

“Modest’ Swimwear No Longer Just For The Pious”

by Wayne Goff

I have been watching some of the 2012 Summer Olympics on NBC and noticed a not-so-subtle change in swimwear. Knee-length swim wear by Speedo!

Simply Modest

Back in June I came across an article about a company started by Crystal Huyben named “**Simply Modest.**” She claims to be a “born-again Christian” (what other kind is there? wg), and is aged 27. She lives in Ontario, and the article said that she “likes to cover everything from her knees to her collarbone when she gets in the water.” **Why?**

“Modesty has always been important to me, believing that our sexuality is an amazing gift from God. It’s something to be protected, not put on display for all eyes to see.”

She sells her swimwear online to a varied list of purchasers, from religious sects like Mormons and Muslims, to older women, and plus-size women.

“Outside The Realm Of Religion”

The media has discovered that swimwear is venturing “outside the realm of religion.” Chantelle Thomson, the owner of another modest clothing company geared toward Mormon women, now sells her line of swimsuits at Costco stores on the west coast! In March, a fan “pinned” a photo of one of her pieces on Pinterest and received 1,000 orders within 48 hours.

Thomson estimated that in 2011, 90% of her customers were Mormons, but that in 2012, 30% of her customers “aren’t affiliated with a religion.”

Summer Olympics Swimsuits

I have been watching some of the olympic contests this year, as many of you are as well. It was a welcomed surprise to see the swimmers wearing swimsuits from Speedo that are knee-length. Based upon my limited viewing, I have not heard a single word mentioned about the change, but I am thrilled to see the improvement. Undoubtedly, some of you will be happy to know that a more modest choice of swimwear is now available and popular!

“A world that embraces fashion is now embracing modesty without even knowing it.” Name brands that sell similar garments include **Marc Jacobs, Norma Kamali, Michael Kors, Missoni, and HydroChic** to name a few. I am not promoting these brand names because I don’t know enough about them. But the new offerings are noteworthy just the same.

Biblical Guidelines

So what does the Bible say about the subject? 1 Timothy 2:9-10 simply says “***in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.***”

“**Modest**” (KOSMIOS) means “orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest” [*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, p. 414]. The idea is akin to “harmonious arrangement, adornment.” The suggestion is that there is clothing that is befitting the Christian’s life.

The English dictionary defines “**modest**” as “dressing or behaving so as to avoid impropriety or indecency, esp. to avoid attracting sexual attention” (*Oxford American Dictionaries*).

“**Propriety**” (AIDOS) is “a sense of shame, modesty’ is used regarding the demeanor of women in the church, 1 Tim. 2:9” [*Vine’s*, p. 568]. It is sometimes translated “*shamefastness*” because it is “that modesty which is ‘fast’ or rooted in the character.”

“**Moderation**” (SOPHROSUNE) means “soundness of mind.” It is “that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires...” [*Vine’s*, p. 583]. It is also translated as “*sobriety*” or “*soberness*.”

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