

TO BE ENFORCED— Ruling on Women's Dress

Have some women been defiant — or merely careless? Must God's Ministers exercise God's AUTHORITY to enforce ruling concerning too short and too tight skirts?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

IN THE September, 1962, number of *The GOOD NEWS* an article appeared on this subject. It was PLAIN SPEAKING!

It said, "In this instruction to the spiritual children in God's Church, your Pastor is making this correction to those who need it, I sincerely hope, PLAIN ENOUGH, and PAINFUL ENOUGH that it shall not need repeating!"

But now, four years later, IT DOES NEED REPEATING!

And this time I know that the living HEAD of God's Church—Jesus Christ—directs that His AUTHORITY be used, if necessary, to ENFORCE the ruling which comes straight from the very Word of GOD!

Of course, we must bear in mind that The Church of God is today TWICE as large in membership as it was four years ago. Perhaps HALF of the women in the Church did not read the former article. On the other hand, I have seen some women flagrantly violate this Ruling who have been in the Church several times four years!

Embarrassment For All

And I want to say, before quoting from the former article, that God's ministers are quite frequently embarrassed, while preaching in the pulpit, by women wearing too short skirts that do not cover their knees, sitting with their knees spread apart at least eight or ten inches. Usually the careless ones are middle-aged or elderly women. Just once, I believe, have I personally noticed this inexcusable carelessness on the part of a college girl. This happens REPEATEDLY. Personally, I have not wanted to publicly embarrass these

women. But if, after this article has appeared in print, such carelessness occurs again in my sight, I shall personally reprimand such women regardless of the painful embarrassment it may cause them!

In our teaching on child rearing, based on God's Word, we teach parents to speak plainly JUST ONCE—and then *punish*. The women guilty of this neglect are old enough to know better, but they are our spiritual *children*, and I am instructing all ministers to PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH, and ENFORCE this ruling!

When the article appeared in 1962, women were beginning to wear skirts up to the knees. Today they are becoming more daring, and wearing them two to eight inches *above* the knees.

The teaching of God is MODESTY. The reprinted article, below, makes it abundantly plain that God's instruction DOES NOT call for women to go to the opposite extreme. God is the author of BEAUTY. He wants His daughters to be beautiful, consistent with proper modesty. And what is proper modesty? God gives us the PRINCIPLE involved. He leaves it to His ministers, led by His Spirit, to apply the principle to specific instances.

Applying that principle, the RULING is, then, that the daughters of God must not go to either extreme. Current fashions and styles of the world dictate what, at any one time, is the extreme, and what is the happy medium that *modestly* avoids the extreme. As fashions are today, that means women may wear skirts up *to* the knees—that is, JUST BELOW the knee-cap, BUT NOT EXPOSING IT WHEN STANDING. Women

should wear skirts of sufficient length to cover the knees when sitting.

It is embarrassing to me, personally, when I see a woman in constant embarrassment tugging away at her skirt while she sits, to make it cover her knees when it simply is not long enough to cover them. Or, as so often happens, now, because her skirt comes merely *to* her knees when sitting, but leaves them completely exposed, she continually tries to pull her skirt tightly around her legs just above the knee, fastening the skirt underneath, between her legs and the chair.

No woman is going to look out of style, or attract attention to herself by wearing skirts long enough to cover the knees—even when sitting.

Women who care more for what GOD thinks than what this rotten, filthy, doomed WORLD thinks, will immediately let out any skirts shorter than that. Those who care more about what THE WORLD thinks than God will mark themselves as PART OF THE WORLD—and NO LONGER MEMBERS OF GOD'S CHURCH.

Since the last article on this subject, the Ruling has been so flagrantly ignored or disobeyed that the time has come TO ENFORCE this Ruling. God's Ministers are instructed to act accordingly.

And THIS INCLUDES THESE TOO TIGHT SKIRTS.

By that, I mean these skirts taken up just below the hips, so they FORM-FIT the buttocks, clinging tight behind and under the place where they OUGHT to be SPANKED! I know that nearly all skirts are made that way today. But, 1) you do not have to buy that kind,

and 2) if you have them, you can, and MUST, if obedient, let them out at the seams. And if NOT obedient, God's ministers will know you are part of this world, and not of God's Church.

God is not a harsh or unreasonable God—nor are His ministers harsh, stern or unreasonable. We are merely defining womanly MODESTY. God's Church must be obedient. It must be kept morally pure!

Now READ AGAIN the article of four years ago:

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BELOW

WHY does the Word of God confine His instruction regarding *modest apparel*, and the *adorning* of the person with clothes, to the **WOMEN**?

Did God desire to discriminate—to make women uncomfortable—to show partiality to men? Does God intend for *men* to show off themselves in ornamental and gay attire, while He commands women to make unsightly scarecrows of themselves?

Of course we know better than that. There is nothing in God's instruction to make women appear ugly, or to make them uncomfortable. On the contrary, many, if not most, women will suffer any amount of discomfort in their worship of the goddess Dame Fashion.

God's REASON

God never shows partiality. He never discriminates against individuals, sexes, races, or whoever. Yet God's Word does carry specific instruction for *women* to be modest in their dress—and no corresponding instruction for modesty in *men's* clothing is given. **WHY?**

There is a reason! I think, candidly, that the girls and women in God's Church *know* the answer. And for that very reason some of them seem to want to violate God's instruction!

What I am going to say applies only to a *few*. Women in God's Church are different from those of the world. *But a very few need severe correction.*

I do not mean that even these few go to the extremes of ridiculous fashion so commonly seen in the world. You won't see any member of God's Church wearing artificially striped hair, green eyelids, and a purple mouth, decked out in outlandish dress design and overdone

wacky jewelry. But, in the category of too short and too tight skirts, and in excessively low-neck dresses, some of you women and girls need a sharp rebuke from God's ministers!

Now **WHY** does God's Instruction Book contain admonition regarding modesty in *women's* dress, and not regarding *men's*?

In all three colleges I personally teach a class in *Principles of Living*. This class includes God's instruction in regard to sex and marriage. Sex responses operate in the *mind*, and the male mind does not react in the same manner as the female mind in relation to sex. Sex consciousness, and arousal, in the male, is brought about much more quickly than in the female, and is stimulated by sight, or even by imagination, in a manner that has little effect on females.

God made the female body to be attractive to the male. This attraction may be, and *should* be, one of sheer beauty. But also it may be, and under many circumstances often is, a stimulation of **LUST**. Especially when certain parts of the female figure are emphasized, such as the hips and buttocks by tight skirts, the low neckline exposing portions of breasts, or too-short skirts exposing more than is modest of the female leg.

I am quite aware that it is the current fashion, in the world, to wear short knee-length (and now above) skirts extra tight around the hips. But the women in God's Church have *come out* of the world, and are *different*—or else they have not been put into His Church by God. *God's* daughters do not find it necessary to *conform to this world*, going along in its *extremes* of daring, or wrong, styles.

Candidly, when I see a female with a skirt tight enough to call attention to the shape of her hips, especially when tight *below the hips and under the buttocks*, I know that she is either careless and needs sharp admonishing or else *she is wearing it deliberately to attract male eyes and arouse lust* toward her in men's minds.

Do you want to know my personal reaction when I see such an example? It makes me feel that such a girl or woman needs either a good lecture

driven home by a *sound SPANKING* of what she so brazenly displays, or to be classed as a fallen woman and a common prostitute.

THAT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE! I mean it to be plain, and I want the women in God's Church to know it is coming from God's Minister, who speaks by Christ's authority!

Recently some of our girls and women have been wearing skirts that are entirely **TOO SHORT!** Often I have felt I ought to speak personally to some of you. If this article does not quickly correct this evil—**AND IT IS AN EVIL!**—God's ministers will be instructed to begin speaking personally and in a manner that ought to cause a deep sense of shame and produce a very red face on any girl or woman who invited such sharp rebuke from a Minister of God!

When many of you women wear skirts as high as (and now above) the knee, and which completely expose the knees when sitting, your skirts are an abomination in **GOD'S** eyes. I wonder, frankly, if God doesn't blush when *HE* sees you! Are you women who do this, deliberately trying to tempt men into breaking the spirit of God's law against adultery? Are you trying to make yourselves adultresses? Are you not breaking the very spirit of that law, *yourselves?*

In our instruction to parents in proper child rearing we teach that when you spank your child, it must be sufficiently severe to impress the lesson—painful enough that he will not want to cause it to be repeated very soon. In this instruction to the spiritual children in God's Church, your Pastor is making this correction to those who need it, I sincerely hope, plain enough and painful enough that it shall not need repeating!

Neither Extreme

God's Church does *not* teach, nor does God's Word when rightly understood, that women should go to the opposite extreme of wearing ill-fitting, overly loose skirts that drag the dust and pick up germs. I am not saying that your neckline must be so high that all the neck is covered. God is not the author of **UGLINESS**, any more than of

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or *peril*, or *sword*? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither *death*, nor *life*, nor *angels*, nor *principalities*, nor *powers*, nor *things present* nor *things to come* nor *height*, nor *depth*, nor *any other creature*, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35, 38, 39).

Paul had firmly *set his WILL* to obey God—to make it into the Kingdom of God.

If we, too, set our wills to obey God—come what may!—the time will come when we also, like Paul, can say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

Readers Say . . .

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cial prayer you prayed for me to be healed of cancer on my face. I did as you told me in the letter. I placed the handkerchief on the cancer and asked God for the healing. Every day it would seem to be better than the day before. It kept coming out of my face until within a few days it just fell out. It sounded like a rock when it hit the floor. I just had to praise the Lord for it. The place where it came from could hardly be seen. I knew I was healed. I thank and praise God for this wonderful healing power."

Mrs. H. E., Mississippi

Birth Miracle

"God is indeed performing miracles today. Recently when my wife was having her baby, the way it should be—with no poisons and at home, she was having some trouble, as the baby was trying to come face up instead of face down the way they should. The attending doctor remarked to the aiding nurse (an RN) to call our minister but I knew he was out of town so I had her call a local elder. Things really began to happen then and the elder was in the home about 5 minutes before he heard the cry from a healthy boy. The baby actually turned over and the doc-

tor said that just *doesn't* happen, but it did and he knows it happened."

K. McF., Kansas

God Speaks Out

"You deserve an accolade for your book GOD SPEAKS OUT on 'The New Morality.' I think it was a book most needed for young people in the high schools and if I was so fortunate to be blessed with the wherewithal, I would endow a substantial amount for that purpose. Parents shun confiding in their children the facts of life which you tell in such an informative way that it should be magnified everywhere. Sir, I congratulate you for writing it."

T. D. L., Washington

• *More than a third of a million copies have been sent on request to date—changing the lives of many more than that number.*

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confusion or evil. God is the Great Artist who has designed all the beauty of nature.

Consequently, in conformity with the Word of God, God's Church encourages women to dress neatly, pleasingly, attractively within the bounds of proper modesty and good taste, and even with sufficient becoming style to express personality and individuality. God Himself expressed perfect artistry in beautiful design in nature—in the lily—the rose—beautiful trees, shrubs and plants—in prize-winning livestock—and even in the beautiful human body, when healthy and not degenerated.

For women to dress becomingly yet modestly, there is no need to disguise the human figure by grotesque ultra-modern styles that make them look like lampshades, T-squares, or triangles. The world goes either to that extreme, or to the extreme of undue emphasis on breast, hips, and legs.

But it is in this latter category that some—yes, too many—of our women offend.

More than once I have seen a few of our women, in evening dress, exposing

entirely too much female breast—with neckline cut so low as to show a goodly portion of breasts, with a crease in the middle. On one or two occasions, I have instructed Mrs. Armstrong to speak to such women, telling them plainly that their necklines are too low.

Women's breasts, in plain language, were designed by God to nurse babies—not to be flaunted immodestly to arouse lust in men.

In the matter of too-tight skirts around the hips, the excuse often is that the girl has taken on weight—and she protests that she cannot help it. But she *can* help it, and if she is to remain in God's Church or enter God's Kingdom, *she must*—one of two ways: either don't remain overweight (fasting and proper diet will cure that quickly), or let out the seam.

We want our women to be beautiful—*naturally* beautiful, pleasingly attractive, in good style, *well groomed*—but not artificially so, and this may be accomplished WITH FULL MODESTY.

It is the *over-emphasis* of lust-arousing portions of the female body that MUST BE CORRECTED.

Good Idea

"Last night we were watching 'Candid Camera' on TV and they asked some small children how they thought the world began, and the answers these children gave were amazing. I asked my three older children the same question and they couldn't tell me Gen. 1:1. It really surprised me because we have been trying to learn about God, through your booklets and Bible study, and through the Correspondence School. I have just completed my twelfth lesson, and I find that since I have been learning, my children haven't. I've neglected them. I guess I expected them to understand what I have been reading myself. I see now how mistaken I have been."

Mrs. G. T. S., Ohio

• *A good project for all members: ask your child NOW.*