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PRESENTS

Frankly Speaking Notes . . .

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Ed Smithson, Editor

I LIKE “DRESSY”

Last Sunday morning as I was getting ready to go to worship, I went into my closet and there I saw a suit I had not worn in years. Too small! I took it down and tried it on and it fit fine. It is a navy blue, subdued pin striped suit that I really like. I like pin stripes. My first suit, a hand-me-down from an older brother, was a pin stripe.

I put on a long sleeved white shirt, found an appropriate tie, put a multi-colored handkerchief in my vest pocket, put my American flag pin on my lapel and was ready. I like to dress up. I wasn't trying to impress anyone, I was going to Sunday worship and I wanted to look my best. It has always been that way with me.

Now I will admit that I have not always worn a coat and tie when going to worship, but for many years I have. Perhaps it was because of mama. One thing she was persnickety about was looking one's best when they went out, and that went double for worship. Yes, I went to worship in bib overalls and a white shirt many a time, but that was the very best we had and I can guarantee they were clean. She would have it no other way.

I park my wheelchair next to the back door, (for reasons I won't go into here) so I see just about everyone that comes and goes. For the most part the membership of this church dresses pretty well. They are not flashy but they dress like they are going to worship.

As I am sitting here in my chair at the back, I see some really awful kind of dress. Some people have no sense of responsibility to show themselves “presentable” and others have no sense of shame, because of their skimpy dress.

Last Sunday about ten minutes before the class ended, an older woman and a young couple came in and sat down not far from me. I noticed the younger woman did not seem to be comfortable because she kept fidgeting. I try to pay attention to the teacher but her actions distracted me. Then I noticed the reason for her discomfort. She was pulling at her skirt. There wasn't much of it but she was pulling at it apparently to make it cover what there was not enough material to cover.

Evidently there are a lot of women going to worship these days, particularly in the younger set, that haven't read the Bible or don't care what it says about modesty. "... women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with **modesty** and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire," (1 Timothy 2:9)

Peter also told women, "Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves..." (1 Peter 3:3-5)

God didn't want women to dress gaudily in those days because that is the way "women of the street" (prostitutes) dressed. Today those kind of women wear very, very short shorts, and as much showing as they are allowed. It has always been a puzzle to me why godly women, Christian women, or women who want to do what's right, would want to dress that way. Dressing that way a woman is "advertising." She is letting everyone know what is there and in some instances, to crude men, it is a "come-on." Of course they will deny it, but for a lot of men that is exactly what it means.

In the last couple of years there has been something going on with women to show as much of their uppers as their lower extremities. Blouses and shirts have been getting lower and lower cut so that there is no guesswork as to how a woman is shaped. There seems to be a backing-off of that in the last few months. Perhaps because they had gone as far as they could with their exposure or perhaps because of the criticism they were getting.

There is something about the shape of women, particularly their tops and bottoms that is alluring to a lot of men. While I would not suggest that those who harass and rape women because of their dress be forgiven,

however I would definitely suggest that women who dress provocatively are not entirely blameless.

Why would a Christian woman or one who is purporting to worshipping God, want to provoke, or take the chance of provoking, any man who has to turn his eyes away from nudity to avoid it? Christian are supposed to set an example for others and that starts with teaching their daughters to dress “appropriately” from the earliest years of their lives.

I know there are a lot of folks that would argue against this point, but I believe if women dressed themselves modestly in public is would greatly reduce the crimes against women we are presently experiencing in this country.

Some folks say it doesn't matter what you wear to worship. Maybe you should take a look in the Old Testament and see how God insisted the priests dress when they went into the tabernacle or temple. Please read carefully the 28th chapter of Exodus and pay attention to the type of material used to make the garments and how they were to be decorated.

I am not suggesting that we buy expensive cloths we cannot afford to go to worship, for that is not the point. My folks, and a lot of yours too, believed that when you go to worship the Lord, you should wear the very best you have. If you are a farmer and kaki pants and shirt are the best you have, well and good. If by your living standard you can wear a suit and tie or women wear a nice modest dress, that should be what you wear to worship. My mother and sisters wore hand made dresses made from flowered sacks feed and flour came in. Under those circumstances I believed that to be appropriate.

I don't hear much about modest dress anymore. Wonder why that is? Do you think we have so been influenced by the world and its fashion that we have capitulated?

Worship is something special to me and should be to all those who worship God regularly. Why is it that some folks will wear things to worship they would not wear to a funeral or a wedding?

I remember one time an English teacher in college told me something I have remembered. We were talking about grammar in speaking and she

said, "It is never out of place to speak correctly, regardless of where you are."

I feel the same way about dressing for worship. Dressing properly, with the best you have, modestly and in good taste is never considered out of place.

Ed Smithson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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