting proper circulation, which leads to better health. The attire for women remained constant from the Old and New Testament. Women were never expected to wear pants as an outer garment. Up until the mid-1800s, pants were worn almost exclusively by men in the Western world. The American costume, masquerading under the guise of health reform, sought to usurp the divinely ordained roles of men and women. We reject the spirit of that outfit and all that it stands for. We do not throw off our skirts for pants because the Bible and history show us it is immodest. However, we cover our legs as a means of preserving good circulation.

WE WEAR HIGH NECKLINES

- Egyptian women and French women, who represented Egyptians and Sodom, wore clothing that exposed the breasts and chest.
- During the Dark Ages, it took several hundred years of the papal reign for women to become comfortable exposing their chests, shoulders, and arms.

Our rationale for wearing high necklines: We understand that leaving our chest exposed is unhealthy and leaves us open to disease.

We further understand the importance of the sanctity of marriage. We do not want to expose areas of our bodies that should only be exposed to our husbands, current or future. We cherish purity and want to help godly men to be able to talk and interact with us without having their eyes drawn to our breasts.

WE WEAR CLOTHING WITH LONG SLEEVES

- God gave coats to Adam and Eve.
- Coats have long sleeves.
- Short sleeves came into general fashion during the papal reign in the church of Thyatira.
- Inspiration tells us that Satan invented the fashions that leave the limbs exposed. (*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, 531*)
- In Sister White's day, most women wore long sleeves, but they didn't have anything on their legs under their skirts.
- It is the opposite in our day, for we wear things on our legs but leave our arms uncovered.
- We are counseled that we should cover our limbs (arms and legs) as thoroughly as men cover theirs. (*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, 460*)
- Even in our day of casual clothing, when many men now wear short sleeves, businessmen around the world wear long sleeves and suit coats year round.

Our rationale for wearing long sleeves: We understand that having good health is dependent on having good circulation. We properly cover our arms and legs to equalize the circulation throughout our bodies and to make it easier for our bodies to function properly. There are climate-appropriate tops for every area and season. We cover our arms because it is consistent with modesty throughout history and what we know of the garments that we will wear in Glory.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

Though it would seem as if we are in the minority, we are not. God Himself dresses modestly. With Him on our side, we are in the majority! When we finally get to Heaven and look back on this life, we will realize we gave up nothing. With God, we gain all, for everything worth having is found in Him.

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Without doubt there will be errors, omissions and over-simplifications, for which I take absolute responsibility, as is customary, while hoping that the rest of the material will be enough to stimulate insights and new trains of thought on the topic of modesty, dress and end-time living.

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