

Frontline

AMERICAN DECENCY ASSOCIATION

Volume XXIII Issue III March 2008

When Unclothed is Unfitting



A few years ago John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, wrote a letter to his local newspaper decrying their use of scantily clad women in ads of the paper.

We believe Dr. Piper's words get to the heart of why we keep hammering away at Victoria's Secret's window displays. Here is part of what he wrote.

As a fourteen-year subscriber and reader of your newspaper, I am writing to express the persuasion that your sexually explicit ads that often turn up in Section A are increasingly offensive and socially irresponsible. The effectiveness of catching people's attention by picturing a woman in her underclothes does not justify the ads. The detrimental effects of such mercenary misuse of the female body are not insignificant. The harm I have in mind is described in the following nine persuasions.

1. This woman could not go out in public dressed like that without being

shamed or being mentally aberrant. Yet you thrust her out, even in front of those of us who feel shame for her.

2. This portrayal of a woman sitting in her underclothes at a table with a cup of tea disposes men to think of women not as persons but mainly in terms of their bodies. It stimulates young boys to dwell on unclothed women's bodies and thus lames their ability to deal with women as dignified persons. I have four sons.

3. The ad stimulates sexual desire which in thousands of men has no legitimate or wholesome outlet through marriage. In other words, it feeds a corporate, community lust that bears no good fruit outside marriage, but in fact many ills.

4. The ad makes sensibilities callous so that fewer and fewer offenses against good taste feel unacceptable, which spells the collapse of precious and delicate aspects of personhood and relationships.

5. The ad makes thousands of women subconsciously measure their attractiveness and worth by the standard of rarefied, unrealistic models, leading to an unhealthy and discouraging preoccupation with outward looks.

6. The ad feeds the prurient fantasies of ordinary men, lodging a sexual image in their minds for the day which can rob them of the ability to think about things greater and nobler than skin.

7. The ad condones the proclivity of males to mentally uncloth women by reminding them what they would see if they did, and suggests that there are women who want to be unclothed publicly in this way. This reminder and this suggestion support habits and stereotypes that weaken personal virtue and jeopardize decorous relationships.

8. The ad encourages young girls to put excessive focus on their bodies and how

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Personal note



Spiritual warfare. It's real!

Sometimes believers approach a new believer and try to prepare him/her for the spiritual battle that lies ahead.

Rightfully so! Being spiritual creatures we should expect the spiritual war to rage ever stronger, and it will never end this side of heaven. If you and I don't experience warfare, I submit something's amiss in our Christian lives.

I am more convinced of this than ever before. We are afflicted in so many churches with a sense that we somehow are supposed to be about pleasure, comfort, enjoying ourselves more often than not. It isn't that there isn't a place for relaxation, comfort, fun, but when personal peace and affluence become the object of our lives, we clearly are not in the will of God.

When at the grocery store, for example, you see the evil one having his way at the checkout counter. You find yourself reading some of the article titles and unable to avoid the revealing images. Be silent if you will, but spiritual warfare has stared you in the face and you have ignored your opportunity to oppose darkness.

The television is on and it's spewing out indecency, ungodliness and you sit there permitting it to engage yourself and your family. Remain silent or speak up?

Spending time on the Internet. Do you

faithfully make choices that keep your heart, soul and mind clean? Spiritual warfare.

Do you compromise Truth in your home, the church, your job? The Word is continually under attack either verbally or non-verbally. Do you defend God's standard or wimp out and allow His Truth to be further in decline?

We all have faltered. Each of us has failed at one time or another to be what God would have us to be. Thank God He is so merciful, gracious, forgiving, tender, compassionate, loving.

Nonetheless, our God is not about cheap grace. He wants us like Peter when He denied Christ three times before the cock crowed, to be humbled by our cowardliness and to repent of our sins and take up our cross and follow Him.

Those opportunities are ever before us. Are we growing in our love for Him so that we will not always run from conflict? Let's not run from spiritual warfare, but rather call upon His name and Spirit to help us stand and represent Him lovingly yet boldly - that He would increase while we decrease.

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they will be seen, adding to the epidemic of depression and eating disorders.

9. The ad contributes to dissatisfaction in men whose wives can't produce that body and thus adds to the instability of marriage and homes....

If you love God's gift of sexuality, take a stand for treating it like precious gems rather than common gravel. Guard it in the velvet-lined safe of steel commitment. Don't strew it on the street or in the press.

John Piper

[Excerpted from A Godward Life © 1997 by Desiring God Foundation. Used by permission of WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc.]

Taking back the community

Detroit Free Press - Some Auburn Hills City Council members are tired of seeing young men dressed in baggy pants with their underwear showing or teenage girls garbed in low-cut tops - and they're hoping to do something about it.

The council is now looking into whether it can implement a sort of city-wide dress code. Though nothing has been formally brought to the table, Councilman Henry Knight said a dress code could potentially be enforced under the city's indecency ordinance.

He said the way young people are dressing is having a negative impact on businesses, particularly those at Great Lakes Crossing mall. But Knight insists that the council isn't trying to violate anyone's rights.

"It's a hard issue to legislate morality, we know that," Knight said. "But, we're saying, as the city policy makers, we at least need to say, 'Is there something we can do in a situation we believe is a negative impact upon the businesses in our community?'"

City Manager Peter Auger said the city attorney and police department are researching the legality of implementing such an ordinance and how it could be enforced. He said states like Louisiana and Georgia have either talked about, implemented or are in the process of implementing similar ordinances.

The issue was brought to the council's attention at a meeting earlier this year by Councilman Otis Newkirk. The topic was discussed again on Monday. Newkirk said some civil rights groups, like the ACLU and NAACP, may see this as racial profiling - but he contends that it's not.

"This is not a black/white issue," he said. "It's not just black kids doing it. It's not just white kids doing it. It's not just Hispanic kids doing it. It's all kids doing it."

"We've got to take back the community."
<http://freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080207/NEWS03/80207060> 2/7/08

Abercrombie / Hollister

The Virginian-Pilot - In Virginia Beach police confiscated two billboard advertisements from the Abercrombie & Fitch store at the Lynnhaven Mall Saturday afternoon, saying they were in violation of city obscenity laws. The store's manager was also issued a criminal citation on obscenity charges.

Adam Bernstein, a police spokesman, said the seizure and the issuance of the summons came only after store management had not heeded warnings to remove the images.

The mural-like black-and-white photographs were taken from the store at midafternoon.

Bernstein confirmed that one depicts three shirtless young men from the back, walking through a field. The man in the lead appears to be about to pull up his jeans, which have slipped down enough to reveal his upper buttocks.

The same image is displayed on the Abercrombie Web site.

The other image is of a woman who is topless and whose "breast is displayed with her hand covering just the nipple portion," Bernstein said. "You could still pretty much see the rest of the breast." The seizure was "prompted by several customer complaints, and the management of Abercrombie & Fitch was notified of those complaints," Bernstein said. ...

<http://hamptonroads.com:80/node/452689> Dated: February 3, 2008

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

(1) PRAY FOR A&F decision makers.

(2) If you have recently purchased A&F (Hollisters) clothing, take it back - express your concern - and ask for your money back.

(3) Discuss A&F with your youth. Variety of issues surrounding this:

a. Christians. Do we identify with Christ and His love and righteousness? Or do we identify with Satan and his works of deception, darkness - tugging at us to identify with flesh, being on the edge?

b. **Boycotting.** It's a good thing to have convictions. To believe so much in what is good, right, honoring that you make a full-hearted decision not to align with a company and/or product that goes against your conviction - even if others could care less.

4) Please pray that many of us will seek God for greater passion for personal purity and holiness. That God will raise up numbers of us who are indignant over things such as what Abercrombie & Fitch is doing.

We urge you to contact the General Growth Properties CEO Mr. John Bucksbaum as they are one of the largest renters of mall space in America. General Growth allows A&F to display erotic displays in a store for teenagers. They too are culpable!

LUNCHEON SEMINAR SERIES Guest speaker - Ned Hughes

Fremont-based American Decency Association (ADA) hosted the first of several monthly luncheons with featured speakers from the Fremont area.

Mr. Ned Hughes, CEO of Gerber Memorial Health Services (GMHS), was the first guest speaker in this series, presenting to a general audience from the greater Fremont area. In his presentation, Hughes shared his personal journey of coming to faith in Christ, spoke of his work with GMHS, and shared his concern that the importance of wellness as a means of disease prevention receives little emphasis within healthcare debates. With decades of experience within the field of healthcare, Mr. Hughes has seen a growing epidemic of chronic disease that could be greatly reduced through wellness programs.

Mr. Hughes' informative presentation also highlighted the fact that in addition to being physical beings, there is also a spiritual dimension to us all. He reminded the audience that Christians are called to take care of their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit, recognizing that their lives and service to God and His people are enhanced as they do so.

ADA's next monthly luncheon is scheduled for Friday, March 7 and will feature Dr. Gayle Weeks, president of Midwest Psychology, Fremont. All are urged to attend. A complimentary lunch is provided.

Contact A & F

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New Albany OH 43054
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Contact General Growth

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ABC Faces Indecency Fine for 2003 “NYPD Blue” Episode

Washington Post 1/26/08 - The Federal Communications Commission yesterday proposed a \$1.43 million indecency fine against ABC television stations for a 2003 episode of “NYPD Blue,” the second-largest proposed indecency fine against a television broadcaster ever.

The agency proposed a \$27,500 fine against 52 ABC-owned and affiliate stations in the Central and Mountain time zones, which broadcast the episode before 10 p.m., when the FCC’s authority to police the airwaves for indecency expires each day.

The episode in question, aired Feb. 25, 2003, contained a scene featuring a woman and a young boy. In the scene, the woman disrobes in a bathroom. She is shown in full dorsal nudity, and the side of one breast is shown.

Under the FCC’s indecency statutes, over-the-air radio and television stations are prohibited from broadcasting “patently offensive” material of a sexual or excretory nature from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., when children are most likely to be watching. ABC stations in the Eastern and Pacific time zones were not fined because the episode appeared after 10 p.m. in those regions. The FCC’s indecency statutes do not extend to cable and satellite programming.

In 2006, the FCC proposed a record \$3.6 million fine against CBS television stations for a 2004 episode of “Without a Trace.” The network settled with the FCC for \$300,000. That also marked the most recent television indecency fine proposed by the FCC until yesterday.

The long period of FCC inaction on indecency followed a flurry of proposed fines from 2002 to 2004, the most high-profile of which was in response to CBS’s Super Bowl halftime show in 2004, when singer Janet Jackson’s right breast was briefly exposed.

CBS is appealing that \$550,000 proposed fine in federal court.

For the FCC, the episode of “NYPD Blue” was an indecency twofer.

“We find that the programming at issue is within the scope of our indecency definition because it depicts sexual organs and excretory organs — specifically an adult woman’s buttocks,” the FCC wrote in its ruling.

ABC argued that the scene was necessary to “illustrate the complexity and awkwardness involved when a single parent brings a new romantic partner into his or her life.”

The FCC disagreed.

“The law is simple,” FCC Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate wrote in a statement yesterday. “If a broadcaster makes the decision to show indecent programming, it must air between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. This is neither difficult to understand nor burdensome to implement.”

ABC, owned by the Walt Disney Co., said it will appeal the ruling to the FCC. If the agency turns down the appeal, it will issue a forfeiture order to the network, and ABC will have to pay the U.S. Treasury or appeal the case in court.

http://www.washingtonpost.com:80/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/25/AR2008012503137_pf.html

Points of frustration and concern

*** The fine for ABC was initiated in 2003 for \$1.43 million dollars - the second largest PROPOSED indecency fine against a television broadcaster.

*** This fine was one in a flurry of proposed fines from 2002 - 2004.

*** This followed a long period of FCC inaction on indecency.

*** In 2006, the FCC PROPOSED a record \$3.6 million fine against CBS for CBS’s Superbowl halftime show in 2004, when singer Janet Jackson right breast was briefly exposed.

*** CBS IS STILL APPEALING the Janet Jackson situation WHICH HAS BEEN WHITTLED DOWN TO A \$550,000 PROPOSED FINE.

*** The fine PROPOSED Friday by the FCC for the NYPD Blue episode will also, predictably, be appealed and be delayed for several years.

Lastly, the Washington Post article states it well as it closes its article stating:

“... The lightly staffed FCC enforcement bureau must go up against broadcasters, which have more legal and financial resources to battle the proposed fine and have a vested interest in dragging out the proceeding. After the enforcement bureau makes a finding, it must be voted on by the FCC’s five commissioners, who were occupied with cable television and wireless spectrum issues through much of 2007. ...”

Dear Friends: When our airwaves are filled with corruption, how can we raise children that desire to do right?

Please contact FCC Chariman

Kevin Martin

<http://www.fcc.gov/commissioners/martin/mail.html>

Victoria's Secret & the Lakes Mall

My letter in response to these and other questions.

After months of urging Victoria's Secret in the Lakes Mall in Muskegon, Michigan to tone down their displays, it became clear we weren't getting anywhere.

I had placed a call to the Lakes Mall Manager, Michael Hagen and emailed to the corporate CEO Stephen Lebovitz. I received no telephone call - only an email from Mr. Hagen telling me that I needed to express my concerns to Victoria's Secret. They were the ones that needed to respond to my concerns. [Which we had done on multiple occasions.]

Our letter to 83 mall stores

As a result, we mailed a letter to the 83 stores in the Lakes Mall expressing our concern, stating in part:

"... I'm writing to you because of the great difficulty in finding remedy either through Victoria's Secret local, the corporate office of Victoria's Secret, or through Lakes Mall management. When we expressed concern to Mr. Hagen, he stated that we are to take up our concerns with Victoria's Secret. If one expresses concern to the local Victoria's Secret store, the manager makes referral to their corporate headquarters. When calling corporate headquarters, they state that they will take the concern under careful consideration - and yet nothing changes for the better. The same scenario occurs in mall after mall across the country. ..."

Further, we wrote:

"... We are writing to let you know that if this concern continues to be dismissed, it seems that the only way to avoid these unwelcome displays is to avoid the mall entirely and ask others to do the same. Our voice may fall on deaf ears now, but as the Christmas shopping season approaches will the loss of customers be the only way to get the attention of mall and corporate management? We realize that our decision to not shop the

mall during the Christmas season will not only affect Victoria's Secret, but also the many other stores occupying the same building, and so since we your shoppers are not being heard, it is our hope that you will exert your influence.

We do urge you to discuss with Mr. Hagen and CBL Properties this ongoing concern. We urge you to talk with Victoria's Secret and/or have corporate officers or attorneys discuss this issue with Victoria's Secret, urging that they tone down the manner in which they market their products. ..."

Response from the mall attorney office

On February 14, we received a letter from a law firm representing the mall stating:

"... You have been advised to address your concerns directly to Victoria's Secret. Do not contact the Mall again regarding this matter. You should address your concerns to us as well as to Victoria's Secrets management."

In our letter to the mall stores, we asked the store management to contact us with any questions and comments. We received an email from a lady who stated in part:

A letter from an employee within the mall

"I had read the letter you had sent to the Lakes Mall and every store there ... Every mall, every Victoria's Secret in this country will continue to display what they sell. ..."

Here is my response to her one page letter. I offer it for the purposes of revealing our response to questions like: Why not just shop someplace else? Why do you try to cause problems for the mall? What's wrong with mannequins?

Dear

Thank you for graciously responding to our letter to the mall stores. Since you have already read my letter addressed to the store managers at Lakes Mall, you know of some of our concerns.

As you might also expect, I am writing now as a senior (aged 61) though I would like you to know that I have been expressing such concerns for a long time - certainly since my thirties when I was a teacher of elementary-aged children in the public schools.

You seem bewildered that I could be concerned about - using your words - "a plastic mannequin." ...

However, I am more convinced, with passing time, that my concerns regarding the impact of pornographic displays, messages, themes are legitimate and valid!

What we place before our eyes, our moral sensitivities does impact. Lewd advertising does impact people - particularly the young.

Our culture is becoming increasingly lewd. Small wonder. We are impacted by what is placed before us.

We expressed concern several months ago when Hardees was airing a hamburger commercial at the beginning of a school year featuring a female teacher in a very erotic display in front of male students.

There was a great protest by a state teacher's union and Hardees dropped the ad. Why would a teacher's union protest an advertisement? The answer seems rather apparent. ...

The advertising at Victoria's Secret is irresponsible.

Advertisers for the 2008 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition

We note that a number of advertisers from 2007 did not advertise in 2008. Advair, Bacardi Rum, Cobra Golf Clubs, DirectTV, Discover Card, Harley Davidson, Heineken, Irish Spring Soap, Levi's, McDonalds, Paramount Pictures, Skecher Shoes, Subway, Toyota, Verizon Wireless, Wolverine Boot.

We were particularly pleased to see several withdraw from advertising as we had especially targeted them in 2007. I include McDonalds, Harley Davidson, Wolverine Boot.

However, there is also bad news and the advertisers that advertise in Sports Illustrated are bad news —

Especially troubling are corporations who not only endorse this magazine with their advertising dollars, but also stoop to the same level by incorporating bikini-clad models and eroticism into their ads. These corporations included **GMC, Pontiac, AT&T, Dasani water, Honda, Budweiser.**

GMC was one of the worst culprits with a very seductively posed bikini model. The fine print of the ad talks about the perfection they demand from their vehicles - not accepting "close to perfection". The ad's erotic display of the model, spread across two pages, points out her imperfections - a freckle and a "pointy" elbow. This ad grossly objectifies women - implying she is not acceptable because of her "flaws".

Honda's ad urges viewers to download and customize a SI Swimsuit calendar.

Dasani water has a four-page pullout of a close up view of a model's body with the caption - "Make your mouth water."

For a listing of advertisers who sponsored the SI Swimsuit issue, please visit the following link: http://americandecency.org/main.php?f=updates_new/2008/February/02.08a.08

We offer this analysis:

"... Starting with the topless woman on the cover, SI gets to the real purpose of the issue - the pornographic exhibition of women for the pleasure of men. Page after page reveals erotically displayed young women in, at the most, barely there bikinis. Each lust-producing pornographic pose reinforces the message to ogling men and boys that women are nothing more than sexual objects to be used. And wives and young girls, whose husbands or fathers bring home this issue, are given the message that to be loved they must degrade themselves and that their worth is dependent upon their body and bust size. ..."

For the full analysis, please visit the following link: http://americandecency.org/main.php?f=updates_new/2008/February/02.18a.08

"... Here is the reason why we have a moral breakdown in every area of life. The titanic freedoms which we once enjoyed have been cut loose from their Christian restraints and are becoming a force of destruction leading to chaos. And when this happens, there really are very few alternatives. All morality becomes relative, law becomes arbitrary, and society moves toward disintegration. In personal and social life, compassion is swallowed up by self-interest. ..." Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer

Please contact these companies

General Motors Corporation

Pontiac & GMC Vehicles
G. Richard Wagoner Jr. - Chairman and CEO
300 Renaissance Center
Detroit, MI 48265-3000
Phone: 313-556-5000
Fax: 248-696-7300

AT&T Corp.

William J. Hannigan - President
One AT&T Way
Bedminster, NJ 07921
Phone: 908-221-2000
Fax: 908-532-1675

The Coca-Cola Company - Dasani water

E. Neville Isdell - Chairman and CEO
1 Coca-Cola Plaza
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Phone: 404-676-2121
Fax: 404-676-6792

Anheuser Busch Companies, Inc. - Budweiser

Patrick Stokes - President, CEO, and
Director
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St. Louis, MO 63118-1852
Phone: 314-577-2000
Fax: 314-577-2900

American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

Honda Vehicles
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1919 Torrance Boulevard
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Fax: 310-783-2110