

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

BIBLICAL VALUES ON DRESS
IN TEACHING CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

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Introduction:

The call to dress modestly and decently has been the outcry throughout biblical and cultural history. It is worrying people currently and my prediction is that it will continue to be a problem in the future. In Zimbabwe, our culture demands us to dress decently and adequately enough to cover our bodies. Even though our traditional two pieces of animal skins that covered our bodies around the loins and left us almost naked was acceptable in the past. Today, modern dress that mimic the same kind of insufficient body covering seems to be looked down upon culturally. The worldly people, however, seem to disregard some cultural values and capitalize on informal, scanty type of dress.

As informal dress gains much acceptance at the work place, most people however, continue to dress modestly as part of culture.¹ This same culture (of modest dress) has spread to different community settings causing some confusion as to what constitutes modesty even among the same cultural groups. “Your neckline is too low,” “That swimsuit is too scanty,” “Your pants are too tight,”² are typical admonitions often heard by some American young people from their own immediate families as they struggle to conform to modesty dress.

These admonitions pertaining to modesty dress are not restricted to young American people alone; they are often heard even among African people too. The Solusi family for example, acknowledges that our dress often reflects both our philosophy of life and our emotional maturity. Rather than prescribing all the particulars of dress code, we prefer to encourage each student to develop a personal, lasting philosophy of dress and grooming. Acceptable dress at the University is *occasion specific* as it varies from one occasion to another embracing the following standards:

At Solusi University, we believe that no education can be complete that does not teach the right standards in regard to dress, and that without the teaching of the standards, the work of education is retarded or perverted. In dress as in all things else it is our privilege to honour our Creator who desires our clothing to be not only neat and healthful, but also appropriate and becoming. Students, especially those in the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCSC) department are taught that clothes

¹ Mary, Kefgen; and Phyllis, Touchie-Specht. *Individuality in Clothing Selection and Personal Appearance*. A Guide for the Consumer. 4th Edition. Macmillan Publishing Company, a division of Macmillan, Inc. 1986, page 71.

² Jack Conrad. *The Many Worlds of Man*. New York: Crowell, 1964, Apollo ed., 1968, p. 117.

should strike a good *balance* that avoids the extremes of carelessness and untidiness; and overdress and showiness. Dress should be acceptable, befitting and appropriate to the occasion.³

We try very hard to we should walk our talk therefore faculty, staff together with students are encouraged to build the *self-confidence* to demonstrate security in the inner God given beauty of character and *self-worth*, without the need of '*supplements*'. Jewelry, conspicuous cosmetics, faddish dress and any other external extensions are discouraged; while modest dress that does not draw attention to one's body as an object by other people is well appreciated.

The Solusi Family works together as a team to encourage students to wear clothes that are activity specific. It is not unusual to find that, Lecturers, Residence Hall Deans and Food Services Manager may not allow tight clothing, cut-offs, shorts, and slippers particularly into the classrooms, church or dining room, as the three areas demand smart casual, formal, and semi-formal dress respectively.⁴

Solusi University Mission Statement seeks to "provide quality and holistic education at both undergraduate and graduate levels..."⁵ Holistic education from our perspective endeavours to wholly balance learners in the spiritual, mental, physical and social spheres and therefore, the purpose of my paper is to: ***Impart and uphold Biblical values on dress in teaching Clothing and Textiles in order to enable students to experience and demonstrate the love of Jesus in their daily lives. The final goal is to train students for a Jesus focused life-style and to reveal Adventist identity and uniqueness through dress and appearance.***

The Solusi University Family concurs with Ellen White who stated that:

A person's character is judged by his or her style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. It is right to love beauty and desire it, but God desires us to love and seek first the highest beauty – that which is imperishable." Ellen White continues to say "The choicest productions of human skill possess no beauty that can bear comparison with that beauty of character which in His sight is of 'great price.'⁶

Clothes selected and worn (we believe) should reveal God as the Creator and Author of beauty. The harmony of color scheme and creativity is aimed at producing our good taste in dress. We advise

³ Solusi University, *Student Handbook*. Student Affairs Publication: 2005, p. 27.

⁴ Solusi University *Student Handbook*. 2005, p. 27 and 28.

⁵ Solusi University *Bulletin* 2004-2006, P. 4.

⁶ Ellen, Golden, White. *Education*. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1903. p. 246 to 249.

and counsel students to respect, preserve and separate gender identities at all times. We do believe God's command to have a distinction between male and female should not be blurred.⁷

Definition of contextual terms:

The following are definitions of terms as used in my essay without any deviation from the Clothing and Textiles language.

Adornment:

Clothing and body decoration used to beautify including anything worn above and beyond purely physical needs.

Clothing:

"Body decorations such as cosmetics, tattoos, hair color and arrangements, ornaments of jewelry, badges and insignia of office or rank, extensions, of the body in the form of canes, umbrellas and handkerchiefs as well as apparel or garments."⁸

Clothing, dress, costume, body covering:

"Anything put on the body such as a textile or jewelry, and anything that is done to or applied on the body such as hair arrangement, painting, tattooing, or scarring."⁹

Culture and traditions:

Culture and tradition refer to customs, beliefs, values and accomplishments of a group of people.

Dress:

Dress refers to items of clothing including hair styles, accessories, and jewelry, makeup and body decorations.

Harmony:

Harmony is the combination of all the elements or parts of a garment that work together to create a pleasing whole.

Individuality:

Individuality is the sense of being different from another.

Modesty:

Modesty is "an outward goal that directs a person's behaviour"¹⁰

Ethnocentrism:

"The belief that one's own culture has the 'right' way to do things."¹¹

⁷ The Holy Bible (KJV) Deuteronomy 22:5 "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God."

⁸ Marilyn, J. Horn and Lois, M. Gurel. 1981. *The Second Skin*. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company. U.S.A. 1981, P. 11.

⁹ Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, p. 590.

¹⁰ Alison, Lurie. *The Language of Clothes*. Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publications data. 1983. p. 4.

Dress and Culture (Secular perspective):

Culture and society exist in the present, but they derive from the past. The history of dress is dated about 5 000 years ago in the year 3000 B C in the ancient civilization of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Brown defines culture as:

The sum total of the organization or arrangement of all the groups' ways of thinking, feeling and acting. It includes the physical manifestations of the group as exhibited in *clothing*, shelter, tools, and so on.¹²

Cultural traditions provide formulae for dress patterns, and they also impose limitations upon clothing. They (*cultural traditions*) determine what is appropriate. From early times until now and probably continuing into the future, the mores (*prevailing uses and traditions*) of a society exert pressure on individuals to conform to certain type of dress to preserve the welfare of its society.¹³

However, as communication among groups of people increases, acculturation of ideas takes place. Among other things, similarities of dress become evidently spread through the involved groups, adaptations are made and group uniqueness is compromised. In many parts of the world, Western dress has already replaced traditional folk dress because people have a great quest to be modern. In some countries this influence of Western style of dress and grooming is considered a potential cultural threat to those wishing to maintain their unique identity.¹⁴ As a result, when he took command of the Laos, Pather Lao ordered teenagers to give up their Western fashions and cut their hair. To reduce the pending cultural traditions threat, Pather went further and forbade the wearing of jeans, lipstick and nail polish as well.¹⁵

Seemingly dress became a disturbing issue as some world travellers are reported as having been embarrassed, intimidated and barred from some countries because of how some officials perceived their dress. One example of such restrictions is evidently recorded during Dr. Kamuzu, Banda's reign, in the African Republic of Malawi. In Malawi, a barber was placed at the airport ready to trim male travellers' *locks* if immigration officials deemed the locks 'unreasonably' long or for any other reasons they considered unacceptable. Women were forbidden to wear *mini skirts, pants* or *shorts* except for sports or at resorts. In Saudi Arabia, women travellers showing arms or legs

¹¹ Mary, Lynn, Damhorst; Kimberly, A. Miller; and Susan, O. Michelman. *The Meanings of Dress*. FairChild Publications, Inc. 1999. p. 19.

¹² Ina, Corrine, Brown. *Understanding Other Cultures*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice- Hall. 1963, p. 3.

¹³ Ibid p. 3.

¹⁴ Ibid p. 3.

¹⁵ Kefgen and Touchie-Specht. P. 82.

violated Islamic law and therefore were punished.¹⁶ In Israel, Mea Shearim a very orthodox area had multi-language signs warning women visitors who wore *cut-offs, short skirts or pants* at their own risk of being stoned.¹⁷ In Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Burma, people who wore *long hair, blue jeans* and had *unkempt look* were denied entry or stay in an attempt to reduce street crime and drug use among their own youth and tourists.¹⁸ Ayatolla Khomeini, a fanatic Moslem, ordered women to wear the traditional chador (*body covering veil*) at all times in public, and even in water, swimming. He (Khomeini) ordered the separation of male and female genders at schools; forbade music; and called for prompt return to strict Islamic laws.¹⁹ As if what was viewed as being inappropriate dress cross culturally was not enough, androgynous dress (*a view that acknowledges no difference between male and female as far as dress is concerned*) had its way during the nineteenth-and twentieth-century. Color, design and informality, another introduction of masculinity, the natural face, quietly crept in the fashion industry.

While clothing, especially men's clothing was moving from a very conservative choice to a much wider freedom of variety of fashion with its general social phenomenon that affects and shapes and mankind as a whole, the "rock and roll" stars of the 1960's got dressed flamboyantly. "Hip huggers" and "Bell bottoms" also called "Low rise" and "Flares" respectively became very popular with homosexuals especially wearing the tight and body revealing styles. Most men switched to the then fashionable tight jeans. These body conforming jeans pushed men into carrying attaché cases and purses because close fitting jeans live no room for pockets.²⁰

The rock and roll celebrities led by Elvis Presley began to use cosmetics including: *eye-liners, mascara, and cheek blusher and lip gloss*. David Bowie and Alice Cooper joined Elvis in the 1960s and 70s. The "punks" of England influenced dress and adornment in many directions. England's Boy George and America's Michael Jackson brought male make-up which they wore on and off stage to an abrupt climax in the 1980's. Boy George cross dressed in feminine attire while Michael Jackson wore make-up and had feminine hairstyles up to date. There was something new in that culture as men dressed like women and therefore, writers called the patrons to the new style the *third sex*. Jean Paul Gaultier a French designer wore a skirt and used highly adorned male and female and transsexual models. Gaultier believed that "men and women can dress alike and still

¹⁶ Ibid p. 84.

¹⁷ "Immodest Dress Latest Religious Issue in Israel," *Los Angeles Times*. August 25, 1977, Pt. 1, pp. 1 and 11.

¹⁸ Ibid p. 84.

¹⁹ "According to Code," *Los Angeles Times*. August 2, 1979, p. 1.

²⁰ Kefgen and Touchie-Specht. P. 104.

look different. Masculinity is not a question of skirt or trouser” he said. “It is in the head,” he added.²¹

From the views stated by different cultures studied, it looks like most people the world over were very uncomfortable with the evident departure from culture and traditions as far as dress was concerned. Conrad sums up this dilemma when he says:

To speak of superior practices in clothing ornamentation is impossible as far as beauty and status are concerned. There is and can be no universal best way to be beautiful or modest, or show one’s position in society. Each society has its own rules and these are right for it. Cultural learning alone determines our preference for a plaid skirt rather than a chest tattoo, for pierced ears rather than pierced lips.²²

Damhorst, Miller and Michelman echo the same sentiments when they define ethnocentrism as “The belief that one’s own culture has the ‘right’ way to do things.”²³ Indeed every culture and tradition has its own different views about dress as revealed in the four theories pertaining to the original functions of clothing.

1. Modesty Theory:

The modest theory is also known as the *Mosaic Theory* since its origin is from the Old Testament. It is the Biblical version for why people wear clothes. Moralists believe that our innate feelings of guilt and shame resulting from exposure of particular parts of the body date back to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve had a new awareness of themselves and each other in their nakedness and shame which made them seek cover (Genesis 3:7). Not everybody is Christian and therefore, the modesty theory has been disputed on three accounts which are:

- Body parts that clothes are used to conceal differ from culture to culture therefore the Modesty theory is not universal.
- Expressions of modesty are habits set by the society one lives in. They are not instinctual.
- Even within one particular culture, variations occur depending on age, gender, sub-cultural groupings, locations, and situational factors; for example:
 - The Soya Indians of Brazil are not ashamed of their naked bodies; but are terribly embarrassed if outsiders see them without *lip disks* and *ear plugs*.

²¹ “Clashing with Convention,” *Newsweek*, October 29, 1984, p. 136.

²² Jack Conrad, p. 118.

²³ Damhorst, Miller and Michelman, P. 19.

- Few English or American people see nothing indecent about nudity in art, but even today some people within their culture are horrified at the idea of opposite sexes bathing together.
- Japanese sexes customarily bathe together, but nude art is considered indecent. Some people in Central America hold the same concept too.
- Women on the island of Yap in the South Pacific hold a very strict tradition of modesty about covering their thighs not their breasts.
- Mohammedan women quickly cover their faces not their bodies when they find that someone is watching them taking a bath.
- The Tuareg tribe of Mali, Southern Algeria and parts of Nigeria have men in veils covering their mouths as they consider it shameful to expose them (mouths) particularly to their own people.
- The Chinese up until the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949 leading to the communist philosophy of uniform dress, clothing was worn very high to the neck, covering the breasts, but, with a very high slit up the leg.
- Cretan ladies in 1600BC wore elaborate skirts with short sleeved bodies that left the breasts bare.
- The royal and upper class Egyptian women of the old and middle kingdoms wore straight sheath dresses extending from below the breasts to the ankles, hung from shoulder by a strap.
- However, bare looks, bare backs, no bra; and see-through clothing seemed to defy the concept of modesty moralists hold.²⁴

2. The Immodest Theory – Nudist Theory:

Nudists contend that, clothing is not the result of modesty, but the cause of immodesty. Their argument is that children are not embarrassed by their nakedness until they become accustomed to wearing clothes. They continue to say,

- Clothing is used not to cover the body but to attract attention to it. This is because; “the removal of clothes or garments is far more erotic than going without them in the first place.”
- Nudists content that once the sight of the human body becomes common, the importance attached to sex differences disappear.

²⁴ Damhorst, Miller and Michelman, p. 22.

- Clothes that cover the body do not necessarily conceal it as they may be extreme in exhibiting it e.g. tight clothes that follow body contours (*exhibitionism*).
- Nudists have it that the body was first covered as a sexual lure and clothes were used to call attention to the body parts that they covered. According to the nudists, following are items of clothing that seem to have as their sole or primary purpose of calling attention to body parts:
 - Short skirts and pants.²⁵
 - Narrow skirts with long slits, front, sides or back.
 - Tight clothes in general.²⁶
 - Knit tube tops.
 - Tight jeans.
 - Tight sweaters.
 - The bare look.
 - Bare backs, shoulders, or low necklines.
 - Textured stockings and,
 - Pointed shirt tails.

3. The Protection Theory – Functionalist Theory:

Anyone who has shivered in the cold or blistered in the sun appreciates the physical protection that clothes provide.²⁷ Clothes that protect us from both extremes of weather are a necessity.

4. The Adornment or Decoration Theory – Aesthetics Theory:

To adorn means to “make attractive” or to “lend beauty” and in the case of clothing, the object of adornment becomes the self.²⁸ Lapitsky; Maryswork; in Horn and Gurel indicate that aesthetic values in clothing are extremely significant among adult women. Factors such as price and durability are often rated lower than a nice appearance in dress. According to consumer preference studies they add, appearance was found to be one of the most important criteria considered in the selection of skirts and other clothing items. As men become fashion conscious too, their highest

²⁵ Ibid p. 22.

²⁶ Ibid p. 23.

²⁷ Damhorst, Miller and Michelman p. 24.

²⁸ Ibid p. 26.

value has been placed on their appearance; and style and fashion have become important reasons for their (man's) buying motivations.²⁹

All people decorate or alter the human form in some way to attract the attention of the opposite sex. However, what is considered beautiful and what is sexually attractive are not the same for all people as dress may communicate different messages.³⁰ Dress as a communication system is extremely complex. In any one appearance, messages may be sent simultaneously through a variety of channels. Dress can communicate via the auditory, olfactory and tactile and visual channels as we hear the tapping of heels, smell e.g. perfumes, feel using the tactile component of textiles and see as we look at a fabric and be able to make a guess that a fabric is soft e.g. velvet and decide to take it or leave it.³¹

Clothes can reveal your personality to other people around you because they are indeed a keynote to you as a person. You therefore, can not afford to toss the question of dress aside with the remark, "If people can't like me for what I am, they need not like me for my clothes," Rush and Craig point out.³²

James Laver defines modesty as "an inhibitory impulse directed against either social or sexual forms of display." It is opposed both to the wearing of gorgeous clothes, and to the wearing of too few clothes. It aims on one hand, at prevention of disease or satisfaction (social or sexual) and on the other at the prevention of disgust, shame or disapproval from other people around us.³³

The thirst to adorn the body with eye-catching clothes, expensive jewellery, an array of attention-calling accessories and colorful cosmetics has left only the minority uninvolved. Nonetheless, we must be aware that it is dangerous to thoughtlessly express the values of business community that dresses for material success, or youth culture that promotes dress to express independency and self-display. This is especially so today, as the fashion industry capitalises on the marketing of clothes, jewelry, and cosmetics designed to promote pride, vanity and seductive behaviour. The users of the above listed items used to adorn one's body do not think the motives they are said to portray should be taken as being offensive but, as a different way of dress that's all.

²⁹ Lapitsky and Maryswork in Horn and Gurel p. 27.

³⁰ Horn and Gurel p.28.

³¹ Damhorst, Miller and Michelman. P. 80.

³² Hazel, Thompson, Craig and Ola, Day, Rush. *Clothes with Character*. D.C Health and Company: USA. P. 3.

³³ James Lover, *Modest in Dress*. Boston: Houghton, 1969, p. 13.

Whether we agree with such thinking or not, this kind of thinking may raise the major problems of negative motives, leading to the following questions. When we dress for church or any other occasion, do we dress for the Lord, ourselves, or for others? If our dress is to respect the Lord, does it reinforce our humility or our pride? These are not easy questions to answer as it is known that plain dressers have been accused of taking pride in being plain as well.

To adorn means to make attractive or to lend beauty.³⁴ In clothing, the object of adornment becomes the self. Those who accept the adornment or decoration theory believe that all people have an urge to express themselves creatively and this urge to improve the appearance is universal. It is a fact that there are no people known to us, past or present that do to adorn their bodies in some fashion depending on the type of theory that befits their culture, values and life-style. This being the case, Moralists would be wise to study what God has in store for us. It is by no doubt that Christians should consult the Bible in such dilemmas by asking the question, what is the Bible's instruction about dress?

Biblical Perspective versus Secular Perspective on Dress:

Scriptures tell us to dress from the inside out. We should be clothed with the garment of humility toward one another because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to be humble" (1 Peter 5:5).³⁵ As God's chosen people, Greek or Jew exists among us because Christ is all, and is in all. We are admonished to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3: 11 and 12).³⁶ Paul in (Romans 13:14) brings advice to God's children to clothe themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and never to gratify the desires of sinful nature.³⁷ Warning is given to us from James about the evil of giving better treatment to the well dressed while we look down upon the poorly dressed (James 2: 1-5).³⁸ Jesus Himself warned the Pharisees for their observance of external cleanliness while they were in fact fraught of sin inside (Luke 11:39).³⁹ This inspired counsel has been taken lightly by many but the truth is, as God's children, we cannot afford to be more concerned about our appearance than we are about the condition of our hearts. Christians dress to glorify God, and our clothes serve as a frame to reveal the picture of the Omnipotent-God we serve.

³⁴ Horn and Gurel, p. 26.

³⁵ 1 Peter 5:5. *The Holy Bible (NIV)*.

³⁶ Colossians 3:11 and 12 *Holy Bible (NIV)*

³⁷ Romans 13:14.

³⁸ James 2: 1-5.

³⁹ Luke 11:39

In no better way”, wrote Ellen White, “can you let your light shine to others than in your simplicity of dress and adornment. You may show to all that, in comparison with eternal things, you place a proper estimate upon the things of this life.”⁴⁰

Christians should take note that our outward appearance is a visible and silent testimony of our Christian values. Some people choose to dress and adorn their bodies with costly clothes to please themselves. Their wealth, power, or social status is prioritized in order to please others. They are in conformity with current fashions for admiration by others. Their dress code is tailored to suit their peer groups. “What I look like is no one’s business!” they say but what they do not know is that, what we look like reflects on who we believe in. God is our Father and we are stewards of His property.

Our houses, cars, time, money and personal appearance should reflect that Jesus dwells in us. When we invite Jesus into our lives, He cleanses us wholly by working from within, not by any cosmetic cover. Contrary to the outward appearance that reflects a painted face worn by seductively dressed women with glittering jewelry, extravagant clothes displaying a self-centred individual, inner renewal is reflected by a radiant smile on the face of clean, modestly dressed children of the Almighty God. The apostles Paul and Peter give us admonitions against inner pride and vanity which are destructive to ourselves and others. Pertaining to appearance and character, Paul writes to Timothy his true son in the faith using the terms “decent, sober and well-ordered” to describe the appropriate adorning for Christian women⁴¹ (1 Timothy 2:9 and 10) and (2 Peter, 3:3-5). Dress should not cause shame to God, self, and others; rather, it must be modest, decent and adequate to provide sufficient covering. The principle of modest and decent dress is very relevant, especially today when modern dress fashions reject appropriate dress as a basis for human relationships that are attractive. Our main task is to shun and reject seductive dictates of fashion and choose to dress in a manner that reflects our outward appearance of natural beauty, simplicity and elevated purity. The terms soberly and self-control determine all other virtues. A sober woman’s appearance does not negatively say “*look at me, admire me*”, rather it says “*look at how Christ has changed me from the inside out*”. Ellen White reminds us that:

Those who worship at fashion’s altar have but little force of character... They live for no greater purpose, and their lives accomplish no worthy end. We meet everywhere women whose mind and heart are absorbed in their love for dress and display. The soul of

⁴⁰ E.G.White. *Testimonies to the Church* vol.3. p.376.

⁴¹ “I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.” (1 Timothy 2:9-10) (Peter 3:3-5) *The Holy Bible (NIV)*.

womanhood is dwarfed and belittled, and her thoughts are centred upon her poor, despicable self⁴² (*Testimonies for the Church*).

Paul and Peter contrast the appropriate adorning of Christian women and the inappropriate ornaments of worldly women. Both apostles highlight the outward ornaments of the body as being inconsistent with the appropriate inward ornaments of the heart, the quiet spirit and benevolent deeds.

Christian women who have been freed from the bondage of self admiration are not afraid to wear the same dress over and over for as long as it is clean, well-made, wears well and conservative. Ellen White further gives counsel against being lavish upon ourselves at the expense of others, who may need God's money. "Our money" is God's money. That money is supposed to feed the hungry, maintain widows and orphans in good health; and one tenth of it is to be *returned* to God in Tithes and Offerings⁴³ (*Child Guidance*).

God really cares about His children's dress as evidenced in Isaiah's reproof against Jewish women who dressed with a seductive motive. In this passage, dress communicated a negative message about wealthy Jewish women. Their dress and adornment which revealed inner pride and vanity, seduced others. These Jewish women seduced leaders, a behaviour that lead the whole nation into disobedience and Divine punishment. Body decorations are not for Christians. The Jewish women adorned themselves with bangles, headbands, crescent necklaces, ear, nose, and signet rings; and many other decorations which provoked God into punishing them. The Lord bought them a stench, sores on their heads and baldness on their scalps, sackcloth, and branding instead of fragrance, well-dressed hair, fine clothing and beauty respectively⁴⁴ (Isaiah 3:16-26).

Jezebel's name has become a symbol of seduction in Biblical history. To the Church in Thyatira God shows His wroth to the Israelites for conforming to her ungodly desires. Jezebel seduced them into sexual immorality and idolatry⁴⁵ (Revelation. 2:20). Her final hour as we read in (2 Kings 9:30-37) is marked by her destruction. Jezebel was thrown out of a window down to her death after she had made an attempt to seduce the new King (Jehu) at his arrival in Jezereel. Jezebel as her

⁴² *Testimonies for the Church*. Mountain View, California, 1948, volume 4, p. 644.

⁴³ Ellen Golden White. *Child Guidance*. Nashville, 1954, p. 421.

⁴⁴ *The Holy Bible*. Isaiah 3:16-26.

⁴⁵ *The Holy Bible*. Revelation 2:20.

custom, painted herself to attract the King's attention to her... God's anger did not spare her as her flesh became Jezreel dogs' food so that no one would ever say "This is Jezebel" again.⁴⁶

"Israel and Judah were lead into apostasy by Oholah and Oholibah two adulterous sisters who like Jezebel painted their eyes and decorated themselves with ornaments to lure men into adultery with them. God again directed His jealous anger against the two women and punished them to death. The two sisters were killed by their former lovers. Oholah died a sword death by Assyrians who stripped her naked and killed her. Oholibah too died a shameful death---naked and bare and her prostitution shamefully exposed⁴⁷ (Ezekiel 23).

From the accounts above, there is no doubt that ornaments and cosmetics can lead to seduction, adultery, apostasy; provoking God's jealous anger and causing Him to inflict divine punishment. It is sad to know that some Christians argue about the relevance of Old Testament. "It has been done away with," "It made sense only to the Jews" "Please read the context..." These are comments and contributions that come from some fellow Christians with no Biblical support whatsoever. The Old and New Testaments both reveal to us that, colorful cosmetics, glittering jewelry and eye catching clothes were used to accomplish seductive purposes. The Bible gives accounts of women who managed to lure and seduce men into adulterous acts using the same kind of adornment. We may try to twist God's Truth by manufacturing our own "truths" to suit our needs and situations but be warned that there is no right way of doing a wrong thing. We can only provide a way of doing the right thing wrongly with full knowledge that God's Truth never changes.

It is amazing how the Bible incorporates color as a negative contributory factor in clothing. It is true color especially red could have some genetic and psychological effects on human behaviour.

Today as in the past, Lurie points out certain details of costume convey direct sexual signals. Bright red clothing, exposure of more than the usual amount of flesh; and the wearing of revealing tight garments are universally recognized signs." She further comments that "today, excess jewelry could be suggestive of overtones of sensual laxity."⁴⁸

In the Bible, both Jeremiah and John focus on the scarlet color to address harlots of their time.

⁴⁶ *The Holy Bible*. 2 Kings 9:30-37.

⁴⁷ *The Holy Bible*. Ezekiel, 23.

⁴⁸ Alison, Lurie. *The Language of Clothes*. Library of Congress Cataloging in Publishing Data. 1981, p. 244.

What are you doing you devastated one? Why dress yourself in scarlet? And put on jewels of gold? Why shade your eyes with paint? You adorn yourself in vain. Your lovers despise you; they seek your life⁴⁹ (Jeremiah 4:30).

The scarlet color is said to call attention of other people to the wearer. It is warm and it advances. It brings objects nearer to the observer than they actually are. It communicates many messages. The great harlot described by John as dressed in purple and scarlet (Revelation. 17:4) represents the end-time apostate religious-political power that lures inhabitants of the earth into spiritual fornication contrary to the bride of Christ the Church, dressed in modest, pure linen without outward ornaments⁵⁰ (Revelation. 19:7-8).

The experiences of Jacob's family at Shechem and the Israelites at Mount Horeb both recommend the removal of ornaments to effect reconciliation with God (Genesis 35:2-3 and Exodus 33:4) respectively.

So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was in Shechem" (Genesis 35:4). "Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onward⁵¹ (Exodus 33:5).

Both at Shechem and Mount Horeb; the preparation to a renewal of a covenant commitment to God was demonstrated by removal of ornaments. We may wonder what the two experiences reveal to us. These experiences reveal to us the need to remove from our hearts the idols we cherish and replace them with devotion to God. They also teach us that we need to foster a humble attitude in order to facilitate reconciliation with God. If we do not learn of what the Almighty, God our Father expects from us His children, we are then, missing the whole point of being Christians.

As Christians, Jesus is our Model, we should model Christian values through Christ-like lifestyles and pass them on to students at our Institutions and to all around us by the way we live, *dress*, eat, give, act and think. We (teachers) have a challenge from Jesus to convey Christian values through the wearing of *modest dresses*, of *good quality*. Our attire should be of *good harmony* and *beauty*; it should be *economic*, *neat* and *well fitting*; and compatible with good health as well as befitting with our culture. A look at the birds and all other animals God created should give us an idea of how God loves us. They look so beautiful today that it is very difficult for humans to imagine how they

⁴⁹ *The Holy Bible*. Jeremiah 4:30. (NIV)

⁵⁰ *The Holy Bible*. Revelation 17:4 and 19: 7-8. respectively (NIV)

⁵¹ *The Holy Bible*. Genesis 35:4 and Exodus 33:5 respectively (NIV)

looked like before the fall. Nonetheless, God still sees our beauty regardless of our sins. That is why He invites us to Him as we are.

Application:

“The data or subject matter of an academic discipline may remain the same, says (Poe, pg. 149), but how people think about the discipline may vary widely depending on their philosophical perspective.”⁵² In the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCSC) discipline, Christian values provide the stimulus for concern in the first place. This is contrary to the philosophy held by some people in the secular world who tend to adopt a materialistic view of the nature of humanity. The social sciences discipline tends to explore the depths and heights of humanity because they (social sciences) are said to have grown out of the primary doctrines of the *Imago Dei*, thus making them different from the natural sciences which focus mainly on the chaos theory. Social Sciences study humans in their variety of dimensions and relations.⁵³ (Poe 127).

Social sciences deal with a subject related to the doctrine of creation, humanity, the implications of the fall and those concerned with humans, as being made by God. They examine and explore the best and worst of people i.e. the potential for which people were created alongside the reality of sin.

To put what we believe and teach into reality, Courses, CLTX 326 and CLTX 526 at Undergraduate and Graduate levels are taught theoretically and practically to assess values transmission. Students are instructed to:

- ❖ Design a pattern for a garment of their choice
- ❖ They chose a fabric suitable for the pattern
- ❖ The layout and cutting process is done by the students and they construct the garment
- ❖ They prepare the garment for an assessed fit for their final grade

Normally the variables of interest in the overall assessment will be:

- ✓ Suitability of the garment for the intended use
- ✓ Cost of fabric compared to quality and beauty
- ✓ Color harmony and suitability for occasion
- ✓ Neatness and finish and

⁵² Harry, Lee, Poe. *Christianity in the Academy*. Teaching at the Intersection of Faith and Learning. Baker Academic, 2004, p.149.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 129.

- ✓ Fit including length and body fit should be in conformity with Solusi University dress code.

Students from Solusi University have shown a difference in dress, discipline, commitment, industry, honesty, performance and character in general. Their uniqueness is quickly noticed wherever they go. They are so well placed at strategic and important positions such as Banks and Taxes Departments country-wide that they make us proud. Comments and questions such as “Your students are different,” “What do you do to them?” “Is it because at your University you pray?” are the order of the day especially when they are on industrial attachment. Praise and Glory be to God that our students come; they learn and conform to our unique Adventist Philosophy of doing things. Indeed our efforts are rewarded and we see them in the fruits harvested every year.

Conclusion:

The clothes Christians wear do not necessarily make them Christians, but they (Christians) should reveal their identity through their dress and appearance. The Bible is explicit and has a lot of admonitions about what Christians should avoid but it does not prescribe a standardized dress for Christian men and women to wear. It is unfortunate that no explicit specifications are Biblically documented but the terms modestly, with decency, and propriety given in 1 Timothy 2:9 I feel should be adequate, and sufficient guide for serious and committed Christians to follow. All it calls us to do is to follow the simplicity of Jesus’ lifestyle, in our dress and appearance. To follow Jesus in our dress and adornment means to swim against the current by not desiring to paint up and decorate our bodies as do the rest. No account is given anywhere about Jesus as a lover of fashion, all we know is He loved us to His death. Christians should always remember that even though we are in the world, we are definitely not of the world. This certainly calls for courage; courage to be transformed by the sensible dictates of the Word of God (Romans 12:2), and refuse to conform to the seductive appetites of fashion. Christians need to pray to God for wisdom; wisdom to realize the difference that exists between the God desired lifestyle that is permanent and eternal and the capricious dictates of inappropriate dress that change. We should quest for courage to exhibit a warm and sincere Christ-like character, that is not by powder deep coverings of cosmetic nature on our faces and gold or pearls or expensive clothes on our bodies (1 Timothy 2:9). We Christians should strive to beautify our souls with the graces of the heart, the gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in God’s sight (1 Peter 3:4). As Christians we should cultivate courage to dress not to glorify ourselves by use of external aids that include self decoration with jewelry and eye-catching clothes, but to glorify God by dressing modestly, decently, and soberly. We should remember that

our outward appearance is a constant silent witness of our Christian identity from within. May our *dress* always tell the world that we live to glorify God and not our own selves.