

A sepia-toned photograph of a woman in 19th-century attire sitting at a desk. She is wearing a dark, high-collared dress with a white neckerchief. She is looking towards the camera. On the desk in front of her are several books and a microscope. The background shows a room with a window and some furniture.

# **The Attire of the Medical Missionary**

*“Even the style of the apparel will express  
the truth of the gospel.”*

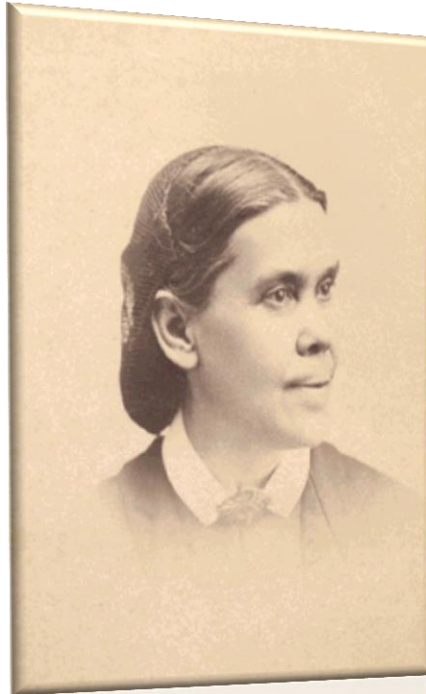
{Ev 269.1}



True dress reform is all about Jesus—appreciating Jesus, loving Jesus, and obeying Jesus. When we are filled with genuine love for God, He places within our hearts the desire to please Him in all things. A true Christian dresses to please Jesus.



How do we know what pleases Jesus in our dress? Like any other area in our lifestyle, such as our diet, or our entertainment choices, we need to educate our selves as to what inspirations says.



In the Spirit of  
Prophecy, we read:  
“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 598.2}

“The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. All who are in earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired by God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel.” {Ev 269.1}



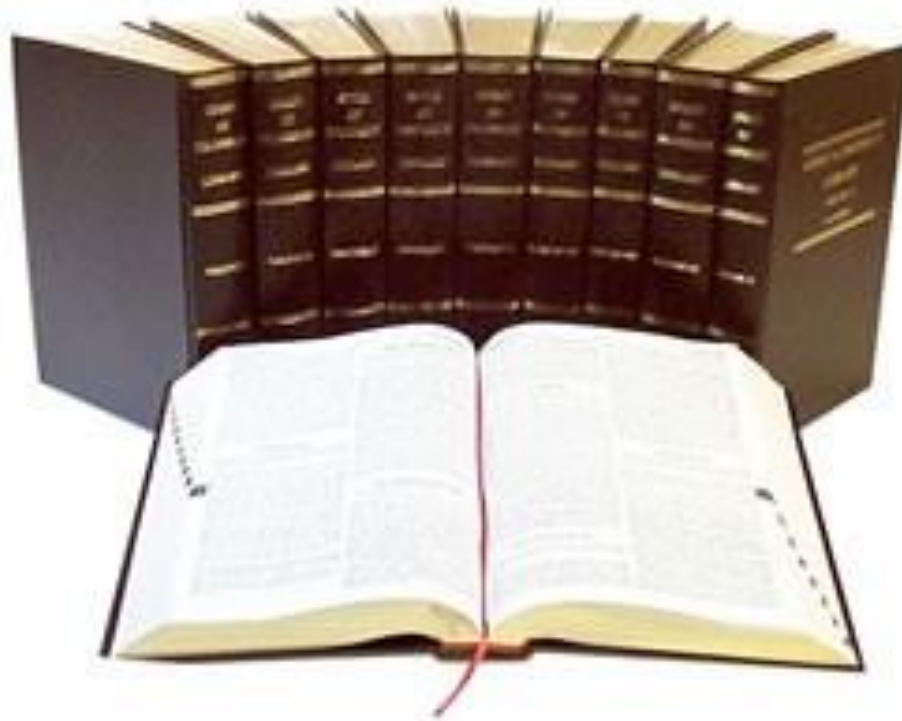


The main scriptures that pertain to our appearance, and our attitude of separation from the world include:

- Romans 12:1,2
- 1 John 2:15-17
- Rev. 18:4
- 1 Timothy 2:9,10
- 1 Peter 3:3,4
- Deuteronomy 22:5



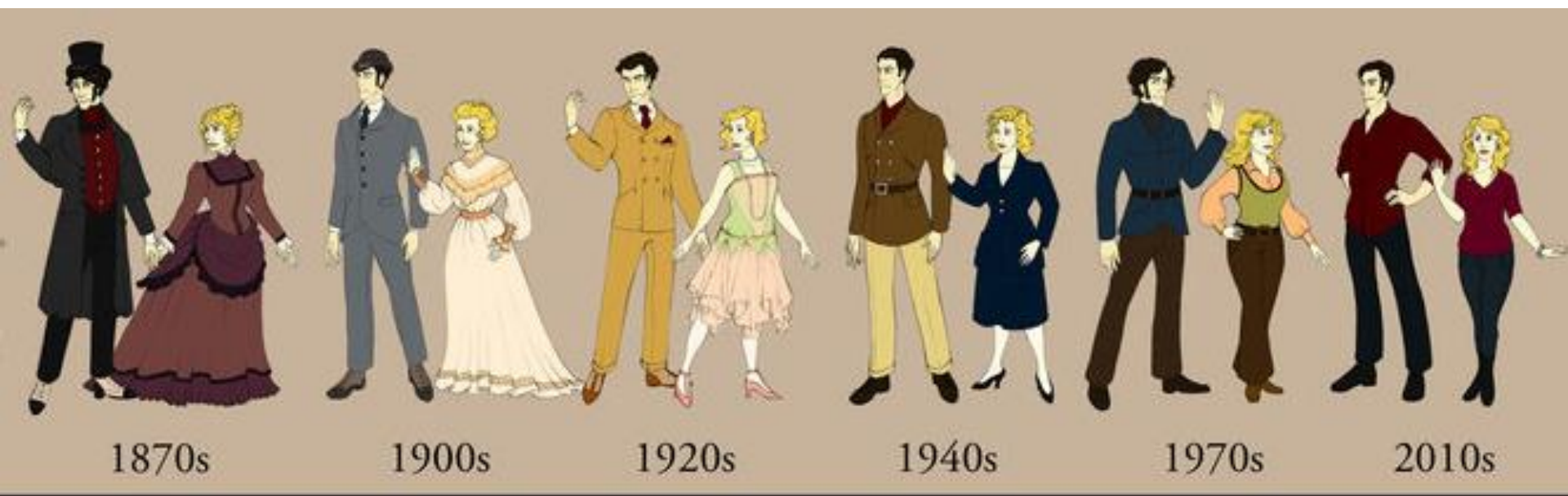
While these scriptures may be familiar to us, and are full of godly counsel, many of us have a difficult time making a practical application of this counsel, because our culture is so different from biblical culture.



God has also given us the Spirit of Prophecy to make it even more clear as to what pleases Him in our dress.

But it's been nearly 100 years since the voice of God's modern day prophetess has been silenced in death.





And fashion has changed more in the last 100 years than any time in history!



If, in our dress, we are following along with the trends of culture, and keeping in step with society—without carefully considering inspired counsel— it is not only likely, but most certain that we are outside of God's will for us.



Inspiration says: “Satan, the instigator and prime mover in the ever-changing, never-satisfying decrees of fashion, is always busy devising something new that shall prove an injury to physical and moral health; and he triumphs that his devices succeed so well.” {CG 432.3}

# Fashion Timeline



Because of the continual degradation of society, and the lowering of moral standards, the concept of modesty is continually changing. If Seventh-day Adventist women of 1900 were asked, “What is modest attire?” their answer would be quite different than if that question were asked of many Adventist women today.

## What is MODESTY?

The range of what is considered modest in society is so vast that this word MODEST has *no meaningful definition* to most people.

Notice this definition of modesty from the Urban Dictionary:

“MODESTY for Females: The act of dressing in a non-seductive way. It ranges from not wearing tube tops and super-short shorts to wearing long skirts and sleeves below the elbows.”

With a wide open range like that defining modesty, *just about anything could qualify as being modest!*



That's the world's definition of modesty. But what is God's definition? Can we know what is modest and what is immodest in God's eyes?

Yes, we absolutely can if we are willing to consider some basic principles of modesty.



Modesty is all about concealing the sensual aspects of the women's body in the areas God designed for her to conceal, so that neither the form or the flesh is revealed.



*Pride*

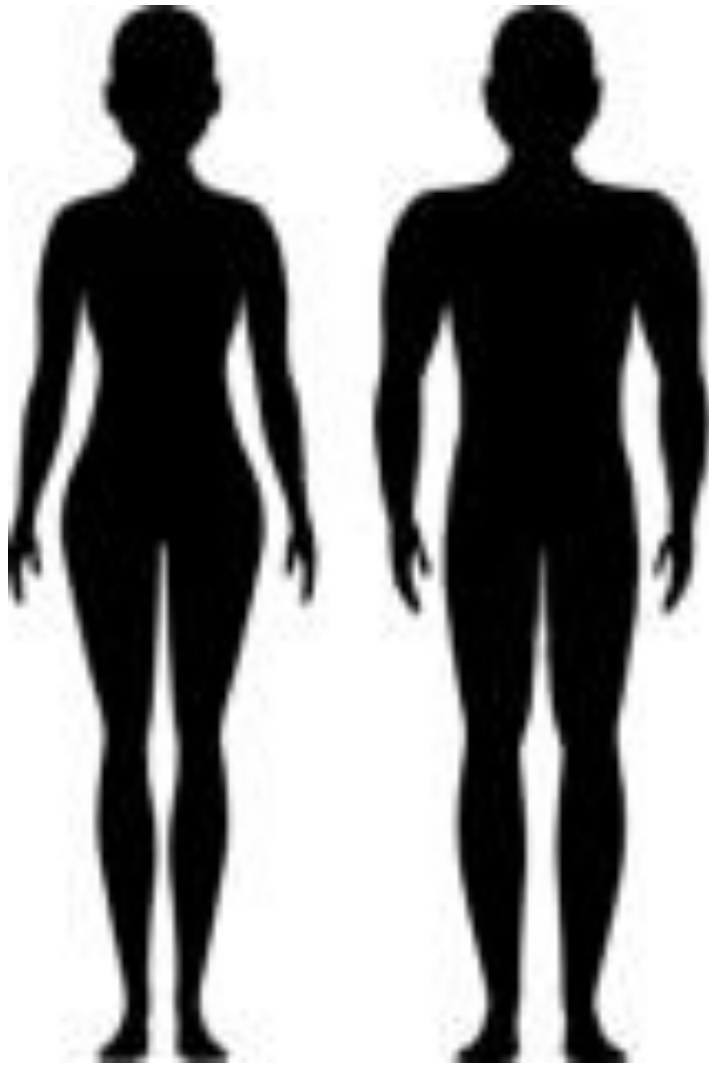
Modesty is also about having a meek and humble spirit, which is portrayed in our demeanor as well as in our attire.

“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 423.2}



Rather than becoming distracted by variable and insignificant details, let's utilize silhouettes to illustrate the contrast between modesty and immodesty.





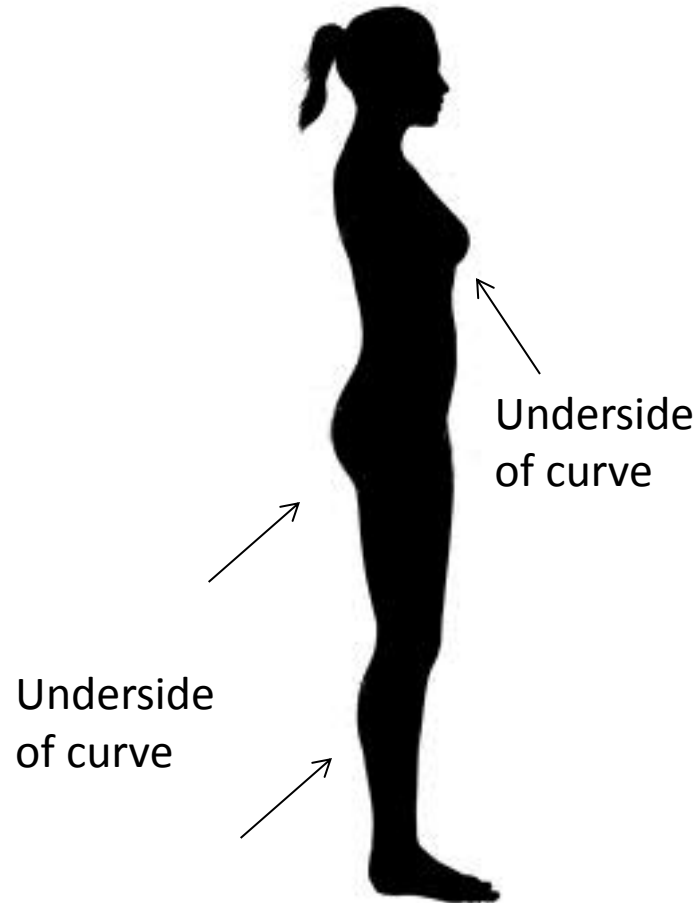
It is an obvious fact that God designed women's and men's bodies differently. Women's curves, specifically her breasts, smaller waistline, and wider hips, are visually stimulating for men.



Many of the styles of today are designed to show off a woman's curves. High heels further emphasize the seductive attraction of plunging necklines, tight fitting clothes or bare legs.

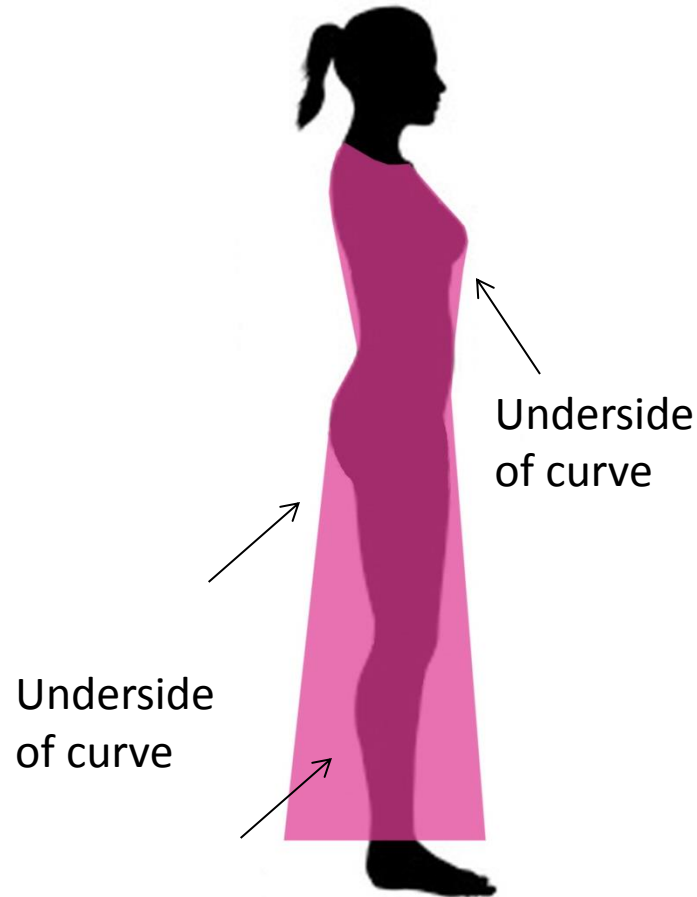


Immodest clothing accentuates the sensual aspects of a woman's body, either showing the bare flesh inappropriately, or revealing the form because of its tightness.



We understand that God designed women to have curves.

But when women reveal the ***underside*** of their curves, men are tempted to have lustful thoughts.



Modest clothing is designed to loosely conform to a woman's shape, while not revealing the ***underside of the curve of her breast, hips, and calves.***

In this silhouette we can observe the bare arms and shoulders, the form-fitting dress accentuating the breasts and hips, the bare thighs and knees, and the high heels. Is this representative of a modest women?



In these silhouettes, these woman are clothed, but you can hardly tell. Tight pants and tops obviously reveal the women's form.





We have become so accustomed to the exposure of the female form, it isn't shocking to us anymore.



But, at any time before 1915, it was absolutely shocking to see anything but a full length dress on women.



This re-enactment photo, taken in 1945, shows the shock and dismay of the ladies in their 1890 and 1900 floor length dresses when they see the bare legs on the 1945 lady.

This “modern fashion” of 1945 would have been shocking to every godly woman who had lived up until 1915.



From biblical times, up until 1915, the majority of godly women displayed similar silhouettes. It wasn't until 1915 that this silhouette began to change.



In these silhouettes, there is a distinctive femininity showing a modest reserve—the shamefacedness and sobriety Paul admonishes women to have.



The biblical rule, God's standard of modesty, has been the same ever since the fall of mankind.

This standard of modesty, the covering of women, has had many styles, but only one standard, which has been the same for every age. It has been followed conscientiously and consistently by godly women during and since Bible times.





During the lifetime of Ellen G. White, this Bible rule of modest covering was followed by society at large. Ellen White never needed to address the problem of tight fitting clothing such as the stretchy garments popular today. Nor was the inappropriate revealing of the skin of women a major issue. Until the end of her life, almost all the women wore long sleeve dresses, high necklines, and ankle length skirts.

Here at Ellen G. White's funeral in 1915, you can see the women all have on the long, full skirt and long sleeves. That was the style of the day, which complied with God's standard of modesty.





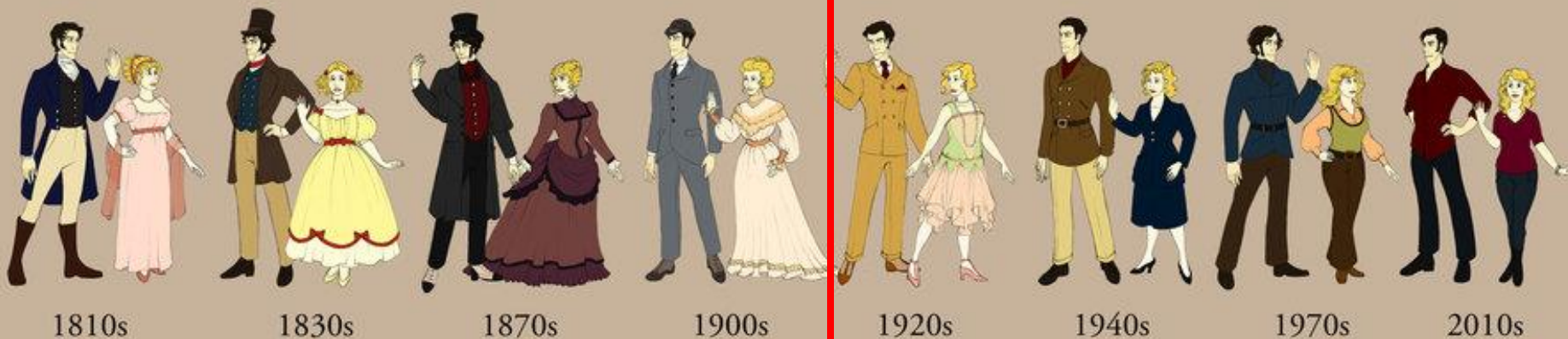
The time around 1915, when Ellen White died, was a significant period in the history of women's dress.



Within a relatively short span of time after 1915, women went from being totally covered, to revealing legs, arms and low necklines in a shameful manner. The 1915 date is historically significant in regards to fashion.

Now let's take a look at skirt lengths on women from almost Bible times to current. Notice what happens between 1900 and 1920—a radical change in skirt length!

### Terrizae's Western Fashion Timeline



# Fashion Timeline 1860-2020



Notice in this chart which starts at 1860, the ladies wore long skirts up until 1910. By 1920, the hems are nearly up to the knees. Somewhere between 1900 and 1920, there was a drastic change in the moral standard of society.

Here is another graphic showing the hemline change between 1910 and 1920.



This graphic timeline shows the skirt length starting to rise right at 1915.

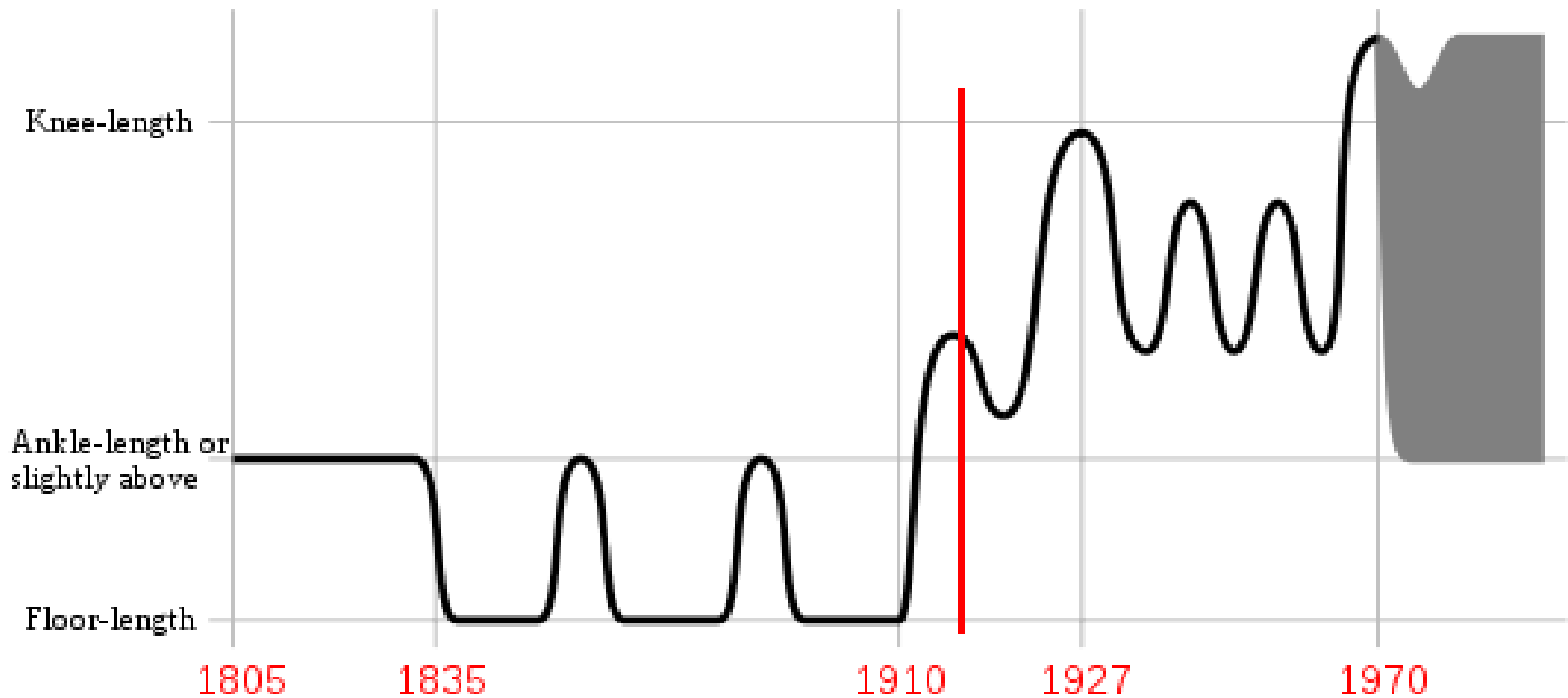


**CHANGING SKIRT LENGTHS** charted above have gone up and down with the Federal Reserve Board index of industrial production ever since they first left the floor in 1910. When skirts were skimpiest (1926-29) times were

booming. When skirts were at their longest (1930-35) America was in the midst of a depression. The four actresses above were fashion plates of their era (left to right): Louise Drew, Joan Crawford, Claudette Colbert, Kay Francis.

This graphic shows that skirts in popular fashion never rose much above ankle length until right around 1915.

Abstract conceptual overview of changes in hemline heights (skirt lengths):



Up until 1915, the lower body was always completely covered. The ankles, legs, knees and especially above the knee were never shown by respectable women.

From around 1915 on, fashion has deliberately revealed these parts of women's anatomy through various styles.



XVIII sec. - 1802 - 1820 - 1835 - 1848 - 1860 - 1868 - 1872 - 1876 - 1880 - 1885 - 1890



1894 - 1898 - 1903 - 1906 - 1909 - 1912 - 1914 - 1916 - 1919 - 1923 - 1927 - 1930

**Sleeveless  
& Knee  
length**

While many styles came and went throughout the last 500 years, the basic standard of a long flowing garment for women remained the same before 1915.





If you do a study on what women have worn throughout history, you will find that, except for the reprobate heathen idolaters, women in cultured society have covered themselves completely with a long, full garment throughout history, particularly women who feared God.



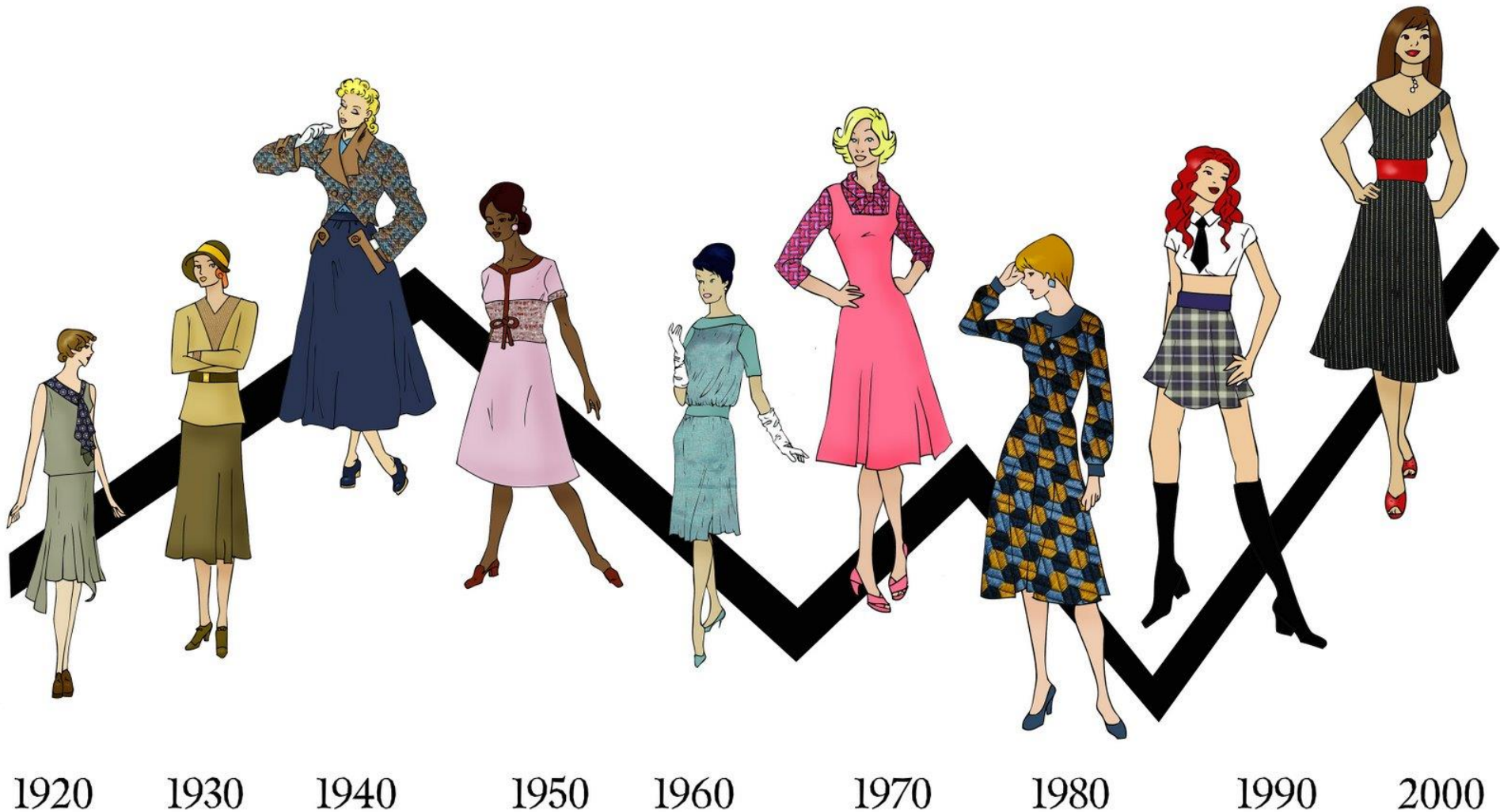
It is a verifiable historic fact that respectable women wore long, flowing garments up until around 1915.





History also clearly reveals that it is only in these last 100 years since around 1915 that fashionable hemlines have become shorter and shorter.

It just doesn't make sense that God would change His standard of modesty for women during the last 100 years of earth's history, just so they could fit in with the world!





We could go through all the fashions that have been popular for the last 100 years, and clearly see all the styles that were out of harmony with God's standard. Styles change. God's standard is changeless!

Today's fashion declares that women can bare their arms up to their shoulders, their legs up to their knees and beyond, and their upper chests down to where cleavage could show. And if those areas are not bare, it is the fashion for the clothes to be so tight as to reveal the form.



Worldly fashions  
are what you see  
in society every  
day.



Worldly,  
immodest  
fashions should  
be very easy for  
us to detect!

The fashions of the world include any style that is not in harmony with God's standard.



**Too low neck**

**Too short sleeves**

**Too showy**

**Too tight**

**Too short length**

**Too high heels**





“As a people who are preparing for the soon return of Christ, we should give to the world an example of modest dress *in contrast* with the prevailing fashion of the day.”

{CG 424.4}





Now we will consider other silhouettes that will illustrate an important principle in dress reform.

We all recognize these symbols. They tell us which restroom to enter. No one has to wonder. The dress is for women, the pants are for men.



This symbol was made official by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 1972. These symbols represent what the majority of society wore at that time: The majority of men wore pants and the majority of women wore approximately knee length dresses.



However, if this public restroom symbol was created at any other time in history, it would have been quite different.



If it were created in Bible times, most likely it would have looked something like this.



If this symbol had been created from the 1500s to the early 1900s, according to what the majority of society wore in this country, it would have looked like this.



If this symbol were recreated today according to what the majority of society wears, it would look like this, as the vast majority of men and women wear pants.

Obviously, this symbol would not work too well!



Ellen White warned us about the confusion and crime that we see today: “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.” {CG 427.3}



A battle between the sexes over who wears the pants has been going on since the 1850s.

# The Tremendous Trouser Tug-of-War



Ellen White clearly addressed this issue, giving us inspired counsel that is very applicable to us in our day.

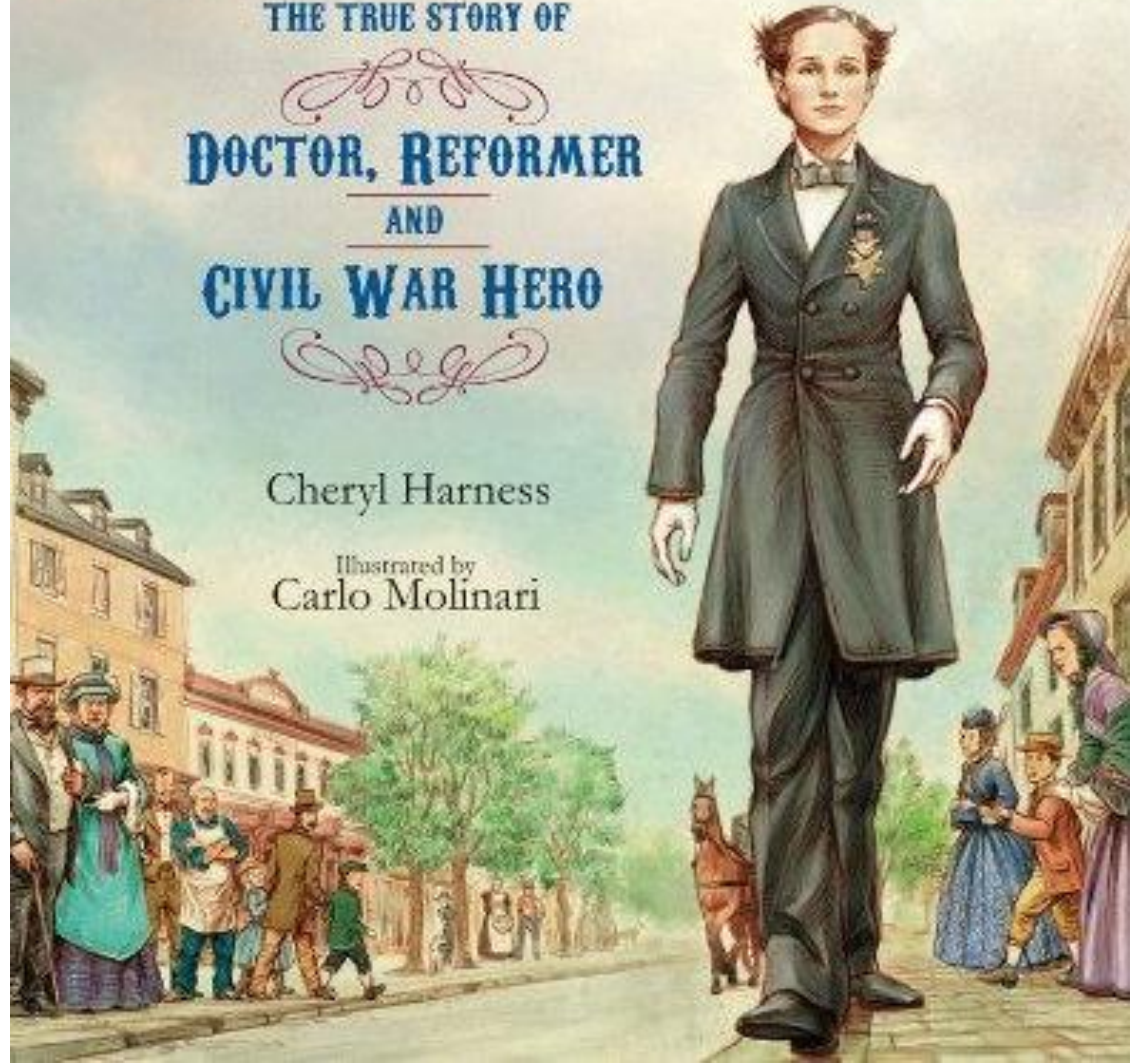
# MARY WALKER WEARS THE PANTS

THE TRUE STORY OF

DOCTOR, REFORMER  
AND  
CIVIL WAR HERO

Cheryl Harness

Illustrated by  
Carlo Molinari



“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. . . . {CG 427.2}



“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.***" {2SM 477.8}



“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.”  
{2SM 477.8}



“This is the style and influence of the ‘American Costume,’ taught and worn by many at ‘Our Home,’ Dansville, N.Y. It does not reach to the knee. I need not say that this style of dress was shown me to be too short.” {3SM 278.2}





“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.” {1T 421}



The four ladies most often credited with exerting the strongest influence for pants on women are *Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Marlene Dietrich and Katharine Hepburn.*



Ellen White's comments were specifically regarding the first two during the 1850's. The second two exerted the most powerful influence during the 1930's.

We will consider the ideals and philosophy of these women.





- Amelia Bloomer, in complete defiance against God, stated: “It matters not what Moses had to say to the men and women of his time about what they should wear.” (Referring to Deuteronomy 22:5) She had a rebellious spirit. She was a spiritualist. Her influence led away from submission to God.



- Elizabeth Cady Stanton stated: “The bible and the church have been the greatest stumbling block in the way of women's emancipation.” She also was a spiritualist. She stirred up rebellion against biblical principles wherever she spoke. She defied God. She initiated the first Women’s Rights Convention.

- Katharine Hepburn stated: "I'm an atheist, and that's it." She is labeled the Mother of Androgyny. She was flagrantly rebellious and insubordinate against God and biblical principles. In her youth she had an incestuous relationship with her older brother. She was an immoral, irreligious woman.



- Marlene Dietrich stated: "Since then [childhood], I have given up belief in God, in a 'light' that leads us, or anything of that sort." She also said, "If God exists, he needs to review his plan." Dietrich, who was bisexual, enjoyed the thriving gay scene of the time and drag balls of the 1920's in Berlin. She was an alcoholic. Throughout her career Dietrich had an unending string of affairs.



And yet, these woman are admired, appreciated and adored for what they have done in making pants popular on women.

***“All women need to thank Amelia Bloomer for wearing pants. But we also need to thank Marlene Dietrich, Kate Hepburn and Coco Chanel because they made pant-wearing the cornerstone of gamine (boyish) sexiness since the 30’s.”***

<http://personalimagecompany.com/blog/?p=593>



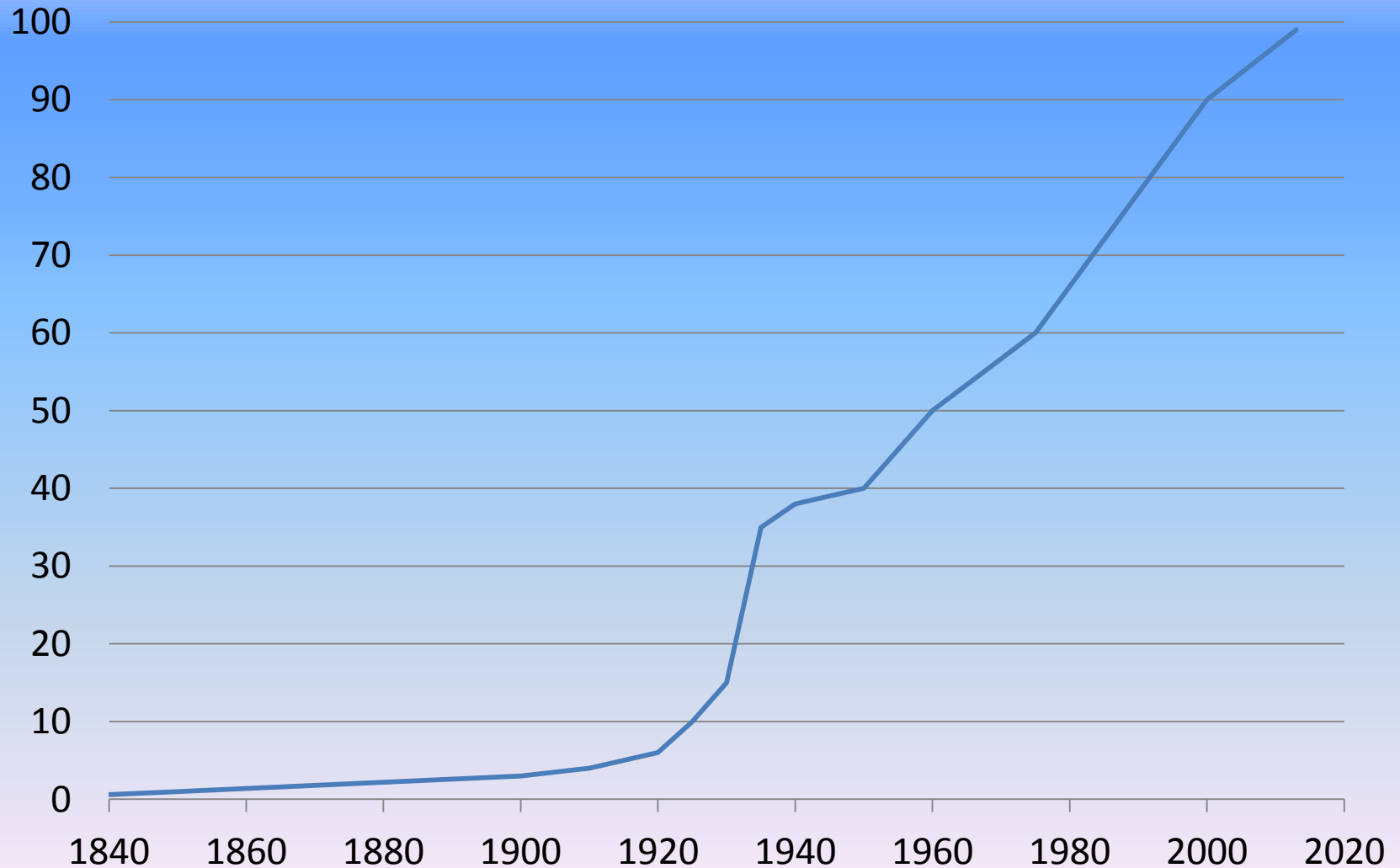
A feminist blogger writes:

The fact that trousers are no longer taboo for women is the result of a long process led by trailblazers who fought, sometimes with their lives, for the right to put on their pants, one leg at a time.

What today is regarded as simply a daily choice for most Western women—skirt or pants?—was, not long ago, a scandalous question.

This chart reveals the progress of this movement to put pants on women..

## Percentage of Women Who Wear Pants From 1840 - 2013





We have become so familiar with pants and jeans on women, we don't give it a second thought.

Fashion experts consider the T-shirt and jeans combination to be the gender-neutral, androgynous uniform, because “everybody wears them!”





The gals can dress just like the guys, and no one cares one bit.





**Coco Chanel – 1930s**



**Katharine Hepburn – 1930s**



**Marlene Dietrich – 1930s**

But this progression of fashion has had 100 years of development. Most of us weren't alive when pants weren't popular on women. We were born into this fashion. That's why it's so hard for us to understand why this is so important.



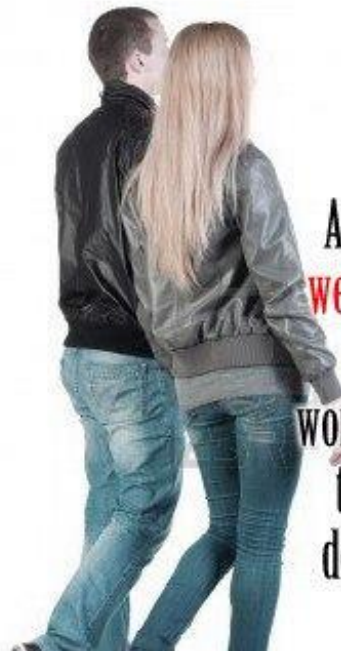
“And as soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children.” {1T 137}



Here I am with my boyfriend in 1972. The clothes we are wearing are identical men's clothes, even the same size!

From what we have learned this far, was this an abomination to the Lord?

# Sinful Fashions

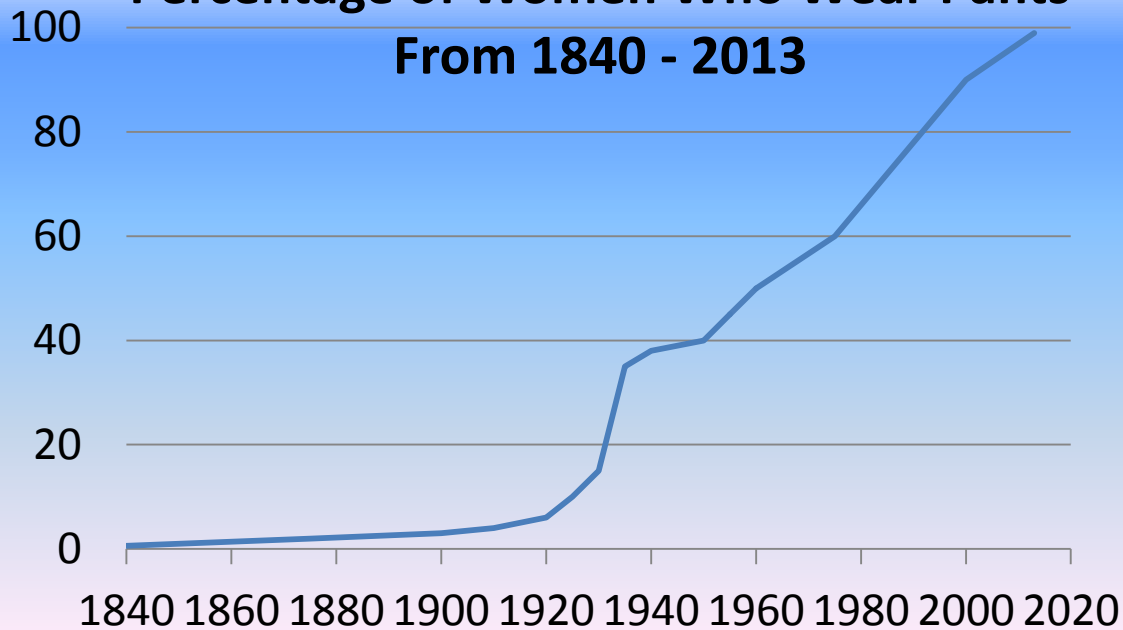


A woman **must not wear** men's clothing,  
nor a man wear  
women's clothing, for  
the LORD your God  
detests anyone who  
does this.



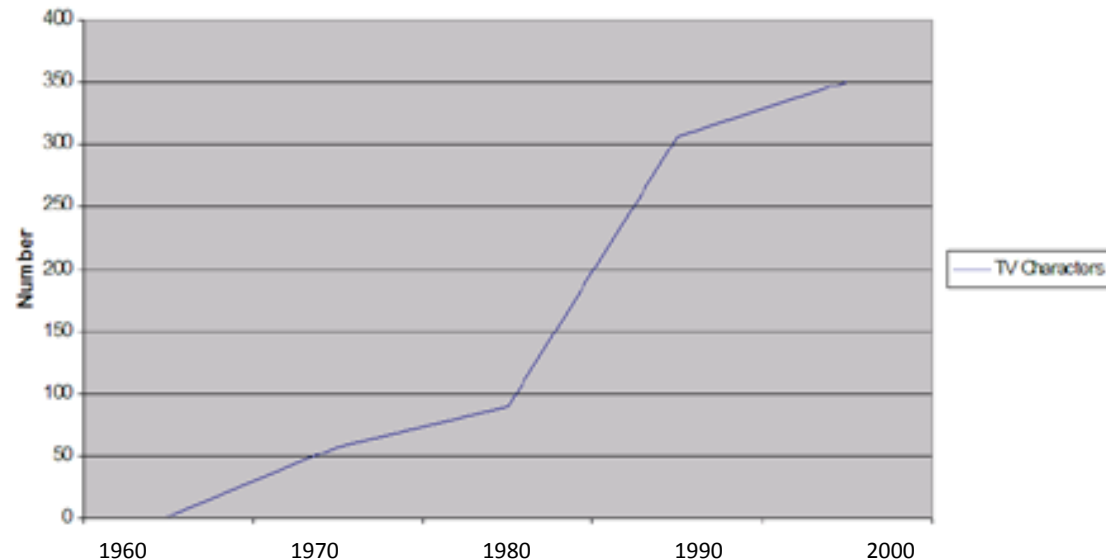
The recent fashion trends have included unisex, gender bending, androgyny, and lately, we have gender fusion and genderlessness.

## Percentage of Women Who Wear Pants From 1840 - 2013



Notice the striking correlation between the increasing number of homosexuals and the increasing acceptance of unisex fashion.

## Number of Homosexual Characters



<http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring04/Douglas/homosexuality%20on%20prime%20time%20television/root/acceptance%20graphs/hs/graps.htm>



“All who stand ready to make a compromise with the world do in truth despise the humble, self-denying, self-sacrificing principles of Christ.” {RH, August 23, 1898 par. 3}

What is the standard of modesty that God gave us through Ellen White: “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}





“A simple, unadorned dress of modest length. . . short enough to avoid the mud and filth of the streets.” In other words, it would be ankle length, and it would have sleeves that covered the arms, at least over the elbows, and a high neckline.



The short reform dress  
1865-1881



“The same attention should be given to the clothing of the limbs as with the short dress.” {4T 640.1}

The more acceptable style  
1881



The “short dress” was 8-10 inches from the floor and had pants underneath.

Ellen White clearly said that women's limbs should be covered as thoroughly as men's. Consider the popular fashion for dressing up for church. Men have on their suits, with arms and legs well covered. Women often have bare arms and legs.



Apart from the modesty issue, because it is the fashion to bare the arms and shoulders, women follow this fashion even when it would be more comfortable for them to cover their limbs. Especially in air conditioned homes, cars, churches and public buildings, it is more healthful to cover the limbs.



Notice this counsel from Ellen White: “We advocate that the limbs of women should not be exposed, but sensibly, neatly, and comfortably, clad.” {HR, May 1, 1872 par. 3}

“We inquire, Why should not women clothe their limbs as thoroughly as men do theirs?” {HR, May 1, 1872 par. 11}



“In order for women to be protected against the sudden changes of our variable climate, the feet and limbs must be equally clothed as other portions of the body. The arms and hands being near the heart will better take care of themselves, for they are not in as much danger as the lower limbs. The feet and limbs need especial care.” {HR, May 1, 1872 par. 12}



To dress healthfully means to cover ourselves evenly, with no tight bands.



As medical missionaries, we have a message to share with the world! Thankfully, today, we can find attractive styles that are in harmony with God's principles.





God wants His daughters to be preparing for translation. He wants us to rightly represent Him wherever we are.

We are to dress attractively, modestly, femininely, and simply and healthfully!



“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 458.4}



Let us pray for that noble independence and moral courage to follow God's standard of modesty. We have been blessed that maxi skirts are currently in fashion. We can wear this style because it is in harmony with God's standard.





“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.” {4T 641.3}

May God help us as we pray for revival and reformation in our church, that we may discover God's true standard of modesty for the daughters of God.





For more information on  
dress reform,  
please go to  
[www.SistersInSkirts.com](http://www.SistersInSkirts.com)

Remember, this is because  
we love Jesus!  
We love Him, because He  
first loved us!