

Objections to Dress Reform



Some of the reasons why some people oppose modest dressing as it is taught in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy

First, let us make this clarification.

There is true dress reform, as outlined in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and then there is fanatical dress reform that is promoted by unholy extremists.

One is designed to glorify God, and the other is designed to attract negative attention, causing people to despise the so-called dress reform.





Fanatics who pride themselves on their strange, eccentric “modest” attire are generally anything but humble and kind. They’re often pushy, and critical and have no concern for the feelings of others. They would like to coerce everyone into looking just like them.

These people are not true dress reformers. Their characters are not Christlike. They have not been softened and sweetened by the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it is because of misinformation or lack of information that leads people to oppose dress reform.

They have not taken the time to prayerfully study it out for themselves.



That is why we are seeking to educate our members regarding the true principles of dress reform.

We appeal to you to study for yourself, and ask God to reveal His truth to you.



We are interested in teaching true dress reform as it is presented in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

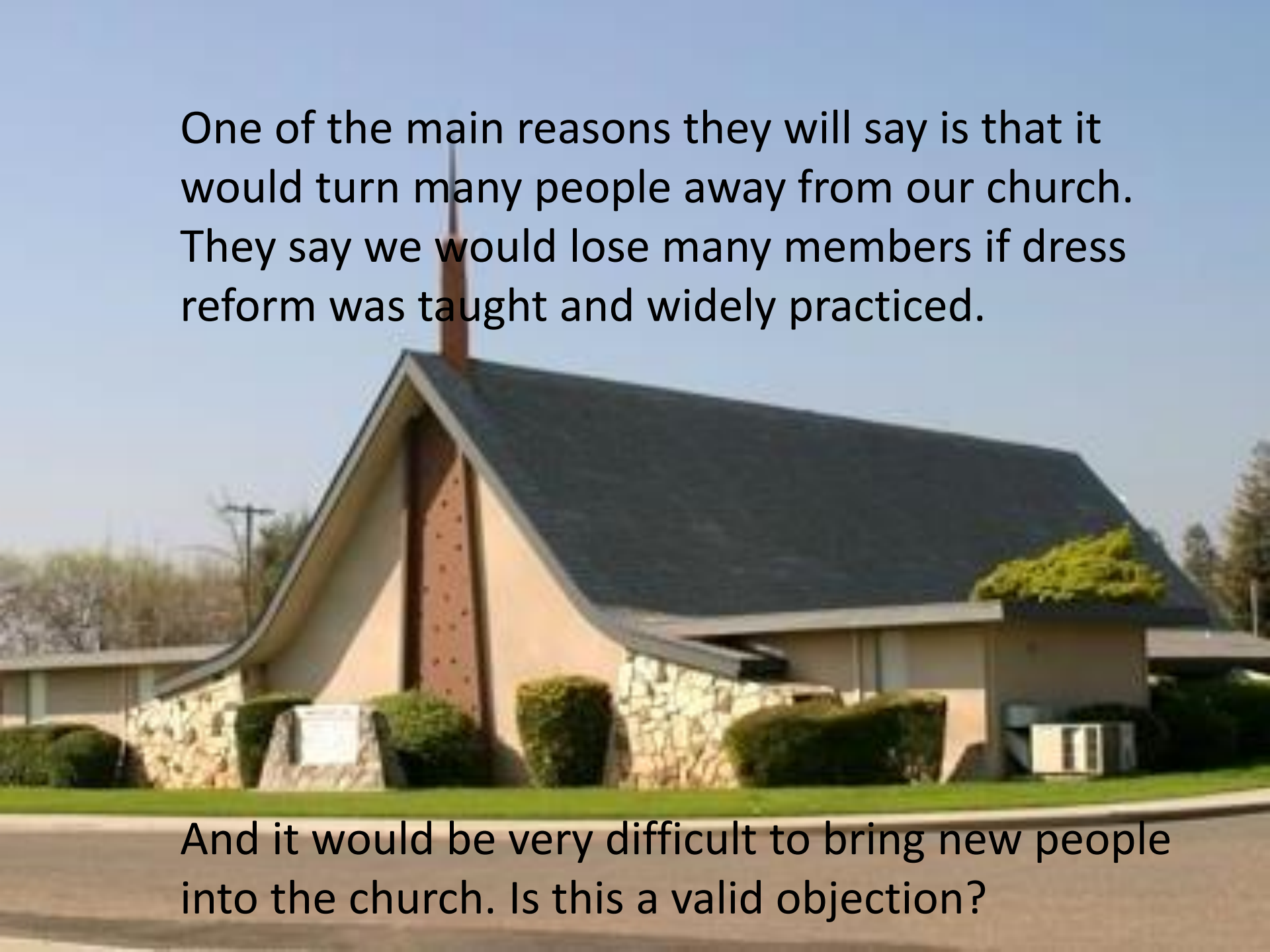
The external appearance of the true dress reformer is an outworking of the inward work of grace on the heart. The desire to please Jesus is their highest priority. Self has been laid aside and perfume of humility and love sweetens the influence of such people.

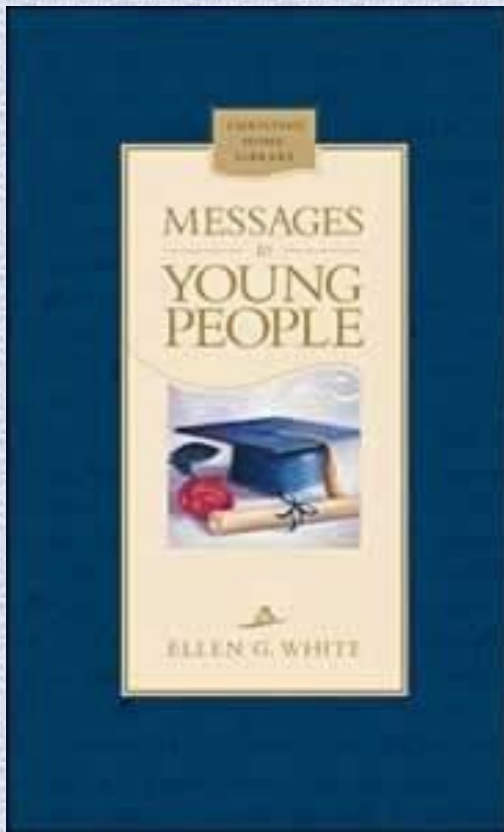
We will now consider some of the objections that some Seventh-day Adventists raise in opposing true dress reform.



One of the main reasons they will say is that it would turn many people away from our church. They say we would lose many members if dress reform was taught and widely practiced.

And it would be very difficult to bring new people into the church. Is this a valid objection?





Let's see what God has to say about this:

“Many dress like the world to have an influence. But here they make a *sad and fatal mistake.*” {MYP 128.1}

A fatal mistake? This is not talking about physical danger, causing one to lose one's earthly life. This fatal mistake will cost them their eternal life!

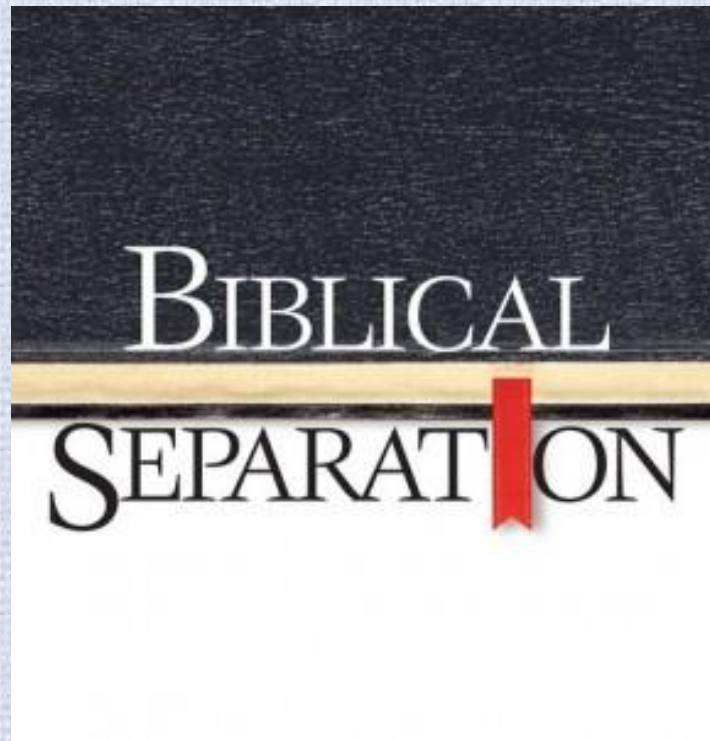
“You have entertained the opinion that the reason why the world is so much opposed to us as a people is that we are too unsocial, ***too plain in our dress***, and too strict in regard to amusements, withdrawing ourselves from them too much in practice as well as in precept. . . . But **no greater mistake** could affect the human mind. “{5T 433.1}

Such strong language! It is a ***fatal mistake***, even the ***greatest mistake*** to think that God’s requirements in modest, plain dress would cause us to have a lessened influence with the world. The truth is, our worldly dress is what causes our influence on the world to be lessened!

“The reason we have had *so little influence* upon unbelieving relatives and associates is that we have manifested little decided difference in our practices from those of the world.” {FE 289.1}

“In dress, in speech, in deportment, we are to be a people distinct and separate from the world.” {7BC 941.12}





“God calls you to separate from the world. You are not to follow their practices, nor conform to them in your course of action in any respect.” {2T 43.2}

So, if we are not to follow the fashions of the world, how different from the world shall we be?

"Many who suppose they are going to heaven, are blindfolded by the world. Their ideas of what constitutes a religious education and religious discipline are vague, resting only on probabilities. There are many who have no intelligent hope, and ***are running great risk*** in practicing the very things which Jesus has taught that they should not do, in eating, drinking, and ***dress***ing, binding themselves up with the world in a variety of ways. They have yet to learn the serious lessons so essential to growth in spirituality, to come out from the world and be separate. The heart is divided; ***the carnal mind craves conformity, similarity to the world in so many ways that the mark of distinction from the world is scarcely distinguishable.***"

{LS 350.4}

“If God's professed people had not departed greatly from him, there would now be a ***marked difference*** between their dress and that of the world.” {2SG 227.1}

“Those who claim to know the truth and understand the great work to be done for this time are to consecrate themselves to God, soul, body, and spirit. In heart, in dress, in language, in every respect they are to be ***separate from the fashions and practices of the world.***” {FE 311.1}



“My sisters, there is need of a dress reform among us.”
{2SM 473.1}



From these statements we can see that the church has actually backslidden from God’s true standard in dress, and that we need a thorough reformation in dress.

Could the opposite actually be true, that people don’t come into our church, or are driven out of our church because of our backsliding in dress?



“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.***” 4T 641

Could we actually be hindering those sincere souls who would accept the truth if they saw the Seventh-day Adventist sisters in more modest and less worldly attire?

That’s what God says. That’s a sobering thought.

Notice in the following quotation how important the visual impact of the Christian's appearance is:



“The Lord would have you ***make it manifest*** in your manners, ***in your dress***, in your spirit, that you are blessed. He would have you ***show*** that the ***line of demarcation*** between the world and the followers of Christ is a ***distinct line***, so decided that the difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not is ***always discernible***. If the people of the world do not ***see that you are different*** from those around them, they will not be influenced by your profession of religion; for you will not be a savor of Christ, and you will win no soul to the service of God. {ST, June 6, 1892 par. 1}

“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.” {PCP 38.2}



Sisters, we really do need to ask ourselves, Which influence do I bring into the church?



“While the Lord brings into the church those who are truly converted, Satan at the same time brings persons who are not converted into its fellowship. While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the ***purification of the church***, and the other for the ***corrupting of the people*** of God. . . .” {FLB 305.2}

One area that has not yet been addressed is high heels vs. flat shoes for women.

Scientific researchers from the University of Portsmouth recently conducted a study on high heels, and how they affected a women's appearance.

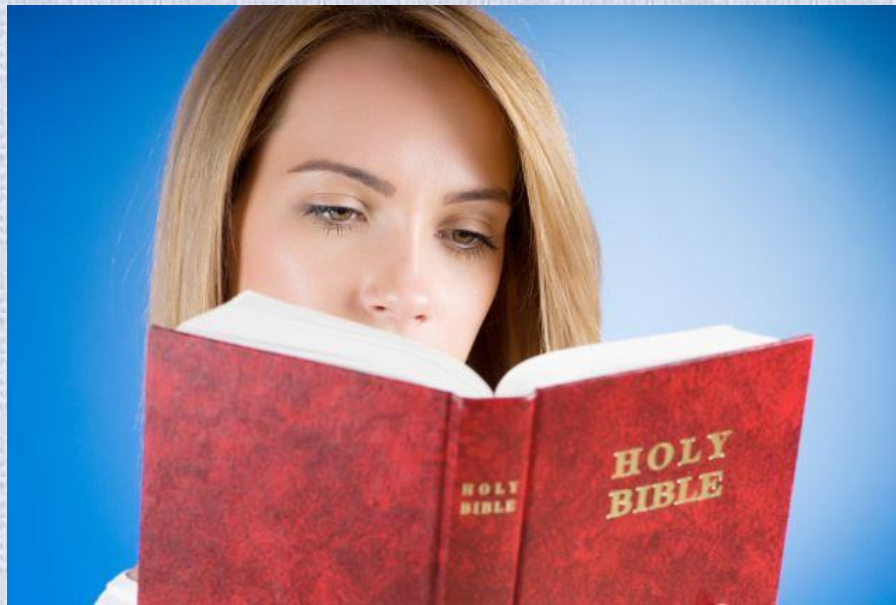
Writing in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior*, the researchers said:

"We suggest that high heels may exaggerate the sex-specific aspects of the female walk which could cause sexual arousal in males."

Would a pure, God-fearing woman really want that result?



“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.” {OHC 271.2}



Pride...God's Word rebukes pride.



What's so bad about pride? "***All pride is sin, and must be expelled from the soul.***" Ms 161, 1898, p. 1.

"Unless ***human pride is humbled and subdued***, unless the stubborn heart is made tender by the Spirit of Christ, it is not possible for Him to impress His divine similitude upon us." {CTr 232.5}

What is our condition in this fearful and solemn time? Alas, what ***pride is prevailing in the church***, what hypocrisy, what deception, what ***love of dress***. . . . We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins, that they may be blotted out. {1SM 125.2}

“Pride and extravagance in dress is a sin to which woman is especially prone.” {MYP 355.2}

“God is constantly instructing His people to flee from pride of appearance.” {TDG 295.4}

We are told that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, our pride of appearance will disappear. “***All love of dress and pride of appearance will be eradicated.***” {RH, September 2, 1884 par. 8}

If dress reform will help us the get rid of the deadly sin of pride, we should gratefully accept this gift God is offering us!



When you hear people objecting to the modest, simple, healthful dress that we are instructed to wear in the Bible and the Testimonies, no one will say they object because of their pride.

They might say they don't like dress reform because of the way it makes them feel, or they don't like the way it looks on them. And most frequently, they're worried about what others will think of them. But does it not all come under the sin of pride?



What does God have to say about pride in dress?



“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.***” {4T 647.2}



PRIDE -- Could this be the unspoken reason why some people oppose modest attire?

Pride is deeply engrained in each one of us. The Bible tells us that a proud look is an abomination to God. A proud person would not enjoy dressing modestly.

A good definition for modesty is ***humility in clothing***. Pride and humility are incompatible, as they are the complete opposite of each other. Yet, God has the power to give us victory over our pride!

GAZING STOCKS

The next objection that we will deal with is the idea that Ellen White says that we are not to be gazing-stocks! The inference is made that if we dress modestly, people will stare at us. So we need to fit in with the world in order not to be a dreadful gazing-stock!

Please read the entire passage in context where she talks about gazing-stocks! If we are sloppy, dirty, mismatched, uncouth, and disheveled, then we are gazing-stocks.

If we take care of our hygiene, and are tidy, refined, courteous and wear modest, neat attire, we would never be classified as a gazing-stock in God's eyes.

Here are some who would qualify as gazing-stocks!
May we take care never to be a gazing-stock!



Another objection to dress reform is that it is inconvenient.



Staff members tend gardens at Loma Linda, early 1900s

Is the most convenient style of clothing the only criteria that should determine what God's people should wear?

God says, If the world introduce a **modest**, convenient, and healthful mode of dress, which is in accordance with the Bible, it will not change our relation to God or to the world to adopt such a style of dress. ***Christians should follow Christ and make their dress conform to God's Word. {CG 415.1}***

It doesn't matter how convenient something is if it is not modest, and it goes against other biblical principles

What does God have to say regarding the excuse of inconvenience?



“It is the duty of every child of God to inquire: ‘Wherein am I separate from the world?’ Let us suffer a little inconvenience, and be on the safe side. What crosses do God's people bear? They mingle with the world, partake of their spirit, dress, talk, and act like them.” {1T 277.1}



“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.” {1T 525.1}

Another objection to dress reform is, some would say, “This is so old fashioned!
You’re going back to the 1800s!”





Actually, we're going back way further than the 1800s. We're going all the way back to Bible times, and accepting the biblical standard of womanly modesty. **It just so happens that Adventist women followed the biblical standard of womanly modesty during the late 1800's to the early 1900's when Ellen White was alive.**



Ellen White had to deal with people complaining about God's style of dress being too old-fashioned.

Here is what she said:
"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 478.3}

Should we, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, be worried about what the ungodly world thinks about what we wear?

Jesus told us clearly what the world will think about His true followers. He said that the world will hate us. And the Spirit of Prophecy tells us what the world will think about the way we look:

“The age in which we live is one of temptation, and if the people of God stand clear from the corrupting influences around them, they will be termed, ‘peculiar,’ ‘old-fashioned,’ and ‘odd.’ ” {RH, November 18, 1890 par. 8}

“When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, straight-laced extremists.”{RH, January 9, 1894 par. 10}

Let us, instead of fearing the world, pray for moral courage to stand strong, even in the midst of ridicule and persecution!

Seventh-day Adventist Christians are not in a popularity contest with the world.

We are in a great controversy between good and evil, and our greatest enemy is SELF—our love of the world.

“The question with men and women gazing heavenward is, How can I obtain the mansions for the blessed? It is by being a partaker of the divine nature. It is by escaping the ‘corruption that is in the world through lust.’ It is by entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, laying hold of the hope set before you in the gospel. It is by fastening yourself to Christ and straining every nerve to leave the world behind.” {OHC 75.3}

“They must have the converting power of God before they can be a blessing to others. Unless they are converted daily, they will have a continual warfare with self. They may plead for their own way, but their way is not always the right way. They must fall upon the Rock, and be broken.” {19MR 374.3}

Would it not stand to reason that God has a standard of modesty for women that would apply in every culture and era—a standard that includes simplicity, healthfulness and womanly modesty?

Perhaps the styles are not the same, the fabric is not the same, the colors and patterns are not the same, the design is not the same, ***but the overall principles of womanly modesty are the same.***



All of God's daughters throughout history have needed to guard against revealing their flesh and form in a prideful, seductive way, and all have been called to avoid the mannish styles promoted by a rebellious society.

So it still holds true today. God's standard of womanly modesty applies to God's daughters in these last days.



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, tights or nylons.

Furthermore, a knee length dress over bare legs certainly could not qualify as being in harmony with the principles of true modesty or health. Yet, this fashion that leaves women's legs exposed to the sight of all and chilly in cooler weather, is prevalent in the church and approved by most pastors.





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.

Another objection is: It's Too Late to Teach This Extremely High Standard

It's so far from what people wear that it would just cause division and problems.

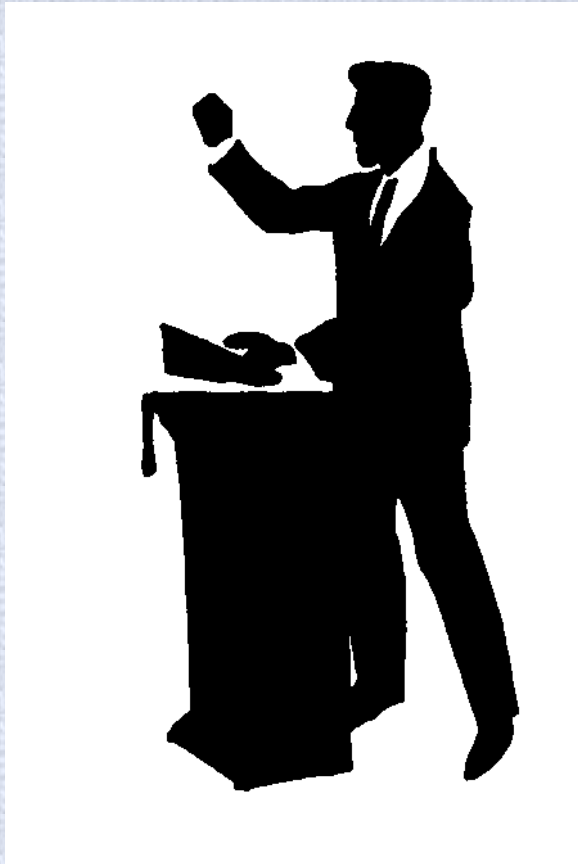
Granted, God's standard of modesty is high, much higher than most Seventh-day Adventists have ever imagined.

“God calls His church to be more separate from the world in their dress than you have thought.” {TDG 295.4}

Many pastors fear preaching or even condoning the teaching of such a high and seemingly unattainable standard to those who have become so accustomed to immodest fashions.



But, if teachers of dress reform teach it gradually with love for God and man being the motivator, God will speak to the hearts of those who are truly Christians, as we exemplify these standards of selfless sacrifice in our lives.



One of the reasons why we rarely hear the topic of modesty addressed in our pulpits is because our SDA pastors have exalted their human opinions as the standard. Yet, 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? So, they don't preach on modesty, or if they do, they hold up a low standard.



Pastors would be much better off not speaking on modesty until they are willing to support the Biblical standard, and point people to the Spirit of Prophecy, where the people can read God's counsel for themselves. Especially in their own homes should the standard be upheld. Leaders shouldn't let their fear of conflict allow them to 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. If pastors set these inspired standards aside, labeling them as old fashioned and non-applicable, and go about to establish their own standards based upon society's current view, they will end up changing their definition of modesty every few years.

With this mode of reasoning, when nudity becomes acceptable, wearing the skimpiest clothes available now will seem modest in comparison.

God's principles may seem way too high to those who are not familiar with them. There is a strong temptation to discount and disregard standards we are not used to. If we are truly sincere in seeking His will, we must lay aside our opinions and preferences.



Reform is not easy. It takes courage.

“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.” {4T 636.2}



We encourage and applaud all those who begin taking steps toward practicing God's standard of womanly modesty. For some, the first step is just covering their most sensual areas. Many times, this commitment to modesty begins a process of analyzing and adjusting one's wardrobe over time. As long as women are willing to do God's will, they will continue to make reformations in this area until they reach the highest standard.



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}

Another objections is: Dress reform will distract from the Gospel



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. However, many honest, godly men will admit that immodesty distracts from the delivery of the gospel.



Ignoring dress reform also limits the work of the gospel in a woman's own heart. Minor principles become major issues to individuals when they are firmly resisted, thus hardening the heart against the Holy Spirit. "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}



That is why we, as part of the growing army of dress reformers led by inspired counsel, are calling our Seventh-day Adventist Church to return to the biblical standard of womanly modesty.



True dress reform is closely linked with genuine faith—faith that grasps hold of divine power which brings us into harmony with God’s will. Holiness is the inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit, with shamefacedness and sobriety which leads a woman to shun worldly fashions and attitudes and to cling to Jesus alone.

Some pastors will resist this message, claiming, “I Don’t Feel Called to Teach Dress Reform”



There has been much harm done by the current standard that is being defended by many pastors who, by their silence or outright defense, have condoned the current fashions worn by church members, just because they are more modest than what they see in the mall.



We appeal to all SDA pastors to cooperate with dress reform and not to fight against it, as some have done. God gave some counsel especially for pastors in reproofing worldly fashions and pride of appearance. Silence is not an option for leadership.



“I have been shown that God here (in the story of Achan) illustrates how He regards sin among those who profess to be His commandment-keeping people. Those whom He has specially honoured with witnessing the remarkable exhibitions of His power, as did ancient Israel, and who will even then venture to disregard His express directions, will be subjects of His wrath.



“He would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him and are not to be lightly regarded. He shows us that when His people are found in sin they should at once take decided measures to put that sin from them, that His frown may not rest upon them all.



“But if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for those sins. In His dealings with His people in the past the Lord shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, they should seek God earnestly, in great humility and self-abasement, until the wrongs which grieve His Spirit are searched out and put away.

“The prejudice which has arisen against us because we have reproved the wrongs that God has shown me existed, and the cry that has been raised of harshness and severity, are unjust. God bids us speak, and we will not be silent. **If wrongs are apparent among His people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty.**



GUILTY



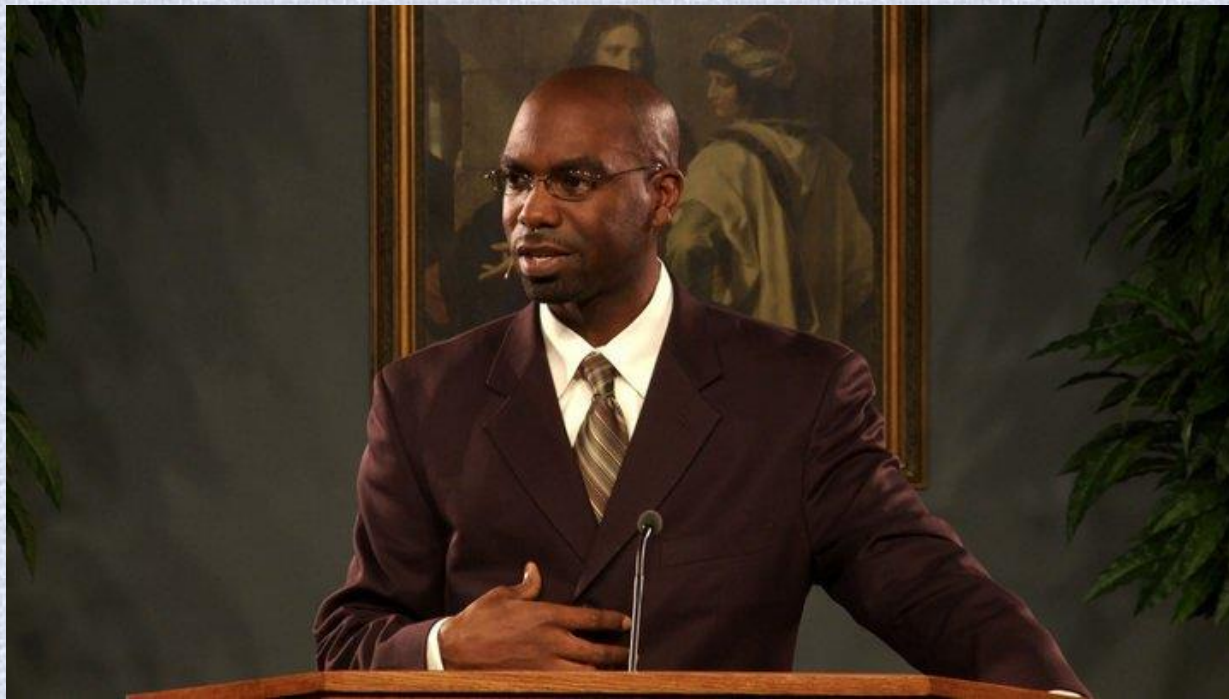
“In vision I have been pointed to many instances where **the displeasure of God has been incurred by a neglect on the part of His servants to deal with the wrongs and sins existing among them.** Those who have excused these wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable and lovely in disposition, simply because **they shunned to discharge a plain Scriptural duty.** The task was not agreeable to their feelings; therefore they avoided it.” {3T 265}



“Reform, continual reform, must be kept before the people; and your example should exemplify your faith.”
{PH100 49.1}

Faith is the means by which all genuine reforms are accomplished. The faith of Jesus is that which leads us to keep the commandments of God and bring glory to Him, even in what we wear. This is the message we are to bear to the world.

We admire all Seventh-day Adventist pastors and leaders who are willing to take a stand for God's principles, and to encourage the women in the church to study and understand how God would have them dress in these last days.



These are just a few of the objections we have addressed. You will find others in our presentation ***A Plain Distinction***, and on our websites:

www.RemnantRaiment.com

www.MovingTowardModesty.com

www.SistersInSkirts.com

www.TheAndrogynyDeception.com

May God bless you as you seek to glorify Him, even in your dress!

