

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

August 2012

## Immodesty in the Church

By Bill Johnson



I received the following email from a Texas pastor. He wrote: *I'm a church leader who is very concerned about the attire of some of our mothers, wives, and their children who attempt to dress to appease the cultural fashion ideas of our society.*

*I noticed a young mother who was wearing what I can only describe as something fit for the beach - to morning church services! What is an appropriate way to convey to these mothers and/or their teenage daughters who dress in this manner, that it is entirely inappropriate without embarrassing them or making them feel uncomfortable?*

*I'm the one who is uncomfortable with how they dress and appear at*

*church. I shouldn't have to be subjected to their cleavage (in both body areas) or shots of their midriff while attempting to worship. What's a gentle, loving response you have had positive experience with in handling this type of situation? It's time to take a thoughtful stand here in Texas.*

### So how does one address this? A few thoughts.

1. Immodest dress may turn heads but it also stimulates wrong thinking - lust which is sin.
2. Jesus' words: *"You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* **Matthew 5:28 (ESV)**
3. Further, God's word says in Hebrews 12:14 *"Pursue holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."*
4. Dressing immodestly is not pursuing holiness. However, this doesn't

absolve men of their responsibility. Men are not to lust. But wouldn't a truly Christian woman abstain from dressing in a way that tempts men who are visually vulnerable?

### **What Christian would knowingly contribute to the downfall of another?**

We urge you by the mercies of God: please be careful.

**"Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God's judgement - hating what He hates, loving what He loves - and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word..."**

[*"Holiness"* by J.C. Ryle]

**Perhaps this bulletin insert will serve as a tool to remind men and women of the importance of modesty in all walks of life but especially within the church.**

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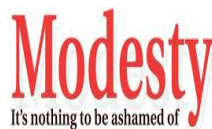
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## Comments from others

*Immodesty in the church is no small matter. We share the following comments to assist you in understanding the concern.*



### Letter #1:

*The problem [of immodesty] discussed in this email is rampant in the Evangelical community.*

*... As soon as someone talks about it we have the terms of legalism thrown in our face and the tragedy is that sometimes legalistic means have been used to address the problem.*

*I believe that the problem is a heart problem and not simply a case of this outward appearance.*

*The outward appearance is symptomatic of a person that has not spent enough time with God. I believe the place to begin is to make clear what the nature of saving faith is and then based on what we see in lives address the issues*

*of evangelism strongly in the areas of repentance and true Evangelical faith and I believe there will be a difference but it will not happen over night.*

### Letter #2:

*This subject is one that grieves me also. I recently attended a church service (supposedly evangelical) where the worship team was dressed very immodestly. One girl had the "mod" midriff style showing her belly button while another had pants that were so tight they had to be sprayed on her hips. I was deeply offended and found it very difficult to worship with that kind of exposure on the platform. What has happened to the Biblical teaching that Christians should dress modestly!*

### Letter #3

*We are constantly battling this issue in our church especially with the teen girls. We have a terrible time even with younger children ... Many are dressed like there is no standard at all left. Anything seems to go. Often this is an exterior sign that shows us the reflections of what is often occurring on the inside. We need*

*the Lord to intervene in hearts so that the outside becomes a testimony of changed lives.*

### Letter #4

*I agree wholeheartedly on this issue. Our society is bombarded with the flesh at every turn. A great cd series that I would like to recommend to all women is one that has been circulating in our church. It is titled, "MODESTY: Does God Really Care What I Wear?" and was put out by Nancy Leigh DeMoss' radio program, Revive Our Hearts.*

### Letter #5

*The truth is that this is a sad issue in the church. I am a woman and it bothers me when I see women and young girls dressing like an old issue of Playboy magazine. It angers me ... but if you dare say anything then you're told that you're being intolerant, not loving...*

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