

The Naked Church

“and knowest not that thou art . . .
naked:” Rev. 3:17





Today we would like to consider a popular practice that has brought the members of God's church into a near-naked state—swimming!



There is a strange idea that somehow the presence of water makes it acceptable to bare one's body almost to the point of nudity.

**We would like to review
swimwear fashions, starting
around the time Ellen
White wrote the following
quotation:**

**“In these last days, fashions
are shameful and
immodest.” {1T 188.3} 1855**



1855

In 1855, this
is what the
swimsuits
looked like.



1855

Women of society in general wore suits like these when swimming.

Both the arms and the legs were fully covered, and the form was concealed.



1864

**And not only that,
but they had
“bathing
machines” – little
houses pulled by
horses that could
be backed into the
water, so that
women didn’t
need to walk on
the shore in their
wet swimwear.**



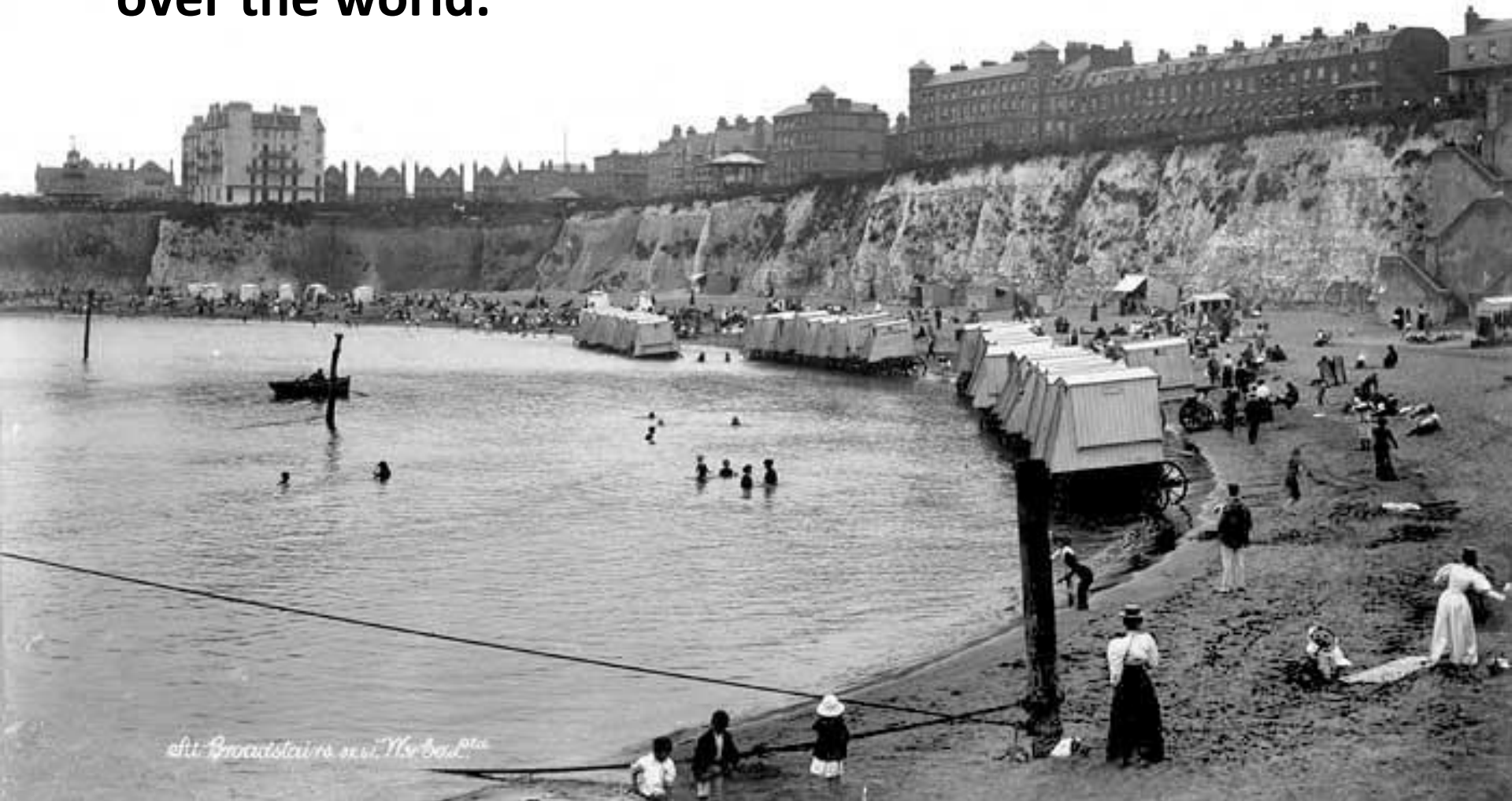
They could come from the water and climb right up inside their little changing rooms, and put on dry clothes. This way, they would avoid any “indecent” exposure caused by wet, clinging clothes.



During this time in history, people went to great lengths to make sure they protected the modesty of the women.

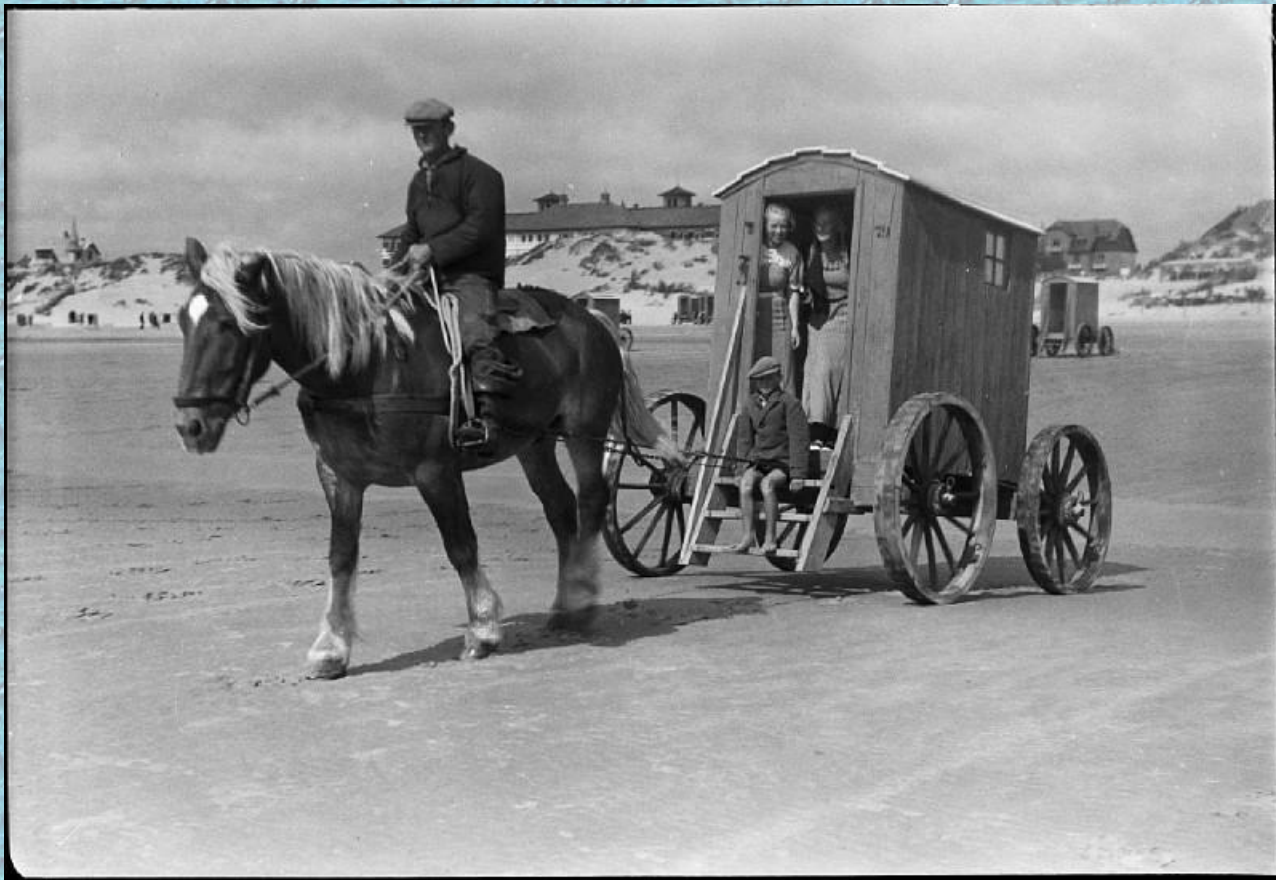


You can find photos of these
“bathing machines” from all
over the world.

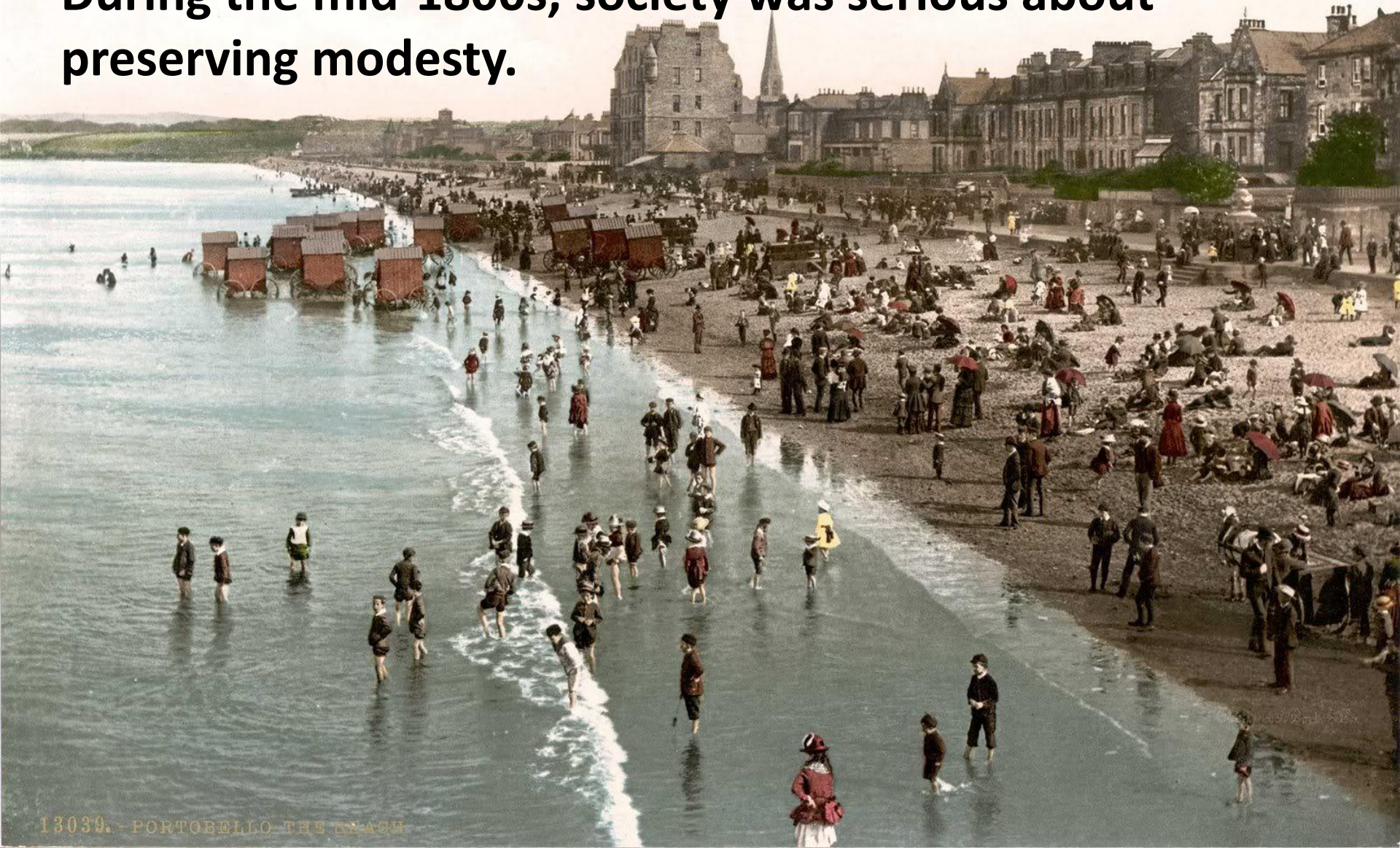


St. George's Bay, N.S.W. 1870

The husband and father was the guardian of the modesty of the women under his care.



If you didn't own your own "bathing machine" you could buy a ticket to use a public "bathing machine." During the mid-1800s, society was serious about preserving modesty.



The beaches in those days looked nothing like our beaches today. People were covered!



1884



But changes were soon to take place. No doubt the younger generation considered their parents “old fashioned.” New styles of swimwear were developing. The arms became bare.

Soon even the older women adopted the new fashion of bare arms when swimming.





The new fashion took hold, and no more covered arms were seen in swimwear.



In the 1880s and 1890s, during the bicycle fad, swimming was becoming more popular, and women were becoming “liberated.”

The next thing to change was to uncover the lower legs.



1880

The old “bathing machines” would soon be relics of the past.



With the abbreviated swimsuits, they weren't really necessary any more.



**Now the young ladies
could frolic on the
beach in their new
abbreviated swimsuits.**



By the early 1900s, the legs and arms became increasingly bare as the material decreased in the swimming costume.



But they still had to deal with those pesky old skirts. These were soon to disappear, as well.



1900



By the way, in 1922 a Washington DC law required bathing suits to be not shorter than 6 inches above the knee. You were arrested if you wore a shorter model.

The fashions were constantly calling for less material in swimwear.

Women rejoiced in their new freedom to reveal their bodies.



**Before long,
the skirts were
removed
completely!**



The boys took up the pastime of girl watching as the young ladies revealed more of the bodies.



**The swimsuits
were covering less
of the body, and
revealing more
skin.**

1918



**The next
step was
to
remove
the
sleeves.**



1922

Now we start to see photos of “bathing beauties” as woman posed for the camera in their exposed state.





The first “Miss America” contest was in 1920. It was a swimsuit competition. Here are the contestants.

By the 1920s the shape of the body was fully revealed in the swimwear.



While not all the young ladies wore this swimwear yet, the influence of those in swimming competition spread quickly.

1920s



As with any fashion, the young ladies had to join in to be in the popular crowd.



1922

To see young ladies like this on the beach must have been a terrible shock to the elderly, who had seen the totally covered swimsuits of the 1880s.

1930s



**Swimwear fashions
continued their decline
throughout the 1930s**

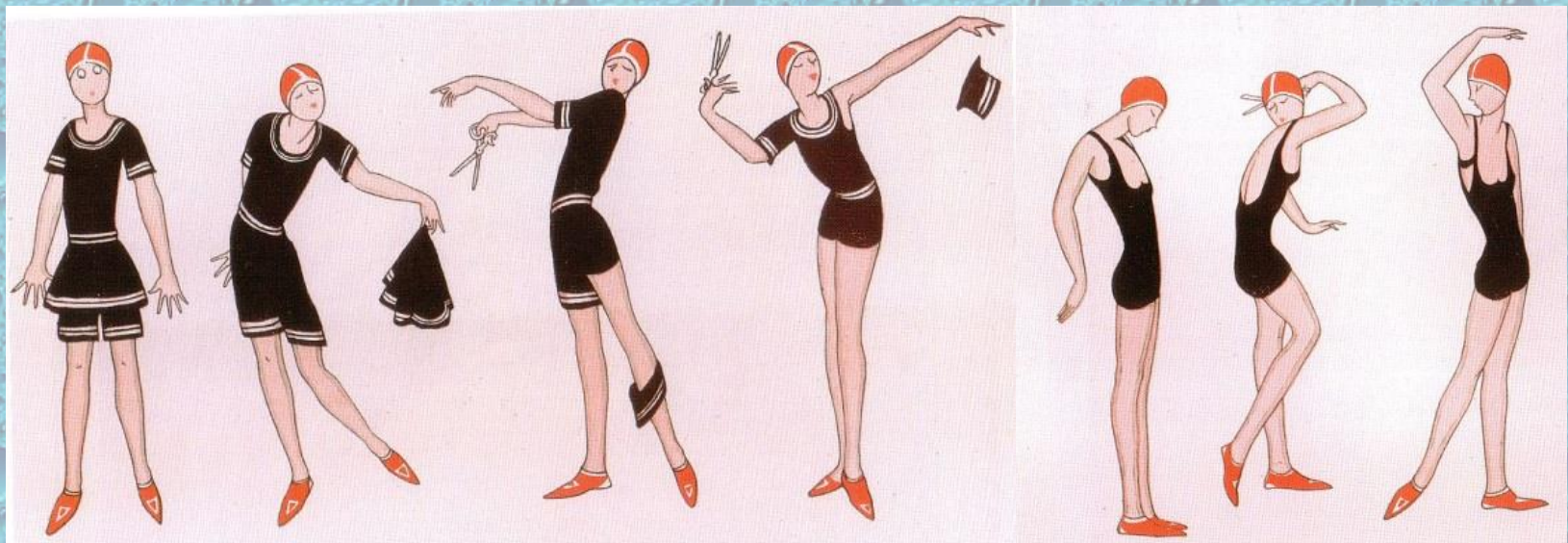


1930s

**Sunbathing
became a
popular activity,
since so much
skin was now
exposed.**



1938



This graphic shows the “progression” of swimwear from 1900s to the 1940s.

First the skirt goes, then the legs, then the sleeves, then continual removal of material.

**By the 1940s
swimsuits were
becoming quite
provocative.**

**The popularity of
these swimsuits
intensified through
the movie industry.**



1946



1946

The first 2 piece swimsuits were made available in 1946.

1946

It was in 1946 when the bikini was first introduced by an ungodly man from Paris. What an evil harvest this fashion has reaped!



Mr. Reard, the bikini originator, called it the bikini because he predicted this fashion would cause an atomic eruption in society.

Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.
The first nuclear test site of the Cold War.
Chilling inspiration for the world's coolest swimwear: the string bikini, invented by Louis Reard



1946

It took a while for the Bikini to become popular with the masses, but nowadays you can see them at every beach and poolside.





So, in less than 100 years, swimwear fashion had progressed from this to this!



This is NOT progress in God's eyes!

1900s

Australian swimmer and later on actress Annette Kellerman was one of the first women to sport a figure revealing one piece swimsuit as opposed to pantaloons which were the accepted attire at the time. Annette was arrested on a Boston beach in 1909 for indecency after wearing a one piece fitted swimsuit that came above her knee.

1910s

The 1910's saw the first big changes in fashion with knitted swimwear and tights although this style was still considered very daring. Jantzen Knitting Mill coined the term 'swimsuit' instead of the previously used 'bathing costume'.

1920s

The more figure revealing swimsuits of the 1900/10s came into their own in the 1920s with younger women wearing figure hugging tank suits made from wool jersey.

1930s

Swimwear started to become sexier in the 1930s with stars such as Jean Harlow, the original 'Blonde bombshell' posing in shorter more feminine styles.

1940s

War rationing provided stimulus for the two-piece, when the U.S government ordered manufacturers to reduce the amount of fabric used when producing swimsuits, but the actual design was courtesy of Louis Réard who invented and coined the term 'bikini' in 1946. After struggling to find a model to sport his two-piece, Réard selected 19 year old Micheline Bernardini, a nude dancer from Paris. The original design was so small it fit inside a matchbox.

1950s

Bikinis were banned from beauty pageants after the first miss world contest in 1951 but they weren't down and out for long. The most famous sex symbol icon of all time, Marilyn Monroe has become one of the most iconic female figures of the last century and not least because of this image of her in an itsy bitsy teeny weeny polka dot bikini!

1960s

Ursula Andress caused a stir in her bikini as 'The Original Bond Girl' in the first ever James Bond film. Dr. No, the iconic film scene will remain part of film history for decades to come and 40 years later the infamous bikini sold for \$60,000 at auction.

A HISTORY OF SWIMWEAR



1901

1970s

1970 saw the resurgence of the 'one-piece' when sex-symbol and Charlie's Angels star Farrah Fawcett donned her iconic red bathing suit for which the accompanying poster shoot, made millions of dollars and started an overnight trend of super tight swimsuits with low necklines and high cut legs.

1980s

Elle Macpherson, known as 'The Body' during her heyday poses here for the iconic Sports Illustrated magazine. The high waist bottoms scream classic 80s, as does the bold, two-tone design. High-waist bottoms have seen a comeback this summer, but let's just hope Elle's green bikini top stays in the 80s...

1990s

The return of the one piece by Pamela Anderson in the cult 90's show Baywatch - enough said.

2000s

The noughties moved away from the angular frame as a symbol of sexiness and fully embraced a return to the curves. One celeb who is not only renowned and celebrated for her curvaceous figure is none other than the gorgeous Beyonce Knowles.

2010s

Over the last few years Kim Kardashian of reality TV fame has appeared in her bikini on more magazine covers than we can keep count of to become the ultimate bikini wearing celebrity.

Although the teeny weeny bikini is still popular in the 21st century, 2012/2013 has seen the revival of high-waisted bikini bottoms and a new twist on the immortalised one-piece complete with cut-out designs and accessorising.

While not every woman wore a bikini, it became quite fashionable and accepted by society.



1950s

Through the years
Miss America
contests
continued to
parade near naked
women before
admiring
audiences.



1953

**The sad part is,
Seventh-day
Adventist women
joined in following
the swimwear
fashions of the day.**



1950

THE BIKINI Timeline

1900 - 2012



Let us seriously consider the implications of such a drastic change in swimwear fashion that took place in such a short span of time. What did God tell us?

“The people of God should not imitate the fashions of the world. All who do this will gradually lose that peculiar, holy character which should distinguish them as God's people. In these last days some of the fashions are shameful and immodest. 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. We are living in a time when earth's inhabitants are growing more and more corrupt, and the line of distinction must be more plain between them and the Israel of God, or the curse which falls upon worldlings will fall on God's professed people.” {RH, April 8, 1880 par. 5}

“Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will inevitably cause it to appear less repulsive.” {GC88 509.1}



Over the years, society has become conditioned through familiarity with sin. Seventh-day Adventist members have not escaped this conditioning process.

“Through familiarity with sin, their senses become so blunted that evil seems attractive to them, rather than abhorrent.” {CTBH 155.2}



As a people, Seventh-day Adventist have become so familiar with sin that we can't see anything wrong with uncovering our bodies in public, as long as water is nearby!



We must admit that sitting or walking next to a waterfront doesn't change what people see when they look at your body! The presence of water doesn't make men less likely to lust.



The skimpiest attire we are willing to wear publicly, (or what we would be willing to wear if our bodies were trim and in shape) molds our view of modesty. When our reserve is broken by wearing immodest swimming attire, it alters our sense of decency.



The most immodest garment that a woman chooses to wear in public (i.e. swimwear) sets the standard for the rest of her wardrobe. What she is willing to wear by the water influences what she will wear anywhere.





If we have no shame at showing our bare backs and shoulders, and our bare legs all the way to our crotch in swimwear, and perhaps even our midriff, we won't sense much shame when we wear immodest clothes elsewhere, even to church. Why should we? We've already shown it at the pool, so why should we be so diligent to hide it elsewhere?

Since the majority of Christian women's swimwear is virtually like the world's, we shouldn't be surprised that the divorce rate among Christians is just like the world's! Sexual purity and modesty are closely linked.



Should godly men who are striving to maintain pure minds purposely choose to go where worldly women are exposing their bodies in worldly swimming suits?

Shouldn't the fathers be protecting their daughters against immoral men?





Are we training our daughters to be immodest when they grow up? It begins when they're young, and progresses right through their lifetime.

If a Christian mother is willing to publicly wear a modern bathing suit, she must realize the total loss of her influence over her daughter in matters of modesty.



How can she bare her body in her swim suit, and then later tell her daughter she can't wear a clingy tank top or short shorts downtown. Her daughter will see right through the double standard.



The problem is, the daughter will most likely go one step beyond what her mother was willing to wear. That's why we have seen the standard of modesty drop lower and lower with each passing generation.



This is one of the reasons we have lost many of our youth to the world. They can see how we rationalize away God's standards in the area of Christian modesty, and other areas as well.



In March 1971, Don Hawley wrote in the Ministry Magazine,

“We decry the wearing of shorts, the backless back, the plunging neckline, and the miniskirt, pointing out that such people are "half naked." But if that person switches to a condition of being three quarters naked (i.e. into swim wear), then all is well.

“Apparently if we want to do something badly enough, such as engage in mixed swimming, then the laws of modesty can be temporarily abrogated.”

This brings us to the topic of mixed swimming . . .



Mixed swimming was unheard of in the early days of our church. As it was becoming popular in society, our leaders spoke out strongly against it.

“The Evils of Promiscuous Bathing”



“Closely related to the question of immodest dress is that of **promiscuous bathing** at popular resorts. Undoubtedly the free and easy association of men and women in scanty attire at bathing resorts is one of Satan's most fruitful sources of evil. Such association breaks down the barriers of modesty and reserve, and prepares the way for the entrance of evil which later corrupts the life.”
July 16, 1925 THE ADVENT REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD

“Temptations of the Summer”

By the Review
and Herald Editor
F.M. Wilcox,
June 13, 1929



“We believe that the style of bathing suits employed at the popular resorts of the day should not be used by Seventh-day Adventists in general **promiscuous bathing** [mixed swimming] on any occasion. God has called His people to be distinct and separate from the world. In the midst of the general laxness and lowered standards and prevailing wickedness of the last days, He calls them to a standard of purity and holiness around which there is to be gathered a people prepared for translation at the coming of the Lord.”



Youth's Instructor – December 9, 1958

QUESTION *What is wrong with girls and boys going swimming together if they are chaperoned?*

ANSWER The counsel you have evidently received against mixed swimming centers largely in the Bible instruction concerning modesty of dress. It would require a rather ingenious individual to invent arguments that the modern version of the bathing suit is "modest apparel."

While many refuse to recognize it, for boys and men to be in close association with girls and women in the near state of nudity that the current bathing suit creates is a very real source of temptation to wrong thinking and acting.

Neither does such dress encourage modesty among the young women when they are in street clothes.

Heart-to-Heart Talks by the Editor “A Better Way”

July 9, 1942 - THE ADVENT REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD

It is difficult to understand how conscientious Christian believers can find pleasure in many of the ways adopted by the world, in attendance at the theater and the movie, in joining the excited crowd at the commercialized baseball game, in frequenting popular swimming resorts.

We are receiving inquiries from the field regarding whether it is appropriate for our young people to go to the beaches and engage in mixed swimming. The influence connected with some of these popular resorts is anything but wholesome for the child of God, and we believe it is very unfortunate for our young people to enter the zone of this influence.

1867

Even though the ladies wore swimwear such as this in 1867, the early Adventists still did not participate in mixed swimming!



1867

**“Early
Experiences”
BY MAUD SISLEY
BOYD**

**(Our First Woman
Foreign
Missionary) as
recorded in The
Advent Review
and Sabbath
Herald, Oct. 17,
1935**

In those days we had very few holidays and no stated vacations. Usually once a year the office hands united with the rest of the church in a picnic at Goguae Lake, where the time before dinner was occupied by valuable talks, usually from Elder and Mrs. White. After partaking of a hygienic dinner spread upon the grass, we young folks went boating and swimming. The young women were taken to a secluded cove, where they were left till a set time, when the young men would call for them; no mixed bathing in those days.

In the same way other standards have been lowered through the years, you can see the sad progression of the acceptance of mixed swimming in our church. However, in March 1971, Don Hawley wrote in the Ministry Magazine,

“As far as I am aware, most of our colleges *still have segregated bathing*. If they do not, we are continuing to confuse our young people with our double standards.”

So, in 1971 it was still a general practice at our colleges to have segregated swimming. But today, mixed swimming has been fully accepted by our church leaders.



Perhaps you're in the "conservative" camp, and you wear shorts and a tank top or a T-shirt over your suit when swimming. In contrast to the rest, you feel very modest.

Consider this: The devil has led the world into the depths of immodesty. Then he tricks some Christians into thinking they're modest if they stay a few steps behind the world. They don't stop to think how far the world has fallen.



**If we are faithful
Seventh-day
Adventist Christians,
the world cannot be
our standard. We
need to look back at
our pioneers, and
remember the high
standards they
upheld.**



They kept themselves separate from the world, and did not practice mixed swimming even when fully covered!



For centuries women covered themselves in public, even when swimming. Not that long ago, swimwear included stockings that covered the legs, long sleeves that covered the arms and ample, loose covering on the torso. And even the ungodly, worldly women wore this modest attire at public swimming areas. Some beaches were designated as segregated swimming areas.



Should God's people in the last days be satisfied to maintain a much lower standard than in those early days, just because society has fallen so low?





It's dangerous to walk on the fence and compromise with the world!

Who is it that is trying to convince us that God's standard of modesty is lower now than it was when the pioneers were alive?

“Says the great deceiver, ‘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 . . .’”

{TM 474.1}

Modern swimwear has been the devil's "foot-in-the-door" trick to get God's church to take off their clothes and not even realize they're naked.



So, what do we as Seventh-day Adventist Christians need to do?

We need to stop wearing the immodest fashions of the world! We need to cover our bodies modestly when in public.





We need to teach modesty to our children when they're young, so they will understand the principles of Christian modesty.

There are some acceptable styles available for children.



Are there some options for ladies who want to turn away from worldly fashions in swimwear?

These styles are available for purchase online. While they do not cover as much as they should, they are certainly better than what many Seventh-day Adventist women wear when swimming.





While these styles are definitely an improvement over popular swimwear, they still don't match the modesty standards of Ellen White's day. Should God's people, on the brink of eternity, be contented to be less modest than society as a whole was 150 years ago? Aren't we supposed to manifest the highest standard of purity, as we overcome all worldliness, pride and lust?



Here is a picture of a California beach in 1905. How society has fallen!

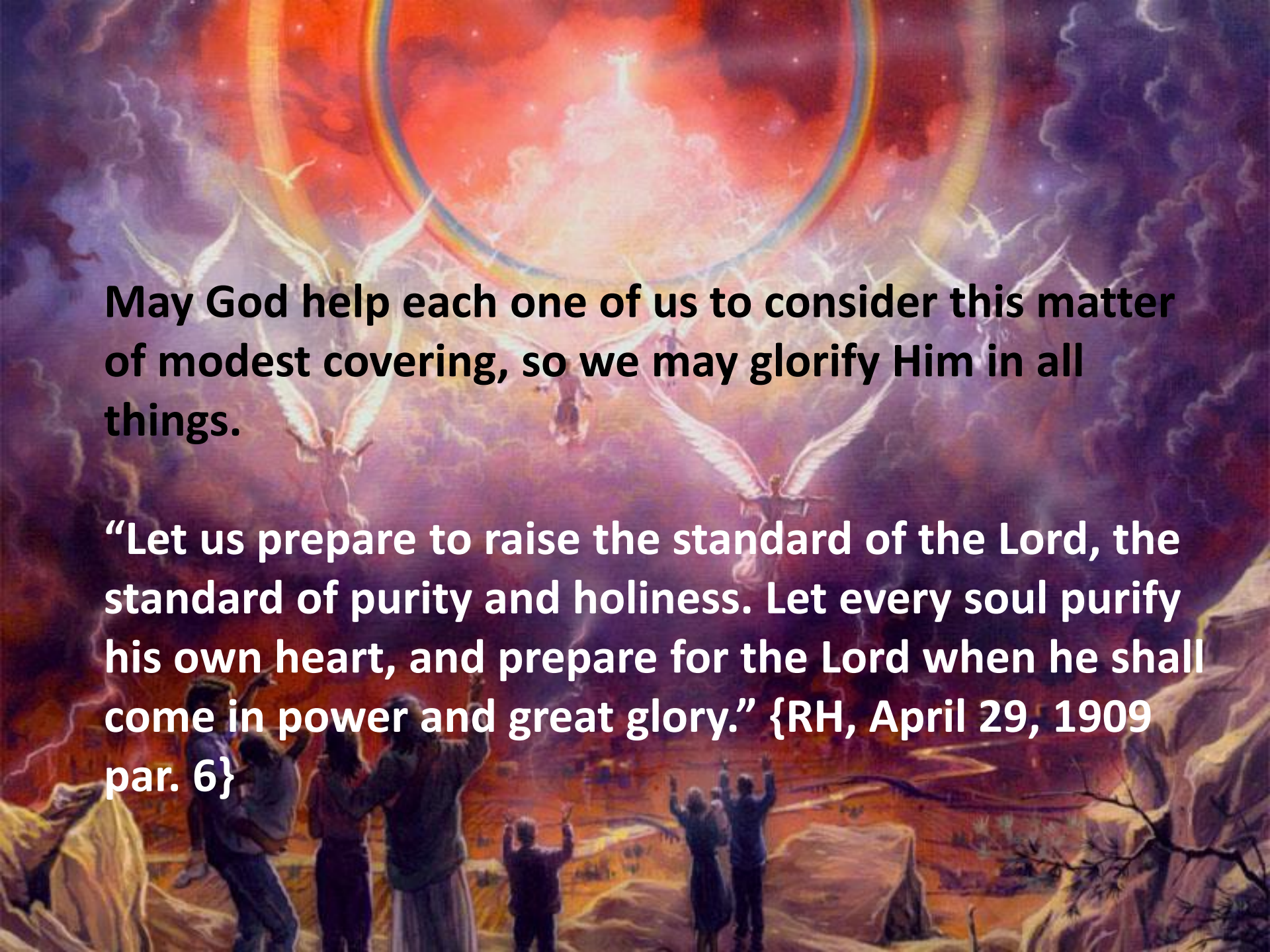
Our society has become so degenerate that we have become blind to the rampant depravity. Nearly naked people are everywhere on our beaches and by our pools. How desperately we need the eye salve of the Holy Spirit, to show us our nakedness!



Sadducea



What will be our reaction when God's Spirit shows us that we are naked?



May God help each one of us to consider this matter of modest covering, so we may glorify Him in all things.

“Let us prepare to raise the standard of the Lord, the standard of purity and holiness. Let every soul purify his own heart, and prepare for the Lord when he shall come in power and great glory.” {RH, April 29, 1909 par. 6}