

"CHURCH CLOTHES"

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

One may visit a farming community in a rural congregation and find all of the males dressed in bib-overalls and no neckties. Then one can go into the city and visit another congregation and discover that every male (even pre-schoolers) are attired in three piece suits and neckties. Both forms of dress seemingly are acceptable, why?

One can stand in a busy place (shopping mall, city square, bus station, etc.) and ask people the question, "What do you consider "church clothes"?, and get many answers.

Many people would answer the question today about "church clothes" by saying, "If we were going to a wedding, funeral, or to meet the Governor or President - we would dress in our finest clothes, wouldn't we? Well, we are going to meet the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords - so we should want to dress the very best we can - right?" To this, I will have to agree. But this is only an opinion. Now if one chooses to wear something different, like John the Baptist (Matthew 3:4), can we scripturally criticize him/her?

Now - one area that a certain amount of criticism may surface is in the area of immodesty (1 Timothy. 2:9). When females begin revealing "too much flesh" and that is an area of opinion - it can lead to problems. It has always been a good practice to encourage females to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in all manners of dress. If even for a second, one questions the modesty of her attire, she should avoid wearing it. In most congregations this is all that is needed. However, the Holy Spirit works through the Word - so one must be "into the Word" to be guided properly.

However, if a congregation finds itself filled with low necklines, high hemlines, tight fits, bare backs, and shining belly buttons on females; likewise for fellows wearing skin tight jeans, and baring their chest hairs, someone has not been doing some basic teaching. In such a situation, some church leaderships have had to "lay down some specific guidelines". Hopefully, it will always be easy to distinguish between the dress of the world and the dress of the Christian.

May we all strive to dress decently and in order at all times, but especially as we come together to worship our Lord.

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