

A Plain Distinction

Part Three

“Is Modesty Culturally Relative?”



“A modest, godly woman will dress modestly.” {CG 413.5}



In the last section, we discovered that God's standard of modesty has been the same throughout history. It does not change just because society gets used to an increasing lower standard. While culture may affect the specifics on how God's people apply the principles of biblical modesty, yet the standard remains unchanged throughout all time.

But, certain questions have arisen. . .



There is a quotation in the Spirit of Prophecy, and a passage in the Bible which cause some people to believe that modesty is defined by culture, and changes with the times.

The topic of these inspired quotes is head coverings.

Let's take a look at them.

Should women cover their heads?

Is modesty relative according to culture?



“The small bonnets, exposing the face and head, show a lack of modesty.” 2SG 227.1

“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.” 1 Corinthians 11: 5



First we will take a look at the quotation in the Spirit of Prophecy:

“I was shown that some of the people of God imitate the fashions of the world, and are fast losing their peculiar, holy character, which should distinguish them as God’s people. I was pointed back to God’s ancient people, and then was led to compare their apparel with the mode of dress in these last days. What a difference! What a change! Then the women were not so bold as now. **When they went in public they covered their face with a vail.**” 2SG 227.1



The paragraph continues:

“In these last days fashions are shameful and immodest. They are noticed in prophecy. They were first brought in by a class over whom Satan has entire control, who “being past feeling (without any conviction of the Spirit of God), have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness.” **If God’s professed people had not departed greatly from him, there would now be a marked difference between their dress and that of the world.”**



“The small bonnets, exposing the face and head, show a lack of modesty.

The hoops are a shame.

The inhabitants of earth are growing more and more corrupt, and the line of distinction must be more plain between them and the Israel of God, or the curse which falls upon worldlings will fall upon God’s professed people.”

2SG 227.1



Some read this and conclude that either,

- 1) We must wear large bonnets in order to be modest, or
- 2) The Spirit of Prophecy cannot be used to define modesty, and standards of modesty change with the culture.

However, we will show the faulty reasoning behind both these two conclusions.



Bible History Online

If women in Bible times were acting in obedience to God's ideal of modesty, not just following cultural norms of modesty, by wearing the full veil, then why wouldn't God have revealed to Ellen White that this wearing a full veil was part of true dress reform? Large bonnets couldn't possibly take the place of a facial veil, as they did not hide the face from view, they just protected the face and neck from the sun.



Was Ellen White really declaring that large bonnets were God's approved replacement for a veil? Was she claiming that woman should not appear in public without a large bonnet? If so, why was she never pictured wearing a large bonnet? If God required women to either cover their face as in the Bible times, or to wear large bonnets, would He not have made that plain to Ellen White?



Were those Bible women just following a cultural norm which was neither approved or disapproved by God? If so, why did Ellen White seem to approve of the specific practice of wearing veils that covered the face?

And why did she disapprove of the cultural norm of small bonnets? This matter is very important to understand in our discussion of modesty.



Do we conclude that full facial veils are good and small bonnets are bad from this quote? Or that big bonnets are good?

Or is there a deeper meaning that fits in with all the other counsel in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy on the topic of modesty?



Here is our conclusions: We believe that women in the Bible were following cultural norms by wearing a full veil. These norms however, were reflective of God's ideal for a woman's **attitude** of humility (another word for modesty) and this is why Ellen White made the contrast between their behavior and the attitude of the women of her time who were manifesting pride of appearance (another term for immodesty). The attitude of humility or modesty can be preserved while one follows some cultural norms, while it would be opposed to other cultural norms.



God wants our hearts to be in harmony with Him. Cultural practices in dress can either help or hinder our Christian walk. That is why we are in great need of spiritual discernment.

The facial veils helped the women in Bible times manifest a modest, humble attitude. But small bonnets hindered the women in the mid 1800s from manifesting a modest, humble attitude. That is why they were declared to be immodest.

Likewise, there are cultural practices today that can help us as women to reveal womanly modesty, and there are practices that can hinder it, thus rendering them immodest.



Wearing a large bonnet which had practical purpose of protecting the face and neck from sunburn on summer and from wind and rain in winter was a cultural norm that could be followed with modesty and reserve, while wearing a small decorative bonnet which did not protect the face and neck was a cultural norm that could not be followed with modesty and reserve. They were solely for the purpose of drawing attention to the wearer.

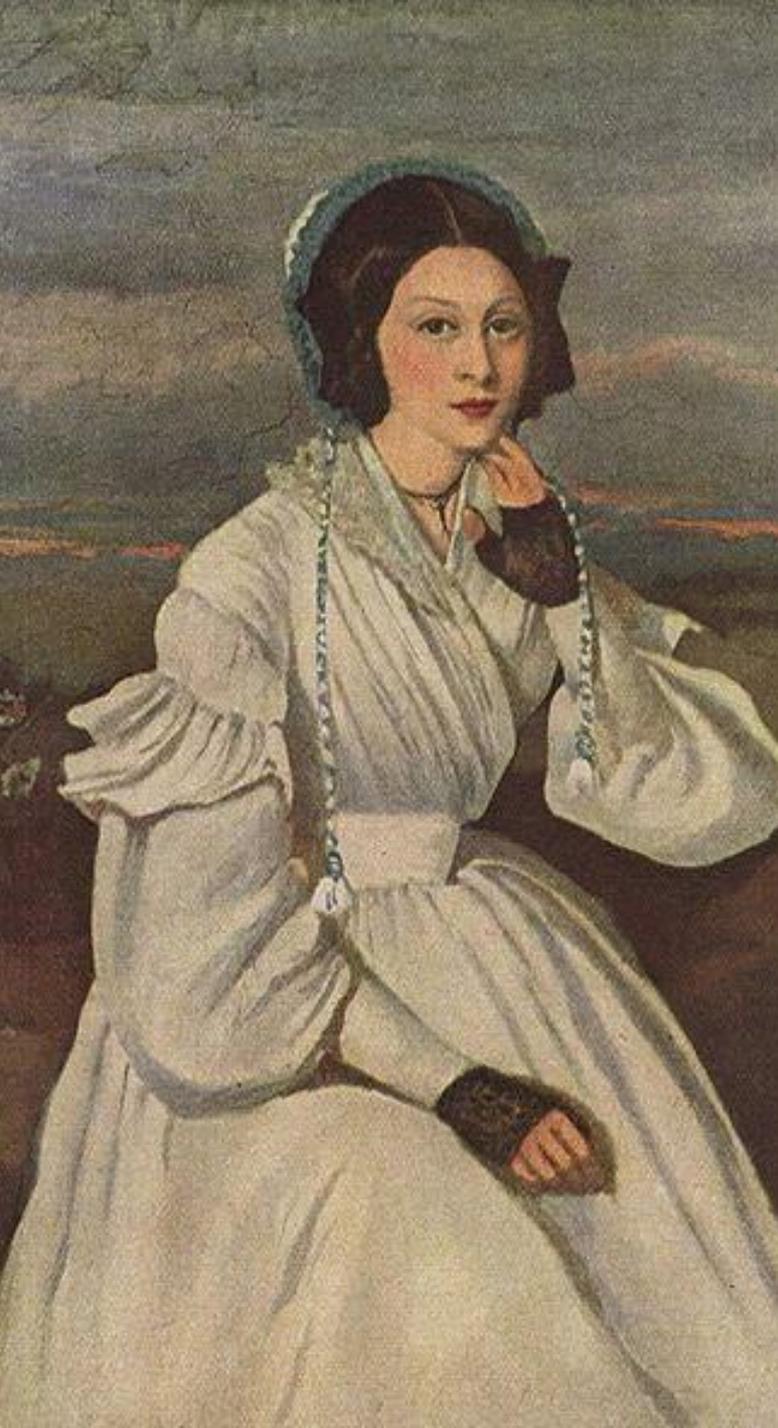
Here is a description of small bonnets from a Seventh-day Adventist pastor who was alive during the time of this fashion:
“little bunches of artificials on the back of their heads for bonnets” March 1, 1860, M. HULL. Knoxville, Iowa



Another pastor of that time wrote:



“To put on clothing for display is evidently a device of Satan, beneath the dignity of right reason, not to speak of its criminality and guilt, in the sight of God. Contemplate for a moment a modern bonnet, **an ingenious airy fabric, just on the point of sliding backwards from the back part of the head, leaving the face and a great part of the head exposed to sun and wind and rain.** Can any one tell the use of such an article?” {October 29, 1857 UrSe, ARSH 205.20} JOSEPH CLARKE.



This evidence points to the clear fact that these small bonnets were ornaments of fashion designed to elicit admiration. They revealed the presence of pride, and a desire to attract attention. The wearers of such articles reveal a lack of modesty, showing by their appearance the attitude that is in their hearts. Immodesty includes an attitude as well as an appearance.

NOVELTIES FOR DECEMBER.

BONNETS, SLEEVES, NIGHT-DRESS, ETC.

Fig. 1.—White corded silk front, with puffed silk crown edged with black lace. A black velvet ribbon, which is fastened inside the front of the bonnet, is carried to the centre

of the crown, where it finishes in a point, from which hang clusters of grapes with foliage. The inside trimming is of tulle, scarlet velvet, and purple grapes.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.



Fig. 2.—Eve bonnet of puffed white tulle, with small pointed cape. The front edge of the bonnet and cape are edged with a double row of Marguerites. The same flower, mingled with tulle, forms the inside trimming.

Fig. 3.—The front of the bonnet is of quilted gray silk. The crown is soft, and of plain silk crossed with black velvet. Deep blue flowers are arranged on the lower part of the crown, and instead of the curtain are loops of

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.



ribbon and lace. The inside trimming is of tulle, black lace, and blue flowers.

colored ribbon, arranged in points. The outside is trimmed with a half wreath of lilies of the valley and a violine-colored feather. The

Fig. 4.—Bonnet formed of rows of violine-colored ribbon, arranged in points. The outside is trimmed with a half wreath of lilies of the valley and a violine-colored feather. The

Ellen White declared: "Any device designed to attract attention to the wearer or to excite the admiration, is excluded from the modest apparel which God's word enjoins." M.H. 287. {1919 SNH, BHB 168.4}



Though Ellen White surely did wear a large practical sunbonnet when the circumstances necessitated, we do not have a picture of her indoors with one on. The purpose of a sunbonnet was supposed to be to protect a woman's face and head against the sun, wind, rain or cold. No doubt, if we were exposed to hours and hours of inclement weather, riding or walking in the open air, women today would wear some form of protection on their heads as well. Indoors, bonnets were entirely unnecessary.



God's standard of modesty doesn't change: that which reveals the figure of a woman or draws attention to her appearance for the purpose of causing others to admire her was immodest in Bible times, and is immodest in our day.



← Immodest



← Modest

We may adopt cultural norms that are modest, while we must shun those cultural norms that are immodest. Culture does not define modesty. If it did, the gradual desensitization of men to immodesty would allow for increasing amounts of flesh to be considered modest.



1 Corinthians 11, the passage about women covering their heads, is misused by some to try to prove that modesty is defined by cultural norms. Thus, they say that society decides what is modest.

However, none of the reasons given in this passage are cultural or based on Paul's preference or opinion.



Paul points out that nature itself (not his own preference) teaches it is a shameful for men to have long hair.

while women are more attractive with long hair (her hair is her glory), which is given her for or literally “in place of” a covering. This, we believe after extensive studying, is the teaching of the passage. Long hair vs. short hair, as opposed to a physical veil, we believe is meant by the term “covering.”





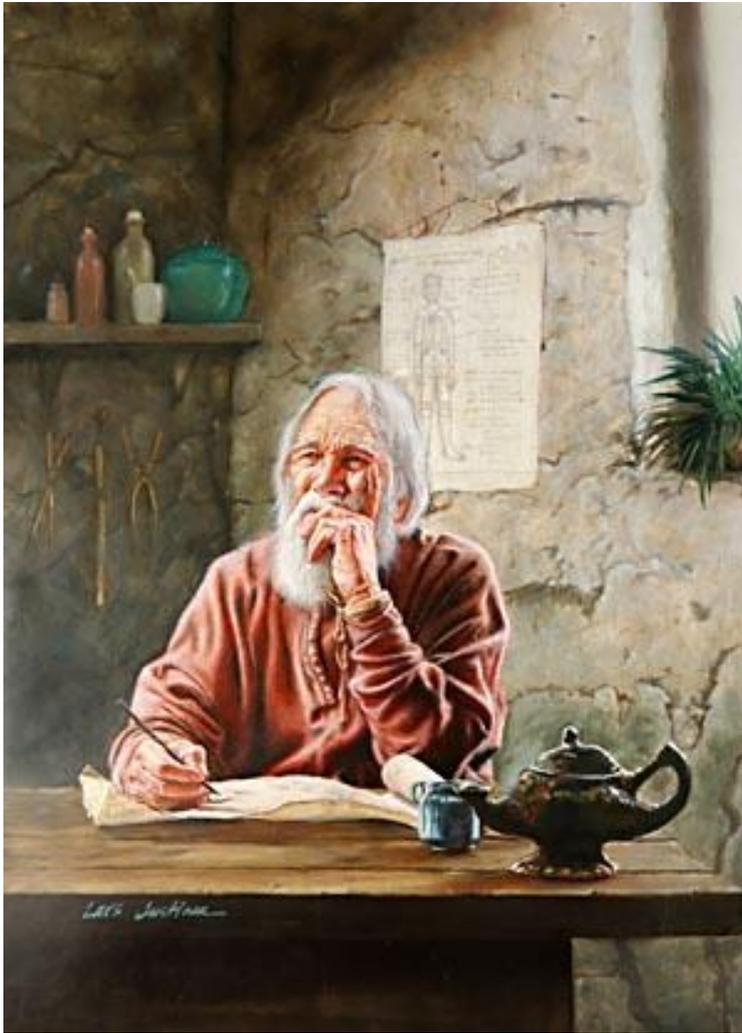
Researching sex hormones, I found that the ability to grow thicker long hair is a gender distinct physical feature linked to high estrogen. So, it's not just an arbitrary, culturally created distinction that God ordained as a sign of women's submission to men's authority in the church. It is rather a physiological distinction between healthy men and women. Women should not to try to look like men and men should not to try to look like women or else they are symbolically rejecting God's order of authority.



The reasons Paul gave that women should wear their hair long were that man is woman's "head," and man is the "image of God," while woman is "the glory of man" and was created for "the sake of man" In light of this, Paul made it clear that the woman needs to wear a symbol of subjection on her head while praying and prophesying, activities that would tempt her to forget her place of submission to her husband and godly men in leadership and to "usurp authority over a man" (1 Tim 2:12).



To strengthen his argument Paul reasons that since it was a shame for a woman to go around with sheered or shaved head (this is assumed to be obvious), then she should keep her hair long.



If Paul is clearly outlining a timeless doctrine, then why does it sound in the last verse like Paul really only meant it as his opinion?

“But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God”

“No such custom” is translated in several translations as “no other custom.” If this was Paul’s intention, then he was stating that if anyone wants to argue about this issue, Christians have “no other custom” than what Paul has just outlined, that is that men are to keep their hair short and women are to keep their hair long.



If, however, the majority of the versions are correct in using the phrase, “no such custom” it would have to refer to the new custom creeping into the Corinthian church of women cutting their hair, possibly emulating the temple prostitutes in Greek culture, or men wearing their hair long. We can deduce that someone must have written to Paul about this new fad or custom in the Corinthian church, or was questioning the traditional custom of gender distinctions in hair length. 1 Corinthians 11 records his doctrinal defense, not his opinion.



1920s

Ellen White was silent on women cutting their hair because this practice didn't start to be widespread until after she died. The Biblical teachings of distinctions between the appearance and roles of men and women were generally followed in her day because Christianity was the dominant ideology. She had no need to clarify something that was so clearly taught in the Bible.

Consider these comments from our official publications shortly after Ellen White died:

Be Not Conformed to This World

A Discussion of Underlying Principles

BY THE EDITOR

There is a good reason why women should have long hair. There is a good reason why women should not wear men's clothes, and why men should not wear women's clothes. Do you know what it is? I'll tell you. Purity and morality can never be maintained except there be a distinct line of demarcation between the sexes. There must be that which will differentiate a man from a woman at all times.

“Long hair is given to a woman as the emblem of her sex. And a beautiful emblem it is. If you yield to the urge of the god of fashion and cut off your hair, you obey the god of fashion, and the Bible says, ‘His servants ye are to whom ye obey.’”

OCTOBER 3, 1927

**BOBBED HAIR AND
MASCULINE CLOTHES**

They go well together and no one understands their purpose better than he who institutes the fashions of the world. The inroads these customs have made among believers need not have been so serious if we had only heeded the multiplied warnings that have been coming to us all these years. For God has plainly spoken on these subjects in words that can not be questioned nor misunderstood. The line of demarkation in such matters is just as plain today between those who love God supremely and those whose hearts are in the world, as at any time in past history.

Do our people see no danger in the adversary's plan to break down the barriers between the sexes? Will the present shamefully immodest dress, even daring as many do to violate the plain command of God by wearing that which pertains to men (Deut. 22:5), have no evil effect? Will the marring of that which has been for ages woman's crown of glory, the sign and protection of her womanhood (1 Cor. 11:15) result in no evil? Certainly it will result in just what Satan planned. The removing of these distinctive marks of womanhood can but lead to immodest actions on the part of women, while taking the last vestige of respect for her on the part of men. It leads sooner or later to the unblushing boldness and lack of shame which is becoming more and more prevalent in our time. *But the end is not yet.*

What we see now is but the beginning of Satan's plan to make the world once again what it was before the flood. What a shame and reproach that God's people should not from the very beginning have shunned these adominable practices!

SIGNS *of the* TIMES

AMERICA'S PROPHECIC WEEKLY

Are the PILLARS of

Society Crumbling?

20

WALTER L. BURGAN

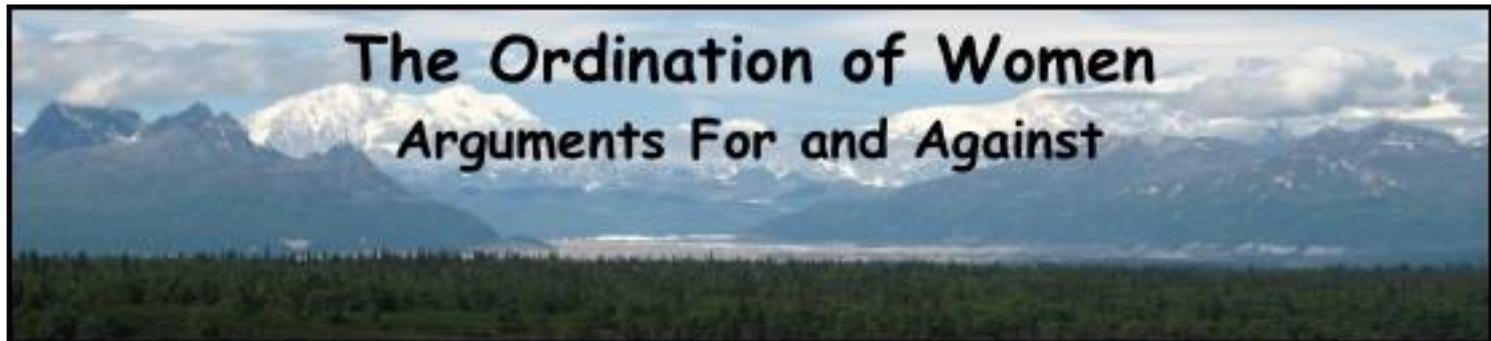
What HOPE is there for the FUTURE when our HOMES and HOME LIFE are DECADENT?

world.

It is not uncommon to see women with their hair bobbed, dimples painted in their cheeks, and lips painted red to match their hats. So masculine have they become that they are now deserting parlors established purposely for them, and are frequenting men's barber shops where they have their hair trimmed, their faces massaged, their nails manicured, and their shoes shined. One writer very forcibly states that "moral darkness, like a funeral pall, covers the earth. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and deceptions are misleading the minds of men;" for to men, as the fashion makers, can be traced the origin of the fads and fancies which are practiced by many women.

The teaching isn't specifically about modesty; it is about submission. When the custom of women cutting their hair short began again to creep into the church, godly church leaders spoke out against it using the teachings of 1 Corinthians 11. Now, church leaders are silent, not even recognizing the relevance of this issue.

With the disappearance of the teaching that women should not cut their hair short like a man's, most Christians have also lost sight of the principle that the Bible teaches them to have an obvious, outwardly visible submission to their husbands, especially those who participate in public worship (praying and prophesying). This has left women prone to falling into the temptation to “exercise (usurp) authority over a man” both in public worship and at home. The proper use of this symbol of submission applies just as much or even more so when women participate in public worship.





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Those Christian denominations where the women still recognize the symbol of submission, either cloth or long hair, do not have the issues with disagreements on women's ordination that we are having in our church. Our church very much needs an outward sign of submission of wives to their husbands (long hair on woman.) It would ever help us to remember that a woman's husband is her head, and that the position of spiritual leadership and doctrinal authority in the church belongs to godly men.

Long



Short



While we have no specific agenda to convince Seventh-day Adventist women that they need to have long hair, we do believe that very short, mannish haircuts do blur the distinction between the sexes, contrary to God's design.

Our main reason for bringing up this discussion of the veils, small bonnets and hair for a covering is because some like to use the aforementioned quotations to try to "prove" that modesty is culturally relative. Thus, they say that what society declares is modest today becomes the standard of modesty.

What dangerous reasoning this is! We strongly oppose this thinking!



Long hair and long skirts are obvious identifiers of the female gender. In this symbol, in just a quick glance it is easy to determine which is the man and which is the woman. By maintaining these identifiers, we are cooperating with God's ideal to maintain a plain distinction between the sexes.



Objection 2: The Disappearance of Notoriety

It has been suggested that the **only** reason the shorter length of dresses were condemned was because of the **notoriety** attached to them. There was notoriety attached to short dresses because the “certain class” who wore them were spiritualists. {1T 464. 1}.



Ellen White said if Adventist women wore this “extreme short dress” they would “disgust and prejudice good people, and destroy in a great measure their own influence” {3SM 278} because society would identify anyone wearing that style of dress as a spiritualist.



However, Ellen White said there were “evils and notoriety” associated with the dress that came “about to the knees”. {1T 464. 1} Feminism is no longer a notorious movement; it is a celebrated mindset in our society. While the notoriety of wearing pants under a knee length or shorter dress has disappeared, there are evils in that style that remain. What are the evils?



The “singular mode of dress” {1T 421.4} these spiritualists adopted was not only incidentally associated with them, it was intertwined with their ideals. The short dress over pants which they wore was designed specifically in order “to fashion their dress very much like that of men,” {1T 421.3} and thus it was connected to the ideology of the movement.



The short dress could not be notorious without being evil, because the evil was in the fact that “God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded” {1T 421.2} in regards to Deuteronomy 22:5. There was no limit to how short the short dress could go, because these women fashioned the dress as close to menswear as society would allow. This was the evil intention of the American Costume and why Adventist women were counseled not to wear it. If they didn't question the motivation behind the design of the dress, neither would they question when the dress became shorter and shorter, as we will see that it did.

We can see that Amelia Bloomer started with dresses that came just below the knee with full, modest, feminine pants. This dress does not appear to be a whole lot shorter than the Adventist reform dress that Ellen White wore and recommended.



Amelia Bloomer





However, feminists would not be satisfied until they had the freedom to dress just like men, in pants and coats, which we can see from the Bible, was immodest for women and therefore, not feminine. Fighting for this freedom was a slow process because of the restrictions of society, which was largely influenced by Biblical teachings at that time.



Mary Walker (1865)

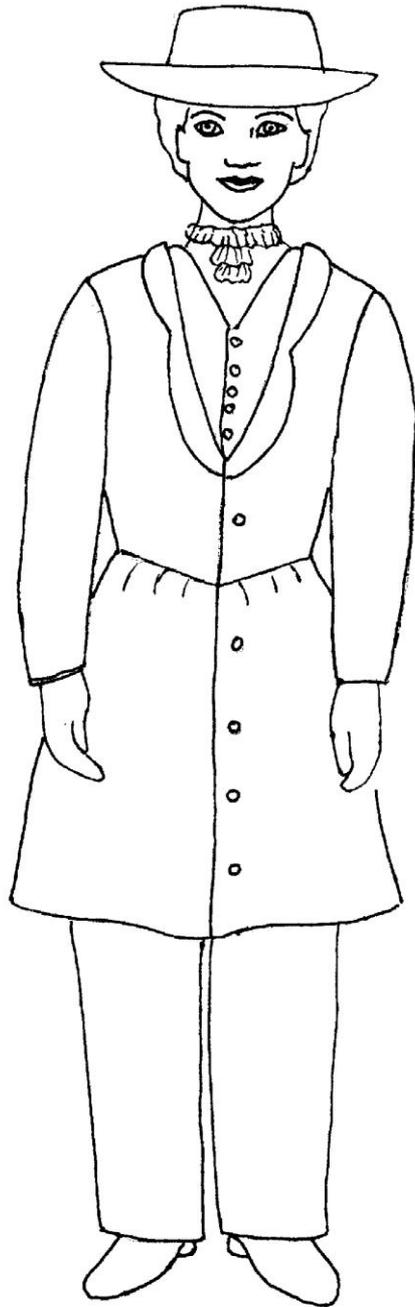


Mary Walker (1870)

It wasn't long before feminists like Mary Walker started wearing narrow pants that looked like men's trousers, while their dresses became shorter as well as narrower. When Mary Walker resorted to actually dressing in men's clothes before it was socially acceptable, she was arrested on multiple occasions for impersonating a man.



Referring to those who were starting to dress like this, Ellen White said, “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. Those who adopt and advocate this style of dress carry the so-called dress reform to very objectionable lengths. Confusion will be the result.” {1 T 460}



Ellen White said that these even shorter dresses “resembling a coat and reaching about halfway from the hip to the knee” were not “in harmony with the word of God.” {1 T465} They blurred the distinction between a man’s and a woman’s outer garment. God revealed to Ellen White that this “short dress” that was really a long coat, was so incredibly unacceptable that she declared, “I need not say that this style of dress was shown me to be too short.” {3SM 278.2}



Secular society readily agreed with her statement for a while, but eventually grew accustomed to the style. And now most Christians and even pastors think it is perfectly modest to wear a waist or hip length jacket over pants. However, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy make it clear that this cannot be modest according to God's standards. They still reveal the crotch when a woman is seated, and the hips and thighs when she is standing.





Katharine Hepburn

As society slowly rejected Biblical teachings, it began to allow women to dress more like men. Finally women could wear the exact same clothes as men and be applauded for it, as Marlene Dietrich, and Katharine Hepburn did.



Marlene Dietrich



Objection 3: The Desensitization of Society

Some would propose that we teach a standard of modesty that most men basically agree on, so we don't have to go back to a time when the standard of modesty was so extreme? Is there a problem with this thinking?

Dr. David Vaughan, author of *Beauty of Modesty*, writes: “Modesty matters. But since the sexual revolution of the sixties, Americans have found it increasingly difficult to talk about modesty. We have instead become *so desensitized to immodesty* that the very notion of virtue seems almost to have been lost in the onrushing flood of sensualism.”



And a young Christian woman writes: “Even though I do find Hollywood’s immodest fashions to be atrocious, it does indeed affect me. I hate to admit it, but the more I see other women wearing revealing things, the more I am *desensitized to immodesty*. And that is not a good thing.”



When an immodest fashion becomes prevalent, the reaction of men is conditioned to eventually be unaffected by regular immodest exposure. Many fashions that used to be shocking and arousing to men's lusts no longer have this affect, because men become *desensitized* to a greater or lesser degree. However, inside, many men stumble over culturally acceptable immodesty. Those who are more sensitive to immodesty are even scorned. However, it is the *desensitization to immodesty* that God abhors, because it results from familiarity with sin.



When Christians realize that modest attire includes covering the lower legs, they must admit the fact that their idea of modesty has been affected by our degraded society. It's a condition called desensitization and we all need to be spiritually sensitized to what it means to be modest, not make concessions for the desensitized state of most Christian men.



The statement about the immodest exposure of the barely clad ankle reveals the tendency for modesty to appear relative. The men in Ellen White's time seemed to show little interest in the exposed lower leg of a woman because "it is fashion, and for this reason it is endured." However, God did not make allowance for this fashion because of men's apparent lack of interest. He condemned it through the words of Ellen White.



A man in the present culture who goes to the beach sees women wearing swimwear that cover hardly more than their under garments would. Those men who seem desensitized to this common sight do not react. They show a trained apparent lack of interest, because it is quite unacceptable for men to gawk at an attractive woman in a swimsuit. Church sponsored swimming parties don't seem to be of concern to those who have become desensitized to seeing women in swimsuits.



Similarly, in undeveloped countries where women go around topless, most of the men in these countries are not easily sexually aroused by the common sight of women's bare breasts. This body part has lost its sexual association. But that does not make it modest.



This trend in the Western world of women showing more and more will no doubt continue, until it is common for woman to be bare breasted. In fact, on August 26th of 2012, the fifth annual nationwide topless rally was held in cities across America. Women showed up in the streets bare breasted to protest the gender inequality that requires woman to wear tops, but allows men to go shirtless. We may see laws across America change very soon.



So, how do we know where to draw the line between which body parts are acceptable to expose and which are not? With time the mundane revealing of the entire female form loses its sexual association. This is why there is the movement of “naturalists” or nudists who see nudity as natural, not something to be associated with sexuality by default, but only in intentionally sexual contexts. They believe that people need to become accustomed to nudity to desensitize their “unnatural” association between nudity and sexuality.



“Christian” nudists, who believe in monogamy and purity of mind, believe the solution to the problem of lust is desensitization rather than modesty. If they saw Adam and Eve in the garden after their fall sewing fig leaves together, they would have told them they need to just get used to being naked so they wouldn't be burdened with a “sinful” psychological and social shame associated with public nakedness.

They postulate that if men were used to seeing women naked, then lust would cease to be a problem and if women were used to being seen by men naked, then the shame of some and the intentional provocative intensions of others would be removed.



If nakedness could solve all this, why did God invent clothes?



Because God intended that nakedness should not be a public affair, but a private matter between a husband and wife. God designed that the curves of a wife's form would cause sexual reaction in her husband. A husband's sexual desire for his wife was meant to cause a corresponding sexual reaction in her. It is desensitization that makes couples resort to various means to "spice up" their love lives.

Most Christian men would disagree that public nakedness is the solution to lust, and yet they approve of the fashions that are by God's standards immodest, simply because they are desensitized.





With each rise of the hemline, men have grown accustomed to the exposure of more of the female leg. Now, the average Christian men would admit that he is rarely aroused by the routine exposure of a woman's leg from the mid-thigh on down, and certainly not by the ankle. Therefore the conditioned, desensitized reactions of men, including pastors, should not determine the definition of modesty. Just because normal men aren't turned on by a woman's lower leg anymore doesn't mean that they wouldn't be if it were a rare sight.



Godly men who approve of knee length skirts, pants which are not covered by a long skirt, and other form-revealing clothing do not realize they have been desensitized. They use their own sexual reaction to define whether something is immodest or not.



Stockholm Fashion Week
street style SPRING 2013



These are interesting symbols depicting a man and a woman. The difference between them is the woman has on a long skirt, and long hair in a bun. In just a quick glance it is easy to determine which is the man and which is the woman.



A present-day pastor may approve of clothing, or lack thereof which would have horrified Seventh-day Adventist pastors in the 1930's. Next we will share a portion of a sermon that was preached in 1934 by Carlyle B. Hanes, one of Adventism's most popular authors and evangelists:

“A marked characteristic of this time is **immodest exposure** of the person, a display of physical charms, an **accentuation of every bodily part** which is calculated to create—what shall I say? admiration?—on the part of the beholder. O dear friends, if the desire to create admiration in this matter stopped with admiration, it would be going too far. But it is more than that. I do not need to tell you. Your flesh is as my flesh. The impulses and cravings inherent in fallen human nature are not unknown to you.”





“No one can dress in such a way as to call attention to and **accentuate the sensual, the fleshly, the physical**, and then look with apparent innocence into my eyes and tell me she does not know what she is doing. She does know what she is doing. No one is as dumb as that. She is cultivating and encouraging and ministering to the earthly, the passionate, the sensual, the lower nature.”

McCall's August 1925



Less than 10 years before this message was preached, this fashion pattern reveals one low neckline, narrower, short skirts, bare legs and arms, and high heels which accentuated a woman's hips when she walks. As Adventists have usually been very careful to stay a few steps behind fashion, by the time this message was preached, these fashions would have been common among the more fashionable women in the church.



A 1930's fashion pattern reveals a more professional, conservative look. Half the designs have slightly low necklines, and all have narrow, straight skirts, that are too fitted in the hips to be modest when squatting or bending. Bare ankles and high heels are ubiquitous in this period. This is what the more conservative members would have felt comfortable wearing.



This honest, concerned pastor said that the fashions of his day created an **“immodest exposure of the person... an accentuation of every bodily part,”** calculated to draw attention to **“the sensual, the fleshly, the physical.”** Yet, these fashions, in comparison to modern fashions, are modest. Does God’s standard of modesty change when men become accustomed to what was once immodest?



Anyone living in modern society has been seriously affected by the rampant immodesty all around us. Men and woman alike are used to seeing the form of a woman's crotch, buttocks, hips, and thighs under her pants. They are used to seeing the upper cleavage of a woman's chest when she bends over with low or loose necked shirts. It is not possible to see this kind of thing on a regular basis and not be desensitized.



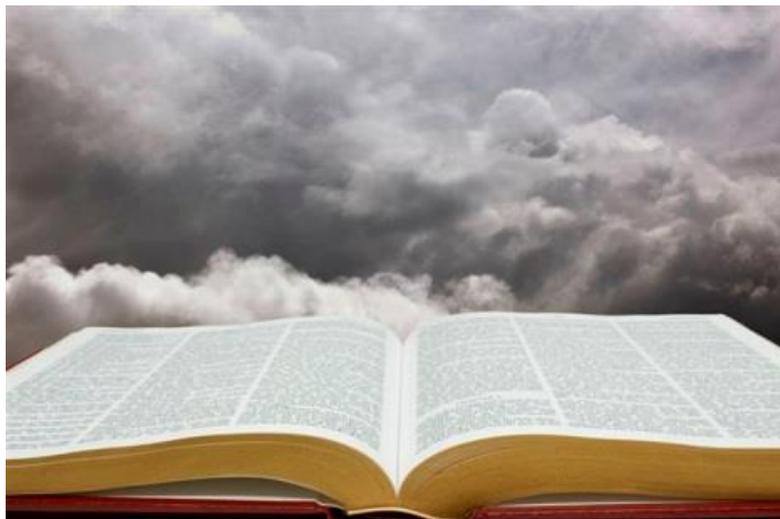


In one way, this desensitization has become a necessary evil. It is a coping mechanism that helps men to deal with the bombardment of temptations. Otherwise, they would be walking around with continual temptations for their passions to be inflamed by nearly every woman they see, since the vast majority are immodestly attired.

But just because we've become desensitized to immodesty doesn't change God's standard of modesty!

We're told that:

“It has become customary for professors of religion to excuse almost any pernicious indulgence to which the heart is wedded. By familiarity with sin, they become blinded to its enormity.”
{MYP 398.4}



In order to counteract the prevalence of sin, we need to become more familiar with righteousness as found in His Word!



Summary

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, the Apostle Paul, who spoke for God, would have uttered a rebuke, had he been alive, to professed Christians who followed the example of those “who would advocate the doing away of the distinction of dress between males and females.” {1T 460}

“This style of dress, God would not have his people adopt. It is not modest apparel, and is not at all fitting for modest, humble females who profess to be Christ's followers.”



In studying the history of the change, we see the progressive blurring of the distinction between the sexes. This effectively removed the biblical definition of womanly modesty. (*For more information on this history see TheAndrogynyDeception.com*)

Today, *there is no widely-accepted definition of modesty* that remains unchanged by culture and fashion in our church.

Today, *there is no distinction between the sexes* that is clearly recognized in society.



When uncovered pants were first worn by women, they were decried as wholesale abomination by society at large.



As time went on and women's hemlines were raised, revealing more and more of their bare legs, it got to the point that pants were modest in comparison to their miniskirts.



Now, men, including pastors have become used to the sight of women in uncovered pants.



It is likely that it won't be long before skirts become acceptable for men in our culture.



Rather than supporting their teachings with biblical distinctions and standards of modesty, many use their own opinions to either oppose or defend this fashion. With this lack of sound reasoning and Biblical teaching, we could soon face another fashion crisis.

There is no point in talking about the need for modesty or distinction between the clothing of the sexes if the biblical standard is ignored. All we have left is a collection of conflicting human opinions, with no way to unite in a cohesive standard.



Without a biblical standard, anything goes, and it will continue to go down, down, down, following in the footsteps of the world into deeper degradation.



While skirts on men are generally unacceptable to mainstream society at this current time, we cannot help but conclude that there is a lot more inspired and historical evidence that skirts/robes on men are more acceptable to God than pants on women.



To oppose skirts on men but to approve pants on women is hypocritical. For the informed, there is no logic in that position.

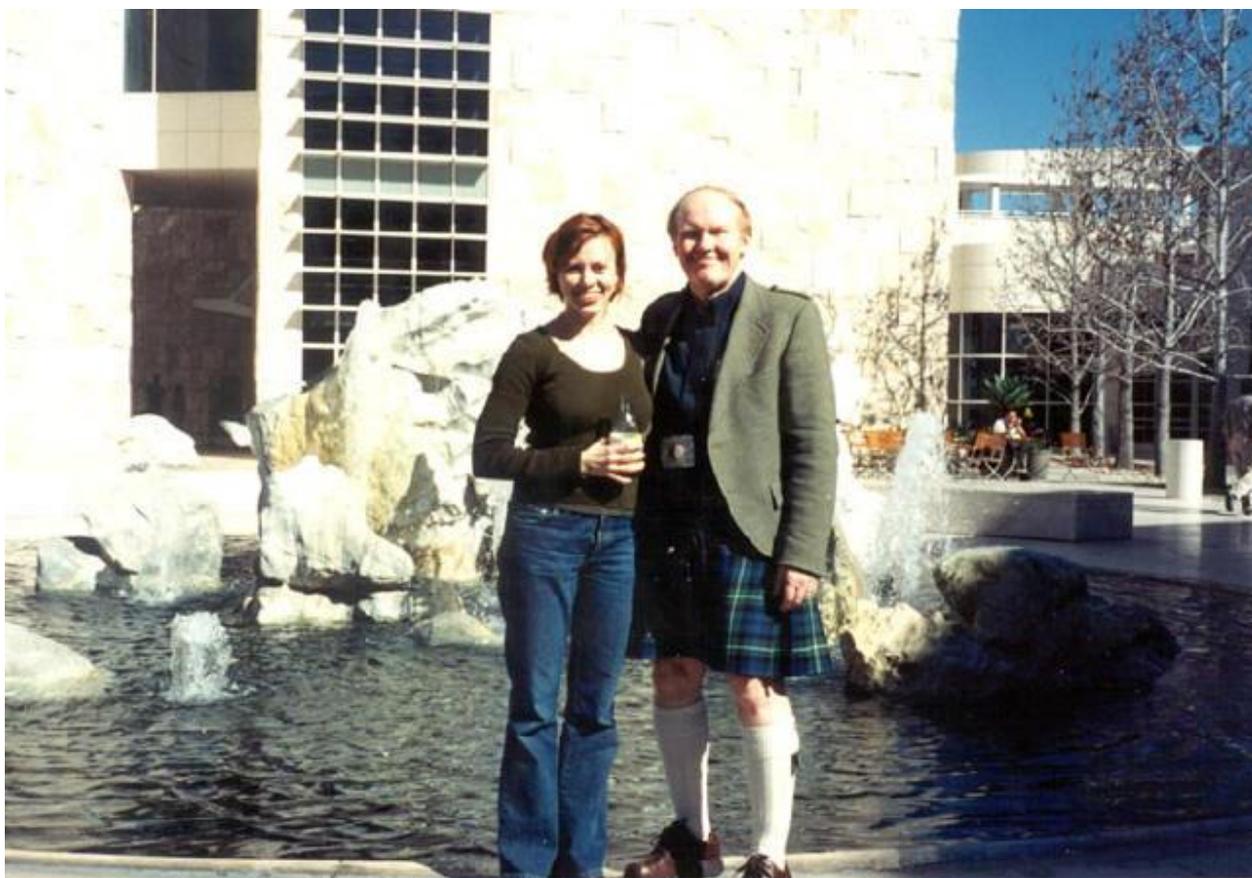
On the other hand, to approve of men and women wearing interchangeable clothing is akin to thumbing our noses at God's commandment to maintain a plain distinction.





We are NOT advocating that Christian men wear skirts today. In Western culture, this would be a crossing of the gender boundaries currently recognized by society, and a stumbling block to others.

Feminine skirts



Adventists need to be taught the principles that make a garment feminine or masculine according to God's standards, not society's standards.



We cannot depend on society to inform us of what features are feminine or masculine, or modest or immodest.

When women wear the long, flowing skirt in a feminine style, (let down at least to mid-calf) with her lower limbs covered, men's boxy, straight attire will always appear masculine in contrast.





It is clear that the plain distinction that God designed between men and women is applicable and appropriate in every age. God specified that women are to wear a garment let down, which would be a long, flowing garment, which is widely distinct from a man's garment. This will keep her legs modestly covered and healthfully comfortable in any weather. It keeps her lower form from being suggestively revealed in any position.



When a woman wears appropriate attire as God directed, she will always appear womanly and modest. Her demeanor will tend to match her clothing, which will demonstrate a meek and quiet spirit, with shamefacedness and sobriety. By a glance, she can be distinguished as a God-fearing woman.



God is calling for revival and reformation among His people, starting with the leaders. Those who call for a revival while ignoring the need for reformation in all areas of life could be facilitating a false revival. Praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is futile if we choose to remain ignorant of, or even reject God's standards.

We pray that you may discern the need to accept the truth of this call for reformation in dress. For more information, please see www.SistersInSkirts.com.

May God bless you as you prayerfully consider this matter.

