



*Your Clothes
& Your
Heart*

What Do Your Clothes Have to Do With Your Heart?

An important message to help you in your walk with Jesus.



This is written for Seventh-day Adventist Christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and have made a covenant with Him through baptism to follow Him wherever He may lead.

We invite you to prayerfully consider if you hear the voice of God speaking to your heart through these messages. If you are weak in your faith, or hesitant in your commitment to God, it is an urgent matter that you seek the inward adorning before considering your outward attire.

“There is a remedy for the sin-sick soul. That remedy is in Jesus. Precious Saviour! His grace is sufficient for the weakest; and the strongest must also have His grace or perish. I saw how this grace could be obtained. Go to your closet and there alone plead with God. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). Be in earnest, be sincere. Fervent prayer availeth much. Jacob-like, wrestle in prayer. Agonize. Jesus in the garden sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort. Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God; then watch, and just as long as you watch and pray, you can keep these evil besetments under, and the grace of God can, and will, appear in you.” {AG 87.6}

We also need to understand that what we wear affects our relationship with God. If we ignore God’s principles of dress, we neglect the inward adorning as well.

“As we see our sisters departing from simplicity in dress and cultivating a love for the fashions of the world, we feel troubled. By taking steps in this direction they are separating themselves from God and neglecting the inward adorning.” {CH 596.1}

Although this is specifically addressed to women, it would be very appropriate for husbands, future husbands, fathers, and especially church leaders to read this document as well.

“Christians should not neglect to search the Scriptures on these points. They need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. Those who are earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired of God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel. Their dress bears its testimony to their own family, to the church and the world, that they are being purified from vanity and selfishness. They demonstrate that they are not idolaters.” {6MR 161.1}

“The human heart has never been in harmony with the requirements of God. Human reasoning has ever sought to evade or set aside the simple, direct instructions of his word. Those precepts which enjoin self-denial and humility, which require modesty and simplicity in conversation, deportment, and apparel, have, in every age, been disregarded, even by the majority of those who professed to be followers of Christ. The result has ever been the same, — the adoption of the fashions, customs, and principles of the world. 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.” {CTBH 93.1}

“I saw that **the outside appearance is an index to the heart.** When the exterior is hung with ribbons, collars, and needless things, it plainly shows that the love for all this is in the heart; unless such persons are cleansed from their corruption, they can never see God, for only the pure in heart will see Him.”--1T 136 (1856). {DG 154.1} “While the outward adorning beautifies only the mortal body, the ornament of meekness adorns the soul, and connects finite man with the infinite God. This is the ornament of God's own choice. . . . Angels of heaven will register as best adorned, those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk with Him in meekness and lowliness of mind.”--RH, Jan. 18, 1881. {DG 154.2}

“**Dress is an index of the mind and heart.** That which is hung upon the outside is the sign of what is within. It does not require intellect or a cultivated mind to overdress. The very fact that women can hang upon their persons such an amount of needless articles of clothing shows that they cannot have time to cultivate their intellects and store their minds with useful knowledge.”--MS 76, 1900. {1MCP 289.2}

“Sabbath-keepers, remember that **the outside appearance is an index to the heart,** and while you are so anxious to imitate the fashions of the world; while your heart is in these things, you are like them, you have their spirit, and have lost the truth out of your heart. While you study your appearance to look as near like the world as possible, remember your Redeemer. Upon his head was a crown of thorns. The greatest concern some Sabbath-keepers have is their outward appearance. They are fostering pride, and will perish with their pride unless they entirely reform.” {2SG 286.2}

Many dress like the world to have an influence. They spend hours that are worse than thrown away, in studying this or that fashion to decorate the poor, mortal body. But here they make a sad and fatal mistake. If they would have a saving influence, if they would have their lives tell in favor of the truth, let them imitate the humble Pattern. Let them show their faith by righteous works, and make the distinction broad between themselves and the world. The words, the dress, and the actions should tell for God. Then a holy influence will be shed upon all, and all will take knowledge of them, that they have been with Jesus. Unbelievers will see that faith in Christ's coming affects the character. . . . {TMK 312.4}

The external appearance is an index to the heart. When hearts are affected by the truth there will be a death to the world, and those who are dead to the world will not be moved by the laugh, the jeer, and the scorn of unbelievers. They will feel an anxious desire to be like their Master, separate from the world. They will not imitate its fashions or customs. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God and gain the immortal inheritance, and in comparison with this everything of an earthly nature will sink into insignificance. {TMK 312.5}

Dear Seventh-day Adventist Sisters, God has a special work for you to do, unique and precious that cannot be accomplished by anyone else in the world. He is calling you to represent Him in purity and holiness.

“Satan knows that women have a power of influence for good or for evil; therefore he seeks to enlist them in his cause. . . .” {DG 152.1} And he has a powerful deception specifically crafted for the women who profess to love God. It is regarding our external appearance—the way we dress and present ourselves to the world.

For some reason, when the subject of dress comes up, we women tend to get our defenses up. We’re ready to fight for our choice to appear as we want, and we tend to rise up against anyone who would suggest that we have a need to reform in this area. But if we are serious about our commitment to Jesus, we simply cannot afford to shut our ears and harden our hearts against God’s inspired messages. To do so would be disastrous.

The power of influence is so strong that it is difficult for us to break away from it. We as Seventh-day Adventist women are bound under the influence of generations of Laodiceanism. We look around us, we look to our leaders, to our parents and our peers—we assume they have it right, so we follow along, never taking the time and effort to investigate for ourselves the inspired testimony on dress. Anyone who does not fit into the “normal” range of how Seventh-day Adventist women dress, we label as either fanatical or worldly. To us, the fanatics are those who are more modest and plain than we are, and the worldly are those who are less modest and plain than we are. We automatically assume the way we dress is the correct standard.

I know—I was there myself for many years. By being a little more conservative than average, I congratulated myself that I was totally acceptable to God. Whenever I read something in the Spirit of Prophecy about dress, I’d compare my practices with some who were “more worldly” than I was, and assure myself that I was in full harmony with God’s will in this area. I had a huge block that prevented me from hearing God’s voice in the words of inspiration. The problem was, I simply did not want to change, so I barricaded my heart against God’s counsel.

I was seriously self-deceived in this area. Yet I had a meaningful devotional experience and truly believed I loved Jesus with all my heart. But in the area of dress, I ignored God’s standard, and set up my own standard, and I was quite happy with it. I didn’t realize that “God calls His church to be more separate from the world in their dress than you have thought.” {TDG 295.4}

“Many cling to their. . . darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing.” (See *The Laodicean Church*, 3T 253-260) When the Holy Spirit comes with a “startling denunciation” contained in the Laodicean message, we come to a crossroad in our experience.

One day I heard the Holy Spirit speaking to me about my attire and appearance. The strong impression that I needed to make some serious changes was terrifying to me. I wanted to believe I was right, my SDA friends were right, my spiritual leaders were right, and the recent generation before me had been right, and that God was quite happy with our dress standards. But the Spirit of God spoke with such power I couldn’t ignore it. I knew I must either obey or violate my conscience and risk losing my peace with God. To resist the Holy Spirit is a terrible thing for one who is serious about God. I praise the Lord, He brought me to the point of surrender that day, which was the first in a series of ongoing changes I would be making, and am still making regarding my appearance.

As Seventh-day Adventists with a special message to share with the world, we have a sense of sadness when our Sunday-keeping friends block our attempts to share the three angels' messages with them. Often they are comfortable and confident in their beliefs. They assure themselves that their pastors are correct in their arguments against the Sabbath truth. Most aren't even willing to sit down and hear an evangelistic sermon or a Bible study on the Sabbath. They have closed their minds. Could we be guilty of having the same attitude when it comes to hearing the inspired counsels on dress? Do we have the same unwillingness to study it out or listen to someone who has carefully studied the issue?

The willingness to investigate the matter of "dress reform" is a miracle in itself. I hadn't lacked information on the subject, or at least the knowledge of where to find the information—I had lacked a willing heart. Our stubborn resistance to the Holy Spirit is the natural condition of our hearts. But when God is finally able to get our attention, and give us a willing heart, that is a miracle. By listening, we allow Him to show us where our ideas don't line up with His will. Then we start realizing how off the track we have been. My entire perspective on the principles of modesty began to change as I opened my heart to hear God's instruction.

This area of our appearance is the one area that Satan is working in harder than any other in the lives of Seventh-day Adventist women. "Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God." {4T 647} We've had almost a hundred years since our prophetess died, in which we have done it "our way." You can see it in the history of how our SDA ladies have dressed for the last century, and observe one small compromise after another taking place. We need to face it: we have inherited a century of compromise, much of it taking place before many of us were even born. It's a gradual decline, almost imperceptible, especially to the undiscerning.

As I have gone back over the last 100 years and traced the slipping of the principles year by year, I have seen an amazing apostasy unfold. That's why God is calling us to go back, not 20 years, not even 50 years, but at least 100 years or more, and consider His words recorded by His prophetess. And we need to hear the whole story, not just bits and pieces of those words, which some would twist and misquote to assure us that we are doing just fine.

We have not experienced a great revival and reformation leading us back to the high standards God gave us many years ago. Ellen White saw the apostasy, and it grieved her heart. "I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders." {5T 217.1}

If you, dear sister, have reposed in the impression that your dress is totally acceptable to God, simply because you are comfortable and happy with what you wear, and because you fit in with your peers, and with the rest of society, I urge you to go to God, and ask Him to give you a receptive heart, that you may be willing to hear His inspired counsel regarding what He wants you to wear. This is a serious matter. We simply cannot afford to trust the example of even the most influential and highly respected female leaders in our church. They also have inherited the influence of a century of Laodicean apostasy. Because they are following those that came before them, their dress cannot be your example. God has a standard, and we are responsible for finding out what it is.

The willingness to launch out into unfamiliar territory, especially when few have ever traveled that path, requires courage and strong motivation. And, when all those around you consider your course to be foolish and unreasonable, your pursuit must be prompted by a desire that is higher than being accepted and approved by your friends. There is no stronger motivation for change than the love of Christ. It is out of love for Him that we receive transforming power to make changes that go against the tide.

Because the impression I received from God regarding my need to make changes in my appearance was so powerful, I determined that I would get to the bottom of this issue, and study the matter out with earnestness and diligence. I clearly remember a discussion between two of my close friends as I was beginning my search. One was wearing jeans, and the other was wearing a knee length skirt. They were arguing which was more modest, and thus more pleasing to God, each believing her clothing was preferred by Him. The jeans-wearing lady loosely paraphrased a quote she mistakenly believed was written by Ellen White, declaring that we should not be the first or the last to adopt any particular fashion. That “quote” assured her that she was dressed appropriately. The other lady was sure that skirts must be more modest, even though her knees and legs were bare.

As I pondered their disagreement, I knew that there had to be a way to find out which one was right, because surely God wouldn’t just command that women dress modestly, and then leave us with no principles by which we could determine His will. What were those principles? I was determined to find out.

And, over the past several years, I have done just that. By reading literally thousands of articles, books, sermons, and historical records, along with spending many, many hours of agonizing prayer and wrestling with God, a deep impression has been made on my soul, providing me with a most amazing understanding of a great controversy in the matter of dress. What seemed like just a small issue at first has expanded to reveal that this one issue has done more than any other thing to bring our church into the Laodicean condition.

But this issue is not just in our church. It is becoming evident from my study that the degenerate, deteriorating fashions of the world have paved the way for the moral degradation of society such as this world has never seen. Unfortunately, our church has not been on guard, and we have followed these fashions a few steps behind society.

By tracing the history of dress in our church over the last century through articles and letters in our official publications, I have observed how this step-by-step decline in standards took place. From the early 1900s, culture would introduce an ungodly fashion, and the church, through articles and sermons, would clearly rebuke the fashion. But after a brief time of exposure, the familiarity gradually led to the acceptance of one worldly fashion after the other, sliding along just a bit behind society. The less-committed among us set the example, but it was the leadership who basically approved of the trends, either through their silence or their outright acceptance.

Today, our church, at least in North America, has virtually no standard of dress. Modesty has become relative; it is merely an opinion. Officially, no one is able to say what’s modest or immodest. Each one wears what is right in her own eyes.

Pastors generally don’t preach on modesty because it is considered to be a subjective issue, where each woman comes to her own conclusion about the appropriateness of her clothing.

There is no counsel coming from the leadership of our church to guide young ladies into God’s definition of modesty. The more we become accustomed to the world’s standard, the more “old fashioned” God’s

standard seems. The distance between the two standards has become so great, the leaders have virtually thrown out God's standard, and the only standard we have now is to stay a few steps behind the world.

Often people try to avoid discussion of dress standards by quoting, "Let not the dress question fill the mind." Ellen White wasn't telling us to put little thought into what we wear. Indeed, she declares, "The subject of dress demands serious reflection and much prayer." {4T 641.3} The "dress question" to which she was referring was the effort of some to force the ladies to go back to the set-aside "reform dress" which had a very specific pattern and style. Years later Ellen White gave guiding principles in which she advocated "a more sensible style" which could have many variations and patterns. This "less objectionable dress" didn't show the pants underneath, but included a plain, modest top, an ankle length skirt without tight binding at the waist, and the limbs were to be covered. It is a misuse of her writings to make it sound like she discouraged a study of God's standards of modesty. She pleads, "Will my sisters accept this style of dress and refuse to imitate the fashions that are devised by Satan and continually changing?" {4T 640.2} If they had done that, and if we had continued to follow their example, we wouldn't even need to discuss the dress issue at all!

We read in the Spirit of Prophecy, "When the church is converted, there will be a very great reformation in dress." {PH157 14.1} The condition of the Laodicean is to feel no need of reformation or transformation. Spiritual blindness causes us to think we're just fine.

Laodicea's problem is pride and self-sufficiency. "I saw that God's people are on the enchanted ground, and that some have lost nearly all sense of the shortness of time and the worth of the soul. Pride has crept in among Sabbathkeepers—pride of dress and appearance." {EW 120.1} We are so proud, that we get seriously offended if anyone tries to point out that our dress is not pleasing to God. We must overcome that pride: "Unless you overcome pride of dress . . . God will not own you as his, and will not receive you to himself at his appearing. You can be overcomers. Go to God daily for strength, and every day overcome. {YI, December 1, 1852 par. 23}

All God wants from us is a listening, willing heart. And if we don't have that, God says, we may ask for it, and He will give it to us. Praise God!

"The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the will of God; but if you are "willing to be made willing," God will accomplish the work for you. . . ." {ST, May 18, 1904 par. 9}

God is so good! He will help us get to where we are willing and even eager to hear the timeless principles that God gave us through the Spirit of Prophecy, to show us how He wants us to dress.

Searching out significant doctrines in the Word of God requires in-depth prayerful study. Scripture must be compared with scripture, gathering together all the references on a particular subject. Out of this study, a beautiful, harmonious doctrine emerges. We cannot base our doctrines on isolated texts that do not line up with the weight of evidence found in the scriptures.

In the same way, we must be diligent students of the Spirit of Prophecy if we would know God's will for our dress. We should never assume that our uninformed opinions are a safe guide to follow.

In studying this topic, one discovers many principles and guidelines regarding our appearance. In applying dress principles, we must be careful not to take only the ones that appeal to us, and ignoring the rest. There are four basic categories for the principles of Christian dress as given to us by inspiration.

These include: modesty, simplicity, healthfulness, and gender distinctiveness. These principles are clearly defined in the Spirit of Prophecy, so that we need not be subjected to mere opinion in these matters. Along with these four categories, we can clearly see that God wants us to dress tastefully, becomingly, neatly, with cleanliness, and so on.

Only when we incorporate all the principles are we dressed in a way that glorifies God. Again, these are God's timeless principles, not our opinions. Not—what do I think is modest, but—what does God say is modest—is what matters.

When I first started my journey of discovering God's principles of dress, I was concerned that God would be asking me to make changes that would be distasteful and unpleasant. It seemed like a huge sacrifice to my pride. But I should have known that God's blessings far outweigh any sacrifice we can ever make. He has rich treasures awaiting those who choose to please Him no matter what. I can honestly say that in following His principles of dress my heart has opened up to receive His love in a greater measure than ever before. There is tremendous joy in full surrender, and I wouldn't trade it for the world!

The fashions of the world are basically any fashion that violates God's principles. Much has been written regarding the spiritual danger of following the fashions of the world. "No Christian can conform to the demoralizing fashions of the world without imperiling his soul's salvation." {RH, March 31, 1891 par. 7} But we can't even know if we're following worldly fashions unless we clearly understand God's principles.

It is quite evident that modesty has been severely disregarded in today's fashions. But the real question is—what is God's standard of modesty? Let's say for instance that God's standard is at level 100, and the current world's standard is down to level 25. By continual exposure to the low level of the world's standard, we may come to believe that level 30 is actually modest and acceptable to God.

But we can't use the level of the world's fashion to determine God's standard. We must go to inspiration to find His standard. If we look at the world, and try to determine what pleases God by making our standard just one notch higher than the world's, we could end up quite far from the mark.

When all God's principles are combined and applied together, it will become obvious that each principle lends itself to cooperate with the other principles. Likewise, one principle violated tends toward the violation of other principles. This is the very way Satan has succeeded in bringing the standard so low.

Starting in the 1920s, shortly after Ellen White died, it became the fashion to wear skirts anywhere from mid-calf to just below the knee, while leaving the legs barely covered. It was this violation of the timeless divine principle of keeping the limbs covered that paved the way for other violations along the way. Bare or barely covered legs, even from the ankle to the knee, are uncomfortable and unhealthy in cold weather.

One man writes in the Review in 1979, "For years my wife wore skirts and sheer nylons to keep in harmony with our church standards, all the while complaining bitterly of the cold and discomfort. Often she commented, 'It isn't fair for God to allow men to be warm and comfortable while the women are cold and inconvenienced.'" What an unfortunate misunderstanding our ladies have had! This wrong fashion of nearly bare legs has been popular for decades. Unfortunately, because the women in our church had already chosen to follow worldly fashion—barely covered legs—above God's principles—while includes keeping legs covered warmly—they had set themselves up for another violation. Instead of going back to God's standard, they followed a fashion, now labeled as androgynous, introduced by worldly people who were intentionally rebelling against God's standard.

A fashion blogger writes about the fashion trends leading to androgyny: “Firstly, to consider fluidity in gender, let’s broadly look back at women’s fashion through the twentieth century. Belle Époque gave way to the Garçonne look of the 1920s flapper with short hair, flattened breasts, and a de-emphasized waist. Inspired by WWI, the 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of Coco Chanel with the iconic Chanel suit. In 1931, Chanel was hired by American film producer Samuel Goldwyn to dress several of his stars, including Katharine Hepburn. Hepburn’s use of loose men’s trousers and non-conformist style has transferred over to the everyday woman’s closet of today. Women have a lot more freedom to cross gender barriers and to borrow from elements of menswear.”

A Fashion Designer writes: “There is no question that one of the great icons of style is Katharine Hepburn. But as many know, it is the menswear from *Woman of the Year* that was revolutionary. This was, after all, World War II and a time when women were only starting to enter the workforce. The strong suiting in the movie was so ahead of its time...the starting point for our modern career wear. 70 years later, its design has changed precious little in fashion. It served as the model of inspiration for Giorgio Armani with his Power Suits of the 1980s and continues with other giants like Donna Karan and Miuccia Prada today. This is especially true of offering pants as an option for women--virtually unheard of in the 1930s and 1940s--because Kate **rebelled** and led the way with her own offscreen uniform of a tailored blazer, blouse, and slacks. Now it's simply considered a classic look. Whether you now wear trousers, khakis, jeans, leggings, or even sweatpants as loungewear, you can trace most of that back to Katharine Hepburn. Menswear is one of the biggest trends for Fall/Winter 2012, and you can see much of that influence starts right here.”



More fashion designers/bloggers state:

*‘Way back in the 1940s, **Katherine Hepburn broke all the rules and made the androgynous look famous.**’*

*‘**The goddess of American Cinema [Katharine Hepburn] paved the way for all of us women to wear a ‘traditional men’s attire’, making it ok for the rest of us.**’*

“Israel have been asleep to the pride, and fashion, and worldliness in the very midst of them. It is these things that separate God from his people, that shut the ark away from them. When the truth affects their hearts, it will cause a death to the world. They will then lay aside the outward adorning, and if they are dead they will not be moved by the laugh, jeer, and scorn of unbelievers. They will feel an anxious desire to be separate from the world, like their Master. They will not imitate its pride, fashions, or customs. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God, and gain the immortal inheritance. This prospect will swallow up all beside of an earthly nature. God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. And as soon as any indulge a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as his children. They show that they are strangers to grace, strangers to the meek and lowly Jesus. If they had acquainted themselves with him, they would walk worthy of him.” RH, December 12, 1882

We will take a closer look at androgynous fashion, comparing it with God’s standard.

A Plain Distinction

By Heather Cummings and Linda Kirk

When truth is being rediscovered, it often requires extensive research to establish it on a firm foundation with adequate supporting evidence. The arguments require ongoing close examination, and may need adjustments in order to make truth clear. There is a need for deeper investigation regarding the biblical and Spirit of Prophecy truth which emphasizes that “God designed that there should be a **plain** distinction between the dress of men and women.” {1T 460.1}* The purpose of this article is to clarify the position that is being set forth as truth for these last days. We will address objections and concerns that have been raised by honest-hearted individuals in their quest for truth.

Androgyny Abomination

Deuteronomy 22:5, says “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.” If we have any doubt as to whether this command still applies to us, Ellen White makes it clear: “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.” {1T 460.1} “There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination.” {1T 457.2} Androgynous fashions are an abomination to God. Androgynous means “Partly male and partly female in appearance; of indeterminate sex.” Clothing that is neither masculine nor feminine in appearance is androgynous. The ideology that makes it a goal to blur the distinction between the sexes in appearance and roles is called Androgyny.

The androgyny agenda has been extensively documented. Removing gender boundaries in clothing is recognized by androgyny activists as a successful method to influence attitudes about gender roles and sexual orientation. Most people are unaware of the adverse and degenerate motives behind the push for blurring the gender-distinction of clothing, roles and attitudes. Regardless of their ignorance, it is a fact that we are currently living with the results of those historic gender-blurring campaigns, which have permeated the mindset of our culture.

There is a definite political agenda behind unisex clothing. Tove Hermanson describes the political success gained in this gender blurring process in his article, *Women, Pants and Politics*: “Adopting aspects of menswear had a direct relationship with the Women’s Movement, socially and politically....The good news is that as attitudes about gender have changed, and as women and homosexuals have won political and social freedoms we should’ve had all along, the rigid distinctions between clothing styles for men and women have blurred.”

A discernible spiritual element also lurks behind this agenda. Pro-androgyny Purnima Coontoor, in the article *Life - Towards Tao* writes: “Don’t look now, but things are changing: women are becoming like men and men are becoming like women. What it means is that society on the whole, is learning to balance its male-female energies, a sure sign that consciousness is rising...The stage seems set for more and more to move naturally towards enlightenment, for there can be no doubt that only a proper balance between the energies can equip a person for liberation from the human condition....To quote

* Emphasis added to all quotes.

from a Medieval Latin treatise on alchemy, ‘when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, then you will enter the kingdom of God.’”

Behind the teachings of Androgyny is the rejection of God-given differences in male and female roles and sexuality. Now we can see why God gave such a clear command for men and women to wear gender-distinctive clothing. Some would deny the evidence, claiming that clothing today is just as distinct as it was when this command was given in the Old Testament. We will now take a look at what the command itself reveals.

Distinct Clothing is not Interchangeable

In Deuteronomy 22: 5, the word which is translated as “that which pertaineth to” in the KJV is the Greek word “keli.” In addition to clothing, this word refers often to men’s armor, instruments, and articles. In other words, a woman is not to put on anything that only men should use, including his clothes. This addresses the distinctly male role as the protector and provider, prohibiting women from going into battle. Men, however are not to put on a woman’s “simlah.” This word refers to an outer garment, wrapper, or mantle worn by a male or female. In Bible times, both men and woman wore an inner garment or robe that was worn next the skin, as well as this outer garment or mantle. A woman’s outer garment had obvious differences in appearance to a man’s outer garment; otherwise God could not have restricted men from putting on a woman’s “simlah.” If the mantle was not being worn, but was hanging up on a hook, anyone would be able to tell if it was a man’s or a woman’s garment. Both genders wore robes and mantles, but we can deduce from this text that the mantles were distinctly different. Therefore, we can conclude that there is nothing wrong with men and woman’s garments being the same basic format; nevertheless, there is to be a distinct article that is worn that clearly differentiates the clothing of male and female.

Some have presented the idea that “as long as a woman looks like a woman, it really doesn’t matter what she wears, as long as it is modest.” In other words, she could even wear pants that look just like a man’s jeans and a T-shirt that looks just like a man’s shirt as long as her shapely figure, feminine features and hairstyle made her overall appearance look feminine. This thinking does not align itself with biblical principles. God did not say, “As long as a woman looks distinctly feminine, she is free to wear that which looks just like menswear.” The distinction between the men’s and women’s clothing to which God referred was not determined by the shape of the body underneath, the length of the hair, or any other physical characteristic. You could put a beautiful, shapely woman in a man’s suit or a military uniform and still tell she is a woman. Likewise, you could also put a muscular man in a long flowing skirt, or a mini skirt and high-heels and still tell he’s a man. As long as the man is a masculine-looking man, or the woman is a feminine-looking woman, they could be in direct violation of Deuteronomy 22:5, and yet clearly be distinguished as their correct gender. But, when you have a masculine-looking woman in masculine clothing, or a feminine-looking man in feminine clothing, this lack of distinction in the clothing causes a lot of confusion.

The distinction should not only be in the features or the physique of the man or woman, but in the article of clothing. That way, a woman can have a shapeless, bean-pole figure and even masculine facial features, and you could tell at a glance that she is a woman simply by the distinctly feminine clothing she is wearing. You could also have a plump man with feminine facial features and no facial hair, and his masculine clothing will reveal that he is a man. We need this kind of distinction in our clothing, so we don’t have to depend on the overall appearance to be distinct.

In Deuteronomy 22:5, neither the specific shape nor design of the garments of men or women are described. We cannot see photos of these outer garments nor how they were worn during the time that this command was given; therefore, we cannot get an inspired standard for proper distinctions from this passage alone. We can only see that there should be a distinct difference in the most visible article of clothing and that the two genders should not interchange the clothing that has these distinct differences. Men and women can both wear pants or skirts and shirts, but at least one of the principal outer articles of clothing must have a consistently obvious distinction. We'll discuss the biblical principles of distinctions in the next section; however, we want to point out that a bifurcated garment in itself is not distinctly masculine or feminine. The distinction is manifested in how the garment is worn.

The most popular clothing item in our day, jeans, has no obvious universal distinction that would define gender. This clothing experiment was performed by Linda in 2008 to determine if there was a plain, obvious distinction between men's and women's jeans.

I went to the Thrift store, and looked at jeans. There was a rack for men and a rack for women, but they were very mixed up, and I could not tell which were which. I asked the sales lady, and she said the only way to tell which was which was by the sizing. Women's jeans were sized by numbers such as 6, 8, 10, 12, etc. Men's went by the waist size: 28, 30, 32, 34, etc. There was just a tiny little tag inside the jeans that told the difference. I found 6 pairs of jeans that fit me very well, 3 were men's and 3 were women's. I bought them for the purpose of an experiment, not to wear for myself. I modeled them to show my husband, and took photos of each pair, and presented the photos to several people, asking them to tell me which were the men's and which were the women's jeans. No one got the answers correct. There was one pair of men's jeans that fit me the best of all of them, and they were very comfortable. I thought to myself, if I wanted to wear these jeans, no one would have known that they were men's jeans. And if the tag had been cut out by the previous owner, I wouldn't have known these were men's jeans.

At that time, in 2008, baggy jeans weren't fashionable on women. That was before "boyfriend" jeans, which Katie Homes made popular by wearing her husband's jeans. To be distinctly feminine, the jeans needed to be worn tight. Now, because of the skinny jeans for guys, even tight jeans aren't distinguishable from men's. So, as an outer garment, it is impossible for women's jeans to be distinct from men's.

Heather recalls this experience in regards to interchangeable clothing:

"Years ago, I had a pair of jeans that looked pretty 'feminine' on me because they were really tight. When I couldn't fit in them anymore, I gave them to my husband, who was a lot thinner than I was at the time. When he wore them, they looked like relaxed fit guys jeans."

Here's what a man posted on a forum:

"I got my first pair of women's jeans by accident just a few weeks ago. When I got them home I noticed they were women's jeans. They fit well and were extremely comfortable. These fit better than any other jeans I've ever owned. And they're not obviously women's jeans. And I intend to buy more of them. Nobody seems to notice."

If a type of clothing is indistinguishable if interchanged, then it is not distinct enough. There has been cross-over in all articles of clothing: sweaters, jackets, and shirts. Just because an article was sold in the women's department doesn't mean it is distinctly feminine. You could have two couples with all four individuals wearing pants and T-shirts. One man could have on his wife's pants and T-shirt that fit him

loosely, making them look like men's clothes and the woman could be wearing her husband's pants and T-shirt that fit her snugly, making them look like women's clothes. The other man could have on tight men's pants and a tight men's T-shirt and his wife could be wearing baggy women's pants and a loose T-shirt. You cannot look at any one of the four individuals and tell which gender of clothing they are wearing. Is the first couple committing an abomination, while the other couple is totally acceptable to God? This is the kind of confusion we get when trying to understand the meaning of Deuteronomy 22:5 while holding on to the idea that current fashions and practices are acceptable in God's eyes.

Would any random distinction qualify as a fulfillment of this command, as long as it is relatively visible? Or are there biblical principles that can help us define what is feminine and masculine? Various cultures and eras have made distinctions between men's and women's clothing by things like embroidery, embellishments, colors, textures and material. These can help add to the distinction between the clothing of the sexes. But in general, these distinctions are neither intrinsically masculine nor feminine, but are rather arbitrary. While we should honor society's distinctions between the clothing of the sexes that are in harmony with biblical principles, we need something more specific. Since our culture has embraced the unbiblical idea that it is fashionable to wear androgynous clothing, we cannot depend on our culture to inform us of appropriate distinctions. If we could discover biblical principles to define God-approved distinctions, even though culture may change drastically, we could have confidence that God approves of our distinction.

God knew what would be the result of adopting interchangeable fashions. Ellen White said that "the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime." {1T 460.1} So He gave us principles in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy to protect us from falling into Satan's androgyny trap. He doesn't want His people to see how close they can come to the trap without being snared. Next, we will share the principles that we have discovered that show what are to be the specific distinctions that set women's clothing apart from men's.

Biblical Femininity

The dictionary definition for *feminine* means "relating to or pertaining to a woman." According to the Bible, what elements describe the clothing that properly should pertain to a woman? 1 Timothy 2:9 says that women should "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." (KJV)

The Greek word that is translated as "modest" is "kosmios", which means orderly, well-prepared, or well-arranged. It comes from the word that is translated "cosmos" in English. The cosmos was put in order and arranged by God, and likewise a Christian woman's clothing should be "well-arranged" and "well-prepared" according to God's standards, not according to the world's standards. A godless fashion designer might think that the clothes he designs for women are "well-prepared," but if they do not fit the purpose that God intended for women's clothing, that is, to cover her appropriately, then they are not "well-prepared" according to Him. It is significant that most of the Bible versions translate this word as "modest," while the remaining versions use "becoming," "proper," "decent," or "respectable" and "appropriate." This dress is proper and decent for a woman only when it is modest.

The Greek word for "apparel" is "katastolé" which, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon means properly, "a lowering, letting down," so it is literally "a garment let down." This would apply to a dress, skirt, robe, or long coat, but not to pants topped with a waist length shirt. The term "katastolé" **would exclude** pants and a shirt as being an acceptable outer garment for a woman. It is possible that this term specifically referred to a woman's garment, because it is a different word than is normally translated as gender neutral clothing or apparel. Used only this once in the Bible, it is a feminine noun derived from

the verb *katastelló*, which means “to appease, restrain, keep down, lower, or pacify.” This special term, “*katastolé*” could be a reference to the fact that women’s clothing was designed to restrain a woman’s own desires for attention, and the desires of men observing her.

The Greek word “*aidos*” that is translated as “with shamefacedness” means “a sense of shame.” A woman is not to have a negative attitude of shame towards her own body, but a healthy sense of shame attached with revealing her form to the view of others. This word carries with it the idea of the importance of discretion, showing that she understands the issues that make a garment either modest or immodest for a woman.

And the Greek word “*sōphrosynēs*” that is translated as “sobriety” also means “self-control,” “soundness of mind” or “self-restraint.” Self-restraint is needed in order to bring into captivity the prideful attitudes of the flesh that lead women to disregard discretion, and to dress seductively or ostentatiously. “Pride and extravagance in dress are sins to which woman is especially prone; hence these injunctions relate directly to her.” {CTBH 93.3}

Men are never admonished to wear respectable (*kosmios*) let down garments (*katastolé*), with a sense of shame (*aidos*) and self-control (*sōphrosynēs*), as woman are counseled to do. This combined set of words applies only to women’s clothing, revealing what is appropriate clothing for them: an appropriately modest, long, flowing garment that conceals her body so as not to arouse sensuality or pride in her heart, or lust or covetousness in her observer’s heart. By God’s enabling grace, she is to put aside her desire to attract attention to herself, and cover herself appropriately, not according to society’s standards, but according to God’s standards of modesty and femininity, which deal with the inner adornment as well as the outer apparel.

Why must a woman dress with modesty? Because men are prone to being tempted to fantasize about a woman in revealing clothes. A man can have a physical reaction just at the sight of a woman’s body, apart from any reciprocated feelings on her part. This is not true for a normal woman. While a woman may admire an attractive man’s body, her lust is not for his body alone. Under normal circumstances, she is not tempted to fantasize about simply enjoying a man’s body; she wants his affections. The sight of a man’s body does not automatically trigger a physical reaction in a woman. When he shows interest in her, and she senses that she is desired by him, then a woman’s body begins to respond in a physical way. Because a woman has such a strong carnal desire to gain admiration from men, she is tempted to dress in such a way that draws attention to her body.

This is the reason the Bible highlights the importance of women dressing with modesty, while men are not thus enjoined. Men are capable of dressing immodestly, but this does not carry the heavy moral responsibility that a woman’s immodesty does. A woman’s desire to elicit attraction and gain affection is why she must use self-control. She must quell the desire to enhance her appearance or reveal her body in order to gain the admiration of other women and sexual attention from men. With this knowledge, a woman’s modesty and self-control will lead her to adequately cover the areas of her body that attract men’s gaze and lead them to desire her body.

The world’s definition of feminine clothing is that which conveys that the wearer is a female, by the purposeful exposure of a woman’s form. The Bible’s definition of feminine clothing is ***just the opposite***: that which conveys that the wearer is a female, by the purposeful concealing of a woman’s form. Appropriately adequate covering is the biblical definition of respectable apparel for a woman. This is what makes clothing truly feminine.

Defining Modesty

Thus far we have learned that God has a standard for the clothing of His people, which includes a plain distinction between the clothing of men and women. This plain distinction involves a distinct garment that can easily be differentiated as being a man's or woman's garment, even when it is not being worn. We learned that the definition for biblical femininity is exactly the opposite as the definition for worldly femininity. God-approved feminine clothing is modest by definition.

The Fullness of Feminine Garments

Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:9 that appropriate clothing for women is modest. A feminine article of clothing has ample fabric to conceal a woman's figure. It is also a garment let down. It doesn't cling, it flows. It doesn't reveal, it conceals. While, in Bible times, a man could wear a narrow robe with only a small functional mantle thrown around the shoulders, a woman would need a fuller garment to flow over her body to conceal her curves. It is quite possible the significantly larger dimensions of a woman's mantle was one of the distinguishing features of this distinctive garment in the Bible.

It is logical and reasonable that a closer-fitting, straight-silhouetted garment, which would not hide a woman's curves, is fitting masculine attire, while a full, flowing silhouette with folds to disguise curves would be appropriate feminine attire. This would acknowledge the God-designed differences in the masculine and feminine forms and their sexual responses. Women have curves that need to be concealed from a man's eye; therefore a woman's garment should flow around her, not cling to her figure. While she should not wear shapeless, boxy clothing which is distinctly masculine; neither should she wear revealing, sensual clothing. A long flowing garment is the best apparel in all cultures and eras that fits the definition of feminine. The tucks, pleats and folds that make a woman's dress flare and flow make woman's apparel both distinct and modest. Men shouldn't wear an outer garment that swishes and swirls around them, making their clothing appear feminine, and women's clothing should not be cut in a masculine fashion.

Baggy uncovered pants simply do not qualify as distinctly feminine clothing in any culture. They do not flow around a woman's body. While loose pants may disguise the figure more than tight jeans, they do not have ample fabric to conceal a woman's figure in all circumstances. In bending and squatting positions, they are pulled tight over areas of a woman's body that draw a man's attention. (And if they are extremely baggy, they certainly do approximate men's wear.) We are counseled in the Spirit of Prophecy that women's clothing should be "tidy and well fitting." {BTS, May 1, 1908 par. 2} That doesn't mean that women's tops should be tight. If you look at the photos of the clothing of Ellen White and her godly sisters, their dress bodices were not shapeless and baggy, nor were they tight. They were tailored with darts to loosely conform to the shape of the upper body, without being tight in a sensual way. And without exception, they all had long, flowing dresses which concealed the form of the lower half of their bodies. This style of dress was in harmony with God's standard of modesty.

The Length of Feminine Garments

God gave Ellen White a vision that gives us His standard of modesty in regards to the length of the skirt, which is to be a woman's outer garment. He showed her three women in very different lengths of skirts. Two were displeasing to Him, and one was pleasing to Him. He didn't give her the exact length of the dress that He wanted women to wear, but we do know that it didn't drag on the ground, and the length wasn't "about to the knee." Both of these lengths were proclaimed to be "extreme." To avoid either extreme, Ellen White recommended a length from 8-10 inches from the floor. This lower-calf length dress, when the legs were also covered, was in harmony with God's requirement for women to wear a long garment that sufficiently conceals the form, as revealed in 1 Timothy 2:9.

This was the length of skirt of the reform dress, which was advocated from 1867 to 1881. Regarding this dress, Ellen White writes, "My views were calculated to correct the present fashion, the extreme long dress, trailing upon the ground, and also to correct the extreme short dress, reaching about to the knees, which is worn by a certain class. I was shown that we should shun both extremes. By wearing the dress reaching about to the top of a woman's gaiter boot we shall escape the evils of the extreme long dress, and shall also shun the *evils* and *notoriety* of the extreme short dress." {1T 464. 1} This length of skirt over covered legs is the shortest length ever specifically recommended to be in accordance with inspired revelation.

In Bible times, a man's garment could have been shorter, or pulled up to reveal his thigh, as when men "girded up their loins" (1 Kings 18:46) in order to run or perform strenuous labor. While it was acceptable for men to wear a longer garment, it was not acceptable for a woman to wear a shorter garment. A woman's robe needed to be long enough to cover her legs from the thigh down, because showing the bare leg up to her thigh is nakedness in God's eyes, according to the following verse. Isaiah 47:2-3 says, "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." This exposure would have been a humiliating disgrace for a woman in those days. Most women have no such shame today.

Ellen White makes a surprising statement about the exposure of the "almost unclad ankle" being immodest. Here is the paragraph: "We cannot, if we would, conceal the fact that women have feet and limbs that were made for use. But in regard to the exposure, this is on the other side of the question. We have traveled extensively the past twenty-five years, and have been eye-witnesses to **many indecent exposures of the limbs**. But 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, or about knee-length] **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}

Consider what Ellen White said: 1) It was a "common thing" for gentleman to see a woman's "almost unclad ankle." 2) No one seemed to think it was immodest anymore, as evidenced by her observation that "no one seems to blush at this immodest exposure. No one's sensitive modesty seems shocked." 3) The reason for the lack of shame was the fact that it was "customary" and fashionable. 4) Despite the fact that "no outcry of immodesty is heard" it was immodest nevertheless "in the fullest sense."

The Adventist reform dress (8-10 inches from the floor) was designed to be short enough to avoid the need to lift the skirts under any circumstance, such as climbing stairs and getting in carriages, which necessitated the long skirt to be lifted, revealing a woman's lower leg. It also clothed the feet and limbs "modestly and sensibly, making exposure impossible." She declares, "We have decided that health and modesty require that women clothe their limbs as thoroughly as they do other parts of the body." {HR, March 1, 1874, par. 13} The fact that this dress was short enough for the pants to show made this length unpopular even though it was more convenient than longer dresses. This "objectionable feature" of pants showing underneath the dress caused such contention that, after several years, God removed that which should have been a blessing, allowing women to wear the less practical, but more fashionable ankle-length dresses that came to the top of the shoe. After 1881, no one was to advocate a uniform adoption of this "short dress and pants," which referred to the specific Reform Dress pattern, unless they have the "Word of the Lord for it." {SpM 92.2}

While wearing a flowing lower-calf length skirt with adequate leg coverings, such as pants or boots, could still qualify as modest apparel, if the longer length were worn by all Seventh-day Adventist women, the uniformity would be more pleasing to God than if there were a wide difference in lengths. "If all our sisters would adopt a simple, unadorned dress of modest length, the uniformity thus established would be far more pleasing to God, and would exert a more salutary influence on the world, than the diversity presented four years ago. As our sisters would not generally accept the reform dress as it should be worn, another, less objectionable style is now presented. It is free from needless trimmings, free from the looped-up, tied back overskirts. It consists of a plain sack or loose-fitting basque, and skirt, the latter short enough to avoid the mud and filth of the streets. The material should be free from large plaids and figures, and plain in color. The same attention should be given to the clothing of the limbs as with the short dress." {4T 640.1} Notice, when this longer, ankle length dress was adopted, which would require being raised in certain circumstances, she said, "The same attention should be given to the clothing of the limbs as with the short dress."

The mothers of young girls were instructed that their daughters' dress, even with their legs adequately covered "should reach below the knee." {2SM 471.2} This was shorter than was acceptable for adult women. She asked these mothers, "Is it reasonable, or even modest, to see the limbs of your daughters exposed, to the bend of the knee, without any covering, except a cotton stocking in summer, and flannel, in winter? Why should not mothers clothe their daughters sensibly, modestly, and healthfully, irrespective of prevailing fashions?" {Heath Reformer, Nov 1, 1870} We do not see anything in inspiration that would lead us to believe that God's standard of modesty would allow a knee length dress with thin leggings, which are today's equivalent of a cotton stocking. Furthermore, a knee length dress over bare legs certainly could not qualify as being in harmony with the principles of true modesty.

It has been suggested that the only reason the short dresses worn by feminists 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.



We can see that Amelia Bloomer, pictured to the left, 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, pictured to the right. However, feminists would not be satisfied until

they had the freedom to dress just like men, but this was a slow process because of the restrictions of society. It wasn't long before Amelia Bloomer and other feminists like Mary Walker, pictured to the lower left (1865), started wearing narrow pants that looked like men's trousers, while their dresses became shorter. When Mary Walker, pictured on the lower right (1870), resorted to actually dressing in men's clothes before it was acceptable, she was arrested 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 T 465} 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} She didn't say, "It's too short." She said the equivalent of: "It's so short I don't even need to say that it's too short!" Secular society readily agreed with her statement for a while. Yet, most Christians now think it is perfectly modest to wear a waist-length jacket over pants.



As quickly as laws would allow, women dressed more and more like men, until the point where a woman could wear the exact same clothes as men and be applauded for it, as Marline Dietrich did, pictured to the left. Now, Satan is working on the men's side to feminize their clothing. As you can see in the picture to the right, we can't tell anymore whether women are wearing men's clothes or men are wearing women's clothes, because the clothing is androgynous, without distinct masculine or feminine characteristics.



The evil of disregarding God's clear counsel of dressing distinctly is still here, long after the notoriety of the short dress "reaching about to the knee" has disappeared. "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. 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. Were the apostle Paul alive, and should he behold women professing godliness with this style of dress, **he would utter a rebuke.**" {1T 460} Then she quotes 1 Timothy 2:9, which we have already showed teaches women to wear an appropriately feminine and modest long dress. If the woman's dress is worn over covered legs, falling no higher than 10 inches from the floor and has ample fabric so that it flows over her body, we can be sure that God approves of this style as distinctly feminine and modest apparel.

The Standard of Modesty

The Bible has defined modesty for us. In addition, God has given us clear principles to guide us in the Spirit of Prophecy. If we set these aside, labeling them as old fashioned and non-applicable, and go about to establish our own standards based upon society's current view, we end up changing our definition of modesty every few years. With this mode who knows where we will end up! There is a topless movement for women, which is increasing in momentum. While it seems outrageous to us now, what if in a few years it is totally acceptable and common in society? If we have been using a human standard to define modesty, we may find ourselves thinking that string bikini tops are quite modest in comparison.

The way many people develop their standard of modesty is looking at what the world is wearing, and making their standard just a little higher. For example, since miniskirts are in style, they reason that surely a skirt a few inches above the knee is modest. If ladies are wearing strapless tops, then tank tops must be modest. If bikinis are common, then one piece swim suits are considered modest. And so on. Human opinions of what is modest are continually changing with each new generation.

Here is 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. O people of the church of God, let us return in practice to the time when modesty and chastity and sweet simplicity were more than words, and carry out in our lives what the principles of the gospel demand—separation from the world and its fashions, adornment of its evil practices, and entire following of our Lord in all matters pertaining to life and godliness."



What did the deplorable immodesty of the 1930's look like? Above are illustrations of everyday 1930's women's attire, and to the left is a fashion



show in the same period. To the right is a photo of prostitutes in 1930. They were all dressed more "modestly" than the majority of our SDA women today, many of whom consider themselves modest!



When we base our definition of modesty on the world's continually deteriorating standard, we lose sight of God's standard, and remove the barriers He has erected. "When once the barriers of

female modesty are removed, the basest licentiousness does not appear exceeding sinful. Alas, what terrible results of woman's influence for evil may be witnessed in the world today!" {AH 58.3}

Unfortunately, defining modesty by keeping a few steps behind the world's standards is supported by a statement in our 2005 church manual regarding dress, which reads: "They will not be the first to adopt the new styles of dress or the last to lay the old aside." For over 60 years, members have read this quote and concluded that it is perfectly fine to follow worldly fashions, as long as they are not the first to do so! This quotation was not written by Ellen White, but it is sandwiched in between two of her quotes, so that many people have attributed this quote to her. This is ironic, because nowhere does she say that the fashions of this world are safe for Christians to follow. She does say that if the current styles are in harmony with God's principles, then we may follow them. That is why we must carefully study God's standards in order to know if a particular fashion is in line with God's standard.

The more opinionated people become regarding their human, unbiblical standards of modesty, the more judgmental they become toward those who don't fit into their mold, whether others are more or less modest than themselves. This is what has brought such division and confusion in this area. If God's people were willing to lay aside their own ideas, and seek out God's truth, with humble hearts, we wouldn't be trying so hard to promote our own idea of what is modest, while labeling other ideas as either fanatical or liberal. God's standard of modesty should humble us all.

One of the reasons why we rarely hear the topic of modesty addressed in our pulpits is because we have exalted our human opinions as the standard. If a pastor faces a congregation and declares his opinion of what is modest, he's going to have a hard time convincing people. What makes his opinion better than their opinion? We'd be much better off not giving any standards of modesty unless we're willing to point people to the Spirit of Prophecy, where they can read God's standards for themselves. God would not have women dress according to this varying standard of the opinions of men. We cannot make up a standard for modesty any more than we can sanctify Wednesday as the Sabbath. There is a higher standard to which we must answer.

If all of God's people were to follow His standard of modesty, it would keep the ladies sufficiently covered at all times, in the church, at the beach, down town, wherever they are. And God's standard of purity would keep the men's minds pure at all times, so that not one sensual thought is allowed to remain. Men are admonished to flee from fornication, which includes lusting after the exposure of the female form. Society's low standard of morality allows women to dress immodestly, showing cleavage, bare shoulders, tight, short clothing, directly affecting the morality of men. Ellen White declared, even in the 1800's that "**Virtue and modesty are rare.**" {CG 417.2} Since modesty is rare, purity is also rare. True, God's standard is high, but through His power, it is attainable.

We are to overcome on every point. We are to flee from idolatry, which for women includes the idolatry of dress—wearing the fashions of this degenerate age. "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." {MYP 358.1}

God has actually made it relatively easy for His daughters to follow His standard of modesty in these last days. There are long, flowing skirts, most of them from 36 to 40 inches in length that are available in almost every woman's catalog. One can dress tastefully, beautifully and be in style by a wise selection of what is widely available to us in the stores and online today.

Desensitization

When we realize that modest attire includes covering the lower legs, we must admit the fact that our idea of modesty has been affected by our degraded society. We need to be spiritually sensitized to what it means to be modest. The statement about the immodest exposure of the barely clad ankle reveals the tendency for modesty to appear relative. A man in the present culture who goes to the beach sees women wearing bathing suits 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 a woman in a bathing suit, just as 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, inside, many men stumble over culturally acceptable immodesty. 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.

This trend 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 change very soon. In undeveloped countries where woman go around topless, the men in these countries may not be sexually aroused by the common sight, but that does not make it modest. 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 "Christian 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 believe in monogamy and purity of mind, but their solution to 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.

God intended that nakedness should not be a public affair, but a private matter between a husband and wife. God's design was that the curves of a wife's form would cause sexual reaction in her husband. That is why a woman should keep her body covered from all but his eyes. With each rise of the hemline, men have grown accustomed to the exposure of more of the female leg. Now, the average man would say 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 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.

Seventh-day Adventist pastors who approve of women's bare lower legs, or pants which are not covered by a skirt, and other form-revealing clothing do not realize how desensitized they have become. They use their own sexual reaction to define whether something is immodest or not. A present-day pastor may approve of clothing, or lack thereof which would have horrified Seventh-day Adventist pastors in the 1930's. Has God's definition of modesty changed? No, but society's definition has.

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

underneath even lose pants when the woman bends over, squats or spreads her stance. 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 we must recognize our state of desensitization, and recognize that society's standard of modesty is a far cry from God's standard.

Some women are not naturally endowed with curvy figures that need more care to avoid appearing seductive. Others have figures that are no longer attractive due to obesity or age. However, all must remember that, though they may not be a source of temptation to some men when they wear immodest clothing, they are examples to those with attractive figures who must be more careful with their modesty. Women of all ages and shapes will be convicted to adopt God's standard of modesty when they prayerfully consider their witness and example.

Ellen White addressed the low cut top in this statement: "They may ask for a dress that is cut low in the neck because it is the fashion to wear them so. Who has supposed such a fashion? It is not a right fashion, and we should not allow ourselves to consider it right." {PCP 36.5} If you look at the photos of the women in our church in the latter part of the 1800's, you will see their necklines of their clothing conforming to the neckline on their bodies. The chest or shoulders were not exposed. They also did not have the stretchy material that clings to the figure as a second skin as we have today. If it had been a common practice for women to reveal the bare shoulders, and wear tight clingy clothing as is common today, Ellen White would surely have condemned it.

Becoming desensitized to the current standard of modesty can lead to demoralization, or moral corruption. Ellen White says, "There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion. **Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized.**" {4T 648}

Granted, God's standard of modesty is high, much higher than most Seventh-day Adventists have ever imagined. **"God calls His church to be more separate from the world in their dress than you have thought."** {TDG 295.4} God's standard seems almost unattainable, especially to those who have become accustomed to wearing tight, short miniskirts with low necklines, or shorts and tank tops. For them to hear about God's high standard of modesty would be similar to a pork-eating, beer drinking, cigarette smoking, junk-food-loving person hearing about the highest standard of health reform, such as a vegan diet of organic, largely raw fruits and vegetables, without vinegar, caffeine or chocolate, and so on! But we don't generally present health reform in one bucket load. We teach it gradually. Likewise, we should teach dress reform gradually. But we shouldn't set a lower standard, and leave the people there. That's what causes the Laodicean condition. We should all be striving for the highest standard in our Christian lifestyle in every area. Even if people declare the Lord's standards to be extreme, we need to remember that "When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, strait-laced extremists." {FE 289.1}

Principles of Distinctions

When uncovered pants were first worn by women, they were decried as wholesale abomination by society at large. Then, as time went on and women's hemlines were raised, revealing more and more of

their legs, it got to the point that pants were modest in comparison to these miniskirts. Now, men have become used to the sight of women in uncovered pants. Rather than supporting their teachings with biblical distinctions and standards of modesty, many use their own opinions to defend this fashion. With this line of reasoning, we could soon face another fashion crisis.

Writing about the homosexual push toward androgyny, one blogger states, "As fashion codes gradually relaxed over the twentieth century androgyny has become increasingly acceptable as a style for American women today. However, while conventional symbols of masculinity, such as suits, short hair and pants, have become fair game for women, men still risk persecution for wearing conventional signs of femininity, such as skirts, high heels and barrettes."

But even this is changing. It is likely that it won't be long before skirts become acceptable for men in our culture. In 2010, the popular store, H & M started carrying "man skirts." If we have been using a faulty standard of modesty, the wearing of skirts by men will be strongly opposed at first, and then eventually accepted by using the same argument which allows for the acceptance of uncovered pants by women. It will be declared that: both men and women wore robes in the Bible, and therefore it can't be wrong for both men and women to wear skirts.

Laying aside biblical distinctions leaves us open to accepting anything. Skirts, or robes, in themselves, don't pertain to a woman any more than pants, in themselves, pertain to a man. Both can be worn in a distinctly feminine or masculine way, as they have been throughout the ages. However, if a woman were to wear uncovered pants, regardless of what is acceptable by society, it would always be in violation of the principle of modesty. That is why is it so important for us to understand what is acceptable for a man to wear and what is acceptable for a woman to wear based on biblical principles.

Let us make this clear. We are **NOT** advocating that men wear skirts. In our current Western culture, this would be a crossing of the gender boundaries currently recognized by society. But, when they become common on men, as they surely will, we need to know the principles that make a garment feminine or masculine. Just because women have adopted a fashion first, such as skinny jeans or high heels, doesn't make them feminine any more than men adopting pants first made them masculine. Neither can we depend on the shifting opinions of the public sense of propriety. We need principles to help us keep from blurring the distinction between men's and women's clothing no matter how crazy androgynous fashions become.

Let's summarize the principles. The cut of a skirt, which creates ample fabric to flow around the woman, concealing the form of her lower body, makes it feminine. The length of a woman's dress needs to be at least mid-calf length in order to be modest. Feminine tops have tucks and pleats to allow the garment to be loose enough in the chest but yet not hang on her form in an ill-fitting manner. Skin tight clothing that draws attention to the form, such as spandex or skinny jeans are not modest on a man or a woman. The same can be said about high heels, jewelry, cosmetics, and hairstyles that serve to elicit attention, take unnecessarily time and money, are impractical, or may be detrimental to health. These are not appropriate for men or women.

Here is the bottom line regarding women's clothing.

Satan's Agenda is to:

- Uncover the flesh by leaving limbs, shoulders, chest, and back bare.
- Reveal the form by wearing tight and sheer clothing.

- Exalt self through appearance, encouraging lust and covetousness through sensual and extravagant attire.
- Put fashion above health by wearing uncomfortable shoes and constricting clothes, and allowing limbs to become chilled.
- Deny God's gender distinctions by wearing interchangeable clothing without regard to feminine principles in their designs.

God's Standard is to:

- Cover the flesh by clothing the limbs, shoulders, chest, and back.
- Conceal the form by wearing a well-fitting but not tight top with a long, flowing skirt.
- Glorify God through appearance revealing submission and humility through simple, modest attire.
- Put health above fashion by wearing comfortable shoes, non-restricting clothes, and keeping the limbs covered.
- Abide by God's gender distinctions by wearing clothing with clearly feminine principles in their designs.

An Index to the Heart

Modesty includes more than the outward appearance. It has to do with the heart. We are told that "The outside appearance is an index to the heart." {CTBH 93} It does no good to teach women standards of dress without addressing the attitudes of the heart. The outward dress is simply a revelation of the inner attitudes. "A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of a simple, appropriate attire." {CG 413.5}

Ellen White reminded the fashion-obsessed youth of her day to consider the suffering and self-denial that Jesus experienced for them. "It was to save us from the very pride and love of vanity and pleasure which we now indulge, and which crowds out the love of Jesus, that those tears were shed, and that our Saviour's visage was marred with sorrow and anguish more than any of the sons of men." {CG 421.6} Only as our vain hearts are broken in repentance can we be free from the idolatry of fashion which leads us to dress just like the world.

Both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy make clear reference to the need for women to reveal their womanliness in their dress. Thus, their apparel would demonstrate the distinctive feminine qualities and gentle, unassuming manner fitting for women. The modest apparel ordained of God portrays the opposite attitude of the forward, bold, shameless aggression so common among women today. The 1847 dictionary definition of the word "immodest" included this idea of showing a lack of reserve or restraint, a lack of womanliness, a bold, forwardness that women were demonstrating, even in her day. She addressed this attitude when she said "The small bonnets, exposing the face and head, show a lack of modesty." {1T 188.3} "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} It was this prideful, unwomanly attitude that she was condemning, the lack of restraint and reserve that godly women are to show in their dress and demeanor.

Ellen White spoke repeatedly of the need for women to be more reserved, not forward or bold. These sinful attitudes are encouraged by prideful, worldly dress. "The love of dress endangers the morals and makes woman the opposite of the Christian lady characterized by modesty and sobriety." {4T 645.2} God wants His daughters to nurture an attitude of modesty and reserve: "From the light which the Lord

has given me, our sisters should pursue a very different course. They should be more reserved, manifest less boldness, and encourage in themselves ‘shamefacedness and sobriety.’ ” {AH 332.2} “Our sisters should encourage true meekness; they should not be forward, talkative, and bold, but modest and unassuming, slow to speak.” {AH 334.1}

Wearing distinctly feminine clothing affects our attitudes. That is why, when certain women in the 1850’s abandoned God’s standard for modest, feminine clothing, and raised their skirts to knee length and above, it affected their attitudes and took away the modesty and reserve that God wants women to have. “With the so-called dress reform there goes a spirit of levity and boldness just in keeping with the dress. Modesty and reserve seem to depart from many as they adopt that style of dress.” {1T 421.4} If a woman struggles with pride of appearance, or sensuality, the wearing of a simple and modest outfit will decrease these temptations tremendously. It is futile to try to overcome these sins of the heart while continuing to wear the clothes that are fulfilling these desires.

When women, by God’s grace, overcome sins that include pride of appearance, the world will no longer be able to say, “There is no distinction between us. We are alike; we dress, and talk, and act alike.” {CET 157.1} “We are to reveal our faith in our dress.” {YI, April 27, 1909 par. 7} “The very dress will be a recommendation of the truth to unbelievers. It will be a sermon in itself.” {RH, May 30, 1871 par. 10}

Conclusion

The conclusion to this study is that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with men wearing skirts or women wearing pants. Men wore skirts in Bible times, and Ellen White encouraged women to wear pants as undergarments, both for the sake of modesty and for healthfulness. However, uncovered pants should not be worn by women because they do not fulfill the biblical principles for feminine, modest apparel as set forth in 1 Timothy 2:9. If culture had taken a different route, and women had started wearing pants before men, with no evil motivation, they still would have been immodest and unacceptable according to biblical principles. The problem is not that women are wearing pants, it is that they are not wearing a feminine outer garment covering the pants—the full, flowing skirt that God has directed us to wear—both in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy. That feminine outer garment is what gives the distinctly feminine and modest appearance.

The Spirit of Prophecy has clarified for us what is considered modest apparel in the length of the skirt. The wearing of a longer, ankle-length skirt or dress complies with Deuteronomy 22:5 and 1 Timothy 2:9. Since the reform dress is no longer advocated, the longer skirt is now ideal. However, we do know that God would consider the mid to lower calf length modest when the legs are sufficiently covered. That length could provide a practical option during times of vigorous physical activity.

Though current society may not be knowledgeable of the fact that uncovered pants on women was introduced into our society first by spiritualists who were defying the biblical principles of male headship, and later by reprobate fashion designers, sharing this information with people strengthens our position, and makes us all the more determined to avoid this particular fashion.

Since fashion, at this present time, is intensifying the effort to blur the gender boundaries beyond anything we have ever seen in our culture, it is important that Christians refuse to participate in the fashions of this degenerate age. Godly women should take care that their clothing is recognized by all who see them as modest and feminine, as men should beware of the feminization of modern male fashions. The feminine appearance that God is looking for in a woman is for her to cover herself with a long, full skirt with a modest top. That reflects her acceptance of her womanly role. It shows her desire to obey God’s command that women dress in appropriate, modest attire. It is also evident of her

willingness to maintain a plain distinction between the sexes. Her dress says all these things to all observers. It also provides a powerful reminder to the wearer that she is “on duty” as a witness for the Lord, much as the ribbon of blue helped the ancient Israelites remember their covenant with God.

An awareness of globalization should lead God’s people to wear clothing that will be considered modest to reasonable minds in all cultures, as we seek to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“All who now plead for souls should in their dress and deportment carry the modesty and marks of the Lord Jesus. They must wait, watch, and pray for the Holy Spirit to be abundantly bestowed. We must take in the idea of Christianity; in conversation and in dress we must represent the truth. A decided guard must be placed upon the human agents in regard to the impressions they are making upon others in deportment and in dress. The Bible is our guide; study its teachings with a purpose to obey, and you need make no mistakes. Our dress should be in strict accordance with the character of our holy faith. [1 Timothy 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:3-5 quoted.] ***There is need of putting more of the Bible precept into the dress***, as well as the inward adorning into the character.” {DG 158.2}

We believe that what we have represented in this paper as God’s design for women’s clothing is putting the Bible precept into the dress, as we are admonished to do. We believe it properly represents the truth, and guards the impression that we are making upon others. We believe that it brings the dress into strict accordance with the character of our holy faith.

We recognize that the principles of Christian dress are but a minor part of our message, and should not be overemphasized in their relationship to the whole gospel. Yet, we are told, “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.” {Counsels on Health 73.1} Minor principles regarding eating and dressing become major issues to individuals when they are firmly resisted, thus hardening the heart against the Holy Spirit. God is calling for revival and reformation among His people. We cannot experience true revival if we ignore our need for reformation. Praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is futile if we choose to remain ignorant of God’s standards. Understanding God’s standards in regards to our dress is closely linked with the final preparation of God’s people for the Great Day of the Lord.

The androgynous idol that has been erected by society is worshiped by participating in the confusion of male and female roles and appearances. The “self-image” is adorned to participate in the worship of androgynous ideology. By our choice of clothing we can either help promote this androgynous mindset, or we can take a stand against this abomination. As Christians, it is our privilege to stand up for the principles of God’s kingdom and oppose the works of darkness. Seventh-day Adventist women have a tremendous opportunity to visually oppose this androgynous ideology, making a powerful statement to all who see us dressing according to biblical standards. This is not the time to blend with the world in its idolatry, but to stand firm to principle, no matter the cost.

This article can be found at <http://theandrogynydeception.com/a-plain-distinction.html>

Additional websites that provide information on Christian dress are:

<http://www.RemnantRaiment.com>

<http://www.MovingTowardModesty.com>

<http://www.SistersInSkirts.com>

<http://www.TheAndrogynyDeception.com>

<http://coveredwithchrist.com/>

<http://h-e-e-d.com/>

<http://thestraighttestimony.com/>

For additional copies, please email linda7kirk@gmail.com

Clothing that Promotes Satan's Agenda

The Bible speaks of a woman with the “attire of a harlot.” (Proverbs 7:10) Because of her clothing, the logical assumption is made that she IS a harlot. Why else would she wear the attire that identifies her as one?

The attire we wear identifies us with the group we follow, or the philosophy we subscribe to. Employers, clubs, schools and other organizations utilize uniforms to show solidarity, a sense of belonging. We can make strong statements with our clothing, and we naturally make strong assumptions by observing other's clothing.

Satan has ever been endeavoring to get God's people to put on the world's uniforms, so that they themselves, as well as those who see them would identify them as belonging to his worldly realm. God has ever admonished His people to shun the fashions of the world that would identify them as Satan's followers.

How vital is the need for spiritual discernment so we as Christians may detect and avoid the fashions that are linked with ungodly philosophies—those fashions that would align us with loyalty to Satan's kingdom.

What if Satan were successful in these last days in designing and popularizing a fashion that would closely identify the wearer as sanctioning his philosophy? Actually, he has done just that! There is a particular fashion called **Androgyny** that is becoming so prevalent that it is crossing almost all cultural boundaries and becoming accepted as standard attire around the whole world. But upon closer investigation it will be seen that Androgyny is *much more* than just a fashion.

As a fashion, androgyny is *any style that tends to blur the distinction* between males and females or *blends male and female elements*. As a philosophy, it includes blending or blurring the roles or traits, creating gender-ambiguity along with the promise of gender equality. It has morphed and evolved during the last century, and is becoming more complex and confusing. (Promoting gender equality may sound like a noble and just cause, but we need consider the root as well as the “fruits” revealed by the company it keeps.)

At one point in history, around 100 years ago, very few women subscribed to the fashion of androgyny, and the vast majority abhorred it. Now, very few women *do not* endorse it. Even some men are wearing this fashion. Androgynous attire can be either unisex, which means non-gender specific, or it can be a blend of male and female elements.

While androgyny goes so much deeper than fashion, it is obvious that fashion is an effective tool to pull humanity into the androgynous mindset. Once a person adopts the androgynous style, (or approves of the style on his spouse,) it is only logical that a sympathetic tie is created to the philosophy that the fashion represents. With this acceptance of the fashion aspect, which promotes the blurring of gender

distinctions, the discernment to oppose the androgynous philosophy is weakened and blurred. “The minds of many have been so darkened and confused by worldly customs, worldly practices, and worldly influences that all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error, seems destroyed.” {5T 62.2}

Our church leaders, starting with Ellen White, took a strong stand against androgyny upon its first appearances, in the 1850s, later in the 1890s and then in the early 1900s. The term androgyny was not in wide use, but the idea of blurring the distinction between men’s and women’s clothing was clearly understood.

Many of our leaders, other than Ellen White, wrote against blurring the distinction between men’s and women’s clothing in our official publications. In an 1895 Advent Review and Sabbath Herald article, written about how the bicycle was bringing in mannish attire on women, we read: “But one principle has long been established and universally acknowledged. The Bible states it: “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.” Deut. 22:5. In all civilized nations this precept has been accepted. Distinction in dress has **marked a line between the sexes** that has been universally respected. Modesty and law have united to maintain that standard. Logically the question might be raised, Why may not a woman wear trousers as well as a man? But good society has always put its foot on that query—it was not a debatable question....The ‘new woman’ throws away her skirts, and snaps her fingers at the Bible, at society, at law, at the blushes of her more cautious sisters, and at jeering men. She will dress as she pleases.” [Emphasis added in all quotations.]

In another article in 1895, we read: “These outfits are, we believe, called bloomers. They are not so, for they have not the semblance of a skirt...Whether or not male attire is immodest for women, we must recognize **distinction in dress as the great barrier to immodesty**. May the time be far distant, **may it never come**, when Christian women who discern the signs of our times shall be seen in this abominable display.”

Another 1895 Advent Review and Sabbath Herald article states: “According to the Bible, a **clear distinction** should be maintained between the dress of men and of women. Deut. 22:5....The devil is constantly trying to mix everything up, to **destroy the line of demarcation between male and female**, truth and error, right and wrong.”

In 1926, the editor of the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald wrote: “But when one adopts the ultra-extreme costumes, such as **break down all distinction between the sexes**—styles of dress clearly condemned in the Scriptures,—it seems to us the church has a duty to enforce appropriate Christian discipline....We cannot help but feel that such dress is an abomination to the Lord, and we cannot conceive that any of our sisters, young or old, should so lose their sense of womanly propriety as to **break down this distinction which exists between sexes**.”

In a 1927 Advent Review and Sabbath Herald article, we find this statement: “In all matters of dress and physical appearance, there should be **wide distinction** preserved between men and women.”

A 1928 Southwestern Union Record article states: “Evidently one of the most treasured of Satan’s plans today is the modern fad among women and girls in aping the ways, the habits, and even the dress of men. **Few seem to see what a curse this is intended to be or they would shun any tendency in that direction as they would the leprosy.** Sad indeed it is that many who profess present truth are blinded to the results of such a course. God has spoken, but few seem to believe that He means what He says—or perhaps they are too careless to find out what He does say. There will be weeping and wailing on the part of many when it is too late....**Do our people see no danger in the adversary’s plan to break down the barriers between the sexes?**”

In 1928, in the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, we read: “For a woman to wear any manner of dress **approaching male attire** was declared to be an abomination (Deut 22:5).”

In a 1957 Review and Herald article, the girls’ dean of PUC, after quoting Ellen White, wrote: “Thus we see that from the days of ancient Israel to the early days of the Advent Movement, God’s attitude toward women wearing men’s attire, or **attire that resembled men’s attire**, has not changed. He knew the fashion that would exist in these last days. **Can we safely believe that He approves today that which He condemned in the earlier days of the message?**”

Again in 1957 in the Pacific Union Recorder, the president of Pacific Union Conference writes: “Commenting on the text, Deuteronomy 22:5, Dr. Albert Barnes says, “The **distinction between the sexes is natural and divinely established** and cannot be neglected without indecorum and consequently injury to purity.” It is well for members of the remnant church to review from time to time certain standards of dress as outlined in the Word of God. We are not immune to the carelessness of the world.”

In 1970, this paragraph appeared in an article in the Review and Herald: “According to the Bible, a **clear distinction** should be maintained between the dress of men and women.”

In 1971, the editor of the Review and Herald wrote: “God intended that there should be a **sharp distinction** between the appearance of men and women.”

Joe Crews, who founded Amazing Facts Ministry, wrote a powerful chapter opposing unisex fashions in his book, *Creeping Compromise*, published in 1977.

In spite of these strong counsels through the years, calling for a *plain, clear, wide* and *sharp* distinction between the sexes, the influence of some pastor’s wives and other influential female leaders exerted a stronger power. The editor of the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald wrote in 1925: “We believe that upon the older membership of the church, and particularly upon the wives of our church elders and ministers and the teachers in our training schools, there rests a solemn responsibility to exemplify the principles of true godliness as relates to questions of dress, diet, etc. How can we raise the standard in the flock of God if the shepherds themselves are not true examples? So long as some of our workers persist in following styles of dress which are lacking in dignity and true womanly modesty, many who are younger will be led to follow their example, regardless of the instruction given them.”

By the 1930s, the church's position against androgyny was still strong, but with signs of weakening. Exceptions were starting to be made where masculine-type clothing was thought to be suitably worn by women in factories, in the garden, or on vigorous hikes. The exceptions increased over the years, with certain caveats to keep the distinction somewhat in place. But eventually, the exceptions became the rule, and androgyny became acceptable everywhere. By the 1960s, many were so distraught by the miniskirts, that unisex pants seemed quite desirable in contrast. So, as a church, we muted our official stand against androgyny, gradually at first, but in continual progression, until, at this present time, there is not a whisper raised against androgynous fashions from the church leadership.

This is extremely unfortunate because, now, as never before, there is an aggressive androgynous agenda proposing to blur all gender distinction. Fashion is one way to do this.

Is androgyny an abomination to God? We have clear biblical evidence that it is in Deuteronomy 22:5, as well as in the Spirit of Prophecy. Along with that, we can now clearly see the links between idolatry, false religion and androgyny. But androgyny is seen as a positive pursuit by society today. We have been conditioned by psychology and philosophy to believe that androgyny is a beneficial and ideal goal.

We are living in a pro-androgynous society, by which we have all been influenced. From the writings of a multitude of spiritualists, new agers, wiccans and pagan philosophers, from babblings of eastern gurus, yogis, and mystical practitioners, from philosophies of Jungian psychologists and sociologists, from the political jargon of globalists and socialists, from the propaganda of feminists, egalitarians and gay rights advocates, we hear the praises of androgyny. A common thread in this theory is rebellion against "traditional values" or "social roles" which also include the moral values God ordained for humanity. There is an underlying desire in androgynous ideology to intentionally blur the distinctions between males and females, which brings Babylonian confusion to the appearance, identity and roles of men and women.

Androgynous philosophy is not the belief of a few lunatic-fringe radicals, but it is the underlying foundation of modern psychology, globalist politics, and all pagan worship through the centuries. The ideology of androgyny is an effective tool for feminist and gay rights activists to achieve their agendas.

Before you summarily dismiss this proposal of the inherent abomination of androgyny, please do your own investigation. Google such phrases as "androgynous fashion," "androgyny Gnosticism," "androgyny paganism," "androgyny women's rights," "yoga kundalini androgyny," "androgyny homosexuality," "androgynous queer," etc. Be prepared to be disgusted and repulsed when you research these topics. You will truly see the "depths of Satan" in this philosophy.

There are so many aspects of androgyny that they cannot possibly be addressed in this short article. When examination is made regarding the basic tenets of the proponents, there will be seen a distinct rebellion against God's standards and ideals. A claim that god-consciousness can be achieved by balancing male and female energies comes from many spiritualistic teachers, such as in the books *Rebirthing Into Androgyny: Your Quest for Wholeness and Afterward*, and *Androgyny: The Opposites Within*.

The article entitled *Androgyny: the Pagan Sexual Ideal*, by Dr. Peter Jones is a must-read if you want to understand the connection between androgyny and sexual perversion. You can find it by Googling the title, or at this link: http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/43/43-3/43-3-pp443-469_JETS.pdf

It is believed that it is in “the androgynous level of consciousness where God incarnates in the seeker.” Such nonsense as this is taught: “Our Divine Complement, also known as our Twin Flame, is the opposite polarity of our integrated male/female androgynous Lightbody that was split off from us when we took embodiment in the lower dimensions.” “When consciousness is androgynous, the balance of feminine/receiving and masculine/projecting allows the molecules of form to spin rapidly enough to break free of third dimensional limitations and illusions. The balancing, and eventual expanding, of every individual’s consciousness makes a great impact on the Collective Consciousness, as well as the aura, of Gaia.” “Through the influence of this great Cosmic Ray, divine emanations are powerfully radiating the electronic patterns of light to prepare us for transfiguration into our I AM Avatar blueprint of androgynous perfection. This is the state in which our inner male and female polarities are completely balanced and we walk not as a man or a woman, but from a greatly expanded DNA expression as our mighty I AM Presence, our God Self of the Light.”

These diabolical and blasphemous mutterings that come straight from demonic beings are the foundation of the theory of androgyny. Entire books have been written spewing this evil philosophy, and many websites promote it. Because of the dangerous spiritualistic influence, it is not recommended that you research this aspect of androgyny. The research done by this writer has been cautious and brief, but enough to realize that the “spiritual” or mystical aspects of androgyny are straight from the depths of hell.

Regarding the gender identity aspect of androgyny, here’s one summary from homosexual glbtq.com:

“Androgyny has long been embraced by strong women, soft men, members of queer communities, and others who do not easily fit into traditionally defined gender categories. Some cultures have revered the androgyne as a divine union of earthly principles, and many religions have worshipped gods that represented the combination of male and female. Lesbians and gay men of the 1970s gay liberation movement embraced the idea of androgyny because it allowed them to express gender traits that had previously been forbidden to them. By the 1980s, androgyny had spread from the gay and lesbian communities into the mainstream. By the 1990s a "dyke chic" had developed on many college campuses, and a new lesbian catch phrase asked, "Why just dress like a lesbian when you can be one?" During the 1990s a mood of gender questioning swept over the glbtq community. No longer content to move from the male/female dichotomy to the gay/lesbian dichotomy, young queers began to search for broader terms in which to define themselves. They began to expand the definition of androgyny to include not only those who blended male and female gender characteristics, but also those whose gender was impossible to determine and those who refused to identify themselves in traditional gender dichotomies.”

Another website article on Androgyny shows the connection between androgyny and the theory of evolution:

“In fact, evidence of androgyny being embraced by society appears everywhere - institutionalized in entertainment and fashion cultures, more explicitly in expanding gay and lesbian communities. As trendsetters, entertainment and fashion industries have played an influential role in advancing a challenging perspective on human sexuality for modern times. In reality, human sexual diversity had long existed in world civilizations. What caused the obsolescence of androgyny was the prominent rise of Christianity which buried the culture of androgyny and drove same-sex relationships underground. In the traditional biblical point of view, God created human beings in His own image. They are not accidental, but essential part in the grand scheme of things. Homosexuality defies the purpose of God in humanity as male and female, and therefore is a perversion against God and Creation. The argument for the revival of androgyny offers a contrary perspective in two-fold - human is by nature androgynous; and humanity is an accident of evolutionary process. Apparently, the increasing global attraction to androgyny indicates that the modern theory of evolution holds greater sway than the traditional doctrines of Christianity. Some may believe that androgyny is just a passing trend, and others may think that it's part of the evolution of humanity. Whichever it is, one thing seems inevitable - as the world becomes more integrated and complex, society will adapt pervading changes as social norms to move humanity forward in its social evolution.”

<http://uniorb.com/RCHECK/RAndrogyny.htm>

To find out the connection between fashion and androgyny, Google phrases like “Katharine Hepburn androgyny” and “Marlene Dietrich androgyny.” You’ll see that they are hailed as the “Mother of Androgyny” and “Queen of Androgyny” because they made the wearing of pants popular for women. You’ll find statements like: *‘The goddess of American Cinema [Katharine Hepburn] paved the way for all of us women to wear a ‘traditional men’s attire’, making it ok for the rest of us.’ “Not until Marlene Dietrich and Katharine Hepburn appeared in public in men’s trousers did it begin to be possible for the average woman to appear in public in pants.” “Marlene Deitrich’s role was that of the social renegade, the seductress who was cross-dressing as a rebellion against her social role.”*

From the fashion website <http://www.glamqatar.com/androgyny-in-fashion/>:

“The androgynous look, or “masculine” dressing, has been a source of interest and intrigue for several years now, both on and off the runway. . . . the fashion world seems intent on pushing gender boundaries when it comes to dressing. . . . Some interpret it as pushing gender borders so that a woman would border on the line of looking masculine, or a man would border on the line of looking feminine. Others understand being androgynous as looking almost genderless, a sort of gender ambiguity if you will. Many view androgynous dressing as a way of not conforming to society’s expectations of how a male or female should dress. **Some call it a sexual revolution, others a fashion rebellion.** (Emphasis supplied)

Fashion experts are definitely encouraging this “new androgyny” which is the blending of masculine and feminine articles. The androgyny fashion that started in the 1930s put women in slacks. The fashion developed into the unisex trend of the 1960s and 70s with the ubiquitous jeans and T-shirt. In fact, in the 1960’s jeans and a T-shirt was labeled as the “Uniform of Rebellion.” Now we’ve moved much beyond that, but jeans are still considered to be a basic staple of many androgynous fashions.

One fashion blogger states: “In fact, a T-shirt and jeans combination is the simplest of androgynous looks, popular with all genders.” <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/androgynous%20woman?page=7>

Another declares: “Gender-neutral staples like jeans and t-shirts have become generic uniforms for both sexes. These basics allow for any gender associated with garments to be stripped away, placing the focus on the identity of the individual wearing it. Androgynous fashion at its best.”

http://www.colormagazineusa.com/index.php?view=article&catid=64%3Alifestyle&id=544%3Agender-bending-closets&tmpl=component&print=1&page=&option=com_content&Itemid=67

You may say, “When I wear jeans, I’m not saying I believe in androgyny.” Well, the woman in the attire of a harlot may declare that she is not a harlot, but what do her observers think of her? If you wear the attire of an androgynist, will not those who observe you conclude that you support the androgynous ideal?

From a major fashion website, androgyny is described as blurring the masculine-feminine boundaries:

“Androgyny and fashion: the evolving trend. Androgyny has always been a source of interest and intrigue. But as society’s boundaries have changed, so too have the masculine-feminine boundaries blurred. From ambiguous sexual and physical attributes to a focus on gender-crossing fashion, we look at the changing face of androgyny - and how women’s fashion is taking a masculine turn.

“Learn a playful dandyism and you will become the magnet for people’s dark, unrealised yearnings,” advises Robert Greene in his book *The Art of Seduction*. The ‘dandyism’ Greene is referring to isn’t prescriptive to a style of dress but rather to an underlying ambiguity. It’s about mixing masculine and feminine attributes. In other words, it’s about *androgyny*.

“The history books are littered with examples of androgynes who captivated society with their pleasant gender-bending confusion. But while the concept is not a new one, they were historically figures who rebelled against society’s norms. They were the Beau Brummels, the David Bowies, the Coco Chanel and Marlene Dietrichs. Now, with the boundaries of what’s acceptable being more and more blurred, the time has become right for the outliers to become the mainstream. Androgyny is now an evolving, large-scale fashion trend and one we’ll see on the list of fashion trends for 2012 and beyond.” <http://www.fashionising.com/trends/b--androgyny-androgynous-fashion-22284.html>

Here is some more information from a fashion site showing how this androgynous ideal developed:

“During the 'counter-culture' revolution in the 1960s, the music and fashion industries inspired a trend towards self-exploration emphasizing individual freedom and self-realization. This allowed men and women to start self-defining who and what they were, the evidence being men and women basically wearing the same clothes and hairstyles; and men, more than ever, adapting what was traditionally women's wear. This is best seen with both men and women in tight, low-slung denim, tight, body-forming tops and headbands, jewelry and other accessories taking on a non-gender-specific role.”

“The fashion industry also capitalized on the growing social affinity to androgyny. Fashion's borderline androgyny trend showed up in dresses, full-length skirts, and heeled boots for men on the runway and on the streets, especially in fashion-forward places like New York's downtown neighborhoods. While women began adopting menswear into their wardrobes as early in the 20th century, it is fair to say that men has only recently began experimenting with adapting women's clothing for their use. This modern movement has nothing to do with free love, and everything to do with the fashion-forward freedom to blur traditional gender lines in expressing one's personal style. Still somewhat controversial, the trend of androgynous fashion has sparked the creativity of apparel designers, fashion-loving tastemakers, and style icons alike.”

“If you pay close attention to the marketplace, you will find that unisex lines out there already-and thriving. Labels like J. Crew, H&M, Forever 21, Zara, Unable, the Gap, American Apparel, Alexander Wang, Old Navy, Thom Browne, and Band of Outsiders, all have unisex lines - they sell the exact same garment to men and women, just with different cuts.”

<http://www.buffalorising.com/2011/08/fashion-maniac.html>

Wearing androgynous fashion furthers the underlying agenda of androgynous ideology. It's a form of advertising, a promotional scheme to further the cause. The devil would like to use Christians to help promote his androgynous campaign. He wants to persuade Christians that in order to “fit in” with society, they must wear fashions that blur the distinction between the sexes.

“A strong element in fashion for the last century has been the tension between masculine and feminine – playing with gender codes to create an other, an androgynous form which has fascinated us for decades now. Be it Marlene Dietrich seducing the camera in a top hat and tails, Saint Laurent's 'Le Smoking' with its clean masculine tailoring or in recent years the appearance of a male model Andrej Pejic in both menswear and women's wear collections on the runway – we cannot get enough of the duality of gender in fashion.”

<http://bloggedcharityfashionshow.com/2012/09/29/feature-1-fantasy-and-androgyny-within-duality/>

A website called Genderplayful describes their purpose in providing ungendered clothing. Clearly, androgyny mingles closely with sexually deviant styles:

“Genderplayful is for anyone who can’t easily find what they’re looking for in a typical clothing store, with special support for androgynous, unisex, butch, dapper, femme, gender-bending, gender-transgressive, and gender-fanflippingtastic clothing solutions for all kinds of bodies.”

From a website that has been quoted above, we find that androgyny is alluring to both sexes, thus encouraging bisexuality and homosexuality.

“Part of the interest generated by androgyny is the stirring of a desire that we don’t quite understand. It’s the incongruity, the question mark, that intrigues. Society’s definition of what’s ‘acceptable’ has also changed, though. A woman wearing a pantsuit, for example, is now commonplace and hardly thought of as boundary-pushing. [Though it certainly was when it first became popular.] So in turn, for androgyny to be noticed, the game had to be upped considerably. Enter the new wave of **androgynous models**.

“From one decade to the next, the ’90s feminine waif evolved to become almost **genderless**. Physiologically she was already boyish of figure; in the 2000’s she evolved to have edgy tattoos and piercings, attitude, and a sexual confidence that aligned neatly with the burgeoning nudity in fashion trend. Now the fashion industry was embracing models like Freja Beha Erichsen: they were often openly **gay or bisexual, alluring to both sexes**, physically either muscular or androgynously slight.” <http://www.fashionising.com/trends/b--androgyny-androgynous-fashion-22284.html>

These fashions are clearly linked with homosexuality, thus they promote homosexuality, and other ideologies that are immoral. Androgynous fashion is all about seduction, perverse seduction for a perverse society.

“Which leads to a conclusion that, when it comes to working a little menswear into a women’s look in 2012, the options are near endless. The key thing to remember is that it’s not about an all-out single gender look: mixing up both masculine and feminine elements is 2012’s way to master the **art of seduction**.” <http://www.fashionising.com/trends/b--androgyny-androgynous-fashion-22284.html>

Is androgynous fashion a style God’s people should accept? Is it not time for God’s people, Seventh-day Adventists, to raise the bar, and oppose this gender blurring campaign in all its forms? Will you support androgyny, or will you join those who are speaking out, warning God’s people not to be followers of the fashions of this degenerate age?

Seventh-day Adventist Dress Principles: Outdated Relic or God's Requirement?

By Amy Pavlovik

Secret Strategy

"As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power.... Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God...."

He says, "We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion." (TM 472-474)

Satan will do whatever he can to overcome Seventh-day Adventists. And a major part of the strategy decided upon in secret consultation with his angels is to convince us that God's requirements are not as strict as we once believed. In other words, a relaxing of the standards. Have you ever felt that way? "Well, I used to think I should not do such-and-such, but now I think it's probably all right." Have you seen the church around you moving in that direction? Why is that? Could it be because Satan knows that when we relax God-given standards, we "will have no strength to resist [his] power," and eventually we will even find ourselves laughing at how strict we used to be?

Are Dress Standards Obsolete?

To convince us to gradually slip away from beliefs we once held as true, Satan uses varied strategies. In this way, dress standards among Seventh-day Adventists have gradually found themselves on a slippery slope.

One such strategy is the idea that the subject of dress is a side issue, and it is not good to give it much attention. Yet God says, "The subject of dress demands serious reflection and much prayer." (4T 641) So an honest study of what God says about dress will not detract from the doctrinal themes God has given us. Nor is it a waste of time.

Another strategy is our natural tendency to conform to what others around us do. This is a good thing, of itself. Yet when it leads us to conform to sinful, worldly practices, it is not good. The fact is that dress styles that harmonize with inspired teachings are not at all popular today. It is so much easier to blend in than to feel that you are making a "statement" by your appearance, that most of us find ourselves doing it. And it makes shopping so much easier too. Yet:

"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.'" (4T 647)

Another strategy is the often-unspoken opinion that whatever was written by God's prophetic messenger to the Seventh-day Adventist people, is less than fully applicable to us today. Yet:

“I have been shown that the principles that were given us in the early days of the message are as important and should be regarded just as conscientiously today as they were then.” (9T 158)

Is it safe to conclude that God used Sister White to condemn something in her day, but that if she were to see how well-accepted and common it is in respectable society today, she would have a totally different view? It does not seem so.

Another very successful strategy is the line that we must not dress too very differently from society, or people will think we are strange and not listen to the truths we want to share with them. Yet:

“Many dress like the world, to have an influence. But here they make a sad and fatal mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make the distinction great between the Christian and the world.” (1T 132)

“Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ.” (2MCP 558)

The fact is that it takes courage to dress differently, courage which few have. “Few have the moral courage to wear a dress in opposition to fashion...” (HR, May 1, 1872) It takes no effort, however, to float along in the direction of the popular current. This is why Satan’s varied strategies to relax our standards have been so well-received.

History Repeats Itself

“Human reasoning has ever sought to evade or set aside the simple, direct instructions of the Word of God. In every age a majority of the professed followers of Christ have disregarded those precepts which enjoin self-denial and humility, which require modesty and simplicity of conversation, deportment, and apparel. The result has ever been the same—departure from the teachings of the gospel leads to the adoption of the fashions, customs, and principles of the world. Vital godliness gives place to a dead formalism. The presence and power of God, withdrawn from those world-loving circles, are found with a class of humble worshipers, who are willing to obey the teachings of the Sacred Word. Through successive generations this course has been pursued. One after another different denominations have risen and yielding their simplicity, have lost, in a great measure, their early power.” (CG 430)

So Satan’s attack on dress standards is nothing new. It has been tried before and has worked, over and over again. It has been largely responsible for the loss of power in whole denominations. Could this happen to us?

Has It Happened to Us?

“As I have seen many Sabbathkeeping Adventists becoming worldly in thought, conversation, and dress, my heart has been saddened. The people who claim to believe that they have the last message of mercy to give to the world, are attracted by worldly fashions, and make great exertions to follow them as far as they think their profession of faith allows them to go. Worldly dress among our people is so noticeable that unbelievers frequently remark, ‘In their dress you cannot distinguish them from the world.’” (3SM 243) This was written in 1901. Where are we now, well over a century later?

“Not a few of our people are backsliding. They are imitating the fashions of the world. Their spirituality is dying. Step by step they are approaching world-loving. Selfishness and pride are taking possession of

them, and the love of God finds little room in their hearts. Some who were once zealous reformers are now indifferent. Sisters who were once plain in dress are now conforming to fashion. God expects his commandment-keeping people to be distinct from worldlings, but in many instances the line of demarcation is hardly discernible.” (RH, November 17, 1904)

Many Seventh-day Adventists were backsliding in 1904. They had once been zealous reformers, but became indifferent. They relaxed their ideas. The line between God’s people and worldlings was blurred. But even more concerning was the result: their spirituality was dying. Will the result be any different today if we continue in their footsteps?

Is Dress Such a Serious Issue?

The topic of dress is usually not given much attention in our churches, so it is easy to ask, “Can it really be so important?” “Does the way I dress have any significance for my salvation?” “Is it something we should even be talking about?”

“I saw that the outside appearance is an index to the heart. When the exterior is hung with ribbons, collars, and needless things, it plainly shows that the love for all this is in the heart; unless such persons are cleansed from their corruption, they can never see God, for only the pure in heart will see Him....

“It is these things that separate God from His people, that shut the ark away from them. Israel have been asleep to the pride, and fashion, and conformity to the world, in the very midst of them. They advance every month in pride, covetousness, selfishness, and love of the world.” (1T 136)

Thus the choices I make regarding my outside appearance could separate me from God. They could even cost me my place in heaven. Perhaps this is not commonly taught among Seventh-day Adventists. But God, in His mercy, has revealed it to us, so that we need not be lost.

The same statement continues: “God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. *And as soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children.* They are the children of the world and of darkness. They lust for the leeks and onions of Egypt, that is, desire to be as much like the world as possible; by so doing, those that profess to have put on Christ virtually put Him off, and show that they are strangers to grace and strangers to the meek and lowly Jesus. If they had acquainted themselves with Him, they would walk worthy of Him.” (1T 137, emphasis added)

Friends, I did not write that statement; God inspired it through His prophet. If it cuts and stings, know that it comes from One who loves you, and gave His life for you, one who wants to do whatever it takes to keep you from being lost.

“Sabbath-keepers, remember that the outside appearance is an index to the heart, and while you are so anxious to imitate the fashions of the world; while your heart is in these things, you are like them, you have their spirit, and have lost the truth out of your heart. While you study your appearance to look as near like the world as possible, remember your Redeemer. Upon his head was a crown of thorns. The greatest concern some Sabbath-keepers have is their outward appearance. They are fostering pride, and will perish with their pride unless they entirely reform.” (2SG 286, 287)

God's Definition of Modesty

What is modest clothing for Christian women and what is not? Unfortunately, there are hundreds of varying opinions on this subject. So is the question left up to each one's personal judgment, or does God have a standard?

First, God has not specifically addressed, in inspired writings, every detail of which clothing styles are, and are not, modest. However, He *has* given us enough very specific counsel that sincere seekers for truth will be able to make wise decisions in those details which are not revealed.

"Virtue and modesty are rare. I appeal to you as followers of Jesus Christ, making a high and exalted profession, to cherish this precious, priceless gem, modesty." (PH011 27) "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." (1Timothy 2:9) Modesty and shamefacedness are the opposite of boldness, revealing, and flaunting. A modest person has a proper, healthy sense of shame about revealing what is not proper to reveal.

The purpose of a Christian woman's clothing is not to reveal or accentuate the body, but rather to conceal it. This one simple rule will help us choose clothing that draws attention to God rather than to our physical form. For example, consider a low-cut blouse. What is its purpose? Would a blouse with a neckline that reaches the base of the neck work just as well? It would. So what is the reason for the low-cut neckline? It has no real purpose other than to reveal part of the body that does not really need to be seen.

Clothing may completely cover all the skin, yet still be immodest, if it reveals the form by clinging to the body. Spandex tops are widely worn today, but wouldn't a loose-fitting cotton shirt work just as well? It would. Why, then, are spandex tops so popular? They reveal the form. There is no logical reason for making a top skin-tight, other than to reveal the body. Even if that is not my purpose in wearing one, that is still what I am accomplishing.

"And I am decided that these close, skin-tight sleeves cannot be wise or healthful, and whether it be fashionable or unfashionable, I advise that they not be made after the tight order." (DG 176)

How Short is Too Short?

"If women would wear their dresses so as to clear the filth of the streets an inch or two, their dresses would be modest... Such a dress would be in accordance with our faith." (1T 424)

"If all our sisters would adopt a simple, unadorned dress of modest length, the uniformity thus established would be far more pleasing to God.... It consists of a plain sack or loose-fitting basque, and skirt, the latter short enough to avoid the mud and filth of the streets." (4T 640)

The guidelines are sufficiently specific. A knee-length skirt could not be described as avoiding the filth of the streets by an inch or two. Nor, for that matter, could a mid-calf skirt. An ankle-length skirt seems to be the best embodiment of this counsel.

"My views were calculated to correct the present fashion, the extreme long dress, trailing upon the ground, and also to correct the extreme short dress, reaching about to the knees, which is worn by a certain class. I was shown that we should shun both extremes." (1T 464)

It is interesting that Sister White classifies a dress reaching about to the knee as an "extreme short dress" and says we should "shun" this extreme.

Closely related to dress length is the question of whether or not it is modest to reveal the legs. Of course, in today's society, this would be thought of as a ridiculous question. But we should not discredit it so quickly, in light of what God has said. "We cannot, if we would, conceal the fact that women have feet and limbs that were made for use. But in regard to the exposure, this is on the other side of the question." (HR, May 1, 1872)

It seems from this that exposing women's limbs is not proper. The statement continues: "We have traveled extensively the past twenty-five years, and have been eye-witnesses to many indecent exposures of the limbs." (*Ibid.*)

What does God, as He has revealed through Inspiration, define as "indecent exposures of the limbs"? This is of utmost importance as we try to define God's standard of modesty.

"But 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, 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." (*Ibid.*)

If God says, through Inspiration, that something is immodesty in the fullest sense, are we prepared to say that it is not really immodest today, but was simply inappropriate in another time and culture?

And what was it that was immodesty in the fullest sense? A dress raised 18 inches, and "an almost unclad ankle." I am an average-height woman, and a dress 18 inches from the floor would be mid-knee-length on me. This is not thought to be immodest today, but if God has said "it is so in the fullest sense," then there is widespread disregard of His revealed will in the church today.

"We advocate that the limbs of women should not be exposed, but sensibly, neatly, and comfortably, clad." (HR, May 1, 1872)

According to Inspiration, bare legs are not modest. Thus shorts and fashionable-length skirts are ruled out. I should choose long skirts and modest stockings that do not reveal, but rather conceal, my legs.

Note: Some may recall that Sister White wrote about dresses 9 inches from the floor. This "reform dress," adopted by Adventists for a while, included loose pants underneath. Thus, it did not reveal 9 inches of bare or nylon-clad leg.

What God Said About Pants

"There is still another style of dress which will be adopted by a class of so-called dress reformers. They will imitate the opposite sex, as nearly as possible. They will 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. Deut. xxii, 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.' 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. God's prohibitions are lightly regarded by all who would advocate the doing away of the distinction of dress between males and females....

“God designed there should be a plain distinction between male and female dress, 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. St. Paul would utter a rebuke, were he alive, and should behold females professing Godliness with this style of dress.” (2SM 477, 478)

When some women started wearing pants in Ellen White’s day, what did God inspire her to write about it?

1. This style reverses God’s order.
2. It disregards His special directions in Deuteronomy 22:5.
3. God would not have His people adopt this style.
4. It is not modest.
5. It is not at all fitting for Christians.
6. It would lead to confusion, and a great increase of crime.
7. Paul would rebuke us, were he alive to see us in this style.

But alas, it seems that neither Paul, nor many that have his courage and conviction regarding God’s dress standards, are alive today. For pants are now the pervasive dress style among Adventist women, yet inspired counsel on this subject is so rarely brought forth as to be well-nigh unknown.

“There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination. ‘In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.’ 1 Timothy 2:9.

“Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of woman’s rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connection with the third angel’s message. The spirit which attends the one cannot be in harmony with the other.” (1T 421)

Women dressing “as near like the other sex as possible,” God describes as an abomination. And from what God has said, there is no point in trying to create a harmony between the pants fashion and the Seventh-day Adventist message.

God’s Last Word on a Style of Dress

Many will recall reading about the “reform dress,” a specific style of dress which God presented to Seventh-day Adventists in the 1860s. This was a healthful, modest dress about 9 inches from the floor, with loose pants underneath. Sister White encouraged its use for years, but in 1881, she wrote that this style had been laid aside. It had not been well received by Seventh-day Adventists, and the Lord removed the burden of advocating the reform dress style. Yet He did not leave Seventh-day Adventists with no direction on what would be pleasing to Him in their dress. He now presented “another style.”

“If all our sisters would adopt a simple, unadorned dress of modest length, the uniformity thus established would be far more pleasing to God.... As our sisters would not generally accept the reform dress as it should be worn, another, less objectionable style is now presented. It is free from needless trimmings, free from the looped-up, tied back overskirts. It consists of a plain sack [jacket] or loose-fitting basque [bodice], and skirt, the latter short enough to avoid the mud and filth of the streets. The material should be free from large plaids and figures, and plain in color. The same attention should be given to the clothing of the limbs as with the short dress.” (4T 640)

“The dress of our people should be made most simple. The skirt and sack I have mentioned may be used. — not that just that pattern and nothing else should be established, but a simple style as was represented in that dress. Some have supposed that the very pattern given was the pattern that all should adopt. This is not so. But something as simple as this would be the best we could adopt under the circumstances. No one precise style has been given me as the exact rule to guide in their dress.” (Spalding Magan Collection, 91)

This is the last word we have been given through Inspiration regarding a style of dress that would be pleasing to God. It is not a uniform, not one particular cut of dress, but rather guidelines which can be met by a number of modest styles.

1. It includes a skirt of modest length.
2. It is plain in print and color.
3. The bodice is loose-fitting.
4. The limbs are modestly clothed.

There are many jumpers, skirts, and dresses that could fit this description. Pants, shorts, swimsuits, stretchy or low-cut tops, and tank tops, all of which by their very nature are revealing, are not mentioned in this description of how God wants His daughters to dress. Skirts that reveal the legs through shortness, tightness, or slits, would also be ruled out.

Although sleeve length is not specifically addressed in the Spirit of Prophecy, today’s fashion is cap sleeves. With the emphasis God places on modest covering of the legs, it is hardly consistent to believe that these revealing sleeves are pleasing to Him. An elbow-length or three-quarter-length sleeve can be cool and comfortable and much more modest.

Another fashion of the day, especially in church, is open-toed, high-heeled sandals. Contrast with this modest stockings and shoes that conceal rather than display. Which can you picture the Adventist pioneer women wearing? Which looks more sensual?

Stylish or Plain?

“When the mind is fixed upon pleasing God alone, all the needless embellishments of the person disappear.” (4T 645) This includes not only jewelry attached to the ears or worn around the neck, but also jewelry clipped into the hair, and showy watches. Glasses serve a needed purpose, but some styles of glasses are also a fashion accessory. The same goes for belts, handbags, shoes, hair accessories, scarves, etc. Am I wearing it to serve a useful purpose, or to decorate myself?

Beyond simply avoiding gaudy ornamentation, God is calling us to be plain. “Self-denial in dress is a part of our Christian duty. To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith.” (3T 366) “Our faith, if carried out, will lead us to be so plain in dress, and zealous of good works, that we shall be marked as peculiar.” (1T 275)

Even the colors and prints of our clothes are not below the Lord’s notice, and He has expressed His will regarding them. “The material should be free from large plaids and figures, and plain in color.” (4T 640)

“I felt rather sad and ashamed when you stood upon the platform before the large crowd under the tent, with that light, large-figured dress.... We who claim to be in the light, and who take prominent positions to instruct others in children’s meetings, need to be severely plain, yet tidy and tasteful, in

dress; we should not give a semblance of excuse to any for patterning after the worldly, changing fashions of this corrupt age.... Ever have your dress of good, durable material, and modest colors; let it be made plainly, without adornment. You certainly need to improve in your style of dress.” (MR926 23)

Does God really care about large or small prints on fabrics? It seems that He does. Why? Because He wants to cure us of our pride, and make us ready for heaven. It is safe to trust that He knows best how to do this.

When Silence is Not Golden

Preaching on dress standards is now basically taboo, and as a result, most Seventh-day Adventist women are taking their lead from society around them. There is the unspoken opinion that promoting Spirit of Prophecy dress standards is offensive and judgmental, and distracts from the gospel message. Yet:

“We are nearing the close of this world’s history. A plain, direct testimony is now needed, as given in the Word of God, in regard to the plainness of dress. This should be our burden.” (SpM 90, 91)

The resounding silence on dress standards today is a cause for alarm. “My heart is pained to see those who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Saviour, so eagerly seeking to conform to the world’s standard of dress. Notwithstanding their profession of godliness, they can hardly be distinguished from the unbeliever....

“We see steadily gaining ground in the church an evil which the word of God condemns. What is the duty of those in authority, in regard to this matter? Will the influence of the church be what it should be, while many of its members obey the dictates of fashion, rather than the clearly expressed will of God? How can we expect the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit, while we suffer these things to exist among us? Can we remain silent while the teachings of Christ are set aside by his professed followers?” (RH December 6, 1881)

Those in authority in the church have a responsibility to teach and uphold God’s dress standards. These are not man-made ideas, but divinely inspired revelation of God’s will. If we fail to do this, we cannot expect God’s blessing in the church. If, as a church, we neglect this aspect of reformation because it steps on toes, we will never experience revival.

“All matters of dress should be strictly guarded, following closely the Bible rule. Fashion has been the goddess who has ruled the outside world, and she often insinuates herself into the church. The church should make the word of God her standard....

“When a church has been raised up and left uninstructed on these points, the minister has neglected his duty and will have to give an account to God for the impressions he allowed to prevail.” (5T 499, 500)

As calls for revival and reformation are going forward in our church, let us take careful notice of the one thing that is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God.

“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. I have been shown that our church rules are very deficient. All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline. If there is a continuance, in face of warnings and appeals and entreaties, to still follow the perverse will, it may

be regarded as proof that the heart is in no way assimilated to Christ. Self, and only self, is the object of adoration, and one such professed Christian will lead many away from God.

“There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized.” (4T 647, 648)

These fearful warnings should rouse all of us. They have not been heeded. Church members continue to dress in a manner inconsistent with our faith, and the fact that, as a church, we permit it is called a terrible sin. It is time for us to accept the style of dress described by God. Although He removed the burden of the reform dress, no inspired word has ever been given that the simple, modest style described in *Testimonies*, volume 4, p. 640 has been laid aside. It is still God’s plan for our dress.

Time to Make a Decision

It may be easy to cast aside all that God’s messenger has written with one small excuse. “Oh, I know, but no one does this today. Surely it must not apply to our time.” Or, “I can’t possibly see how such-and-such article of clothing could be immodest. That must have been just for her time, when it wasn’t socially acceptable.” Or, “Well, these are general guidelines, but I don’t think we need to follow them that specifically.” Or, “I think dress is just a side issue, and we shouldn’t worry about it.”

The following statement is strong, yet God gave this warning in love, to save us from the deception of following our own hearts in opposition to His revealed will. “If you feel just as safe in following your own impulses as in following the light given by God’s delegated servant, the peril is your own; you will be condemned because you rejected the light which heaven had sent you.” (5T 688)

Dear reader, I do not want this condemnation to be yours or mine; that is why I felt the need to bring to our attention “the light given by God’s delegated servant” on dress. This light is being neglected, and if we continue in this course, we are in peril.

“Peter gives valuable instruction concerning the dress of Christian women... All that we urge is compliance with the injunctions of God’s word. Are we Bible readers and followers of Bible teachings? Will we obey God, or conform to the customs of the world?... Can we expect to enjoy peace of mind and the approval of God while walking directly contrary to the teachings of His word?” (4T 644)

May we each choose the path of surrender, is my prayer.

Christian Dress and Appearance

An Appeal from Sister to Sister

By Heather Van Ornum

This, for many, may be the hardest area to talk about, yet it is one which we must address. Sisters, this area of dress and appearance is one where many of us have fallen far short, and God is calling us to come up higher. I truly believe that Satan holds many of his captives by the chain “pride of appearance”, as I have seen almost no other area of Christian standards to which there is so much opposition, even among many who claim to be “conservative” or “historic” Seventh-day Adventists, as this area of dress. I plead with you to surrender to God in this area, and no longer build up your excuses and your walls of resistance. God is looking for a perfected people, who are willing to follow Him every particular. Will you be among them?

We are bombarded in stores, magazines, billboards, and sadly, even at church, with visual appeals to follow fashion. The world’s fashions have become so accepted in the church that one can often scarcely tell many a Seventh-day Adventist from someone of the world. This is very displeasing to God. Review the earlier section on separation from the world, and think of what those counsels say to us in regards to how we dress. In addition, God has given us very clear and specific counsel in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy on how He wants us to dress. That is what we will be looking at together here.

Keep in mind as you study, that the fashions in Ellen White’s day were very different from those we have today. In her time she was combating such things as restricting corsets, abundance of ribbons and ruffles, skirts dragging in the filth of the streets, hoops with their tendencies to cause indecent exposure in certain situations, the American Costume (consisting of a knee-length dress over pants) which arose with the feminist movement, layers of skirts hanging from the hips, and other such styles. None of these are still being worn in our country today the same as they were then. So you may ask, how can we then expect to find counsel in the writings of Ellen White which will be applicable for our day of short skirts, mini skirts, tight clothing, sleeveless shirts, cap sleeves, sheer clothing, pants for women, shorts, plunging necklines, bathing suits, bikinis, and a host of other such things? You will be amazed as we study to see how clearly God addressed each of these issues through the principles of dress He gave us in the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy. The counsel is as relevant for today as it was then. Much of the counsel on dress reform was written specifically to women, but we will also touch briefly on the area of dress reform for men, as it is very important as well. So, shall we begin?

An Overview of Dress Principles

Let's first take a look on some general quotes on the subject of dress. These will help lay a solid foundation for our more specific study next. Is there a problem with the dress of God's people today? Is God calling us to make a change? Why is the issue of our dress so important?

"I was shown that the people of God should not imitate the fashions of the world. Some have done this, and are fast losing the peculiar, holy character which should distinguish them as God's people. I was pointed back to God's ancient people, and 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 faces with a veil. 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 greatly departed 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 between them and the Israel of God must be more plain, or the curse which falls upon worldlings will fall on God's professed people." 1T 189

"The Lord is displeased with the pride manifested among His professed people. He is dishonored by their conformity to the unhealthful, immodest, and expensive fashions of this degenerate age." CH 598

"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." CG 432

"A person's character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils." ED 248

"This is true sanctification. It is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies,--not an offering corrupted by wrong habits, but "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." CD 57, 58

"Those who are truly seeking to follow Christ will have conscientious scruples in regard to the dress they wear;" MYP 345, 346

"Having before us the picture of the world's demoralization upon the point of fashion, how dare professed Christians follow in the path of the worldling? Shall we appear to sanction these demoralizing

fashions by adopting them? Many do adopt the fashions of the world, but it is because Christ is not formed within them, the hope of glory.... Pride and vanity are manifested everywhere; but those who are inclined to look into the mirror to admire themselves, have little inclination to look into the law of God, the great moral mirror. This idolatry of dress destroys all that is humble, meek, and lovely in the character. It consumes the precious hours that should be devoted to meditation, to searching the heart, to the prayerful study of God's word." MYP 359, 360

"The habits and customs of the world, pride of appearance, selfishness, and self-exaltation, too often intrude, and these sins of His professed followers are so offensive to God that He cannot work in power for them or through them... When there has been a departure from the right path, it is difficult to return. Barriers have been removed, safeguards broken down. One step in the wrong direction prepares the way for another.... The least deviation from right and principle will lead to separation from God and may end in apostasy. What we do once, we more readily and naturally do again; and to go forward in a certain path, be it right or wrong, is more easy than to start. It takes less time and labor to corrupt our ways before God than to engraft upon the character habits of righteousness and truth. Whatever a man becomes accustomed to, be its influence good or evil, he finds it difficult to abandon." 4T 576, 578

"The sum and substance of true religion is to own and continually acknowledge, by words, by dress, by deportment, our relationship to God." 4T 582

"As we see our sisters departing from simplicity in dress, and cultivating a love for the fashions of the world, we feel troubled. By taking steps in this direction they are separating themselves from God and neglecting the inward adorning." 4T 628

"Satan invented the fashions in order to keep the minds of women so engrossed with the subject of dress that they could think of but little else." 4T 629

"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." 4T 634

"To protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health, the dress reform was introduced among us. It was not intended to be a yoke of bondage, but a blessing; not to increase labor, but to save labor; not to add to the expense of dress, but to save expense. It would distinguish God's people from the world, and thus serve as a barrier against its fashions and follies. He who knows the end from the beginning, who understands our nature and our needs,--our compassionate Redeemer,--saw our dangers and difficulties, and condescended to give us timely warning and instruction concerning our habits of life, even in the proper selection of food and clothing." 4T 634

"Will my sisters accept this style of dress and refuse to imitate the fashions that are devised by Satan and continually changing? 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." 4T 640

“It is a shame to our sisters to so forget their holy character and their duty to God as to imitate the fashions of the world. There is no excuse for us except the perversity of our own hearts. We do not extend our influence by such a course. It is so inconsistent with our profession of faith that it makes us ridiculous in the eyes of worldlings. 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.... How little did those professedly believing sisters know of the sermon their dress was preaching! Our words, our actions, and our dress are daily, living preachers, gathering with Christ or scattering abroad. This is no trivial matter to be passed off with a jest. The subject of dress demands serious reflection and much prayer. Many unbelievers have felt that they were not doing right in permitting themselves to be slaves of fashion; but when they see some who make a high profession of godliness dressing as worldlings dress, enjoying frivolous society, they decide that there can be no wrong in such a course. “We are,” said the inspired apostle, “made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” All heaven is marking the daily influence which the professed followers of Christ exert upon the world. My sisters, your dress is telling either in favor of Christ and the sacred truth or in favor of the world. Which is it? Remember we must all answer to God for the influence we exert.” 4T 641

“The love of dress endangers the morals and makes woman the opposite of the Christian lady characterized by modesty and sobriety. Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dress. He sees that the costly apparel stifles the desire to do good.” 4T 645

“ Christ is ashamed of His professed followers. Wherein do we bear any resemblance to Him? Wherein does our dress conform to the Bible requirements? I do not want the sins of the people upon me, and I will give the trumpet a certain sound. For years I have borne a plain and decided testimony upon this subject, in print and upon the speaker's stand. I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I must be clear of the blood of all. 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.” Do not, my sisters, trifle longer with your own souls and with God. 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. I have been shown that our church rules are very deficient. All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline. If there is a continuance, in face of warnings and appeals and entreaties, to still follow the perverse will, it may be regarded as proof that the heart is in no way assimilated to Christ. Self, and only self, is the object of adoration, and one such professed Christian will lead many away from God. There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the

door against the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized.” 4T 647, 648

“God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. And as soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children. They are the children of the world and of darkness.” 1T 137

“While you make yourselves appear like the world, and as beautiful as you can, remember that the same body may in a few days be food for worms. And while you adorn it to your taste, to please the eye, you are dying spiritually. God hates your vain, wicked pride, and He looks upon you as a whited sepulcher, full of corruption and uncleanness within.” 1T 134

“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.” 1T 458

“When told of their mistake, many will immediately exclaim, ‘Why, such a style of dress would be old-fashioned!’ What if it is? I wish we could be old-fashioned in many respects. If we could have the old-fashioned strength that characterized the old-fashioned women of past generations, it would be very desirable.” 1T 461

“To many the dress reform is too simple and humbling to be adopted. They cannot lift the cross. God works by simple means to separate and distinguish His children from the world; but some have so departed from the simplicity of the work and ways of God that they are above the work, not in it.” 1T 523, 524

“Something must arise to lessen the hold of God's people upon the world. The reform dress is simple and healthful, yet there is a cross in it. I thank God for the cross and cheerfully bow to lift it. We have been so united with the world that we have lost sight of the cross and do not suffer for Christ's sake. We should not wish to invent something to make a cross; but if God presents to us a cross, we should cheerfully bear it. In the acceptance of the cross we are distinguished from the world, who love us not and ridicule our peculiarity. Christ was hated by the world because He was not of the world. Can His followers expect to fare better than their Master?” 1T 525

“Many who profess to believe the Testimonies live in neglect of the light given. The dress reform is treated by some with great indifference and by others with contempt, because there is a cross attached to it. For this cross I thank God. It is just what we need to distinguish and separate God's commandment-keeping people from the world. The dress reform answers to us as did the ribbon of blue to ancient Israel. The proud, and those who have no love for sacred truth, which will separate them from the world, will show it by their works.” 3T 171

“Self-denial in dress is a part of our Christian duty.” 3T 366

“It would be pleasing to God if there was greater uniformity in dress among believers. The style of dress formerly adopted by the Friends (Quakers), is the least objectionable. Many of them have backslidden, and although they may preserve the uniformity of color, yet they have indulged in pride and extravagance, and their dress has been of the most expensive material. Still their selection of plain colors, and the modest and neat arrangement of their clothing, is worthy of imitation by Christians. 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.” 2SM 473, 474

“ It would be pleasing to God if there was greater uniformity in dress among Christians. The style of dress formerly adopted by the Friends is commendable.” HR, February 1, 1872

The 1927 General Conference Dress Statement

In 1927, the General Conference committee of Seventh-day Adventists, printed this article in Standards of Christian Living, pages 15-16. It is very valuable to see how specific and detailed they were then regarding dress standards, with how lenient and general our churches are now on the subject.

“The adoption of fads and extreme fashion in either men’s or women’s dress indicate a lack of attention to serious matters, and creates in all thoughtful observers a suspicion of the ability and worth of the wearer. The jewelry is a bid for attention which is not keeping with Christian self-forgetfulness. In the same case is the exhibition of brilliant and flashy colors. A sincere mind will not seek the camouflage of showy dress....

“Let our young women consider themselves well-dressed only when the demands of modesty are met. The dress should be such in material and form as to allow no suggestion of sex lure. Extremely short sleeves, low necks, and skirts that do not fall well below the knees fail to accord with the Christian standard of modesty and refinement. Such attire reveals its inadequacy in the nervous self-consciousness of unsophisticated wearers. Beauty as well as virtue requires adherence to the fullest conservatism in these particulars.

“As a matter of health as well as of beauty and utility, low-heeled shoes should be worn. High heels, by throwing the body off balance, cause strain which often results in serious physical disorders; while it takes a distorted sense of beauty to find any grace either in the shoe or in the posture and walk of the wearer.

“The head is the seat of intelligence and should give evidence of it. The soul is expressed in the face; the elements of beauty lie not so much in feature and color as in the expression of intelligence and benevolence. Let the mind and soul be cultivated, and the face will be beautiful. The use of rouge, lipstick, and similar cosmetics is always false and usually disfiguring. Their use we sincerely discourage. The hair should be neatly but not elaborately dressed. Allowing it to remain in its natural unshorn state enhances women’s charm of femininity and show a becoming sense of her distinction from man. The hats worn should be conservative in style and color, and should be without striking ornamentation. In all matters of dress and physical appearance, there should be wide distinction between men and women.”

A Little History on the Dress Reform Message in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

In 1865, God gave Ellen White a vision about dress reform, after which she promoted a specific dress pattern among the Adventist sisters which she called the reform or short dress. This dress was designed by God to be a blessing and to bring greater uniformity in dress. It was a most modest, healthful, and simple style. It was adopted by many of our people, however some who adopted it began to think of it as a galling yoke and to complain of it, while others made the pattern according to their own ideas which manifested a great diversity and made a poor representation of that which God intended, and still others opposed it from the start. Because of this, Ellen White wrote:

“ In a vision given me at Battle Creek, January 3, 1875, I was shown the state of things which I have here represented, and that the wide diversity in dress was an injury to the cause of truth. That which would have proved a blessing, if uniformly adopted and properly worn, had been made a reproach, and, in some cases, even a disgrace. Some who wore the dress sighed over it as a heavy burden. The language of their hearts was: "Anything but this. If we felt free to lay off this peculiar style, we would willingly adopt a plain, untrimmed dress of ordinary length. The limbs could be as warmly clothed as before, and we could secure all the physical benefits, with less effort. It requires much labor to prepare the reform dress in a proper manner." Murmuring and complaining were fast destroying vital godliness.... One year ago the subject of dress was again presented before me. I saw that our sisters were departing from the simplicity of the gospel. The very ones who had felt that the reform dress required unnecessary labor, and who claimed that they would not be influenced by the spirit of the world, had now taken up the fashions they once condemned. Their dresses were arranged with all the unnecessary adornments of worldlings in a manner unbecoming to Christians and entirely at variance with our faith.” 4T 637

“While none were compelled to adopt the reform dress, our people could and should have appreciated its advantages and accepted it as a blessing. The evil results of an opposite course may now be seen.” 4T 639

“God designed the reform dress as a barrier to prevent the hearts of our sisters from becoming alienated from Him by following the fashions of the world. Those who removed that barrier did not take upon themselves the burden to avert the dangers which must follow. Some in responsible positions have exerted an influence in favor of worldly customs and entirely at variance with the Bible standard. They have done their part in bringing about the present state of worldliness and backsliding. God has been testing His people. He allowed the testimony concerning dress to become silent, that our sisters might follow their own inclination and thus develop the real pride existing in their hearts. It was to prevent the present state of worldliness that the reform dress was recommended. Many scorned the idea that this dress was necessary to preserve them from following the fashions; but the Lord has permitted them to prove that pride was cherished in their hearts, and that this was just what they would do. It is now shown that they needed the restriction which the reform dress imposed.” 4T 639, 640

She then gave this counsel: “If all our sisters would adopt a simple, unadorned dress of modest length, the uniformity thus established would be far more pleasing to God, and would exert a more salutary influence on the world, than the diversity presented four years ago. As our sisters would not generally accept the reform dress as it should be worn, another, less objectionable style is now presented. It is free from needless trimmings, free from the looped-up, tied back overskirts. It consists of a plain sack or loose-fitting basque, and skirt, the latter short enough to avoid the mud and filth of the streets. The material should be free from large plaids and figures, and plain in color. The same attention should be given to the clothing of the limbs as with the short dress. Will my sisters accept this style of dress and refuse to imitate the fashions that are devised by Satan and continually changing?” 4T 640

Let us take a lesson from the way the early Adventist sisters reacted to the dress reform when it was brought to them, and be careful that we do not follow their example when we are presented with a call to come higher in our dress. Let us lift the cross joyfully, and encourage others to lift it too.

Following is a comparison of the “Reform Dress” and the “Less-Objectionable Dress” adapted from the book *Thy Nakedness* by Rick and Gwen Shorter. These details can mostly all be found in 1T 456-466, 1T 521-525, and 4T 628-648.

The “Reform Dress” or “Short Dress”

- 1) Made by a precise or definite pattern
- 2) From 8-10 inches from the floor
- 3) High neck, arms and legs covered. The latter by lined, full pants tapering at the ankle and reaching below the hem of the dress

- 4) Loose-fitting so as not to reveal the woman's form (top or bottom)
- 5) Healthful and modest
- 6) Inexpensive, yet made of durable material
- 7) Convenient
- 8) Raised much prejudice
- 9) This dress was later discarded. Instructions were given later not to promote the short dress with long pants unless given the word of the Lord for it.

The "Less-Objectionable Dress"

- 1) Made by no definite pattern or style
- 2) No precise length given, but longer than the "short dress" and avoided the mud of the street. Approximately ankle length; the dress meets the shoe or ankle boot.
- 3) Modest, covering the arms; with a loose-fitting jacket to cover the upper body. Did not reveal the woman's form (top or bottom).
- 4) Healthful. Legs were to be as well clad as with the "short dress", although the lined pants worn underneath the skirt did not show. The dress covered the pants completely. It was also loose-fitting so as not to restrict movement, and was suspended from the shoulders.
- 5) Simple and unadorned, free from large plaids and figures, plain in color
- 6) Neat and clean
- 7) Inexpensive, yet made of durable material
- 8) Convenient most of the time
- 9) Raised less prejudice

The "less-objectionable dress" is the last dress Ellen White advocated. It embodies all of the dress principles that heaven requires, and is still to be worn today. Let us look at a few areas more specifically.

How Would God Have Us to Dress Today?

Modesty:

Modesty can be defined as being fully covered (except, of course, for the hands and face), and as not wearing anything that attracts attention by sensual clothing or a “look at me” appearance. From a thorough study of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy we see clearly that God considers the following to be immodest dress: makeup or nail polish of any kind, elaborate or fashionable hairstyles that draw attention to the hair, short man-like haircuts for women, jewelry, any clothing resembling that of the opposite sex, exposure of the legs, feet, or upper arms, clothing which is tight or formfitting, showy apparel, ornaments, or trimmings, sheer clothing, low-cut clothing, expensive clothing, anything that attracts attention to the wearer and says “look at me”.

Our dresses are to be long enough that they cover the leg and the pants worn underneath, but not so long that they drag the ground as you walk - this means around ankle length. They are to be loose enough (with plenty of fullness and gathers or pleats over the hips - not narrow A-line), and thick enough (not lacy, sheer, or semi-sheer) so as not to reveal the shape or the skin of the body when standing, sitting, squatting, reaching, or bending. The bodice of the dress should have some sort of loose cape, pinafore, vest, or jacket over it to cover the bosom better. The neckline should be high enough and small enough (not lower than the collar bone) that nothing of the chest or undergarments is revealed when standing or bending over. Clingy fabrics (such as thin knits or silky materials) should be avoided. Slits should not be worn in skirts. It is wise to wear a slip in order to avoid the skirt clinging to the legs or becoming see-through when you stand in a lighted doorway. The sleeves should be worn at least to the elbows for modesty. The bare or hose-covered feet and ankle should not be exposed. No clothing should be worn that resembles that of the opposite sex (we will look at this more specifically later on).

Here are some other ways in which we can preserve and encourage modesty besides dressing modestly ourselves: testify against immodesty and teach the importance of modesty on your own and in the church, uphold and require high standards of modesty among church members, avoid careless immodesty even in our own homes so that our children will develop high moral principles and standards, do not allow sensual clothing advertisements to come into our homes (this includes catalogues, magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Reader's Digest*), do not intermingle unnecessarily with the world, strictly avoid attending or viewing places such as public swimming pools or beaches, overcome sinful imaginations, and keep your mind's eye uplifted to heavenly things.

We must remember that God created men and women with very different sexual natures. The man is very easily stirred to sensual thoughts by the sight of a scantily clad woman, or one in form fitted clothes. Whereas, the woman is stirred more by touch. God has placed in women a sense of modesty in order to protect the men and aid them in their endeavor to keep their thoughts pure, but Satan has been hard at work and very successful in destroying this natural modesty in women and making them bold and provocative in their dress and behavior. We must not allow the devils' lies to cheapen us, but must realize that we are our brothers' keeper, and preserve that God-given gift of modesty and reserve.

"The Bible teaches modesty in dress. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel." 1 Timothy 2:9. This forbids display in dress, gaudy colors, profuse ornamentation. Any device designed to attract attention to the wearer or to excite admiration, is excluded from the modest apparel which God's word enjoins." MH 287

"How contrary to the principles given in the Scriptures are many of the modes of dress that fashion prescribes! Think of the styles that have prevailed for the last few hundreds of years or even for the last few decades. How many of them, when not in fashion, would be declared immodest; how many would be pronounced inappropriate for a refined, God-fearing, self-respecting woman." MH 290

"We judge of a person's character by the style of dress worn. A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of a simple, appropriate attire. . . . The one who is simple and unpretending in her dress and in her manners shows that she understands that a true woman is characterized by moral worth." CG 413

"Virtue and modesty are rare. I appeal to you as followers of Christ, making an exalted profession, to cherish the precious, priceless gem of modesty. This will guard virtue." CG 417

"When one commandment of the Decalogue is broken, the downward steps are almost certain. When once the barriers of female modesty are removed, the basest licentiousness does not appear exceeding sinful. Alas, what terrible results of woman's influence for evil may be witnessed in the world today! Through the allurements of "strange women," thousands are incarcerated in prison cells, many take their own lives, and many cut short the lives of others. How true the words of Inspiration, "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." AH 58, 59

"Our example and influence must be a power on the side of reform. We must abstain from any practice which will blunt the conscience or encourage temptation. We must open no door that will give Satan access to the mind of one human being formed in the image of God." 5T 360

Let us now look at what Ellen White wrote about hoops (and other clothing which led to immodest exposure), for although hoops are no longer worn today, the counsel gives us some important principles of just what kind of exposures God considers to be immodest.

"From what has been shown me, hoops are an abomination. They are indecent; and God's people err if they in the least degree follow, or give countenance to, this fashion.... While traveling in the cars and stages, I have often been led to exclaim: O Modesty, where is thy blush! I have seen large companies crowding into the cars, and in order to make any headway, the hoops had to be raised and placed in a shape which was indecent. And the exposure of the form was tenfold more with those who wore hoops, than with those who did not. Were it not for fashion, those who thus immodestly expose themselves would be hissed at; but modesty and decency must be sacrificed to the god of fashion. May the Lord deliver His people from this grievous sin! God will not pity those who will be slaves to fashion." 1T 277, 278

“The hoops are a shame.” 1T 189

“Hoops, I was shown, are an abomination, and every Sabbathkeeper's influence should be a rebuke to this ridiculous fashion, which has been a screen to iniquity, and which arose from a house of ill fame in Paris.” 1T 270

“Among these pernicious fashions were the large hoops, which frequently caused indecent exposure of the person.” 4T 635

“Because, under certain circumstances, it is, to say the least, not the most modest, on account of exposures of the female form. This evil is greatly aggravated by the wearing of hoops. Ladies with long dresses, especially if extended with hoops, as they go up and down stairs, as they pass up the narrow door-way of the coach and the omnibus, or as they raise their skirts, to clear the mud of the streets, sometimes expose the form to that degree as to put modesty to the blush.” RH, April 14, 1868

“We have traveled extensively the past twenty-five years, and have been eye-witnesses to many indecent exposures of the limbs. But 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, 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.

“But does the popular style of woman's dress always hide her feet from the public gaze? See that lady passing over the muddy street, holding her skirts nearly twice as far from the ground as ours, exposing, not only her feet, but her nearly-naked limbs. Similar exposures are frequent as she ascends and descends the stairs, as she is helped into, and out of carriages. These exposures are disagreeable, if not shameful; and a style of dress which makes their frequent occurrence almost certain, we must regard as a poor safeguard of modesty and virtue.” HR, May 1, 1872

“The slaves to fashion may say the feet and limbs are exposed (with the reform dress of the 1860s). I beg pardon: the limbs are not exposed. It is true the reform dress reveals the fact that women have feet and limbs, and when they are modestly and sensibly clothed, making exposure impossible, she is not ashamed of the fact. But the fact that women have feet and limbs is not, as we have said, concealed by the length of the dress. We have decided that health and modesty require that women clothe their limbs as thoroughly as they do other parts of the body.” HR, March 1, 1874

If God inspired Ellen White to write these things regarding a style of dress which at times exposed 18 inches of a stocking-covered leg to the public, what would she have to say about the styles that are commonly worn today?!

To find more Biblical principles of modesty, please read Genesis 3:7,21; 1 Timothy 2:9,10; Revelation 1:13; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 2:9,11; Luke 8:27,35; Isaiah 47:1-3; Revelation 3:18.

Health:

The clothing should be perfectly loose so that you can move easily. There should be no tight bands at the waistline or around the chest (as with bras), as this impedes the circulation. The clothes should be, as much as possible, suspended from the shoulders. The arms and legs should be well-clothed to prevent any chilliness. High-heeled shoes should not be worn, as they throw the back and internal organs off balance and create health problems.

“In order to secure the most healthful clothing, the needs of every part of the body must be carefully studied. The character of the climate, the surroundings, the condition of health, the age, and the occupation must all be considered. Every article of dress should fit easily, obstructing neither the circulation of the blood nor a free, full, natural respiration. Everything worn should be so loose that when the arms are raised the clothing will be correspondingly lifted.” MH 293

“Another serious evil is the wearing of skirts so that their weight must be sustained by the hips. This heavy weight, pressing upon the internal organs, drags them downward and causes weakness of the stomach and a feeling of lassitude, inclining the wearer to stoop, which further cramps the lungs, making correct breathing more difficult.” MH 292

“Many females drag down the bowels and hips by hanging heavy skirts upon them. These were not formed to sustain weights. In the first place, heavy quilted skirts should never be worn. They are unnecessary, and a great evil. The female dress should be suspended from the shoulders.” 2SM 473

“Our skirts are few and light, not taxing our strength with the burden of many and longer ones. Our limbs being properly clothed, we need comparatively few skirts; and these are suspended from the shoulders. Our dresses are fitted to sit easily, obstructing neither the circulation of the blood, nor natural, free, and full respiration. Our skirts being neither numerous nor fashionably long, do not impede the means of locomotion, but leave us to move about with ease and activity. All these things are necessary to health.” HR, September 1, 1868

“We object to the popular style of woman's dress because it is neither healthful nor convenient. The skirts generally rest upon the hips, which were not designed to sustain weights. Every article of clothing should be suspended from the shoulders. The habit of fastening the skirts about the body with bands, allowing the weight to rest upon the hips to keep them from slipping off is decidedly injurious to health. For exactly where these bands girt are nerves, and large blood-vessels, which carry the blood into the limbs. These veins and nerves should not be pressed, but allowed the most perfect freedom to fulfill the purpose for which nature designed them. I have heard young ladies complain of pain in the side when in a sitting position. I have found upon examination that the only cause was the tight bands pressing upon the tender nerves and veins, impeding the free circulation of blood. When the under clothing, as well as the dress waist, was made loose, and all the garments were suspended from the shoulders by straps, the pain disappeared.” HR, April 1, 1872

“Tight bands or waists hinder the action of the heart and lungs, and should be avoided. No part of the body should at any time be made uncomfortable by clothing that compresses any organ or restricts its freedom of movement. The clothing of all children should be loose enough to admit of the freest and fullest respiration, and so arranged that the shoulders will support its weight.” CG 426

“An almost endless train of disease results from unhealthful modes of dress, and careful instruction on this point should be given. Impress upon the pupils the danger of allowing the clothing to weigh on the hips or to compress any organ of the body. The dress should be so arranged that a full respiration can be taken and the arms be raised above the head without difficulty. The cramping of the lungs not only prevents their development, but hinders the processes of digestion and circulation, and thus weakens the whole body.” ED 199

“After their sin Adam and Eve were no longer to dwell in Eden..... In humility and unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful home and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin. The atmosphere, once so mild and uniform in temperature, was now subject to marked changes, and the Lord mercifully provided them with a garment of skins as a protection from the extremes of heat and cold.” PP 61

“If any part of the body should be favored with extra coverings, it should be the limbs and feet, which are at a distance from the great wheel of life, which sends the blood through the system. The limbs should ever be clothed with a warm covering to protect them from a chill current of air. . . . If the feet are clothed with good-sized, thick-soled, warm boots or shoes, for comfort rather than for fashion, the blood will be induced to circulate freely in the limbs and feet, as well as other portions of the body. . . . If we give the lungs and feet ample room to do the work God designed they should, we shall be rewarded with better health and a clearer conscience. There is but one woman in a thousand who clothes her limbs as she should. . . . Women should clothe their limbs as thoroughly as do men. The portions of the body close to the life springs, need less covering than the limbs which are remote from the vital organs. If the limbs and feet could have the extra coverings usually put upon the shoulders, lungs, and heart, and healthy circulation be induced to the extremities, the vital organs would act their part healthfully, with only their share of clothing. The extremities are chilled, and the heart has thrown upon it double labor, to force the blood into these chilled extremities; and when the blood has performed its circuit through the body, and returned to the heart, it is not the same vigorous, warm current which left it. It has been chilled in its passage through the limbs. The heart, weakened by too great labor and poor circulation of poor blood, is then compelled to still greater exertion, to throw the blood to the extremities which are never as healthfully warm as other parts of the body. The heart fails in its efforts, and the limbs become habitually cold; and the blood, which is chilled away from the extremities, is thrown back upon the lungs and brain, and inflammation and congestion of the lungs or the brain is the result. It is impossible for women to have, habitually, chilled limbs and cold feet, without some of the internal organs' being congested. . . . The many extra coverings over the chest and back and lower part of the body, induce the blood to these parts, and the animal heat, thus retained, weakens and debilitates the delicate organs, and congestion and inflammation result. When the

extremities, which are remote from the vital organs, are not properly clad, the blood is driven to the head, causing headache or nosebleed; or there is a sense of fulness about the chest producing cough or palpitation of the heart, on account of too much blood in that locality; or the stomach has too much blood, causing indigestion.” HL 124-125

“Another evil which custom fosters is the unequal distribution of the clothing, so that while some parts of the body have more than is required, others are insufficiently clad. The feet and limbs, being remote from the vital organs, should be especially guarded from cold by abundant clothing. It is impossible to have health when the extremities are habitually cold; for if there is too little blood in them there will be too much in other portions of the body. Perfect health requires a perfect circulation; but this cannot be had while three or four times as much clothing is worn upon the body, where the vital organs are situated, as upon the feet and limbs.” MH 293

“In some countries the custom of leaving bare the shoulders and limbs of little children still prevails. This custom cannot be too severely condemned. The limbs being remote from the center of circulation, demand greater protection than the other parts of the body. The arteries that convey the blood to the extremities are large, providing for a sufficient quantity of blood to afford warmth and nutrition. But when the limbs are left unprotected or are insufficiently clad, the arteries and veins become contracted, the sensitive portions of the body are chilled, and the circulation of the blood hindered.” MH 382

“Special attention should be given to the extremities, that they may be as thoroughly clothed as the chest and the region over the heart, where is the greatest amount of heat. Parents who dress their children with the extremities naked, or nearly so, are sacrificing the health and lives of their children to fashion. If these parts are not so warm as the body, the circulation is not equalized..... The limbs were not formed by our Creator to endure exposure, as was the face. The Lord provided, . . . also, large veins and nerves for the limbs and feet, to contain a large amount of the current of human life, that the limbs might be uniformly as warm as the body. They should be so thoroughly clothed as to induce the blood to the extremities.” CG 426

“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. It has cost the life of thousands. The air, bathing the arms and limbs, and circulating about the armpits, chills these sensitive portions of the body, so near the vitals, and hinders the healthy circulation of the blood, and induces disease, especially of the lungs and brain.... It is a sin in the sight of Heaven for parents to dress their children as they do. The only excuse that they can make is, it is fashion. They cannot plead modesty to thus expose the limbs of their children with only one covering drawn tight over them. They cannot plead that it is healthful, or really attractive. Because others will continue to follow this health and life-destroying practice, it is no excuse for those who style themselves reformers. Because everybody around you follow a fashion which is injurious to health, it will not make your sin a whit the less, or be any guarantee for the health and life of your children.” 2SM 468-472

Simplicity, Plainness, Economy, Durability, Neatness:

Our clothes should be simple, plain, economical, durable, neat, and clean. They should be modest in color, and free from large, bold plaids and prints. We should not use shiny or glittery material, or clothing with words and slogans or pictures displayed on them, as these things attract attention to the wearer. They should not present an expensive or extravagant appearance, or have showy buttons or unnecessary accessories. They are not to be patterned after or conformed to the fads or fashions of the world in any way.

“Puritan plainness and simplicity should mark the dwellings and apparel of all who believe the solemn truths for this time. All means needlessly expended in dress or in the adorning of our houses is a waste of our Lord's money.” 5T 189

“We do not discourage neatness in dress. Correct taste is not to be despised nor condemned. Our faith, if carried out, will lead us to be so plain in dress, and zealous of good works, that we shall be marked as peculiar. But when we lose taste for order and neatness in dress, we virtually leave the truth; for the truth never degrades, but elevates. When believers are neglectful of their dress, and are coarse and rough in their manners, their influence hurts the truth.... Simplicity of dress will make a sensible woman appear to the best advantage. We judge of a person's character by the style of dress worn. A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of a simple, appropriate attire. The young women who break away from the slavery of fashion will be ornaments to society. The one who is simple and unpretending in her dress and in her manners shows that she understands that a true woman is characterized by moral worth. How charming, how interesting, is simplicity in dress, which in comeliness can be compared with the flowers of the field.” MYP 353

“Such madness concerning the changing fashions of the world should call forth an army of reformers who would take their position for simple and plain attire.” MYP 359

“The material should be free from large plaids and figures, and plain in color.” 4T 640

“Ever have your dress of good, durable material, and modest colors; let it be made plainly, without adornment.” Lt 7, 1894.

“I believe Sabbathkeepers should dress plainly and study economy in dress.” 1T 251

“Simple, plain, unpretending dress will be a recommendation to my youthful sisters. In no better way can you let your light shine to others than in your simplicity of dress and deportment. You may show to all that, in comparison with eternal things, you place a proper estimate upon the things of this life.” 3T 376

“Taste should be manifested as to colors. Uniformity in this respect is desirable as far as convenient. Complexion, however, may be taken into account. Modest colors should be sought for.”

When figured material is used, figures that are large and fiery, showing vanity and shallow pride in those who choose them, should be avoided. And a fantastic taste in putting on different colors is bad. Our clothing, while modest and simple, should be of good quality, of becoming colors, and suited for service. It should be chosen for durability rather than display. It should provide warmth and proper protection.” CG 420

“ Dress as Christians should dress--simply, plainly adorn yourselves as becometh women professing godliness, with good works.” CG 421

“Let the wearing of useless trimmings and adornments be discarded. Extravagance should never be indulged in to gratify pride. Our dress may be of good quality, made up with plainness and simplicity, for durability rather than for display.” HL 120

“When the mind is fixed upon pleasing God alone, all the needless embellishments of the person disappear.” 4T 645

“Should we dress in plain, modest apparel without reference to the fashions;... it would show the sanctifying power of the truth, and would have a telling influence upon unbelievers.” 5T 206

“Our faith, if carried out, will lead us to be so plain in dress, and zealous of good works, that we shall be marked as peculiar.” 1T 275

“All should be taught to be neat, clean, and orderly in their dress, but not to indulge in that external adorning which is wholly inappropriate for the sanctuary. There should be no display of the apparel; for this encourages irreverence. The attention of the people is often called to this or that fine article of dress, and thus thoughts are intruded that should have no place in the hearts of the worshipers. God is to be the subject of thought, the object of worship; and anything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to Him. The parading of bows and ribbons, ruffles and feathers, and gold and silver ornaments is a species of idolatry and is wholly inappropriate for the sacred service of God, where the eye of every worshiper should be single to His glory. All matters of dress should be strictly guarded, following closely the Bible rule.” 5T 499

“Our ministers and their wives should be an example in plainness of dress; they should dress neatly, comfortably, wearing good material, but avoiding anything like extravagance and trimmings, even if not expensive; for these things tell to our disadvantage. We should educate the youth to simplicity of dress, plainness with neatness. Let the extra trimmings be left out, even though the cost be but a trifle.” CG 422

Ellen White’s testimony: “I have not changed in character or in my manner of labor since you first listened to the messages of comfort, encouragement, and warning which God has given me for his people. I am the same in plainness and severe simplicity of dress; the same in bearing an earnest, decided testimony for God; the same in deep interest in the truth. I cherish the same faith, the same hope, the same love for souls for whom Christ died.” RH, August 28, 1883

“We are nearing the close of this world's history. A plain, direct testimony is now needed, as given in the word of God, in regard to the plainness of dress. This should be our burden.” 5MR 404

What About Women Wearing Pants?

You may be thinking, “How can I get counsel as to whether or not I should wear pants from the Spirit of Prophecy, since in Ellen White’s day, women only wore dresses?” In the 1850’s and 1860’s, a situation arose about which God gave the prophetess some very pointed instruction, and it is from this instruction that we may clearly see God’s will regarding the issue of women in pants today. As you read the following counsels, bear in mind that although the specific style of clothing written about may not be worn today, the principles given in regard to that style of clothing are still fully relevant for us. Principles never change, and if God said that something was an abomination to Him 100 years ago, it is still an abomination to Him today. Following is what God had to say about the “American Costume”, an outfit which consisted of dress or coat, pants, vest, cap, and boots. The dress or coat reached to somewhere between mid-thigh and just below the knees, and the pants reached down to the ankles. It was created as a result of the feminist movement.

“I saw that God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded, by those who adopt the American costume. I was referred to 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 the so-called reform dress. It is immodest apparel, wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ. There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination. 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.' 1 Timothy 2:9. Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of woman's rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message. The spirit which attends the one cannot be in harmony with the other. The Scriptures are plain upon the relations and rights of men and women.... With the so-called dress reform there goes a spirit of levity and boldness just in keeping with the dress. Modesty and reserve seem to depart from many as they adopt that style of dress....' The foregoing was given me as a reproof to those who are inclined to adopt a style of dress resembling that worn by men;... "We do not think it in accordance with our faith to dress in the American costume...” 1T 457, 458

“In wide contrast with this modest dress (the “reform short dress” which was 8-10” from the floor) is the so-called American costume, resembling very nearly the dress worn by men. It consists of a vest, pants, and a dress resembling a coat and reaching about halfway from the hip to the knee. This dress I have opposed, from what has been shown me as in harmony with the word of God;...” 1T 465

“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. Those who adopt and advocate this style of dress

carry the so-called dress reform to very objectionable lengths. Confusion will be the result. Some who adopt this costume may be correct in their general views upon the health question, but they would be instrumental in accomplishing vastly more good if they did not carry the matter of dress to such extremes. 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. 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. Were the apostle Paul alive, and should he behold women professing godliness with this style of dress, he would utter a rebuke." 1T 459, 460

Let us summarize here 23 points regarding styles that resemble men's clothing (these points were taken from quotations in 1T, 4T, and 5T about the "American Costume"):

- 1) "It is immodest apparel"
- 2) "God's order is reversed"
- 3) "Might as well sever all connections with the third angel's message"
- 4) "With it goes a spirit of levity and boldness just in keeping with the dress"
- 5) "Modesty and reserve seem to depart"
- 6) "Wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ"
- 7) "Confusion will be the result"
- 8) "His special directions disregarded" [Deut. 22:5]
- 9) "God's prohibitions are lightly regarded"
- 10) "Would cause confusion and great increase of crime"
- 11) "This dress I have opposed from what has been shown me as in harmony with the word of God"
- 12) "God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women"
- 13) "God would not have His people adopt this style of dress"
- 14) It was "The extreme position taken by some dress reformers"

- 15) "Some are deceived in thinking there is much benefit to be received from this costume"
- 16) "Were the Apostle Paul alive and should he behold women professing godliness with this style of dress, he would utter a rebuke"
- 17) "The foregoing was given me as a reproof to those who are inclined to adopt a style of dress resembling that worn by men"
- 18) "God pronounces it an abomination"
- 19) "It would cripple our influence"
- 20) "Place them on a level with spiritualists"
- 21) "Destroy their own influence and that of their husbands"
- 22) "Would become a byword and a derision"
- 23) "Their influence is dead"

Some may argue that points 19-23 were related to how such an outfit would be perceived in that era when dresses were the acceptable clothes for women, but that now since pants are accepted modern attire for women, they are okay. But my friend, please stop and reconsider, for you cannot in any way honestly say that the first 18 points had anything to do with the time in which they were written. Instead, they are eternal principles, and they reveal to us clearly what God thinks of women wearing pants today: it is an abomination! It does not matter how loose your pants may be, or if they have a jacket over them which covers the hips, or if they are "women's" pants; they are an abomination, and that is a pretty strong word which is not to be taken lightly. Dear sisters, I know this may not be a pleasant or easy thing for you to consider. Sadly, it is true that in our culture, pants have become totally acceptable women's attire, and it is very hard for some of us to see this as God sees it, but we must accept that in God's sight, in heaven's "culture", pants are not acceptable attire for women. Are you willing to obey? I do want to encourage you with this thought, that whatever God requires, He is more than able to empower you to cheerfully obey.

Cosmetics, Jewelry, and Hairstyles

"To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith." 3T 366

"But many who profess to be children of God feel no scruples against conforming to the customs of the world in the wearing of gold and pearls and costly array. Those who are too conscientious to wear these things are regarded as narrow-minded, superstitious, and even fanatical. But it is God who condescends to give us these instructions; they are the declarations of Infinite Wisdom, and those who

disregard them do so at their own peril and loss. Those who cling to the ornaments forbidden in God's word cherish pride and vanity in the heart. They desire to attract attention. Their dress says: Look at me; admire me. Thus the vanity inherent in human nature is steadily increasing by indulgence. When the mind is fixed upon pleasing God alone, all the needless embellishments of the person disappear." 4T 644

"Dear youth, a disposition in you to dress according to the fashion, and to wear lace and gold and artificials for display, will not recommend to others your religion or the truth that you profess. People of discernment will look upon your attempts to beautify the external as proof of weak minds and proud hearts." 3T 376

"Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments. All this display imparts no value to the character. The Lord desires every converted person to put away the idea that dressing as worldlings dress, will give value to his influence. The ornamentation of the person with jewels and luxurious things is a species of idolatry. This needless display reveals a love for those things which are supposed to place a value upon the person. It gives evidence to the world of a heart destitute of the inward adornment. Expensive dress and adornments of jewelry give an incorrect representation of the truth that should always be represented as of the highest value. An over-dressed, outwardly adorned person bears the sign of inward poverty. A lack of spirituality is revealed." BTS, May 1, 1908

"The life of nine tenths of those who are devotees of fashion is a living lie. Deception, fraud, is their daily practice; for they wish to appear that which they are not." MYP 359

"Any device designed to attract attention to the wearer or to excite admiration is excluded from the modest apparel which God's Word enjoins." CG 423

"But what about my wedding ring?", you may ask. The Inspired counsel gives us a clear answer to this question as well.

"Some have had a burden in regard to the wearing of a marriage ring, feeling that the wives of our ministers should conform to this custom. All this is unnecessary. Let the ministers' wives have the golden link which binds their souls to Jesus Christ, a pure and holy character, the true love and meekness and godliness that are the fruit borne upon the Christian tree, and their influence will be secure anywhere. The fact that a disregard of the custom occasions remark is no good reason for adopting it. Americans can make their position understood by plainly stating that the custom is not regarded as obligatory in our country. We need not wear the sign, for we are not untrue to our marriage vow, and the wearing of the ring would be no evidence that we were true. I feel deeply over this leavening process which seems to be going on among us, in the conformity to custom and fashion. Not one penny should be spent for a circlet of gold to testify that we are married. In countries where the custom is imperative, we have no burden to condemn those who have their marriage ring; let them wear it if they can do so conscientiously; but let not our missionaries feel that the wearing of the ring will increase their influence one jot or tittle." TM 180, 181

“Here (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) the Lord, through His apostle, speaks expressly against the wearing of gold. Let those who have had experience see to it that they do not lead others astray on this point by their example. That ring encircling your finger may be very plain, but it is useless, and the wearing of it has a wrong influence upon others.” 4T 630

What about cosmetics, makeup, hair dying, perms, and showy hairstyles? All these things, the same as jewelry, are put on the person in order to make her look “better”, “prettier”, or more “attractive”. They are worn to attract attention or admiration. In essence, they say that you’re not content with how God made you, and you want to try to make yourself more beautiful. These things really are deception, because they are not the way God made you to be.

Following are 12 reasons why makeup and jewelry are not in harmony with the consecrated Christian life, as adapted from Shorter’s book, *Thy Nakedness*.

- 1) It’s a waste of money.
- 2) It fosters pride and vanity in the heart.
- 3) It destroys simplicity and modesty of demeanor and appearance.
- 4) It covers your natural beauty-as God made you.
- 5) It develops feelings of insecurity (you don’t look your “best” without it).
- 6) It is a waste of time (making up). Time is a talent, and every minute is from God.
- 7) It will encourage you into associations which are frivolous and un-Christ like.
- 8) It is unhealthful to clog the pores and risk damaging the eyes with these chemicals and dyes.
- 9) Make-up and jewelry are meant to attract, therefore you might attract-you know not what!
- 10) It’s a lie, and Satan is the father of lies.
- 11) It destroys love of eternal realities.
- 12) Your Heavenly Father doesn’t like it.

To find what the Bible says about jewelry and makeup, please read Isaiah. 3:16-24; 1 Peter 3: 3-5; Genesis 35:1-4; Exodus 33:4-6 (and 1 Corinthians 10:11); 2 Kings 9:30; Ezekiel 23:40-44; Judges 8:24; Revelation 17:4,5; Jeremiah 4:30; Hosea 2:13; In contrast, the Christians’ “jewels and ornaments” are the robe of righteousness which Christ has put on them - Isaiah 61:10.

What Is Your Influence?

Dear sisters, what kind of influence are we exerting on those around us? Are we encouraging others to follow the Bible teachings in every particular, or are we, by our example, saying that God is not so particular, and doesn't really care about these little details like dress and ornamentation? I would encourage you to prayerfully read the following story and appeal from the writings of Ellen White, and consider what God is saying to your heart.

"A sister who had spent some weeks at one of our institutions in _____, said that she felt much disappointed in what she saw and heard there. . . . Before accepting the truth, she had followed the fashions of the world in her dress, and had worn costly jewelry and other ornaments; but upon deciding to obey the Word of God, she felt that its teachings required her to lay aside all extravagant and superfluous adorning. She was taught that Seventh-day Adventists did not wear jewelry, gold, silver, or precious stones, and that they did not conform to worldly fashions in their dress. When she saw among those who profess the faith such a wide departure from Bible simplicity, she felt bewildered. Had they not the same Bible which she had been studying, and to which she had endeavored to conform her life? Had her past experience been mere fanaticism? Had she misinterpreted the words of the apostle, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God, for whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"?

"Mrs. D, a lady occupying a position in the institution, was visiting at Sr. _____'s room one day, when the latter took out of her trunk a gold necklace and chain, and said she wished to dispose of this jewelry and put the proceeds into the Lord's treasury. Said the other, "Why do you sell it? I would wear it if it was mine." "Why," replied Sr. _____, "when I received the truth, I was taught that all these things must be laid aside. Surely they are contrary to the teachings of God's Word." And she cited her hearer to the words of the apostles, Paul and Peter, upon this point, "In like manner, also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, as becometh women professing godliness, with good works." "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

"In answer, the lady displayed a gold ring on her finger, given her by an unbeliever, and said she thought it no harm to wear such ornaments. "We are not so particular," said she, "as formerly. Our people have been overscrupulous in their opinions upon the subject of dress. The ladies of this institution wear gold watches and gold chains, and dress like other people. It is not good policy to be singular in our dress; for we cannot exert so much influence."

"We inquire, Is this in accordance with the teachings of Christ? Are we to follow the Word of God, or the customs of the world? Our sister decided that it was the safest to adhere to the Bible standard. Will Mrs. D and others who pursue a similar course be pleased to meet the result of their influence, in that day when every man shall receive according to his works?"

“God's Word is plain. Its teachings cannot be mistaken. Shall we obey it, just as He has given it to us, or shall we seek to find how far we can digress and yet be saved?” Would that all connected with our institutions would receive and follow the divine light, and thus be enabled to transmit light to those who walk in darkness.

“Conformity to the world is a sin which is sapping the spirituality of our people, and seriously interfering with their usefulness. It is idle to proclaim the warning message to the world, while we deny it in the transactions of daily life.” Review and Herald, March 28, 1882.

Dress Reform for Men

Let us take a moment to look at how the dress reform principles we have been studying apply to men's clothing as well. Oftentimes it seems that women have to bear the whole “cross” of dress reform alone, but this should not be so, for the principles apply equally as much to men. It is true perhaps, that the devil has had more success in corrupting and perverting women's clothing over the years, but he has also been hard at work on men's apparel. Brothers, your clothing is to represent in every way the dignity and nobility of your calling as a child of God, the priest of your home, and heir of the glories of eternal life. Your clothing is to be healthful: your arms and legs well-clad and warm, pants preferably suspended from the shoulders by suspenders, and without tight belts or elastics around the waist. It is to be modest: no tank tops, shorts, tight pants or shirts, or going without a shirt. It is to be plain and simple: not following the fashions or trendy styles, not displaying slogans or name brands, without gold or gaudy buckles/clasps/clips, without bold or flashy colors or prints, and without gaudy or showy ties. The hair should be short and neatly arranged without spikes or fancy styling. Your clothing should be also economical, durable, neat (not the baggy, sloppy, careless look), and manly (avoiding all feminine colors or styles).

Consistency of Principle

I would like to look just briefly at this area of consistency. God is calling us as his people to be true to our principles. Our manner of dressing is not to change with the styles, fads, and trends of the world. Neither is it to change according to the occasion or the company we are with. Let me illustrate: Have you ever known someone, or perhaps been such a one yourself, who generally holds to high standards of dress, but when taking part in a wedding or some such occasion, seems to feel that it is okay “just this once” to wear a little lower neckline than they usually would, to wear a skirt without much fullness, or to wear something with cap sleeves? Or perhaps it's that situation where, “Oh, I wear dresses at home, but you see, I'm a nurse, so I do *have* to wear pants when I'm at work.” For some others, most likely those who have not accepted the dress reform message, but feel, none-the-less, that they are pretty careful about what they wear and that their clothes are pretty modest; yet somehow, they don't seem to see any inconsistency with going to the beach or swimming pool in a “modest” one-piece bathing suit. My friends, there is no consistency in this kind of reasoning or practice. If God said

something is proper attire for Christian women, that is what He meant. And just the same, if He said something is not appropriate attire, but rather an abomination, that is what He meant. We must learn to take God at His word and obey Him because we love Him and we trust that He knows what is best for us.

“Those who elevate the standard as nearly as they can to the order of God, according to the light God has given them through His word and the testimonies of His Spirit, will not change their course of action to meet the wishes of their friends or relatives, be they one or two or a host, who are living contrary to God's wise arrangement. If we move from principle in these things, if we observe strict rules of diet [and dress], if as Christians we educate our tastes after God's plan, we shall exert an influence which will meet the mind of God. The question is, "Are we willing to be true health reformers [and dress reformers]?"” CD 35, 36

“Christians should follow Christ, and conform their dress to God's word. They should shun extremes (dress trailing the ground or short dress over pants). They should humbly pursue a straight-forward course, irrespective of applause or of censure, and should cling to the right because of its own merits.” MYP 350

“As soldiers of Christ we must deliberately and intelligently accept His terms of salvation under every circumstance, cherish right principles, and act upon them.” MYP 30

“Your salvation depends on your acting from principle--serving God from principle, not from feeling, not from impulse.” 1T 698

“Move from principle, from thorough understanding. Search the Scriptures, and be able to give to every man that asketh you the reasons of the hope which is in you, with meekness and fear.” 2T 92, 93

“God has established immutable principles, which He cannot change without a revision of His whole nature. If the word of God were faithfully studied by all who profess to believe the truth, they would not be dwarfs in spiritual things. Those who disregard the requirements of God in this life would not respect His authority were they in heaven.” 4T 312

“We are always to be as firm as a rock to principle. Bible principles are to be taught and then backed up by holy practice.” 6T 418

Answers to Objections

Following are 25 common objections to the dress reform. A number of them can apply to other areas of reform as well:

1) I get too hot wearing all that clothing

We believe in following the principles of dress given in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, even if such a way of dress does cause us some discomfort or perspiration at times. For hundreds of years, people have worn much more clothing in the summertime than is worn today even by some of the most conservative dressers, and if they were able to be fully clothed, why should not we? Certainly, the modern styles of skimpy clothing did not come about because of any change in the climate. We do not believe in the idea, "If it feels good, do it," in dress, or in any other area of our lives.

2) My job requires me to wear pants.

You will find that many jobs that people say require pants, can very easily be done in a dress. I found this out when I worked as a nurse aid in a nursing home. Friends told me that it would be just about impossible to do this job in a dress, but I studied and prayed about it very earnestly, and decided to obey the counsel, and I found it to be no problem at all. Indeed, modest dress will help you to maintain proper reserve and Christian demeanor. If you cannot wear clothing that is in harmony with the dress reform in your job, then I believe this is a good indication that your job is not appropriate for a Christian lady.

3) It's too expensive to change my whole wardrobe over.

If you're really committed to do what's right, you'll put every effort toward it. There are lots of ways to work around the obstacle of expense. For some starters, try selling your old clothes in a yard sale and use the money to buy fabric to make one or two modest dresses. Or deny yourself some of the foods or other purchases you would usually make, and use that money. Maybe you can find a nice long, loose jumper at a second-hand store for a good price. After all, you don't need a complete new wardrobe to start out. Two or three outfits will be plenty. Do not believe Satan's lie that you are doing God's work by sending all your money to missions, while you continue wearing your wrong clothing. You spent money to buy your old clothes, and you may have to spend a reasonable amount of money to make some new ones. But obedience is always necessary, and God will make a way so that it is always possible.

"Some have said: "After I wear out this dress, I will make the next plainer." Now, if conformity to the fashions of the world is right and pleasing to God, where is the need of making a change at all? But if it is wrong, is it best to continue in the wrong any longer than is positively necessary to make the change?" 4T 640

4) I feel like I stick out in the crowd, and I get stared at so much. We shouldn't call attention to ourselves.

It is true that if you dress modestly and plainly, you will stand out in the crowd and attract some attention, for right-doing always stands out in the midst of wickedness. It would not be right to try to blend in with the crowd simply to avoid being stared at. If people comment, we may turn their attention to Christ, who is the reason for our manner of dressing. You can be encouraged knowing that you are doing God's will and upholding His standards. It grieves my heart so to see sisters who call themselves "dress reformers", compromising the principles of true dress reform by trying to avoid looking so different (with faded denim a-line skirts, stretchy bottom-hugging long skirts, jean jackets, fitted shape-revealing knit t-shirts, and the list could go on). God calls us to look different from the world around us.

5) There are so many more important issues to deal with than dress. You are majoring in the minors.

The Bible says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10. If we do not watch out for the "little" areas of compromise, and be sure to be faithful in the "little" areas of obedience, we will sooner or later find ourselves being fitted into the world's mold and having lost our position as God's peculiar people. It is true that dress reform should not be the main focus of our religion, but on the other hand, it cannot be neglected, or this neglect will lead to unfaithfulness in all other areas, large and small.

In addition, as we studied earlier, the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy are clear that those who are yielding step by step to worldly customs and fashions, making compromise with the world, are preparing to receive the mark of the beast and will not stand faithful in the great test before us (PK 188, 5T 216). So in actuality, the issue of dress is not a minor or side issue at all.

6) It takes time for people to change. Everyone's different, and you can't expect them to all think like you and be at the same level in their experience as you.

It does take many people a long time to change, but this is often because pride, self, or fear of what others will say holds them back. Thus it is not God's will or "okay" for it to take so long to change. The Bible says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." "Now is the excepted time." True, God does bear long with us and still draw us even when we procrastinate to obey (disobey), but it grieves Him and it is sin, and thus not excusable.

While we certainly agree that not everyone is at the same level in their experience, yet if a certain point of truth is clearly revealed to you, and you do not obey it, God holds you accountable for that.

Every evangelist presenting the Sabbath ends with an appeal to those listening to obey God's call and start keeping the Sabbath. I have never heard one end by saying, "Now I realize this is something new to you and it takes time to change. I realize also that you're all at different places in your experience. So God understands if you keep going to church on Sunday and breaking Sabbath for a

few more months and years.” So why when dress reform or some other standard is presented do people rise up and say, “Oh, you shouldn’t press this (Bible) teaching on the people. They’re not all at the same point you are, and it takes time to change.”? Of course, all teaching must be done with Christian tact, kindness, and love; and not all reforms should be heaped on a person at once, but Bible reforms need to be presented and upheld just the same.

7) Why do you think it’s better to make your own clothes? Why not just buy modest clothes in the stores or even second hand?

I do not believe that it is wrong to buy any factory-made clothing. There are rare times when it is possible to find a dress or jumper at a second-hand or other store which does adhere to the principles of dress reform, being modest, healthful, plain, durable, and economical. But for the most part, I would encourage you to make your own clothing. If you do not know how to sew, it is a very important skill which will be of great benefit for you to learn. The reasons I encourage you to make your own clothes are many, but the primary one is this: I have seen so many sisters purchase clothing which truly does not harmonize with dress reform principles, and yet feel that it is a great find because it is so much better than most of what is available out there, or is so close to alright with only a little thing wrong in it. This is very easily done, and when the only comparison we have is clothing which is wholly unacceptable, it is not hard to see how bit by bit, the standard is brought lower and lower, and the spirit of compromise and worldliness takes possession of the church. How much better it would be for our sisters to make their own clothes so that they can adjust or make patterns to be in full harmony with the dress reform, and so their clothing may glorify God.

8) If a person is truly converted, the dress question will take care of itself. We don’t need a bunch of rules.

This is the ideal situation, but it very rarely happens in real life. The world’s influences are very strong. God has given the responsibility to His church to give specific guidelines to its members, that will help them maintain their commitment to God and their separation from the world. These guidelines will also help to maintain the church’s purity. The reason general suggestions are not sufficient in this matter, is that the world will then invariably fill in the details with its fashions. Meanwhile, we must continue to strive for that ideal, and seek to deal with the heart issues and lead others to true heart conversion. Consider this balance as presented in the following two quotes:

1) Specific counsel to one who was trying to change others outward appearance without dealing with the heart. Encouragement to deal with the heart issues first, and if the battle could be won there, the outward changes would come as a result.

“There are many who try to correct the life of others by attacking what they consider are wrong habits. They go to those whom they think are in error, and point out their defects. They say, "You don't

dress as you should." They try to pick off the ornaments, or whatever seems offensive, but they do not seek to fasten the mind to the truth. Those who seek to correct others should present the attractions of Jesus. They should talk of His love and compassion, present His example and sacrifice, reveal His Spirit, and they need not touch the subject of dress at all. There is no need to make the dress question the main point of your religion. There is something richer to speak of. Talk of Christ, and when the heart is converted, everything that is out of harmony with the Word of God will drop off. It is only labor in vain to pick leaves off a living tree. The leaves will reappear. The ax must be laid at the root of the tree, and then the leaves will fall off, never to return." EV 272

Is this quote inferring that we should never talk or teach about the dress reform? Most certainly not, or it would be contradicting many other quotes on the subject, such as the following. It was written for a specific situation, and helps us to have a proper understanding of how, in what spirit, and with what focus we should present the dress reform.

2) Warning against the seriousness of allowing worldly dress to invade the church, and appeal to take action at once against it.

"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. I have been shown that our church rules are very deficient. All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline. If there is a continuance, in face of warnings and appeals and entreaties, to still follow the perverse will, it may be regarded as proof that the heart is in no way assimilated to Christ. Self, and only self, is the object of adoration, and one such professed Christian will lead many away from God. There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized." 4T 647, 648

9) Dress reform clothing looks too old-fashioned.

What shame is there in looking old-fashioned if we look the way that is pleasing to God?

"Many will immediately exclaim, "Why such a style of dress would be old-fashioned!" What if it is? I wish we could be old-fashioned in many respects. If we could have the old-fashioned strength that characterized the old-fashioned women of past generations it would be very desirable." 2SM 478, 479

10) Following all these rules about dress is legalism and fanaticism.

First, let's look at the definitions of these two words. Legalism is trying to merit salvation by the keeping of the law. Fanaticism is coming up with some man-made theory, making that the main point of

your religion, and trying to get everyone else to think like you do about it. If you study out these words in the Spirit of Prophecy, you will clearly see that she defines them thus.

So let us ask, is following dress rules legalism? No, because we fully realize that we cannot in any way merit our salvation. Christ is our only hope and the only way by which we may be saved. But if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15, 1 John 5:3); and if we do not keep His commandments, we give evidence that we do not really love Him and that we would not be safe to save eternally. Thus, our following the principles of dress reform is one way we show our love for God.

Is following dress rules fanaticism? No, because dress reform is no man-made theory. It was given us by God, and to call obedience to God's requirements fanaticism would be blasphemy. We do not aim to make dress reform the main point of our religion, yet on the other hand, because it has been so neglected and so toned down, we need to speak of it and uphold it far more than most of us do.

11) God isn't so concerned about what I wear. He sees my heart, He knows I love Him, and that's really all that matters to Him.

If your heart is right, it will not produce wrong behavior. The person whose heart is right with the Lord will not choose to wear clothing which the Lord condemns. The condition of a tree is judged by its outward appearance, not by cutting it down and examining the center "heart". Likewise, whether or not you and I are true Christians will be discerned by our outward appearance. We are told that we will be judged by our works, whether they be good or evil. Knowingly disobeying any of God's requirements is rebellion against God, and the person who does this does not truly love God or have a sincere heart. Yes, God does care about what you and I wear, very much.

"In the life of the true Christian the outward adorning is always in harmony with the inward peace and holiness.... Evidence that the taste is converted will be seen in the dress of all who walk in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord." AA 523

12) The dress reform is a hindrance to our witness, as people think we're "holier-than-thou" and unapproachable. We need to dress more like the world in order to have any influence with them.

"Many dress like the world in order to have an influence over unbelievers, but here they make a sad mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make the distinction plain between the Christian and the worldling. The words, the dress, the actions, should tell for God. Then a holy influence will be shed upon all around them, and even unbelievers will take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. If any wish to have their influence tell in favor of truth, let them live out their profession and thus imitate the humble Pattern." 4T 633, 634

“Should we dress in plain, modest apparel, without reference to the fashions;... it would show the sanctifying power of the truth and would have a telling influence upon unbelievers. But while we conform to the world in these matters,... the preaching of the truth will have but little or no effect. Who will believe the solemn truth for this time when those who already profess to believe it contradict their faith by their works?” 5T 206

I have been asked about my faith so many times because someone noticed the way I was dressed, and many others who follow the dress reform have had the same experience. Indeed, it is when we live hypocritically, making a profession of godliness, but dressing like a worldling, that we do not have any saving influence with the world. It is the love of Christ and the joy of serving Him shining out of your countenance that will draw others to you and make them feel that you are approachable.

13) Some dress reformers don't act like true Christians. I don't want to be thought of as one of them.

True, there are some who are wolves in sheep's clothing. But it does not seem any more consistent or right to be sheep in wolves' clothing. We would rather be sheep in sheep's clothing. We cannot let the inconsistency or lack of conversion of some to be an excuse for us to do what is not right.

14) Christ dressed like everybody else in His day, so why can't we?

Christ dressed like every other Jew, but not like a Roman or a Samaritan. Remember that the Jews were required to wear a ribbon of blue around the border of their garments to show their obedience to God, and to distinguish them from other nations (Num.15:38, 39).

Along this same line, some also object that in Jesus' day, both men and women wore robes, so what is wrong with women's pants today? History records that in those garments where there was some similarity between the man's and the woman's, there was always enough difference in embossing, embroidery, and color so that the line of demarcation between the two sexes was readily detected. It is not so today with pants, unless the woman's pants are so tight that they are clearly provocative and immodest. But there is generally little or no difference in color or otherwise. Yet even if there were a very great difference in appearance between men's and women's pants, we would still have no need to consider advocating and wearing women's pants since God has pronounced them to be an abomination and immodest apparel.

15) My dressing this way would be a stumbling block to others accepting the truth.

The Spirit of Prophecy is clear that the stumbling blocks are the unsanctified lives of lukewarm professors, not those who are living in harmony with God's principles and standards. These are rather a witness and a help to those who would follow the truth.

16) I want to dress attractive for my husband so he won't be embarrassed of me when we go out places.

A godly wife may dress attractively so that her husband need never be ashamed of her, without wearing clothes which are immodest and conformed to the fashions of the world; and a godly husband will appreciate having his wife neatly and modestly clothed when she goes out in public. The husband who wishes to have his wife dressed seductively in front of others is not being her spiritual head, protecting her from danger, and guarding her purity. He is putting his own pride and desire to show off before her spiritual and physical well-being, and that of those who behold her.

17) The Spirit of Prophecy counsels on dress were just for Ellen White's day. In our day, we just have to take the basic principles of modesty, health, etc. and apply them the way we think they should be applied in the framework of our culture.

"I have been shown that the principles that were given us in the early days of the message are as important and should be regarded just as conscientiously today as they were then." CH 132

This excuse is a most terrible deception, and one that Satan tries very hard to get God's professed people to believe. If this were true, it would make the Spirit of Prophecy virtually of none effect, because it would enable us to consult our own thinking as to how we would like any and all of her writings to apply to us. It would enable us to reason away whatever we do not like. If there are things in her writings which applied to her time specifically, or were conditional upon the response of the people, that will be made clear as we read the context of the quote. Let us beware of trying to make God's counsels so "culturally relevant" that we destroy their direct application and their authority.

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth [it], that [men] should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." Ecclesiastes 3:14, 15

18) Ellen White said our clothing should be "appropriate for the age". Doesn't that mean we should wear clothing like everybody else wears now?

"Let our sisters dress plainly, as many do, having the dress of good, durable material, appropriate for this age, and let not the dress question fill the mind." CG 414

In our age, most anything goes. Long dresses are worn in our country by the Amish, Mennonites, Hutterites, Brethren, and some Muslims and Holiness Churches. In other lands, Indians wear saris, Japanese wear kimonos, and Arabs wear long robes. National distinctions and religious convictions should be and are honored in this country. Many of the groups who dress the most distinctly (such as the Amish) are highly respected for their modesty and plainness.

God designed the same for Seventh-day Adventist women in the mid-1800's when He gave in vision "a precise style of dress" for all to wear, which would distinguish them from people of other faiths. If this "reform dress" had been accepted and followed, people today would be able to identify the remnant by their dress from afar off. They would be heard saying admirably and respectfully, "She is a Seventh-day Adventist", "Here come the Seventh-day Adventists". But today you cannot tell Seventh-day Adventist sisters from afar off or close distance. What a sad commentary on God's people. And so we have given this honor to the Amish, Mennonites, Hutterites, and etcetera.

Let us not deceive ourselves in saying that a modest dress is not appropriate for this age.

19) She also said "Let not the dress question fill the mind". You shouldn't be making such an issue of it.

"Let our sisters dress plainly, as many do, having the dress of good, durable material, appropriate for this age, and let not the dress question fill the mind." 3SM 254

Let us remember that this quotation was written at a time when many or most of the Adventist sisters wore fairly plain, long, long-sleeved, high-necked dresses, as evidenced by the phrase, "as many do", and by an earlier portion in the same article where she wrote, "There is no need now for any special alteration in our dress. The plain simple style of dress now worn, made in the most healthful way, demands no hoops, and no long trails and is presentable anywhere." These women were thoroughly covered. Ellen White had no burden in view of this to make a big issue over dress. It is a completely different scenario today, when professedly Christian women are wearing sleeveless shirts, plunging necklines, formfitting attire, short skirts, pants, shorts, high-heeled shoes, and a whole host of other provocative and indecent apparel. In a situation such as this, our people need to be thoroughly instructed in the principles of dress reform. This does not mean that it should fill the mind as the all-absorbing interest. By no means! But it must receive proper attention none the less.

"There is no need to make the dress question the main point of your religion." EV 272. On the same paragraph, the point she was making is clarified:

"There are many who try to correct the life of others by attacking what they consider are wrong habits. They go to those whom they think are in error, and point out their defects. They say, "You don't dress as you should." They try to pick off the ornaments, or whatever seems offensive, but they do not seek to fasten the mind to the truth." EV 272

This kind of criticizing and looking for faults in others should not be confused with studying the principles of dress reform and upholding them in the church. As stated in objection #4: It is true that dress reform should not be the main focus of our religion, but on the other hand, it cannot be neglected, or this neglect will lead to unfaithfulness in all other areas, large and small. Ellen White wrote: "The subject of dress demands serious reflection and much prayer." 4T 641

20) What about when she wrote that "Christians should not take pains to make themselves gazing stocks"; and also that "we should not be odd or singular in our dress for the sake of differing from the world"?

"Christians should not take pains to make themselves gazing-stocks by dressing differently from the world... (Let us continue with the next line.) ...But if, in accordance with their faith and duty in respect to their 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 differs from them." MYP 350

I found it interesting to look up the definition of gazing stock in Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary: "GAZINGSTOCK, n. A person gazed at with scorn or abhorrence; an object of curiosity or contempt." This is clearly not talking about someone dressed in neat, clean, modest apparel, but rather someone who is untidy, disorderly, unkempt, or dressed in outrageous, ridiculous, or laughable looking clothing.

Here are some examples of the "gazing stock clothing" that Ellen White condemned: "There is a class who are continually harping upon pride and dress, who are careless of their own apparel, and who think it a virtue to be dirty, and dress without order and taste; and their clothing often looks as if it flew and lit upon their persons. Their garments are filthy, and yet such ones will ever be talking against pride. They class decency and neatness with pride.... They sometimes consider oddity and coarseness humility." CG 415

"In some of our churches I have seen all kinds of reform dresses, and yet not one answering the description presented before me. Some appear with white muslin pants, white sleeves, dark delaine dress, and a sleeveless sack of the same description as the dress. Some have a calico dress with pants cut after their own fashioning, not after "the pattern," without starch or stiffening to give them form, and clinging close to the limbs. There is certainly nothing in these dresses manifesting taste or order. Such a dress would not recommend itself to the good judgment of sensible-minded persons. In every sense of the word it is a deformed dress." 1T 521, 522

"We as a people do not believe it our duty to go out of the world to be out of the fashion. If we have a neat, plain, modest, and comfortable plan of dress, and worldlings choose to dress as we do, shall we change this mode of dress in order to be different from the world? No, we should not be odd or

singular in our dress for the sake of differing from the world, lest they despise us for so doing.” 1T 424, 425

Let’s notice a few points from this quote: 1) we are not to be different just for the sake of being different. It is right to be different for the sake of glorifying God and obeying His principles. 2) we are to decide on our style of dress first; then, if the world decides to copy it someday [which they most likely never would], we do not need to change it just to be different.

21) Ellen White also wrote that “there is a medium position” which we should find and keep, and also that we should avoid extremes. Doesn’t this mean that we should just find some style of dressing that we’re comfortable with, that doesn’t look too peculiar, and not worry about all the particulars?

“I must... pursue an even and independent course and not be driven to extremes in regard to dress. There is a medium position in these things. Oh, that we all might wisely find that position and keep it.” 1T 425

Does finding the medium position mean that I may disobey God? No, the medium position is found in explicit obedience, not erring to the right or to the left! Now let us find out what the extreme position which Sister White was referring to was. “We do not think it in accordance with our faith to dress in the American costume, to wear hoops, or to go to an extreme in wearing long dresses which sweep the sidewalks and streets.” 1T 424. Then what was the medium position? “And if women would wear their dresses so as to clear the filth of the streets an inch or two, their dresses would be modest, and they could be kept clean much more easily, and would wear longer. Such a dress would be in accordance with our faith.” 1T 424

22) She said that if we err at all, it should be “on the side next to the people”.

“In reforms we would better come one step short of the mark than to go one step beyond it. And if there is error at all, let it be on the side next to the people.” 3T 21

This quote, and several others like it, are actually counsel about presenting the health message to unbelievers and new believers. When the entire section from which the quote is taken is read, it becomes crystal clear that the counsel is 1) not to rush people too fast, 2) not to present our strongest positions first, and 3) not to advocate positions which you are not willing to practice.

But even if we apply these principles to the dress reform, it is still good counsel. We are to give the people the WHOLE truth, never watered down or mixed with a little error, but we must give it to them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a step at a time, and having our own practices in harmony with what we teach.

In another place, Sister White clarifies that there is no need to err at all, but to stick right to the truth. "If you err, let it not be in getting as far from the people as possible, for then you cut the thread of your influence and can do them no good. Better err on the side of the people than altogether away from them, for there is hope in that case that you can carry the people with you, but there is no need of error on either side. You need not go into the water, or into the fire, but take the middle path, avoiding all extremes." CD 211

Here she also shows us what the extremes were that the people were falling into in the area of diet reform. "Brother and Sister ----- carried the matter of indulgence in eating to extreme, and the institute became demoralized. Now the enemy would push you into the opposite extreme if he could, to have a poverty-stricken diet." CD 211

23) Ellen White wrote that we're not to make dress a test, didn't she?

The quotation which is cited to prove this objection is found in 3SM 252 - 254. Here are some of the lines referred to: "We have now the most solemn, important tests given to us from the Word of God for this special period of time. This test is for the whole world. The Lord does not require that any tests of human inventions shall be brought in to divert the minds of the people or create controversy in any line." "This (plainness of dress) should be our burden. But it is too late now to become enthusiastic in making a test of this matter.... Our sisters may be assured that the Lord has not inspired them to make a test of that which was once given as a blessing, but which by many was hated and despised as a curse (the reform dress of the 1860's)." "The people of God will have all the test that they can bear. The Sabbath question is a test that will come to the whole world. We need nothing to come in now to make a test for God's people that shall make more severe for them the test they already have."

I would encourage you to read the whole section in 3SM. It is always important to read the context before we form a conclusion. You will see that this was a specific testimony to a few sisters who had written to Ellen White, proposing to return to the reform dress made from a specific pattern that had been advocated in the 1860's. The test that was not to be made was that of all the sisters returning to this specific pattern of dress. Ellen White was in no way negating her other clear statements about the importance of dress reform and the necessity of adherence to it. Also, the styles of dress worn by Adventist sisters at that time were modest, healthful, and simple, so there was no need to agitate the subject of the reform dress again. Sister White made it very clear that the subject of dress reform was still very important. Consider the following lines in regards to these points:

"There is no need now for any special alteration in our dress. The plain simple style of dress now worn, made in the most healthful way, demands no hoops, and no long trails and is presentable anywhere, and these things should not come in to divert our minds from the grand test which is to decide the eternal destiny of a world--the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. We are nearing the close of this world's history. A plain, direct testimony is now needed, as given in the Word of God, in regard to the plainness of dress. This should be our burden." "Our sisters may be assured that the Lord has not inspired them to make a test of that which was once given as a blessing, but which by many was

hated and despised as a curse.... The burden of advocating the reform dress was removed because that which was given as a blessing was turned into a curse. (the issue is clearly over making a test of that specific 1860's reform dress, not over the clear principles of dress reform)" "But a more sensible style of dress has now been adopted which does not embrace these objectionable features (hoops, trailing skirts)." "The dress of our people should be made most simple.... Simple dresses should be worn. Try your talent, my sisters, in this essential reform." "Let our sisters dress plainly, as many do, having the dress of good material, durable, modest, appropriate for this age, and let not the dress question fill the mind."

24) We just need to keep our focus on Jesus, and not bother with all this dress reform.

It's hard to keep your focus on Jesus when you're filled with vain or lustful thoughts. Let's be honest, the styles of today are very distracting. We must be sure we do not participate in or add to the distraction. If we're really keeping our eyes on Jesus, we will live in harmony with His teachings; we will do the things that please Him (which includes proper dress).

25) I just don't feel personally convicted about the dress reform. I'm sure that if God ever wants me to follow it, He'll impress me of it.

"Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable...." 5T 513. "Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty. The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse." AA 279

Impressions from God will never contradict His Word. Impressions from the Holy Spirit will never tell you it's alright to disobey, or give you peace in disobedience. If you learn what God's will is for His children from the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy, you do not need to wait to feel like obeying, or wait for an impression to obey; you need to obey. May the following quote be an encouragement to you, not to be a halting, hesitant, doubting one, but to go forward in obedience, in the strength of the Lord:

"Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, Go forward. Let us obey the command, even though our sight cannot penetrate the darkness. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled." GW 262

(Answers to objections 17-21 adapted from *Thy Nakedness*.)

CONCLUSION

In summarizing our study of these standards (Christian home and finances, Entertainment, Diet and health, and Dress and appearance), I would like to share two poems with you. May they speak to your heart as they have to mine, inspiring you to surrender yourself fully to Christ and live in obedience to all the light He has revealed to you.

Under The Eyes of the Lord

What ever you think, never think what you feel
You would blush, in the presence of God to reveal;
What ever you speak, in a whisper or clear,
Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.

What ever you read though the page may allure
Read nothing of which you are perfectly sure
Consternation at once would be seen in your look
If God should say solemnly, "Show me that book."

What ever you write, though in haste or in heed,
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read;
What ever you sing, in the midst of your glees,
Sing nothing His listening ear would displease.

When ever you go, never go where you fear
Lest the great God should ask you, "How comest thou here?"
Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from pursuing
If God should look down and say, "What are you doing?"

What ever you wear, can you be very sure
That the feelings it quickens are blameless and pure?
Would your face be unblushing and conscience be clear
Should your wardrobe be opened and Jesus appear?

When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write,
When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight,
To be kept from all wrong when at home or abroad,
Live always as under the eyes of the Lord.--*Author Unknown*

How Important Is My Dress?

This is taken from the book "Thy Nakedness; Lord, What Shall I Wear?"

by Gwen and Rick Shorter (Used by permission.)

"Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Jeremiah 6:16

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Hebrews 10:26

"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

"Dear Brethren and Sisters: My apology for calling your attention again to the subject of dress is that some do not seem to understand what I have before written; and an effort is made, perhaps by those who do not wish to believe what I have written, to make confusion in our churches upon this IMPORTANT SUBJECT. Many letters have been written to me, stating difficulties, which I have not had time to answer; and now, to answer the many inquiries, I give the following statements, which it is hoped will forever put the subject at rest, so far as my testimonies are concerned." 1T 456

"Christ is ashamed of His professed followers. Wherein do we bear any resemblance to Him? Wherein does our dress conform to the Bible requirements? I do not want the sins of the people upon me, and I will give the trumpet a certain sound. For years I have borne a plain and decided testimony upon this subject, in print and upon the speaker's stand. I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I must be clear of the blood of all. 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." 4T 647

"God's people have, to a great extent, lost their peculiarity, and have been gradually patterning after the world, and mingling with them, until they have in many respects become like them. This is displeasing to God." 1T 525

"Perhaps no question has ever come up among us which has caused such development of character as has the dress reform." 4T 636

"The Lord is displeased with the pride manifested among His professed people. He is dishonored by their conformity to the unhealthful, immodest, and expensive fashions of this degenerate age." 4T 634

"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." 6T 96

"Another reason which I offer as an apology for calling attention to the subject of dress is that not one in twenty of the sisters who profess to believe the Testimonies has taken the first step in the dress reform." 1T 465

"Our words, our actions, and our dress are daily, living preachers, gathering with Christ or scattering abroad. This is no trivial matter to be passed off with a jest." 4T 641

"Reformatory action is always attended with sacrifice. It demands that love of ease, selfish interest, and the lust of ambition be held in subjection to the principles of right. Whoever has the courage to reform must encounter obstacles. He will be opposed by the conservatism of those whose business or pleasure brings them in contact with the votaries of fashion, and who will lose caste by the change." 4T 636

"God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel, 'God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.' Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: They are joined to their idols, let them alone,' and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." 1T 187

"A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of the mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits, and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work and in doing this work they must blend." CS 42

"We need now to begin over again. Reforms must be entered into with heart and soul and will. Errors may be hoary with age; but age does not make error truth, nor truth error. Altogether too long have the old customs and habits been followed." 6T 142

"God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. And as soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children. They are the children of the world and of darkness." 1T 137

"Our faith, if carried out, will lead us to be so plain in dress, and zealous of good works, that we shall be marked as peculiar." 1T275

"Many dress like the world in order to have an influence over unbelievers, but here they make a sad mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make the distinction plain between the Christian and the worldling. The words, the dress, the actions should tell for God." 4T 634

"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 greatly departed from Him, there would now be a marked difference between their dress and that of the world...The inhabitants of earth are grow ing more and more corrupt, and the line of distinction between them and the Israel of God must be more plain, or the curse which falls upon worldlings will fall on God's professed people." 1T189

"In the vision given me in Rochester, New York, December 25, 1865, I was shown that a most solemn work is before us. Its importance and magnitude are not realized. As I marked the indifference which was everywhere apparent, I was alarmed for ministers and people. There seemed to be a paralysis upon the cause of present truth. The work of God seemed stayed. Ministers and people are unprepared for the time in which they live, and nearly all who profess to believe present truth are unprepared to understand the work of preparation for this time. In their present state of worldly ambition, with their lack of consecration to God, their devotion to self, they are wholly unfitted to receive the latter rain and, having done all, to stand against the wrath of Satan, who by his inventions would cause them to make ship wreck of faith, fastening upon them some pleasing self-deception. They think they are all right, when they are all wrong.

"Ministers and people must make greater advancement in the work of reform. They should commence without delay to correct their wrong habits of eating, drinking, dressing, and working. I saw that quite a number of the ministers are not awake upon this important subject. They are not all where God would have them. The result is, some can show but little fruit of their labors. Ministers should be ensamples to the flock of God. But they are not safe from Satan's temptations. They are the very ones whom he will seek to ensnare. If he can succeed in lulling one minister to carnal security, and by so doing divert his mind from the work, or deceive him with regard to his own true condition before God, he has accomplished much." 1T 466

"Sleeping preachers preaching to a sleeping people!...Some of the ministers are asleep, and the people are also asleep; but Satan is wide awake." 2T 336,337

Additional reading: Ev 272, 273; 1T 131; 1T 138,139; 1T 176; 1T 188; 1T 469; 4T 641-642