

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF JOHN WESLEY'S
VIEW OF MODESTY IN DRESSING AND ADORNMENT

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Date completed: March 2022

This study is a biblical theological evaluation of John Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. In his writings, Wesley distinguishes between modesty in the dressing and adornment of kings and government officers, and ordinary people. He favors kings and government officers, dressing and adornment with expensive clothes and jewelry. But, he disfavors ordinary Christians dressing and adorning themselves with fine clothing, gold, silver, and other costly jewelry.

The study examines Luke 7:24-25, 1 Tim 2:9-10, 1 Pet 3:3-4, and other Scriptures he uses to support his distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment. In conclusion, the study shows that Wesley's modesty distinction between kings and government officers, and ordinary people is not biblical. This is because even though

the Bible indicates that Christians may wear distinctive clothes based on gender, function, and climate, all people should observe principles of modesty, decency, and inner beauty and avoid all expressions of selfishness, pride, extravagancy, harlotry, and idolatry.

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A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

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by

Gakono Stephen Mugo

March 2022

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This work is dedicated to Christians who search
for biblical principles of modesty
in dressing and adornment.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to thank Almighty heavenly Father for the grace and providence, He has granted unto me during my studies. I pass the next gratitude to my beloved wife, Irene Wakuthii; my daughter, Vicky Wamuyu; and my son, Nicky Gakono; for giving me immeasurable support and humble time to complete my studies.

Additional gratitude goes to the East Kenya Union Conference and Central Kenya Conference, who gave me a bursary and a study leave that enabled me to pursue this degree. Also, I thank the Adventist University of Africa faculty, especially lectures in the seminary such as: Prof. Sampson Nwaomah, Dr. Eriks Galenieks, Dr. Anna Galeniece, Prof. Davidson Razafiarivony, Prof. Victor Figueroa, Dr. Kelvin Onongha and Dr. Ron Du Preez, for taking me through various courses which have sharpened my theological knowledge. Also, I thank the AUA staff who served me in the administration block; academic block; library; hostel; chapel; dispensary; cafeteria, and canteen. Your services can not be underrated.

Moreover, I thank my principal advisor, Dr. Lameck Miyayo, Dr. Robert Osei-Bonsu, Dr. Melak Tsegaw, and Dr. Jean C. Ezzo, for giving me academic advice and professional guidance in writing this research. For all these key people and many more who are not mentioned, I pray that our heavenly Father will continue blessing you.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Modesty in dressing and adornment is one of the topics treated under the doctrine of the Christian lifestyle. Christian dressing and adornment are mentioned in various verses in the Bible.¹ It is closely associated with the Christian's choice of dressing and adornment based "on the biblical principles of simplicity, modesty, practicality, health, and attractiveness."²

Many attempts have been made to explain modesty in dressing and adornment based on the Old and the New Testaments. These attempts have resulted in numerous theological works written to explain modesty in Christian dressing and adornment. The apostolic Church Fathers, protestant reformers, and other Bible scholars have produced some theological works. For example, Tertullian claims that when humans "know the Lord," they avoid worldly desires and immodesty.³ John Calvin advocates

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the Bible texts in this paper are quoted from the *New King James Version* (Nashville, NY: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982). The following are some of the Bible passages, both in the Old and New Testaments, which are referred to in addressing the issue of modesty in dressing and adornment. See Gen 24:53; 35:2-4 ; Exod 3:22, 12:35, 33:4-6, 35:22; Num 31:50-51; Deut 22:5,11-12; Judg 8:21, 25-26; 2 Sam 1:24; Isa 3:16-24, 49:18, 61:10; Jer 2:32, 4:30; Ezek 7:20, 16:10-18, 39, 23:26, 26:16, 27:24; Dan 5:16, 29; Matt 6:30, 11:8, 17:2, 23:5, 27:35, 59; Luke 7:25; 15:22; 1 Cor 11:1-16; 1 Tim 2:9-10 Jas 2:2,3; 1 Pet 3:3-5; Rev 1:13, 3:5, 18, 4:4, 7:9, 12:1-2, 17:4, 18:16.

² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrine* (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2018), 325.

³ Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* I.4; II.5, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* Vol. 4, repr., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 20.

for “a simple lifestyle” in dressing and adornment that avoid extravagance and allow Christians to assist “the needy.”⁴

Many theologians have advocated the need for modesty in Christian dressing and adornment. Samuele Bacchiocchi asserts that

The spiritual revival ... is often reflected in the dress reform ... of its members. The history of dress and ornaments in many ways illustrates the human struggle between pride, lust, and greed on the one hand and humility, modesty, and generosity on the other hand.⁵

Taylor Bunch concurs with Bacchiocchi that Christians should nurture the inner person and “avoid all extremes in dress” and adornments.⁶ Staci Osterman echoes that “our dress symbolizes whether or not we have submitted our heart to the Lordship of Christ.”⁷ She sees “modesty in clothing as a way to express our love for Christ and our brethren.”⁸

⁴ Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 156, 311.

⁵ Samuele R. Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1995), 11.

⁶ Taylor G. Bunch, *The Ten Commandments: The Law of Liberty* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), 96.

⁷ See Staci Osterman, “Dress: An Issue of My Heart,” *Adventists Affirm* 17, no.3 (2003): 21, accessed 12 June 2019, <http://www.adventistsaffirm.org/article/118/previous-issues/volume-17-number-3/dress-an-issue-of-my-heart>.

⁸ Osterman, “Dress: An Issue of My Heart,” 21.

John Wesley's *Sermon on Dress*,⁹ *Notes on the Bible*,¹⁰ and *Journals*,¹¹ sum up a theological work well known on modesty in dressing and adornment. Therefore, this study intends to evaluate John Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Wesley, after becoming "a real Christian,"¹² and as a minister "in the Church of England in the eighteenth century," started preaching the gospel of spiritual holiness.¹³ He had no intention of starting a new church. However, his preaching resulted in a revival movement that became the Methodist movement and a church after his death.¹⁴ Wesley emphasized modest dressing and adornment among Methodist Church members, which earned him credit for these teachings on modesty.¹⁵

⁹ John Wesley, *Sermon 88*, accessed 12 June 2019, <https://www.whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/enjohnwesley088ondress.pdf>. See also, John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1771), accessed 12 June 2019, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/sermons.html>.

¹⁰ John Wesley's views on dress are seen in his *Notes on the Bible* as he gives observations on some verses in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. *Wesley's Notes on the Bible* are divided into *Wesley's Notes on Genesis-Job*, *Wesley's Notes on Psalms-Malachi*, *Wesley's Notes on Mathew-Acts*, and *Wesley's Notes on Romans-Revelation*. See John Wesley, *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1774), accessed 12 June 2019, <http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Wesley's%20Notes%20on%20the%20Bible.pdf>.

¹¹ John Wesley's views are traced in his four *Volumes of Journals*. *Volume One* starts from 1735 to 1745, *Volume Two* ranges from 1745 to 1760, *Volume Three* stretches from (31 December 1760) to (13 September 1773), and *Volume Four* starts from (13 September 1773) and ends on (24 October 1790). See John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1790), accessed 12 June 2019, <https://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/cache/journal.pdf>.

¹² Iain H. Murray states that John Wesley became "a real Christian" on 24 May 1738 after hearing the reading of the preface written by Luther on *The Book of Romans*. See Iain H. Murray, *Wesley and Men Who Followed* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2003), 8-9.

¹³ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 238.

¹⁴ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 244.

¹⁵ Bacchiocchi states that "John Wesley is one of the theologians of the 18th century who needs to be honored for his extensive study in dressing and adornment compared to the Protestants before and after him." See Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 67.

John Wesley indicates that humans' allegiance moved from God to Satan after their fall.¹⁶ Further Wesley shows that, this is a human inclination to the world's selfishness and needs, but not unto God and His righteousness.¹⁷ This inclination is seen in immodesty, dressing and adornment, human pride, desires, thoughts, and deeds.¹⁸

Using the Scriptures, John Wesley develops a theology of modesty in dressing and adornment.¹⁹ Wesley further claims that all his teachings are drawn from the Scriptures. He even refers to himself as "*homo unius libri*-a man of one book,"²⁰ teaching ordinary people²¹ the "essentials of true religion,"²² without omitting or adding anything.²³

Statement of the Problem

John Wesley asserts that kings and government "officers" may put on expensive clothes and jewelry, but "ordinary Christians" should exercise modesty in dressing and adornment.²⁴ Wesley further claims that all his teachings are based on

¹⁶ Wesley, *Notes on Genesis* 3:6-7.

¹⁷ Wesley, *Sermon 45, I.2, 45.I.4*. See Wesley, *Sermon 38, 2.8*.

¹⁸ Wesley, *Sermon 41, I.4*.

¹⁹ Thomas C. Oden states that "In the 18th century, Christian doctrines were taught through the preaching of sermons." See Thomas C. Oden *John Wesley's Teachings: God and Providence* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 22.

²⁰ Wesley, *Sermon 1-53, 5*.

²¹ Wesley, *Sermon 1-53, 3*.

²² Wesley, *Sermon 1-53, 1*.

²³ Oden, *John Wesley's Teachings, Volume 1, 22*.

²⁴ Wesley, *Sermon 88, 7, 8*.

“the Bible alone,” for he is “*homo unius libri*-a man of one book.”²⁵ This claim of Wesley poses some theological questions. Such as: is Wesley’s distinction between kings and government officers, and ordinary people concerning modesty in dressing and adornment biblically correct? Can his teaching on Christian dressing and adornment be considered a model for other Christians? Is there a distinction between kings and government officers, and the other ordinary Christians in the eyes of God, and what does the Bible teach about Christian dressing and adornment?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate Wesley’s theological view of the distinction between kings and government officers, and ordinary people for modesty in dressing and adornment. The study first seeks to ascertain why Wesley differentiates kings and government officials from ordinary Christians. It also seeks to determine if Wesley’s view on Christian dressing is based on the Bible alone and how it can serve as a model for Christian dressing.

Significance of the Study

John Wesley’s teaching on modesty in dress and adornment is termed as the foundation of the dress code of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church. In other words, “the early Seventh-day Adventist believers” used Wesley’s teaching on dress in teaching principles of modesty in dressing and adornment.²⁶

²⁵ Wesley, *Sermon* 1-53, 5.

²⁶ Seventh-day Adventist pioneers reprinted *Wesley’s Sermon on Dress* in the *Review and Herald*. See N. Y. Rochester, “On Dress: Wesley’s Advice to the People Called Methodists,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* vii (10 July, 1855): 1-8, accessed 24 May 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18550710-V07-01.pdf>.

Wesley's teaching on dress influenced Adventist teaching on Christian dressing and adornment. The Adventist teaching on Christian dressing is unique and biblically based but elicits diverse discussion among many members.²⁷ Also, Bacchiocchi points out that "Wesley's teaching on dress" necessitates Christians to exercise modesty in dressing and adornment.²⁸ Thus, John "Wesley's teaching on dress" motivated the current study on a biblical theological evaluation of his view of modesty in dressing and adornment compared to the Bible.

Therefore, this study searches for biblical principles on modesty in dressing and adornment for Christians, kings, government officers, and ordinary people. The study may also contribute to the principles of Christian dressing and adornment as presented in the mission and the ministry of the Church. Moreover, the study may contribute to discussing related issues concerning modesty among post-modern Christians, such as: a biblical position on women wearing trousers, mini dresses, or miniskirts. It may further contribute to the question of Christian men and women decorating themselves with ornaments like earrings, nose rings, necklaces, bangles, and finger rings; and braiding, weaving, arranging, or twisting of hair and tattooing their bodies. More importantly, the study may add to the existing knowledge on the theology of modesty in Christian dressing and adornment.

²⁷ Rochester, "On Dress: Wesley's Advice to the People Called Methodists," 8.

²⁸ Bacchiocchi summarized Wesley's six reasons against immodesty in dressing and adornment among ordinary people: first, it "generates, or increases pride in a person." Second, it "tends to breed and increase vanity." Third, it causes "anger, turbulent and uneasy passion." Fourth, it "tends to create and inflame lust." Fifth, it is contrary to "being adorned with good works," and sixth, it affects "the whole nature of inward holiness." See Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 92-93.

Delimitation of the Study

While dressing and adornment is a broad topic in Christendom, this study is limited to John Wesley's view of modesty in Christian dressing and adornment. Wesley is chosen because his teaching is an outstanding theological work documented in the eighteenth century that condemns dress extravagance and promotes modesty in dressing and adornment.

Methods and Procedure of the Study

The study employs a descriptive and analytical approach to systematically evaluate John Wesley's perception of dressing and adornment.²⁹ It evaluates John Wesley's theological view of modesty in dressing and adornment. The study is drawn from *Wesley's Sermons*,³⁰ *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*,³¹ *Wesley's Journal*,³² and

²⁹ Lucretia B. Yaghjian states that "people engage in theological research" to uncover resources that will help them reflect on the theological task, trace historical development, and construct theologies that respond adequately to the questions posed by their situation. See Lucretia B. Yaghjian, *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 89. Bultmann emphasizes "the process of understanding as a critical theme for writing theology." This is so because the text can mean many different things to each reader. Bultmann, therefore, believes that "asking appropriate questions is essential for the task of theology." John Painter, *Theology as Hermeneutics: Rudolf Bultmann's Interpretation of the History of Jesus* (Sheffield, UK: Almond, 1987), 49-50.

³⁰ John Wesley's *Sermons* are recorded in series. First series of *Sermons* (1-39), and (40-53), second series of *Sermons* (54-86), and (87-141). His views *On Dress* are expressed in *Other Sermons* but are seen more directly in *Sermon 88, "On Dress,"* based on 1 Pet 3:3-4. See Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* 657, 658.

³¹ John Wesley's views on dress are seen in his *Notes on the Bible*. Here, Wesley gives observations on some verses in his four commentaries. First, *Wesley's Notes on Genesis-Job*. Second, *Wesley's Notes on Psalms-Malachi*. Third, *Wesley's Notes on Matthew-Acts*; and fourth, *Wesley's Notes on Romans-Revelation*. See Wesley, *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*.

³² John Wesley's views are traced in his *Four Volumes of Journals*. See Wesley, *Wesley's Journals*.

other writings.³³ Sources such as: the Bible commentaries, the Bible dictionaries, the Bible encyclopedias, Christian books, journals, theses, and dissertations, both in hard and soft copies, on modesty in dressing and adornment have been consulted, evaluated, synthesized, and examined.

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the problem's background, the problem's statement, the study's purpose, the study, the significance of the study, methodology, delimitation, and definition of terms. The second chapter focuses on a review of the literature associated with this topic. In an organized and systematic order, a study of literature written by other authors as understood in the history of the Christian church is considered.

The third chapter presents John Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment, especially distinguishing between kings and government officers, and ordinary people. In addition, this chapter includes Wesley's background, theological presuppositions, and hermeneutical approaches to modesty in dressing and adornment.

The fourth chapter deals with a biblical theological view of modesty in dressing and adornment. This section expounds Luke 7:24-25, 1 Tim 2:9-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-4 which are the key texts used in Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. It also looks at Ellen G. White's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Then the biblical theological view is used to evaluate Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Finally, the fifth chapter offers a summary, conclusion, and study implications.

³³ John Wesley's views on dress are extracted from written materials such as: Essays, Letters, Dialogs, Thoughts, Addresses, and Prayers.

Definition of Terms

Some terms used in this study are defined as follows: **Dressing** is wearing “clothes, attires, apparel, or garments to cover the body from nakedness and protect” it from a hostile environment.³⁴ **The dressing** is also “a nonverbal” way of communicating one’s gender, culture, career, profession, marital status, “moral standards, and religious beliefs.”³⁵ One’s way of dressing and adorning self can help identify who they are (class), where one comes from, and their culture.³⁶

Adornment is beautifying one’s body by putting “on ornaments” and hairstyles to depict their status in life, character, and culture.³⁷

Immoderate adornment refers to putting on ornaments, jewelry, apparel, and cosmetics made of expensive materials such as: gold, silver, or pearls.

Modesty is the act of avoiding extravagance in dress and adornment.

³⁴ Victor H. Matthews, “Cloth, Clothes,” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville, NY: Abingdon Press, 2006), 1:691. See also Dwight Arthur Delafield, *What’s in Your Clothes Closet?* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1974), 29. Frank H. Gorman, “Nakedness,” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed., Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville, NY: Abingdon Press, 2009), 4:217.

³⁵ See Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 22-24.

³⁶ Tremper Longman III, ed., *The Barker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 423.

³⁷ Verlyn Verbrugge, ed., *NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words: An Abridgment of New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 705.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews written works on the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment between high-ranked people and ordinary Christians. The chapter has three main sections. The first section considers the view that supports the distinction of modesty in dress and adornment for diverse categories of people in society. The second section explores the view which opposes the distinction of modesty in dress and adornment for different ranks of people. This view demands everyone to observe the principles of modesty in dress and adornment. The third section presents the views of neutral people about the distinction of modesty in dress and adornment. These views support beauty and jewelry for all people.

Why are there different views on the distinction of modesty in Christian dressing and adornment? The researcher observes that Christians in the post-modern period are separated by many factors which are unique from the people who lived in the time of the Bible's authors. This includes geographical environment, era, distance, languages, cultural practices, and structures. Therefore, the different views for the distinction of modesty in Christian dressing and adornment exist because the social, religious, economic, and political customs of the characters in the Bible are different from those of the various authors.

Views in Favor of the Distinction of Modesty in Christian Dressing and Adornment

This section is presented in four sub-sections. Sub-section one focuses on arguments favoring gender distinction in the modesty of dressing and adornment. Sub-section two centers on arguments favoring the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment based on social and economic status. Sub-section three reviews literature favoring distinction in dress and adornment in religious functions. Sub-section four focuses on arguments favoring the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment in political functions.

Gender Distinction of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

The gender distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment is something that existed from the beginning of the human race. For example, Bolich states, “perhaps this need for modesty itself was born from a sense of shame associated with ... Adam and Eve.”³⁸ Gordon J. Wenham concurs with Bolich that the need to dress developed when the first human beings sinned and became “aware of their nakedness.”³⁹ F.W. Farrar echoes that at this point, as recorded “in Genesis 3:7, the eyes of their minds opened” and made them aware of their condition, which forced them to prepare waist clothes to cover their nakedness.⁴⁰

³⁸ Gregory G. Bolich, *Crossdressing in Context Vol. 1: Dress and Gender* (Raleigh, NC: Psyche’s Press, 2006), 22.

³⁹ Wenham states that the “nakedness of humanity before the fall (2:25)” and “after the fall (3:21)” were the same, but at the entry of sin, human knowledge changed, and at the realization of their nakedness, they invented clothes. See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (WBC) 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 1:75.

⁴⁰ F. W. Farrar, *Genesis-Exodus*, The Pulpit Commentary (TPC) 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 1:59.

Rabbi Abba B. Kahana states that after the fall, Adam and Eve separately made “ḤAGOROTH” (girdles) in the “plural” but “not *ḥagorah* (a girdle)” in the singular to cover their nakedness Gen 3:7.⁴¹ It may imply that since the couple made their clothes independently, their attire must have differed.

Thomas L. Constable argues that in Eden (Gen 3:21), “before God sent Adam and Eve out into a new environment He provided them with clothing that was adequate for their needs.”⁴² Constable indicates that these clothes were distinct in gender based on (Deut 22:5), “because God intended to keep the sexes distinct” after the fall.⁴³

In addition, Nancy M. Tischler asserts that “There must have been differences in design between the women’s and men’s garments... (Deut. 22:5).”⁴⁴ She also affirms that the law demanded men to have “blue cord, and long strings on the four corners of their outside garments as a perpetual reminder to fulfill divine commandments ... (Num. 15:38-41, Deut. 22:12).”⁴⁵ Josephus confirms that no woman uses a “man’s clothing,” nor man the garments of a woman as per the Jewish culture.⁴⁶ In other words, Tischler and Josephus are saying that Jewish clothes

⁴¹ Abba B. Kahana, *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* (Bereshith) 9.6. Colin Brown records that, “Midrash is a Jewish method of exegesis which sought to discover deeper meanings in the text beyond the literal one.” See Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan, 1975), 64.

⁴² Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Genesis- Deuteronomy* (Shiloh Road Plano, TX: Sonic Light, 2005), 59, accessed 27 March 2019. <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/ot/genesis/genesis.htm>.

⁴³ Constable, *Notes on Genesis- Deuteronomy*, 59.

⁴⁴ Nancy M. Tischler, *All Things in the Bible: An Encyclopedia of the Biblical World* (London, UK: Greenwood Press, 2006), 1:126.

⁴⁵ Tischler, *All Things in the Bible*, 1:126.

⁴⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews* 4:301.

distinguished the genders. Thus, women were restricted from wearing “men’s clothes,” while “men were forbidden to wear women’s clothes.”⁴⁷

Dress and adornment are vital in distinguishing sex and gender. Wilson argues that the importance of gender categorization of modesty in apparel and adornment has increased since the “eighteenth century” because of “feminist theory.”⁴⁸ For instance, despite the lack of distinction in dressing and decoration by some individuals globally, the dress is still a valid way of telling a boy from a girl, a man from a woman, and a male from a female.⁴⁹ In most cultures, religions are on the front line to ensure that gender distinction in dressing and adornment is maintained.⁵⁰ However, Bolich shows that using “conscious and unconscious” dimensions internationally as the determining factor of gender distinction in dressing and ornamentation has resulted in some problems.⁵¹

What make some authors to support the gender distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment? They base their argument on the earliest human covering recorded in the Bible, especially Gen 3:7, 21, and Deut 22:5.

Social and Economic Status Distinction of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

Dressing and adornment are items of communicating the distinction between individuals’ social and economic status. Angel Manuel Rodríguez states that “in the

⁴⁷ Tischler, *All Things in the Bible*, 1:126. Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews*, 4:301.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 22.

⁴⁹ Bolich, *Crossdressing in Context* Vol. 1, 20.

⁵⁰ Bolich, *Crossdressing in Context* Vol. 1, 25.

⁵¹ Bolich, *Crossdressing in Context* Vol. 1, 30.

Old Testament the functional use of jewelry” distinguishes people’s majestic status, financial stability, and social status.⁵² He further demonstrates that though jewelry was used as an ornament, its use “as currency and an evidence of wealth is not condemned.”⁵³ Bacchiocchi confirms that “Christianity was born” when dress and jewelry measured one’s “social status.”⁵⁴ He also adds that “from the fifth to the tenth century... extravagance in dress and ornaments ... of the clergy and nobles ... merchants and craftsmen,” distinguished their social and economic status.⁵⁵ Thus for centuries, peoples’ dress and adornment have been used to compare and contrast their social and economic status.

Some Bible accounts indicate the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment. Robert J. Karris states that “in the Gospel of Luke ... the life of Jesus Christ” has been described by wearing of apparels from the start to the end.⁵⁶ James L. Resseguie concurs with Karris, and he gives four distinctive clothing in various accounts of the life of Jesus such as: “cradle clothing (2:7)... transfiguration clothing (9:29) ... mockery clothing (23:11)... and grave clothing (24:12).”⁵⁷ He uses clothing to distinguish Jesus’ “social status and inner nature or character during critical, transitional moments in his earthly life.”⁵⁸ Resseguie confirms that:

⁵² Angel Manuel Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible: What You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid To Ask* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1999), 38.

⁵³ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 46- 47.

⁵⁴ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 54.

⁵⁵ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 83, 85.

⁵⁶ Robert J. Karris, *Luke: Artist and Theologian: Luke’s Passion Account as Literature*, Theological Inquiries: Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 86.

⁵⁷ James L. Resseguie, “Clothing: A Map of the Spiritual Life,” in *Spiritual Landscape: Images of the Spiritual Life in the Gospel of Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 91-93.

⁵⁸ Resseguie, “Clothing: A Map of the Spiritual Life,” 94.

In the ancient world, the quality of the fabric (wool, linen, cotton, or silk), the condition and length of the garment, the color of the dyes, and the type of ornamentation indicated social status. Linen and fine silk were expensive fabrics available only to those of high social status. Unblemished garments were essential for social and religious duties. The color and quality of dyes testified to social status; purple dye was very expensive and available only to the wealthy... On the other hand, unbleached garments—dark brown and grey—were the standard of the poor and *hoi polloi*. The length of the garment was also an important indicator of social status. The poor and slaves dressed in short tunics and cloaks, while long cloaks and tunics were common among the rich and dignitaries. Footwear and ornamentation also signaled social status. For instance, long fringes, ornate hems, rings, and headgear were common among the wealthy and those of high status, while slaves lacked all ornamentation and went barefoot.⁵⁹

Resseguie says that dressing and adornment “in the ancient world” covered nakedness and described one’s social and economic status. Batten asserts that Scribes wore “long robes (*stole*) while Pharisees wore long fringes” to signify wealth, honor, and social recognition (Luke 20:46; Matt 23:50).⁶⁰

Ellen Swift asserts that “Studies of material culture, particularly dress, suggest that an important function is to construct a particular status or identity for the wearer.”⁶¹ Alicia J. Batten concurs with Swift that dressing and adornment are significant in “analyses of the social significance.”⁶² Bolich echoes that dressing and adornment play a “social function” of distinctions of different members of groups and social status in divisions of people.⁶³ Paul J. Lane adds that historical, archaeological

⁵⁹ Resseguie, “Clothing: A Map of the Spiritual Life,” 89-90.

⁶⁰ Alicia J. Batten, “Clothing and Adornment,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 3 (July 2010): 155, accessed 5 October 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249841176clothing_and_adornment.

⁶¹ Ellen Swift, “Identifying Migrant Communities: A Contextual Analysis of Grave Assemblages from Continental Late Roman Cemeteries,” *Britannia* 41 (2010): 268, accessed 5 October 2020, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/britannia/article/identifying-migrant-communities-a-contextual-analysis-of-grave-assemblages-from-continental-late-roman-cemeteries/F028B13855CEFB95FD37E6968D923831>.

⁶² Batten, “Clothing and Adornment,” 148.

⁶³ Bolich, *Crossdressing in Context* Vol. 1, 19.

discoveries show that “Considerable stylistic diversity... served as emblems of certain social distinctions.”⁶⁴ Elizabeth Schimpfössl also says that people’s way of dressing distinguishes their “social status.”⁶⁵ Moreover, Elizabeth Wilson confirms there was distinction in fashions of dressing and adornment between masculine and feminine, in economic and social roles “in the seventeenth century” and “in the eighteenth century.”⁶⁶ Thus the dressing and adornment of living human beings and archaeological findings of the dead persons give evidence of distinction in social and economic status.

Why do these authors favor the social-economic distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment? They are using “chronological interpretation.”⁶⁷ For example, they have examined the social-economic role of clothes and jewelry from the Old Testament, New Testaments, and their times. The researcher acknowledges that Christians need to follow Christ’s example because, His clothes were not distinct. That is why it required Judas Iscariot to betray Him (c.f. Matt 26:48-51; Mark 14:43-46; Luke 22:47-48).

However, there is a social-economic distinction between dressing and adornment in the Scriptures. This is because, in all societies, dressing and adornment distinguish the poor and the needy from the affluent. The apostle Paul and the apostle

⁶⁴ Paul J. Lane, “Africa, Historical Archaeology,” in *Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, Vol. 2, ed. Deborah M Pearsall (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2008), 29.

⁶⁵ Elizabeth Schimpfössl, “Russia’s Social Upper Class from Ostentation to Culturedness,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 65, no. 1(2014): 64, accessed 5 October 2020, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1468-4446.12053>.

⁶⁶ Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, 17. See Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communicating Through Clothing, Contributions in Sociology* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 61.

⁶⁷ Ron Du Preez, class notes for GSEM 608 Advanced Methods of Teaching the Bible, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, October 2016.

Peter admonish Christians to be unique and modest in their adornment and avoid to be like the world around them (c.f. Rom 12:2, 1Tim 2:9, 1 Pet 3:3-5). Also, Christians should follow the standard of Christ. But there is a clear distinction between people based on their dress even to this day. Therefore, Christians need to understand and appreciate the context and content of these historical facts to help them in their conclusions.

Religious Functions

The ancient religious leaders dressing and adornment distinguished them from ordinary people. Ross E. Winkle asserts that “the religious leaders in Judaism ... had religious dress - including robes and a crown - that differentiated them from the average adherent of Judaism.”⁶⁸ Winkle singles the priests as an example of the people commanded by the law to wear “distinctive dress,” and none could serve without it.⁶⁹

Josephus, asserts that Moses commanded “Let not any one of you wear a garment made of woolen and linen, for that is appointed to be for the priests alone.”⁷⁰ This means, ordinary Jews were restricted from putting on attires meant for priests. He further comments that all priests, when ministering in the Sanctuary, were required to wear “Cohanoeoe [-priestly] garments.”⁷¹ The high priest was to wear extra clothes known as “Cahanoeoe Rabbae” to distinguish him from other priests and ordinary

⁶⁸ Ross E. Winkle, “‘Clothes Make the (One like a Son of) Man’: Dress Imagery in Revelation 1 as an Indicator of the High Priestly Status,” *Dissertations* 168 (2012), 63, accessed 7 February 2020, <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/168>.

⁶⁹ Winkle, “Clothes Make the (One like a Son of) Man,” 39.

⁷⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews*, 4:208.

⁷¹ Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews*, 3:151.

Israelites.⁷² Josephus says: The ephod had “two sardonyxes of gold ... and the twelve stones made of sardonyx, a topaz, and an emerald; a carbuncle, a jasper, and a sapphire; a ligure, then an amethyst, and an agate, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a beryl.”⁷³

Angel Manuel Rodríguez concurs with Josephus that “the jewelry of the high priest’s garment ... expressed beauty and social status but ... was also a symbol of power and authority” which distinguished him from political leaders and security officers.⁷⁴ Also, Ze'ev Yeivin commenting on Ezekiel 21:31, states that: priestly crowns “‘*Aṭarot* were made of precious materials – gold, silver, expensive clothes, and skins – as indicated (Zech 6:11).”⁷⁵ Rodríguez further states that: though priests wore a crown; “the inscription on it ‘Holy to the Lord’ (Exod 28:36-38) ... identified the nature of his work ... and reminded him of his function.”⁷⁶

Alicia J. Batten echoes that “the high priest’s” garment was designed and made per God’s directives, indicating his rank as the intercessor of the people.⁷⁷ Rooke concurs with Batten that “the garments as a whole distinguish their wearer from the other priests and are thus a sign of status (Lev 21:10).”⁷⁸ To illustrate this, there is a biblical example of the handing over ceremony of the high priest’s office

⁷² Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews*, 3:151.

⁷³ Josephus, *Antiquities of Jews*, 3:168.

⁷⁴ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 32, 33.

⁷⁵ Ze'ev Yeivin, “Crowns, Decorative Headdresses, and Wreaths,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 5, 2nd ed. Fred Skolnik, ed. (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2007), 308.

⁷⁶ Yeivin, “Crowns, Decorative Headdresses, and Wreaths,” 33, 34.

⁷⁷ Batten, “Clothing and Adornment,” 151.

⁷⁸ Deborah W. Rooke, “The Day of Atonement as a Ritual of Validation for the High Priest,” in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day (London, UK: T & T Clark, 2005), 348.

and the authority from Aaron to his son Eleazar (c.f. Num 20:23-29).⁷⁹ In other words, due to religious functions of the high priest, there was distinction in his garments.

Nevertheless, Gilbert emphasizes that though “the ephod of the high priest’s garment” had much jewelry, it should not be seen as an ornament because everything associated with the Sanctuary was “a practical lesson ... to the plan of salvation.”⁸⁰ Bacchiocchi echoes that though “the breastplate of the high priest’s garment ... was decorated ... with precious stones. ... Only the high priest could wear them, and only when he went inside the Sanctuary.”⁸¹ Rodríguez concurs with Bacchiocchi that “Jewelry was prescribed here exclusively for the high priest and not for the Israelites in general.”⁸² Rodríguez further argues that “the ephod of the priestly dress (28:17-30) ... had also a religious motivation... and reminded him of his function.”⁸³ In brief, high priest’s garments were confined to the Sanctuary’s services, and the high priest immediately removed them and put on ordinary priest’s clothes after the service.

Elizabeth Ellen asserts that “The High Priest ... was honored by his turban and breast piece.”⁸⁴ In other words these were the symbols of his distinctive office. Nevertheless, F. C. Gilbert emphasizes that ordinary Israelites upheld modesty because jewelry “in the Sanctuary services” did not play the role of ornaments but was a type and “an object lesson.”⁸⁵ Gilbert and Ellen agree that the use of “the

⁷⁹ Rooke, “The Day of Atonement as a Ritual of Validation for the High Priest,” 348.

⁸⁰ Gilbert, *Messiah in His Sanctuary* (New York: Teach Services, Inc., 2004), 44.

⁸¹ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 44-45.

⁸² Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 38.

⁸³ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 38.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Ellen Platt, “Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part II.” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 (autumn 1979):200-201, accessed 9 July 2019, <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1451&context=auss>.

⁸⁵ F. C. Gilbert, *Messiah in His Sanctuary* (Abrams, WI: Lighthouse, 1998), 58-59.

precious stones” associated with the Sanctuary service and “the priest’s clothes” were not ornaments.⁸⁶ Using the words of Platt, these garments and jewelry are not ornamental dressing and adornment; because they are “associated to some degree with insignia of office for the Hebrew high priest.”⁸⁷ Therefore, the purpose of the high priest’s dress and adornment aimed to distinguish his religious functions in the Sanctuary.

Also, the issue of distinction in dressing and adornment is recorded in the Apocrypha books. For example, in Maccabees, “Simon was made high priest ... and King Demetrius also confirmed him in the high priesthood ... and (commanded) that he should be clothed in purple, and wear gold.” (1 Maccabees 14:27, 38, 43 King James Apocrypha). In this text, the king selected the high priest, and directed what he would wear.

Why do most of these authors⁸⁸ favor distinctive religious modesty in dressing and adornment? These authors have used three basic principles for interpreting the Bible: “observation, or what the text says; interpretation, or what the text means; and application, or text implication.”⁸⁹ Thus, the Hebrew dress code specifications here concern the attires of priests, the high priest, and their ministries in the Hebrew Sanctuary. These authors indicate a clear distinction between the adornment of the

⁸⁶ See Gilbert, *Messiah in His Sanctuary*, 2. Platt, “Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part II,” 201.

⁸⁷ Elizabeth Ellen Platt, “Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part I,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 (autumn 1979):74-75.

⁸⁸ Most authors referred to here are: Winkle, Josephus, Angel Manuel Rodríguez, Ze’ev Yeivin, Alicia J. Batten, and Deborah W. Rooke.

⁸⁹ Ron Du Preez, class notes for GSEM 608 Advanced Methods of Teaching the Bible, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, October 2016. See also Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 60.

priest's office and that of other Israelites or those ministered to. Among the priests, there was a distinction between what the high priest wore and what the ordinary priests wore. Therefore, there was a distinction between dressing for the common Israelites and that of the priests.

Political Functions

Some dressing and adornment worn by ancient civic leaders were distinctive, and separated them from other members of society. Nancy M. Tischler asserts that “kings had crowns to show their elevated status, giving them additional height and splendor” in the ancient world.⁹⁰ Longman and Dillard assert that “a crown would more naturally sit on the head of a royal figure.”⁹¹ Using the words of Ze'ev Yeivin; “A crown is an ornate headdress which serves as a symbol of the monarchy, high office, or some other position which marks its wearer as a distinguished person.”⁹² In other words the “crown” was a distinctive “headdress” that singled out the ruler from his subjects.

In addition, Yeivin is on record that “*nezer*, *‘aṭarah* and *keter* ... are three different terms used for ... headdress in the Bible.”⁹³ He further clarifies that “*nezer*, was the crown” won by somebody picked and dedicated in God's reverence like a Nazirite; “*‘aṭarah*, was a majestic crown” worn to identify social position like that of the king, queen, prince, princess or a noble person; and the “*keter* was a crown” won

⁹⁰ Tischler, *All Things in the Bible*, 1:130.

⁹¹ Tremper Longman III, and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 494.

⁹² Ze'ev Yeivin, “Crowns, Decorative Headdresses, and Wreaths,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 5, ed. Fred Skolnik (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2007), 307.

⁹³ Yeivin, “Crowns, Decorative Headdresses, and Wreaths,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 5:307.

to recognize royalty like that of a queen.⁹⁴ For example, Ingo Gildenhard indicates that Caesar's dressing and adornment had a distinctive role, especially when he wore "a crown made of laurel."⁹⁵

In Genesis 37-45, dressing and adornment signify a status change in Joseph's leadership position. For instance, Jacob provided Joseph with a distinctive coat as his favored son (Gen 37: 3).⁹⁶ It is assumed that perhaps Potiphar provided Joseph with a specific type of clothing as the principle servant of his house (Gen 39:5).⁹⁷ Matthews, concludes that "Pharaoh adorned Joseph with a signet ring, golden necklace, and royal apparel when he made him a prime minister (Gen 41:42)."⁹⁸

Similarly, different dressings and adornments identified kings and other royal family members. For example, Israel kings wore crowns (2 Sam 1:10) as symbols of their kingly office.⁹⁹ Bacchiocchi acknowledges that "Israelites wore the signet ring ... to seal various contracts. It was a symbol of authority, dignity, and social status (Jam 2:2)."¹⁰⁰ He further points out that "Pharaoh gave his signet ring to Joseph (Gen 41:42) ... and Ahasuerus gave his signet to Haman (Esth 3:10, 12)" to give them power and right to execute some verdicts.¹⁰¹ Platt concurs with Bacchiocchi that "the

⁹⁴ Yeivin, "Crowns, Decorative Headdresses, and Wreaths," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 5:308.

⁹⁵ Ingo Gildenhard, "Latin Text, Study Aids with Vocabulary, and Commentary," *Cicero, Philippic 2*, 44–50, 78–92, 100–119, Open Book Publishers 254-255, accessed 5 October 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv5zftxr.20>.

⁹⁶ Victor H. Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 65 (1995): 30.

⁹⁷ Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," 30.

⁹⁸ Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," 36.

⁹⁹ W. A. Raftety, "Crown" in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 831.

¹⁰⁰ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 111.

¹⁰¹ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 111.

signet ring was a piece of jewelry used as a high office insignia.”¹⁰² Therefore, the Israelite leaders wore signet rings to identify their office and rank in society.

Justin states that the queen and kings’ daughters were “clad in garments embroidered with gold.”¹⁰³ Nancy M. Tischler concurs with Justin that monarchs like “Saul” and his kingly family wore distinct attires made of beautiful materials and unique colors like “purple.”¹⁰⁴ She also adds that the early “kings had crowns” to reveal their crucial rank besides increasing their figure and splendidness.¹⁰⁵ Rodríguez also asserts that apparels and jewelry “were symbols of the person’s position in the society.”¹⁰⁶ For example, Prouser O. Horn notes that “when King Saul descended from power, he handed over some clothes (1 Sam 17:38–39; 24:4; 31:9) ... while David received many clothes as he ascended to power (1 Sam 17:38–39; 18:4).”¹⁰⁷

The Apocrypha books have recorded distinctions in dressing and adornment for political leaders compared to ordinary citizens. For instance, in Sirach there is him that sits “on a throne of glory, unto him that is humbled in earth and ashes; From him that wears purple and a crown, unto him that is clothed with a linen frock” (Sir 40:3-4). In other words Sirach indicates there is a distinction between the dress and adornment of the kings and political rulers, and those of ordinary people.

During the Bible times, there were distinctive clothes. For example, Elizabeth Ellen Platt, in defining jewelry and garments listed in Isa 3:18-23, shows that:

¹⁰² Platt, “Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part I,” 77.

¹⁰³ The Apostolic Fathers Justin Martyr and Irenaeus (ANF, 1.2184).

¹⁰⁴ Tischler, *All Things in the Bible*, 1:119, 1:127.

¹⁰⁵ Tischler, *All Things in the Bible*, 1:130.

¹⁰⁶ Angel Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 31.

¹⁰⁷ Ora Horn Prouser, “Suited to the Throne: The Symbolic Use of Clothing in the David and Saul Narratives,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 71 (1996): 34.

The queen's jewelry designating her rank is beautiful (Ezek 16: 17, 39); the king's crown (Prov 4:9; Jer 13:18; Esth 1:4) or scepter (Jer 48:17) is regally splendid; and God's signs of dominion are ultimately majestic (Isa 28:5; 1 Chr 29: 11, 13; Isa 63: 12, 14, 15). Certainly, the English words "beauty," "glory," and "finery" are associated here. Still, the basic biblical meaning has more to do with symbols of high office, which would, as a matter of course, be "beautiful" jewelry, metalwork, and apparel designating exaltation and honor.¹⁰⁸

Here Platt asserts that "kings and queens" in Israel wore distinctive clothes from those of the other ordinary Israelites. She has singled out some of the office insignia, such as: "the crown" that identified the person of high position, besides "the crescents," "necklet cords, and armlet" specifically identified as "insignia of a person from a royal family."¹⁰⁹ From Isa 3:18-23, Platt has listed twenty-two items of dressing and adornments used symbolically.¹¹⁰ Platt observes that officers of valued offices should clothe and adorn themselves with insignias but they should avoid "the misuse of the authority of office for which the apparel stands."¹¹¹ Similarly, Dennis H. Braun asserts that: "when the aristocracy abused their positions of power, the stripping off of their ornaments symbolized their loss of power." In brief, most of these clothes and jewelry were put on to indicate different ranks of people among the Hebrews.

When the Israelites settled in Canaan, they maintained modesty in dressing and adornment. For instance, Creech writes that though the Hebrew "king wore crown," his fighters did not put on any jewelry in battle ground, which made it easier to identify and slay their enemies who wore jewelry (2 Chr 20:25).¹¹² This means

¹⁰⁸ Platt, "Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part I," 72-73.

¹⁰⁹ Platt, "Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part I," 74-75.

¹¹⁰ Platt, "Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part I," 72.

¹¹¹ Platt, "Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part II," 200.

¹¹² Charles E. Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why?* (New York: Teach services, Inc., 1991), 20.

there was a distinction regarding dressing and adornment whereby the king put on the kingly “crown” while his “soldiers wore” plain combat clothes, but their rivals were in “jewelry.”¹¹³

From the literature reviewed in this sub-section, one may ask why the authors presented the distinct role of modesty in dressing in favor of the political functions of different categories of people. The truth is that the Hebrews practiced distinction in dressing and adornment during both the theocracy and the monarchy periods (1 Sam 8:4, 19-20, 10:9: and 2 Sam 2:10). This section, therefore, clarifies the view that there is a distinction between the dressing associated with the office, and the ordinary person.

Views Against Distinction of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

The Church Fathers

The views against the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment are also found in the writings of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* or *Apostolic Fathers*.¹¹⁴ And the *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why? 20*.

¹¹⁴ *Ante-Nicene Fathers (ANF)*, 10 vols, (ANF), 10 vols, repr., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994).

¹¹⁵ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (NPNF)*, 14 vols, repr., ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983).

These are known as the Church Fathers.¹¹⁶ Rosalie Haffner Lee asserts: “A careful study of early church history reveals that the Church Fathers in the first and second centuries advocated for the strictest adherence to high standards of conduct, dress, morality, recreation, and temperance.”¹¹⁷ These high standards may have included modesty in dressing and adornment.

The Epistle to Dognetus (c.150) states, “We should not be anxious concerning clothing and food.”¹¹⁸ The letter shows that despite their positions, all Christians are advised not to be worried about what they put on or eat. Also, Papias *Shepherd of Hermas* says: “Moreover, I say to you all, who have received the seal of the Son of God, be clothed with simplicity, and be not mindful of offenses, nor remain in wickedness.”¹¹⁹ This means, all believers of different classes of people should uphold plainness in dressing and adornment. Thus Godly people are not allowed to over spend money on adornment at the expense of helping the poor and needy.

Justin Martyr (ca.110–165 AD) opines that Christians should not adorn themselves with decoration and “beauty that passes away and perishes, but with everlasting and precious graces.”¹²⁰ This is a counsel to all believers who have become children of God on appropriate dressing.

¹¹⁶ According to Philip Schaff, “the Church Fathers were not the apostles but were closely related to the twelve apostles of the New Testament.” Schaff asserts that the “Apostolic Fathers were the disciples of the apostles of Jesus Christ in the New Testament who lived in the second century” (ca.100-200AD). However, some are termed as “sub-Apostolic Fathers—for instance, Irenæus, who was the disciple of Polycarp.” See Philip Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenæus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 3, accessed 9 April 2019, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>.

¹¹⁷ Rosalie Haffner Lee, “Dress Standards: in the Early Christian Church,” *Ministry*, February 1968, 12.

¹¹⁸ *Dognetus Epistle*, 9:6.

¹¹⁹ *Hermas Similitude*, 9, 31:4.

¹²⁰ Justin Martyr and Irenæus, *How Christians View Death* 1.9 (ANF, 1.301, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

Similarly, Clement of Alexandria (ca 150-215 AD) advises saints to live virtuously by clothing themselves with “meekness and self-discipline, and avoiding pride.”¹²¹ This is a rebuke to extravagant Christians who wear expensive dresses and adornment without assisting “the needy.”¹²² Thus all wealthy and other Christians in general should shun extravagancy in jewelry, and help needy human beings.¹²³ In brief, Clement is at the forefront of developing principles of modesty in dressing and adornment.¹²⁴

In addition, Tertullian (ca. 160-225 AD) requests “females to uphold plainness” by avoiding worldly jewelry if they “wish to get heavenly jewels.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ Clement, the first Epistle to the Corinthians 30.24. *Let us do those things that please God and flee from those He hates so that we may be blessed.* “Clements is assumed to be Paul’s coworker and the author of the Epistle to Corinthians church (Philippians 4:3).” See *The Apostolic Fathers: I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache Barnabas* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press 1965), 4.

¹²² Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 2:13, (ANF 2, 269).

¹²³ Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 2:13, (ANF 2, 268).

¹²⁴ Lee referring the principle of dressing from Clement of Alexandria quotes: “Clement, speaking of women who wear gold, occupy themselves in curling their locks, paint their eyes, dye their hair, and in general practice the ‘arts of luxury,’ said that in truth they were imitating the Egyptians. Furthermore, he quoted heathen poets to show that if even some of them were disgusted with such fashions, how much more should such things be rejected by those who know the truth (ibid., vol. 2, p. 272). He also spoke about ornamented sandals to which had been added ‘nails driven into the soles in winding rows.’ To these ‘mischievous devices’ the Christian must bid ‘farewell’ (ibid., p. 267). After quoting Jesus’ statement in Luke 12:22-28 about raiment ‘consider the lilies,’ and ‘if God so clothe the grass,’ Clement enumerated some of the deceptions he felt might be likened to the grass which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven: love of ornament, gems, gold, artificial hair and wreathed curls, staining the eyes, plucking out hairs, painting with rouge and white lead, and dyeing of the hair (ibid., p. 264).

By way of a positive suggestion he recommended that instead of wearing precious stones and pearls, things to which ‘silly people’ are attracted for show, Christians should adorn themselves with the ‘Word of God,’ Jesus the Pearl of great price (ibid., p. 267). Interestingly enough, he advised that in the place of smearing their faces with devices of wily cunning, they try the adornment of health, namely temperance in drinks, moderation in articles of food, which ‘are effectual in producing beauty according to nature’ (ibid., p. 287).” See Rosalie Haffner Lee, “Dress Standards: in the Early Christian Church,” *Ministry*, February 1968, 13.

¹²⁵ Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*, (ANF 4, 25).

This is the required standard of Christian modesty in dressing and adornment.¹²⁶ This counsel is to all heavenly candidates' ladies without distinguishing them based on their social status.

Finally, *Cyprian of Carthage* (ca. 200–258 AD) calls “Christians to avoid the vanity of being adorned with gold and pearls and necklaces.”¹²⁷ He adds that since they have Christ in their hearts, “they should clothe and adorn themselves in His honor.”¹²⁸ In other words, extravagance in dressing and adornment is not acceptable. In conclusion most of the Church Fathers view jewelry as “worldly adornment.”¹²⁹ Therefore, they advocate for modesty in dressing and adornment.

The Medieval Period

Few documents were written on dressing and adornment during the medieval or middle Ages (ca 500-1500 AD). The Catholic Encyclopedia asserts that many Catholic Fathers misused their “sacramental authorities for worldly profit and wasteful life” throughout the medieval period.¹³⁰ Further, it records that “ordinary church members’ upheld plainness in clothing, but the clerics were intemperate, unethical and unspiritual, especially in wearing costly attires and adornments.”¹³¹

¹²⁶ Tertullian, writing about A.D. 202, reminded Christians they should “seek the cosmetics and adornment of the apostles and prophets.” He explained at great length “the harmful effect of saffron dye on the hair, but what was still worse, in his opinion, was the fact that those who change the colour of their mane proving the Lord wrong, who says, “Who of you can make a white hair black or a black hair white?” “Furthermore, those who would shun old age and sigh after youth by changing their hair colour will be shamed.” See Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* 1.4; 2.5, in (ANF 4, 20).

¹²⁷ Cyprian *On the Dress of Virgins* (ANF 5, 433).

¹²⁸ Cyprian *The Epistles of Cyprian Epistle* (ANF 5, 76).

¹²⁹ Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why?* 44.

¹³⁰ Berard L. Marthaler, ed., *The New Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol 9. 2nd ed.* (Washington, D.C: The Gale Group, Inc., 2003), 726.

¹³¹ Marthaler, ed., *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* 726.

Martin Luther (ca 1483–1546 AD), one of the sixteenth-century reformers, apart from being concerned with the theology of righteousness by faith, was against clerical extravagancy in clothing and ornamentation of the medieval period. Luther says:

In the first place, we require a general law and consent ... against profusion and extravagance in dress, which is the cause of so much poverty among the nobles and the people... As it is, we see that every man wishes to be every other man's equal and that this causes and increases pride and envy among us, as we deserve; all which would cease, with many other misfortunes, if our self-will would but let us be gratefully content with what God has given us.¹³²

Luther is saying that all Christians, regardless of their status, are called to maintain modesty in dressing and adornment. Graeme Murdock adds that clothing in the medieval period “was a crucial way of reflecting and establishing an individual’s social rank and status.”¹³³ Murdock also applauds Martin Luther for condemning “Catholic Fathers’ costly and luxurious vestments” and called them an evil, which leads to immodesty and discontentment.¹³⁴

Later on, Martin Luther’s teachings brought about the birth of the Lutheran Church. Bacchiocchi asserts that “Pietism grew out of the Lutheran tradition in Germany as a reaction ... to bring new life into Lutheranism by leading Christians into an experience of salvation through personal devotion, Bible study, prayer, and simple lifestyle.”¹³⁵ That is why some Christians expected their “clergy and laymen,

¹³² Martin Luther, *First Principles of the Reformation, or The 95 Theses and the Three Primary Works of Dr. Martin Luther*, ed., Henry Wace and C. A. Buchheim (London: John Murray, 1883), 91, accessed 9 March 2020, http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/Luther0155/FirstPrinciples/0224_Bk.html

¹³³ Graeme Murdock, “Dressed to Repress?: Protestant Clerical Dress and the Regulation of Morality in Early Modern Europe,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body, and Culture* 4, no. 2 (April 2015): 180, accessed 9 March 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfft20>.

¹³⁴ Murdock, “Dressed to Repress?” 133.

¹³⁵ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 90.

whether rich or poor, to dress in plain garb without jewelry, ornamentation, and frills.”¹³⁶ In other words, Martin Luther’s teaching was against the luxurious dressing of the clerics and the nobles.

The Church Reformers

During the sixteenth-century reformation, the reformers majored in theological teachings and issues of modesty in dressing and adornment of the medieval period. Bacchiocchi asserts that “The Reformation brought about radical reforms not only in the theological understanding of salvation but also in the practical lifestyle of people.”¹³⁷ To start with, modesty in dressing and adornment ought to be maintained by all people. For instance, John Calvin (1509–1564) asserts that dressing “should be regulated by modesty and sobriety; for luxury and immoderate expense arise from a desire to make a display either for the sake of pride or of departure from chastity.”¹³⁸

Further commenting on Matt 11:8, Calvin states, “Those who think Christ here condones the extravagance of a court are mistaken.”¹³⁹ Then he continues, “There are many other passages in which luxury of dress and excessive attention to outward appearance are censured.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Emory Stevens Bucke, ed., *The History of American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 2:340.

¹³⁷ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 83.

¹³⁸ John Calvin, *The Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1948), 66.

¹³⁹ John Calvin, *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke—Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2004), 7, accessed 17 January 2020, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/>

calcom32.html

¹⁴⁰ Calvin, *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke—Vol. 2*, 7.

Moreover, Calvin states that God desires all Christians to wear a “Frugal and inexpensive mode of dress.”¹⁴¹ Using the examples of “garments made of skins” which God provided to Adam and Eve, Calvin opines that “these garments function as an illustration of the suitable outfits for all Christians.”¹⁴² This means all Christians should avoid being immodest in dressing and adornment.

The Post-modern Scholars

In the post-modern era, there are discussions against the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment. Alicia Batten using the epistle of James states that:

James 2:2 deliberately contrasts the treatment of a rich man who flashes gold rings and wears fine clothing with a poor man in shabby clothing. The rich man is offered a good seat in the assembly while the pauper is ordered to sit on the floor. The letter sharply rebukes such treatment of the two figures, arguing that the people in the assembly have dishonored the poor man but that, in reality, God has chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs to the kingdom (Jas 2:5). Later on, it is the rich, moreover, with their rotting clothes and gold and silver, the rust of which will eat their flesh, who will receive eschatological judgment (Jas 5:1–6).¹⁴³

In the above statement Batten is against discrimination and categorizing worshippers based on wealth and social status, mainly reflected in clothing and jewelry. However, she uses this passage to deliver a moral and theological message.

Also, Richard M. Davidson supports the argument against the distinction of modesty in the dressing and adornment of various categories of people by asking:

Is it possible that since 1844 Seventh-day Adventists have the privilege of refraining from wearing jewelry as a special outward sign of the unique present truth that they are Laodicea, “people of the judgement;” that they live in the time of the investigative judgement? Is it possible that Adventists adopt this posture also because, although the church is spiritually espoused to Christ (Eph. 5; 2 Cor.11:2), the wedding is not consummated (Rev. 19:7, 8)? ...It is

¹⁴¹ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*–Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1578), 106, accessed 19 October 2020, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.html>

¹⁴² Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*–Vol. 1, 106,

¹⁴³ Batten, “Clothing and Adornment,” 155-156.

not that wearing jewelry is wrong-but we have the privilege of waiting to do so until the wedding feast, when Jesus Himself will adorn His bride with jewels.¹⁴⁴

Here Davidson seems to suggest that the saints have “the privilege of waiting to” put on jewelry after the marriage of the Lamb.

Why are some of the Church Fathers,¹⁴⁵ medieval authors, and sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformers against distinction of modesty in the dressing and adornment of various categories of people? Using the words of Davidson, most of the Church Fathers subscribed to the “Alexandrian hermeneutics” that used the allegorical method of interpreting the Bible.¹⁴⁶ Davidson further illustrates that, Irenaeus interpreted the Scriptures depending on “the authority of the church;” Tertullian used “allegory;” Clement used “historical, the doctrinal, the prophetic, the philosophical, and the mystical;” while Origen used “literal meaning ... ethical... allegory/mystical” in interpreting the Word of God.¹⁴⁷

In addition, most of the Church Fathers’ arguments are motivated by two reasons. First, they interpret the texts on dressing and adornment literally. Secondly, they take principles of dressing and adornment as “The set of general, or universal, or absolute standards like the Ten Commandments; which guide behaviors of all human beings across the world in matters of what is good and evil.”¹⁴⁸ For instance, the

¹⁴⁴ Richard M. Davidson, “The Good News of Yom Kippur,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 2 (autumn 1991), 18.

¹⁴⁵ The Church Fathers Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement and Origen.

¹⁴⁶ Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” 88.

¹⁴⁷ Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” 88-89.

¹⁴⁸ Miroslav M. Kiš, “Christian Lifestyle and Behavior” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed., Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 680. See Holmes, Lee Roy, “Liberals and Conservatives: Whatever Happened to the Seventh-day Adventist?” *Here We Stand Evaluating New Trends in the Church*, ed. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2005), 745.

Church Fathers view principles of dressing and adornment recorded in 1 Tim 2:9-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-5 as a mandatory set of rules for all humans.

Neutral Views on the Distinction of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

Some authors have a neutral view of modesty in dressing and adornment. This view does not specify whether there is a distinction between modesty in dressing and adornment for leadership and other ordinary people. For instance, Keavin Hayden declares that “God supports the use of jewelry.”¹⁴⁹ Hayden argues that “jewelry adorned the Garden of Eden ... Lucifer ... the Sanctuary ... and the high priest’s garments;” therefore, human beings should also adorn themselves with it.¹⁵⁰ However, Hayden seems to merge the use of jewelry in God’s creation without distinguishing between the dressing and adornment of the angels, the Sanctuary, and that of human beings.

Some author in a neutral position records that the patriarchal families of Abraham and Isaac possessed jewelry. For example, Kenneth D. Brantley and Julie Tivy Boney assert that “jewelry was part of Abraham’s family and Isaac’s family”

¹⁴⁹ Hayden demonstrates that: Lucifer strode among “Stones of fire “(cf. Ezek 28:12-15); Adam and Eve were placed in decorated Garden of Eden (cf. Gen 2:10-12); Rebecca put on a golden “Nose ring, earrings, and arm bracelets” as a sign of being engaged for marriage (Gen 24:22, 30, and 47). Judah wore “Arm bracelets” which he gave to Tamar as a payment pledge after an act of incest with her (Gen 38:18, 25). When Jacob was ascending to worship God at Bethel, he requested his family to remove the ornaments they were wearing (cf. Gen 35:2-4). As the Israelites left Egypt, Moses instructed them to ask for jewels of “Silver, gold, and clothing from the Egyptians” (cf. Exod 3:22; 11:2, 12:35). On their way, in the wilderness, they wore them. When the Israelites apostatized, they used these pieces of jewelry to make an idol of a golden calf (cf. Exod 35:22). Later on; they offered jewelry to the Lord (cf. Num 31:50). In brief, Hayden shows that biblically, dressing and adornment was part and parcel of the lifestyle of kings and the citizens of Israel (cf. 2 Sam 1:10). See Keavin Hayden, *Lifestyles of the Remnant: A Refreshing Look at the Principles of Christian Living* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), 59.

¹⁵⁰ Hayden, *Lifestyles of the Remnant*, 59.

dressing and adornment.¹⁵¹ Bruce Vawter concurs with Brantley and Boney that ordinary people like “Rebecca wore jewelry as a chunk of her wife-to-be price.”¹⁵² These authors say that since Abraham’s family wore jewelry, Christians may perhaps put it too. However, Angel M. Rodríguez explains that jewelry during the patriarchal period, acted “as currency ... evidence of wealth” (Gen 24: 10, 22, and 35).¹⁵³ Never the less, Rodríguez adds that “nothing prohibited someone” from putting on jewelry as “an ornament.”¹⁵⁴ In this case, jewelry among Abraham’s and Isaac’s families was used as money, but not as ornaments.

Some authors comment that Jacob’s family was dressed and adorned with jewelry. Charles E. Creech asserts that “in Gen 35:2-4 there is an indication that Jacob’s family wore jewelry,” that’s why God instructed them to get rid of them at Bethel.¹⁵⁵ However, Jones-Haldeman argues that, “In the Bethel incident, some ornaments, such as: rings, necklaces, bracelets, and nose rings, were neither removed nor buried by Jacob.”¹⁵⁶ Whitelaw concurs with Haldeman that “Only jewelry associated with idolatry was buried.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, these authors agree that “Jacob’s family possessed jewelry,” but they differ on the use of jewelry after Bethel’s incident.

Also, Dennis H. Braun observes that in “Gen 35” God is not denouncing the putting on “of jewelry,” on the contrary, He condemns the ornaments associated “with

¹⁵¹ Kenneth D. Brantley and Julie Tivy Boney, *The Truth About Jewelry* (Kearney, NE: Morris, 2001), 19.

¹⁵² Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 269.

¹⁵³ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 46.

¹⁵⁴ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 25.

¹⁵⁵ Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why?* 20.

¹⁵⁶ Madelyn Jones-Haldeman, “Adorning the Temple of God,” *Spectrum* 20 (1989): 50.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Whitelaw, *Genesis, The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 411.

worship” of idols.¹⁵⁸ He further illustrates that sons of Jacob like Joseph, were seen wearing jewelry even after Bethel’s experience.¹⁵⁹ These authors agree that members of Jacob’s household put aside some clothes and jewelry at Bethel. Though these authors are silent on the distinctive role of these clothes and ornaments, they emphasize the removal of jewelry as Jacob’s family ascended to Bethel for worship.

Some scholars have commented on modesty in dressing and adornment from the account of the Israelites’ deliverance, exodus, and epic. For example, Dennis H. Braun writes that the children of Israel had plenty “use of jewelry.”¹⁶⁰ Case in point: when the Israelites were requested to give free will offerings to construct “the Sanctuary” on two occasions, they shared some of their jewelry.¹⁶¹ Braun appears to conclude that “the removal of the ornaments” in some Old Testament accounts should not be used to propagate for non-use of jewelry.¹⁶²

In continuation, John I. Durham states that removal “of the jewelry” in (Exod 34) was “a sign of sorrow and repentance” for a short time, but not “a permanent rule” on modesty in dressing and adornment.¹⁶³ Renate Rosenthal concurs with Durham that the children of Israel disobeyed not by “wearing jewelry but by giving it out to make an idol.”¹⁶⁴ Brantley and Boney also argue that, “after the apostasy at Mount

¹⁵⁸ Dennis H. Braun, “A Seminar on Adventists, Adornment, and Jewelry,” *Dissertation Projects DMin* (Digital Commons @ Andrews University, 1996), 13, accessed 9 July 2019, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/22>.

¹⁵⁹ Braun, “A Seminar on Adventists, Adornment, and Jewelry,” 10.

¹⁶⁰ Braun, “A Seminar on Adventists, Adornment, and Jewelry,” 10.

¹⁶¹ Braun, “A Seminar on Adventists, Adornment, and Jewelry,” 11. (C.f. Exod 25:3-4 and 35:22).

¹⁶² Braun, “A Seminar on Adventists, Adornment, and Jewelry,” 12.

¹⁶³ John I. Durham, *Exodus Volume 3 of Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 434.

¹⁶⁴ Renate Rosenthal, *Jewelry in the Ancient Times* (London: Cassell, 1973), 7.

Horeb,” God pardoned the children of Israel and He did not want them to lay aside their “jewelry at all.”¹⁶⁵ Thus, Brantley and Boney allude that God favors jewelry wearing because, from Mt Sinai to Canaan, nothing is recorded against putting on jewelry throughout “the thirty-eight years” of the Israelites’ epic.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, these authors emphasize Israel’s possession of jewelry but not the distinctive role of dressing and adornment for diverse people.

Additionally, Brantley and Boney use “the Parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:22) ... and the pearl (Matthew 13:45, 46)” to assert that the Gospels support the use of jewelry.¹⁶⁷ Brantley and Boney’s argument favors jewelry but maintains a neutral stand on their distinction role. However, Creech differs from Brantley and Boney and states the application of the “parable is not literal” because Jesus’ subject matter was about “God’s love and forgiveness.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, Creech concludes that the “parables aim to give spiritual lessons”, not principles of modesty in dressing and adornment.¹⁶⁹

The neutral view of modesty in dressing and adornment is also drawn from the epistles of the apostle Paul and Peter in 1 Tim 2:9 and 1 Pet 3:4-5. For example, Paul M. Zehr states that “in (1Tim 2:9), Paul advised Timothy,” and the pastor of the Ephesians’ church, on how to deal with “a local issue”, but not “a universal problem” on women’s conduct in dressing and adornment.¹⁷⁰ C.G. Tuland echoes that the

¹⁶⁵ Brantley and Boney, *The Truth About Jewelry*, 27.

¹⁶⁶ Brantley and Boney, *The Truth About Jewelry*, 27.

¹⁶⁷ Brantley and Boney, *The Truth About Jewelry*, 35.

¹⁶⁸ Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why?* 34.

¹⁶⁹ Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why?* 35.

¹⁷⁰ Paul M. Zehr, *1 & 2 Timothy Titus*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1936), 73.

apostle “Paul did not condemn” Christian women’s adornment, but he emphasized on their “inner spirituality.”¹⁷¹ Brantley and Boney further assert that the apostle “Paul permitted” adornment with jewelry but “condemned extravagance” in dressing, and “exaggerated hairstyles” with expensive jewelry in his days.¹⁷²

The researcher observes that most of these authors need to state their position categorically. However, as per their arguments, they show nothing wrong with Christians putting on jewelry and ornaments. Nevertheless, their view is silent on the distinction between dressing and adornment. This view is neither in favor nor against the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment between high-ranked people and ordinary Christians.

One may ask why these authors are neither in favor nor against distinction. For example, some argue that: “Lucifer” was adorned with jewelry; “Aden was beatified with gems,” the “patriarchal family” possessed jewelry; “the Sanctuary” and the “high priest’s garment” were highly ornamented.¹⁷³ Therefore, Christians should put on jewelry. Nevertheless, the purpose of the study is to find out if Wesley’s view is biblically correct because God is the lover of jewelry.

Summary

A close study of the literature review in this chapter shows that there are argument for, against, and neutral on the distinction between dressing and adornment. For example, various texts used by different commentators from the Pentateuch to

¹⁷¹ C. G. Tuland, “Let’s Stop Arguing Over the Wedding Ring,” *Spectrum* 8.2 (1977): 59.

¹⁷² Brantley and Boney, *The Truth About Jewelry*, 37, 38.

¹⁷³ Hayden, *Lifestyles of the Remnant*, 59. Creech, *Jewelry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Why?* 20. Kenneth D. Brantley and Julie Tivy Boney, *The Truth About Jewelry* 19.

prophetic books show that the literature review on dress codes from the Old Testament is mainly a result of the difference in interpretation of the Scriptures.

First, some works of literature favor distinction in dressing and adornment. Most categorize dressing and adornment under the rules of action, determining gender, social, economic, religious, and political diversity. Some literature has shown that In the past, the Israelites wore “a blue ribbon” at the hem of their attires to distinguish them as a holy nation (Num 15:38-41; Deut 7:6, 14:2, 22:12). Other literature has indicated how the Israelites’ clothes had to show gender disparity (Deut 22:5). Additional literature has shown how the Israelites, and the high priests, as chosen and distinct people from other Israelites, wore religious attire as they performed religious activities in the Sanctuary (Exod 28:1-43; 39:1-31). Consequently, the literature review has shown how the Israelites’ king was a chosen civic leader, and his household wore distinctive clothes.

The second view is the argument against distinction in dressing and adornment. This sub-section has presented a non-distinctive role or equality of modesty in dressing and adornment for all people, especially in the history of the Christian church. Most authors supporting this view are motivated by the allegorical method of the Bible interpretation. Most of their arguments categorize the principles of dressing and adornment as general or absolute standards similar to the Ten Commandments. Therefore, they conclude that dressing and adornment principles are universally and uniformly applied evenly to all people and cultures worldwide.

Moreover, some literature review on the New Testament indicates that distinction in dressing and adornment for different categories of people is anchored in the Bible commentator’s theological and hermeneutical principles. The greatest challenge is how some authors interpret the parables of Jesus in the Gospels, the

teaching of the apostle Paul in 1Tim2:9-10 and the apostle Peter in 1 Pet 3:3-4, besides the prophecy of the apostle John in the book of Revelation. In brief, most literature reviewed in this section show that the Bible commentator's theological or hermeneutical orientation influences argument for, against, or neutral on the distinction of dressing and adornment.

Finally, the third view is neutral on the distinction between dressing and adornment. This view is neither in favor nor against the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment between high-ranked people and ordinary Christians.

CHAPTER 3
JOHN WESLEY'S VIEW OF MODESTY IN
DRESSING AND ADORNMENT

John Wesley has extensive work on modesty in dressing and adornment documented in *Wesley's Sermons*, *Notes on the Bible*, and *Journals*. This chapter presents Wesley's view of the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment for different categories of people.

The study is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on a theological analysis of John Wesley's view of the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment. This section is presented in three sub-sections. Sub-section one focuses on John Wesley's biblical, cultural, historical, political, and philosophical background. Sub-section two deals with Wesley's theological influence from other theologians. Then sub-section three looks on John Wesley's Hermeneutical background. Finally, the second section of the study discusses John Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment.

John Wesley's Cultural, Political, and Philosophical Environment

“John Wesley was born at Epworth in Lincoln on” 17 June 1703 to Samuel and Susannah Wesley.¹ He was about to die at age six when fire destroyed their house, but his survival indicated that God had a purpose for his life.² His parents, particularly the mother, employed time and care in bringing him up, “hoping to save his soul.”³ Susannah Wesley taught her children, including John Wesley, “religion and general education” at home, especially in “spiritual life, worship, and life skills.”⁴ His early childhood education at home may be the foundation of his Christian life and theology.

John Wesley advanced in studies at Charterhouse school from year ten and a half until he was sixteen.⁵ Wesley's life at this institution was a time of self-

¹ John Wesley was the fifteenth born in the family. His mother named him “John Benjamin, a combination of the two names” of his siblings, “John and Benjamin,” who died in infancy before his birth. However, he seems not to refer to himself as Benjamin in his writings. See Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists; Volume 1* (Franklin Square, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1870), 31.

² Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 2nd ed., (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1995), 333.

³ Susanna Wesley's *Letter* to Samuel Wesley Jr., 11 October 1709, See Charles Wallace Jr. ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12.

⁴ Susannah Wesley was “a strict disciplinarian.” Before the “age of five,” she taught John Wesley and other children things like “fearing the rod ... eating three meals a day without snacking in between ... bathing and sleeping before eight o'clock at night ... praying the Lord's prayer” both in the morning and evening; “using respectful language” at home; learning the letters of the alphabet; besides, “singing psalms” both in the evening and morning. In other words, John Wesley learned elementary education from his parents, especially his mother, at home for a period of ten and half years. This means from his birth in 1703 till 1714, when he joined a boarding school called Charterhouse in London. Wallace Jr. ed., *Susanna Wesley*, 33-34.

⁵ John W. Kriton, *John Wesley: His Life and Work* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1884), 3, accessed 22 June 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/60214501>.

realization away from his parents' watch. It is noted that Wesley clung to "his childhood teachings at first," but later on drifted away from them.⁶ Luke records that though Wesley looked good in front of others because he "prayed regularly, read the Bible, and attended church services," unfortunately, he was a "casual Christian" who did not follow his infancy religion.⁷ He was affected by the challenges of his early teenage life.

When Wesley moved from the Charterhouse school and joined the Oxford University in 1720, he demonstrated maturity in the Christian life. During his first five years at Oxford University, Wesley did not intend to "become a minister" or establish the Methodist Church.⁸ However, there was "no alteration in his moral and religious character."⁹ Thus in 1725, Wesley was ordained as a deacon, one year after his bachelor's degree in 1724,¹⁰ His desire to become a gospel minister began after receiving a master's degree in 1727, followed by ordination to the priesthood in 1728.¹¹

John Wesley's parents encouraged him to "take holy orders."¹² His father and mother did whatever they could, even engaging in debt to ensure he was ordained to the ministry. For example, Samuel Wesley wrote a letter to John on 17 March 1724/5,

⁶ Kriton, *John Wesley: His Life and Work*, 3.

⁷ Luke, *Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley* Vol. 1, 37.

⁸ The preface of Wesley's Journal shows that about fifteen years earlier, he was influenced by Bishop Taylor to become a minister. See Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (20 September 1740). See also Wesley, *Letter* (23 February 1725).

⁹ Luke, *Life and Times of Rev John Wesley*, Vol. 1. 40.

¹⁰ Luke, *Life and Times of Rev John Wesley*, Vol. 1, 39.

¹¹ At the age of 22, Wesley was advised by Bishop Taylor to become a minister. Then he began to study divinity besides guarding his thoughts and deeds and making religious friends in preparation for becoming a minister see Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (20 September 1740).

¹² John Wesley's letter to Emilia. See Wesley, *Letter* (23 February 1725).

saying, “I will struggle hard, but I will get money for your orders and something more.”¹³ His mother also wrote him several letters affirming that she supported his call “to join the holy orders.”¹⁴ In these letters, she expressed her desire for Wesley to be ordained and serve in one of the churches.

Cultural Environment

John Wesley lived in Great Britain “in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.”¹⁵ Nancy Armstrong asserts that dressing and adornment by this time played “the designative role of male and female.”¹⁶ Further, Clinch asserts that “in the 1700s,” dressing, and adornment affected the entire “English society cutting across low, middle, and high classes besides aristocrats and royalty.”¹⁷ In other words, Wesley lived during “the renaissance period when art and literature revival” affected the dressing culture of gender, occupation, and social status in the family and society.¹⁸

In his sermon *Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount-Discourse IV*, Wesley states that “Just like Christ, Christians should not retire from society, but culture should not gulp down all their time because that would destroy the advancement of

¹³ Letter from the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr. Wesley, *Wesley’s Letter* (17 March 1724/5) and Wesley, *Wesley’s Letter* (19 October 1725).

¹⁴ In Susanna Wesley’s letter to John Wesley on this matter. See letter from Susanna (Annesley) Wesley, *Wesley’s Letter* (10 September 1724), and Wesley, *Wesley’s Letter* (23 February 1724/5).

¹⁵ Clinch, *English Costume from Prehistoric Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 115.

¹⁶ Nancy Armstrong, “The Rise of the Domestic Woman,” *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1987), 108.

¹⁷ George Clinch, *English Costume from Prehistoric Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 115.

¹⁸ Clinch, *English Costume from Prehistoric Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 115.

the true religion.”¹⁹ Finally, Wesley records in the *Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity* that “The more I observe and consider things, the more clearly it appears ... The Methodists grow more and more self-indulgent, because, they grow rich. Although many of them are still deplorably poor.”²⁰ Therefore, the cultural background may be assumed to affect Wesley’s mission. Schlossberg indicates that though “Wesley was a university graduate, his mission targeted the society of low-class and middle-class people in England.”²¹

Political Environment

The political environment affected John Wesley’s theology. First, he was influenced by the diverse political stands of his parents concerning the issue of “The political revolution of 1688 of William and Mary coming to power in England.”²² Geordan Hammond, records that “Wesley’s father supported this revolution” because he “Viewed James II (r. 1685-88) as a tyrant ... However, Susanna’s belief in divine hereditary monarchy led her to oppose the removal of a ruling monarch.”²³ Hammond further states that Wesley’s parents did not take “the Oaths of allegiance and supremacy to William and Mary.”²⁴ This means different political stands of Wesley’s

¹⁹ Wesley, *Sermon* 24, 2.

²⁰ Wesley, *Sermon* 122, 16.

²¹ Herbert Schlossberg, “Religious revival and transformation of English Sensibilities in Early Nineteenth Century,” *The Victorian Web: Literature, History, & Culture in the age of Victoria*, 3 (1998): 1, accessed 25 February 2022, victorianweb.org/religion/herb3.html.

²² Geordan Hammond, “High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley’s Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735,” *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 78, no. 2 (June 2009): 174, accessed 22 June 2020, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/42612802>.

²³ Geordan Hammond, “High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley’s Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735,” 174.

²⁴ Hammond, “High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley’s Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735,” 174.

parents also affected his theological position on allegiance to the government of his times.

Wesley lived in England when religion and politics were merged.²⁵ Tolar Burton asserts that many sermons of that time “followed Tillotson and the theology called Latitudinarianism intent upon reforming morality and society than saving a soul.”²⁶ The Anglican Church of England was a victim of praising political leadership on the pulpits then. However, John Wesley did not support the church and state union.²⁷ Using the words of Davies, amid this secularization in the church, “Wesley made the proclamation of the gospel simple, logical, lucid, and practical.”²⁸

John Kent states that “In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a spiritual revival affected the Anglican Church” both from within and without.²⁹ There was liberal Protestantism on one side and the Roman Catholic Church Counter-Reformation on the other side. However, John Wesley’s sermons, teachings, and theology leaned on Protestantism and supported primitive theology.

Philosophical Environment

The philosophical thinking of the Church Fathers may also have impacted John Wesley’s theology. He says, “From a child, I was taught to love and reverence

²⁵ Isser Woloch, *Eighteenth-Century Europe: Tradition and Progress 1715-1789* (Fifth Avenue, NY: WW Norton, 1982), 298.

²⁶ Vicki Tolar Burton, “John Wesley and the Liberty to Speak: The Rhetorical and Literacy Practices of Early Methodism,” *National Council of Teachers of English* 53, no. 1 (Sep. 2001): 69, accessed 8 December 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/359063>.

²⁷ Albert C. Outler, “Biblical Primitivism in the early American Methodism,” in the *Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1991), 149.

²⁸ Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, from Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 146.

²⁹ John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187-188.

the Scripture, oracles of God; and, next to these, to esteem the primitive Fathers, the writers of the first three centuries.”³⁰ Thus, Wesley’s parents were the first to introduce him to the Church Fathers’ writings. Also, Hammond states that: “While John Wesley was at Oxford, he read the *Epistles of Clement*, *Epistles of Ignatius*, and *Epistles of Polycarp*.”³¹ He valued “The writings of the Church Fathers, and they” also influenced his theology of modesty in dressing and adornment.³²

John Wesley’s Theological Background

Gulley observes that every person has “some presuppositions and presumptions of biblical interpretation,” which come with “Cultural and community-of-faith pre-understandings that influence the interpretive process.”³³ Thus, this theological analysis of John Wesley focuses briefly on his theological background, presuppositions, and hermeneutical approaches or exegetical method.

John Wesley’s theology of modesty in dressing and adornment may result from a cocktail of views picked from different denominations and theologians he interacted with. This paper discusses some denominations and theologians who impacted Wesley’s theological background.

³⁰ John Wesley, “Further Thoughts on Separation from the Church,” *Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert E. Davies (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 538.

³¹ Geordan Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16.

³² See Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 255.

³³ Normal R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 654.

The Church of England

John Wesley's parents brought him up in the Church of England is where. Wesley's upbringing is in line with the Bible's statement that reads, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6). Thus, Wesley's childhood is a pillar that influenced his personality and theology.³⁴ Later on, in 1728, Wesley was "Ordained in the Church of England."³⁵ Wesley explains that despite forming "the Methodism movement," he still belonged to "the Church of England," and he did not contest with her but aimed "to revive Christians and pagans to worship God in truth and spirit."³⁶ No wonder this might be why "Wesley borrowed 24 articles from the 39 articles of the Church of England" but omitted some statements and added a few.³⁷ Even though Wesley further claims that he never diverted from the "Doctrine and discipline of the Church of England."³⁸

Pietism and Puritans

Pietism and the Puritans further influenced John Wesley's theology of modesty in dressing and adornment. On the one hand, "Wesley attended one of the

³⁴ See Susanna Wesley's letter to Samuel Wesley Jr. Wesley, *Letter* (11 October 1709). See also, Charles Wallace Jr. ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 33-34.

³⁵ When Wesley was at Oxford University, his parents kept writing letters to him to join the ministry. Even his father got into debt to facilitate his ordination. See Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (20 September 1740).

³⁶ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, (12 April 1789).

³⁷ Scott J. Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 12.

³⁸ Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, 12.

cottage meetings conducted by Pietism on Aldersgate Street, and his ‘heart was strangely warmed,’ and his life was radically changed.”³⁹ This evidence shows that Wesley’s encounter with Pietism did not leave him the same. For illustration, Wesley advance to say, “No person must be allowed to preach or exhort among our people, whose life is not holy and un-blamable.”⁴⁰ This view leans on the Pietism belief and practice.

On the other hand, Wesley favors the lifestyle reformation of Puritans. As per the minutes of the Methodists conference held in 1758, Wesley is on record asking questions like: “Are our societies ... as godly and as serious as the old Puritans? Why should they not? What means can we use to affect it? Enforce family discipline ... closely examine the state of every soul ... and conversation.”⁴¹

The above questions indicate that Wesley favored the Puritans’ lifestyle. It is important to note that “the Puritans’ theology was about reformation.”⁴² Bacchiocchi,

³⁹ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 24 May 1738. Wesley states, “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the *Epistle to the Romans*. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.” It is worth noting that Pietism majored in lifestyle, prayers, and study of the Bible. Pietism branched from the Lutheranism, aiming to reform Lutheran Church, especially in modesty in dressing and adornment.

⁴⁰ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 24 May 1738. See *The Methodist Magazine*, (1826), 463.

⁴¹ The Methodist Church, “Minutes of the Methodist Church,” (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1765-1860), Vol. 1, (1862), 713, accessed 22 June 2020, <https://archive.org/details/minutesofmethodi00wesl/page/713/mode/1up?ref=ol&view=theater>.

⁴² Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, (1739-41). Here, “Wesley points out a long-time theme that the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.” In this theme, in the introduction to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), Vicki Tolar Burton says, “John Wesley was strongly influenced by a group of German Moravian pietisms he met during his missionary travel.” The Moravians influenced his theology and practices, especially in experiential religion. In addition, Davies writes that “John Wesley’s *Ethical Sermons*, such as: “*Redeeming the Time*,” “*Health*,” “*Sleep*,” “*Marriage*,” “*Money*,” “*Dress*,” and many more leaned on practical theology.” John Kent asserts that “Puritans and Lockians taught that a child’s will must be broken.” For example, in an attempt to search for God, “Wesley was accustomed to opening the Bible at random, aiming to land on God’s guidance besides using drawings in arriving at a complicated decision, which is a common practice among the Moravians.” See John Kent, *Wesley, and the Wesleyans*, 194.

records that “Puritans were known for their zeal for lifestyle reformation in the Anglican Church” through maintaining modesty in outward dressing and adornment by avoiding portentous vestments in worship and ornamentation in general clothing.⁴³ No wonder preachers such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, who participated in the great awakening, emerged from the Puritan tradition.

The Moravians

The Moravians influenced Wesley’s theology. When Wesley went to Germany, he spent three months with the Moravians. Wesley says, “Hereby my passage is opened to the writings of holy men in the German... I hope, too, some good may come to others hereby.”⁴⁴ In addition, Wesley says, “God has given me to know many of His servants, particularly those of the Church of Herrnhut [the Moravians].”⁴⁵ Here Wesley is describing in his *Journal* the experience he got from the Moravians in Germany.

Further, Wesley registers his admiration of Quakers and Moravians’ practice of helping the needy. In one of his *Sermon on Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity*, he asked questions such as:

But is it possible to supply all the poor in our society with the necessities of life? It was possible once to do this; in a larger society than this...It is so among the people called Quakers. Yea, and among the Moravians, so called. And why should it not be so with us? ...And yet, we are able enough if we were equally willing to do this.⁴⁶

From these illustrations, the Moravian teachings have influenced Wesley’s theology.

⁴³ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 90.

⁴⁴ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Wednesday (7 June 1738).

⁴⁵ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Wednesday (7 June 1738).

⁴⁶ Wesley, *Sermon 122*, 10.

Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor

Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor had crucial influences in John Wesley's theological background. To start with, in 1729, Wesley was hired as a tutor at Oxford University. He led "the Methodist Society,"⁴⁷ a religious club nicknamed "Methodist," which dealt with religion and discipline in life.⁴⁸ In addition, he used to read more of "the writings of Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor."⁴⁹ John Telford says Wesley's respect for "Thomas à Kempis was next to the Bible."⁵⁰ Thus, Kempis

⁴⁷ Wesley, *Sermon* 121, 9.

⁴⁸ The title "Methodist" originated with John Wesley's opponents at Oxford University. This nickname referred to "the Methodist Society," the club which performed religious duties such as: "reading the New Testament Bible in Greek, fasting twice a week, participating in Holy Communion frequently, and observing the Church of England festivals besides visiting the sick people and prisoners." However, John Wesley took this nickname positively and made it the official name of his religious (Methodist) movement. See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955), 1024.

⁴⁹ The books of Kempis and Taylor were Wesley's first books to read on *Practical Divinity*. Wesley esteemed these authors till his death. For example, "Wesley viewed Taylor as a man of piety and one of the greatest geniuses on earth." Also, "Wesley spoke of Kempis in terms of high respect." See Wesley, *Sermon* 79, 2.18., and Wesley, *Sermon* 117, 1.15.

See Thomas à Kempis, *The Christian Pattern; Or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ* (London: C. Rivington, 1735), 1-319, accessed 7April 2023, <https://wesleyscholar.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Extract-Kempis-Christians-Pattern-1735-1.pdf>.

See Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Dying: With Prayers* (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle 1842), 1-548, accessed 7April 2023, <https://archive.org/details/holylivingdyingin00tayl/page/n6/mode/1up?ref=ol&view=theater>.

See Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living: In Which are Described the Means and Instruments of Obtaining Every Virtue and the Remedies Against Every Vice, and Considerations Serving to the Resisting All Temptations Together With Prayers Containing the Whole Duty of a Christian, and the Parts Of Devotion Fitted to All Occasions, and Furnished for All Necessities* (Philadelphia: J. W. Bradley, 1860), 1-367, accessed 7April 2023, https://ccel.org/ccel/t/taylor/holy_living/cache/holy_living.pdf.

See Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule And Exercises of Holy Dying: in Which are Described the Means and Instruments of Preparing Ourselves and Others Respectively for a Blessed Death: and the Remedies Against the Evils and Temptations Proper to the State Of Sickness: Together With Prayers and Acts of Virtue To Be Used by Sick and Dying Persons, or by Others Standing in Their Attendance. To Which are Added Rules for the Visitation of the Sick and Offices Proper for That Ministry* (Philadelphia: J. W. Bradley, 1860), 1-210, accessed 7April 2023, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/t/taylor/holy_dying/cache/holy_dying.pdf.

⁵⁰ John Telford, *The Life of John Wesley*, (New York: Hunt & Eaton 1898), 48.

and Taylor's doctrines may be termed Wesley's theological foundation. John Wesley confesses that:

When I was twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter holy orders. At the same time, the providence of God directed me to Kempis's 'Christian Pattern,' I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. ... I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before: and meeting likewise with a religious friend, whom I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. So that now, 'doing so much, and living so good a life,' I doubted not, but I was a good Christian.⁵¹

When Wesley came into contact with the books of Kempis, he first had a negative attitude towards them, but later on, these books transformed his heart and theology. Wesley further records his experience when he encountered Kempis's book in London.⁵² He states that when he felt spiritually bankrupt, he searched for people who held the teachings of Kempis.

One day, being in great trouble of mind, and thinking, where shall I find a man who lives up to the rules given by Kempis ... I spoke to one person belonging to it, which I purposely abstained from, that I might the more exactly observe the whole behaviour, both of yourself and those that heard you. And the more closely I examined, the more I was convinced these are the men I have been seeking for so long.⁵³

From this passage, Wesley esteemed Kempis so much that he desired to associate with individuals who accepted and practiced his teachings. Thus, John Wesley's theology was influenced by Kempis.

⁵¹ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Wednesday (24 May 1738).

⁵² Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Thursday (27 December 1738).

⁵³ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Thursday (27 December 1738).

Jeremy Taylor was also, a very influential person in John Wesley's theology.⁵⁴ In the introductory comment of his sermon, *Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount - Discourse VI*, the commentator states that "Wesley's concern for 'purity of intention,' the central theme in the holy living tradition, goes back to his Oxford days, and his reading of Jeremy Taylor."⁵⁵ Robert F. Lay asserts that "John Wesley's Theology" on dressing and adornment was based on the influence of "Bishop Taylor's *Rule and Exercise of Holy Living and Dying*."⁵⁶ Hammond says, "Jeremy Taylor and William Cave were primarily concerned with the primitive church as a model for Christian devotion."⁵⁷

John Wesley's Theological Method

John Wesley's theological method needs to be explicitly stated in his works. However, his theological method may be derived from his documents. This section of the study is divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section examines John Wesley's presuppositions on the inspiration of Scripture. The second sub-section analyzes his assumptions on the interpretation of Scripture. The third sub-section investigates his hermeneutical approaches and interpretive method.

⁵⁴ Jeremy Taylor was born on 15 August 1613 and died on 13 August 1667. He was a minister of the gospel and an author in the Church of England.

⁵⁵ Albert C. Outler & Richard P. Heitzenrater ed. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 194.

⁵⁶ Robert F. Lay shows that in 1725, at the age of 23 years, John Wesley resolved to live a life of purity. Wesley dedicated his inward and outward life to mind, words, and deeds as a sacrifice to God, not himself or the devil. See Robert F. Lay, *Readings in Historical Theology: Primary Sources of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 349.

⁵⁷ Geordan Hammond, "High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735," *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 78, no. 2 (June 2009): 182, accessed on 22 June 2020, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/42612802>.

The Presupposition of the Inspiration of the Scripture

Wesley's presupposition of the inspiration of the Scriptures is one of the factors that determines his view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Wesley "Believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God."⁵⁸ In his sermon, *The Means to Grace*, Wesley recognized the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God that "Timothy observed from childhood."⁵⁹ Further, in *Notes to Revelation*, he states that "the will of God wrote all the books of the New Testament."⁶⁰

Wesley also viewed the Scriptures as inerrant and infallible. In his *Notes on Matthew*, he comments that the readers of the inspired Word of God are supposed "to take them as they found them. Nor was it needful they should correct the mistakes, if there were any."⁶¹ From this statement, Wesley believes in the inerrancy of the Scriptures.⁶² This means, there is no error in the Scriptures because they are infallible.

He further says, "As soon as this was spoken, St. John wrote it down, even all contained in ... the first chapter ... second and third chapters was dictated to him like manner."⁶³ God revealed his will or message to human beings through "dictation," depending on their faithfulness as the receivers.⁶⁴ Thus, Wesley is inclined to verbal

⁵⁸ Wesley, *Sermon 3*, 9.

⁵⁹ Wesley, *Sermon 3*, 9.

⁶⁰ Wesley, *Notes on Revelation 1:11*.

⁶¹ Wesley, *Notes on Matthew 1:1*.

⁶² Robin Scroggs, "John Wesley as Biblical Scholar," *Journal of the Bible and Religion* 28, no. 4 (October 1960): 417, accessed 22 June 2020, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/1460006>.

⁶³ Wesley, *Notes on Revelation 1:20*.

⁶⁴ Scott J. Jones, *Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 10.

inspiration or mechanical inspiration. In other words, Wesley means that God dictated word for word as the Bible authors wrote down what He said.

In brief, Wesley's presupposition of inspiration is "the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scripture."⁶⁵ This is the base of Wesley's Bible interpretation. The following sub-section will analyze Wesley's presupposition of the interpretation of the Scripture.

The Presupposition of the Interpretation of the Scripture

The presupposition of John Wesley's Scripture's interpretation is built on multiple considerations. First, he leans on "The analogy of faith" the Bible's interpretation.⁶⁶ He states that the "Bible from the beginning to the end is one connected chain."⁶⁷ This concept provides the basis for Wesley's primary guidelines for interpreting the Scriptures: "The agreement of every part of it with every other is properly the analogy of faith."⁶⁸

In continuation, Wesley emphasizes, "We can go, interpreting Scripture by Scripture, according to the analogy of faith."⁶⁹ For example, in the introductory comment to Wesley's sermon, *Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount--Discourse VI*, it is noted that Wesley "relies heavily upon traditional interpretations,"⁷⁰ which goes back

⁶⁵ Jones, *Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, 10.

⁶⁶ Wesley, *Sermon 2*, 9.3.5.

⁶⁷ Wesley, *Sermon 2*, 9.3.5.

⁶⁸ Wesley, *Sermon 2*, 9.3.5.

⁶⁹ Wesley, *Sermon 64*, 2.

⁷⁰ Wesley, *Sermon 21*, 4.

to his Oxford days and his reading of Jeremy Taylor.⁷¹ In other words, Wesley's "Written sermons have been recast for publication, presumably to prove to his brethren of the cloth that they are good, orthodox, Scriptural discourses in the main Anglican line of tradition."⁷² In brief, Wesley esteems the tradition of interpreting Scripture by Scripture.

The second principle that Wesley uses is literal interpretation. For example, he believes that: "Literally, not one iota, not the most inconsiderable vowel; 'or one tittle' . . . however inconsiderable it might seem, should ever be disannulled."⁷³ In other words, he considers the words of Bible authors literally.⁷⁴ He says the purpose of writing *Notes on the Bible* is "to give the direct, literal meaning, of every verse, of every sentence, and as far as I am able, of every word in the oracles of God."⁷⁵ However, he uses reasoning in *The Use of Money*,⁷⁶ and figurative or proverbial interpretation⁷⁷ in some cases instead of the literal interpretation. Here Wesley is using literal interpretation depending on the circumstances of Scripture.

The third principle of Wesley's Bible interpretation method is applying the closest wording of the Bible as much as possible. For instance, in *The Means of*

⁷¹ Wesley, *Sermon 21*, 4.

⁷² Wesley, *Sermon 21*, 4.151.

⁷³ Wesley, *Sermon 25*, 5.2.1.

⁷⁴ See Wesley, *Sermon 40*, 2.15; Wesley, *Sermon 25*, 5.2.1; Wesley, *Sermon 26*, 6.3.7 and Wesley, *Wesley's Notes Revelation 21:15*

⁷⁵ Wesley, *Wesley's Notes on Genesis-Job*, 15.

⁷⁶ Wesley, *Sermon 2*, 5.

⁷⁷ Wesley, *Sermon 2*, 2.

Grace, he tries “to maintain the original words, most likely in interpreting the Scripture.”⁷⁸ In this situation, he uses exact or similar words in the Bible.

The fourth rule used by Wesley is a “plain and obvious” interpretation of the Scripture.⁷⁹ For illustration, in Wesley’s sermon on *The Danger of Riches*, he says:

Let us consider what it is to ‘be rich. What does the apostle mean by this expression? The preceding verse fixes this meaning: Having food and raiment (literally ‘coverings,’ for the word includes lodging as well as clothes) ‘let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich . . .’ that is, who will have more than these, more than ‘food and coverings.’ In the sense of the apostle, it follows whatever is more than these is riches - whatever is above the plain necessities or (at most) conveniences of life. Whoever has sufficient food to eat and raiment to put on, with a place to lay his head, and something over is rich.⁸⁰

The following sub-section is on Wesley’s hermeneutical approaches.

Hermeneutical Approaches

A careful study of John Wesley’s hermeneutical approach is vital for this study. Wesley claims to use “the Bible alone” in all his teachings.⁸¹ However, Outler asserts that Wesley’s hermeneutical approach is based on his “Wesleyan Quadrilateral.”⁸² In this hermeneutical method, Wesley has used “the Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.”⁸³ In developing his view. He quotes 1 Pet 3:3-4 as

⁷⁸ Wesley, *Sermon 3*, 10.

⁷⁹ Wesley, *Sermon 17*, 2.

⁸⁰ Wesley, *Sermon 87*, 1.

⁸¹ Wesley, *Sermon 1-53*, 5.

⁸² “The term Quadrilateral was coined in the Wesleyan tradition by Albert C. Outler,” See Woodrow W. Whidden, “*Sola Scriptura* Inerrantist Fundamentalism, and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Is Creed but the Bible’s workable solution?” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 35, (Autumn 1997), 211-226.

⁸³ Albert C. Outler, *Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 1964, accessed 7 February 2020, <https://www.theopedia.com/wesleyan-quadrilateral>. See also Oden, *John Wesley’s Teachings*, Volume 1, 83.

his crucial text,⁸⁴ followed by Rom 12:2,⁸⁵ and asserts that 1 Pet 3:3-4 is “as express as possible” and interprets it based on 1 Tim 2:9-10,⁸⁶ and Luke 7:25.⁸⁷ Here, Wesley subscribes to the interpretation of the Scriptures based on “the analogy of faith;” that is, interpreting one Bible verse with other similar verses.⁸⁸

However, Wesley interprets 1 Pet 3:3-4 using “tradition, reason, and experience.”⁸⁹ For example, Wesley uses logic by asking thought-provoking questions like:

But is it not strange ...that the all-wise Spirit of God should condescend to take notice of such trifles as these? To take notice of such insignificant trifles, things of so little moment, or rather of none at all? For what does it signify, provided we take care of the soul, what the body is covered with, whether with silk or sackcloth? What harm can there be in the wearing of gold, silver, or precious stones, or any other of those beautiful things with which God has so amply provided us? May we not apply to this what St. Paul has observed on another occasion, that 'every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected?'⁹⁰

In continuation, he quotes one reputable person who did not favor wearing a plain dress. Then he presents his argument using words like: “It is, therefore, certainly worth our while to consider this matter thoroughly; seriously to inquire whether there is any harm in the putting on of gold, or jewels, or costly apparel.”⁹¹ Additionally, he quotes wise sayings of his day, like Herbert’s, who says, “Cleanliness is, indeed, next to godliness.” Also, he asserts that “Agreeably to this, good Mr. Herbert advises

⁸⁴ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 0.

⁸⁵ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 1.

⁸⁶ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 2.

⁸⁷ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 7.

⁸⁸ Wesley, *Sermon 64*, 2.

⁸⁹ Outler, *Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 83.

⁹⁰ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 2.

⁹¹ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 2.

everyone that fears God.” Wesley is here using English literature to interpret the Bible.

When asked about the harm of ordinary persons adorning themselves with jewelry when they can afford it, Wesley, instead of using the Bible to answer such a question, uses human’s natural tendency as an illustration that he applies to many business people in England.⁹² When asked about the relationship between pride and dressing, he responds with an illustration of drinking wine and poison, then concludes, “Experience shows that fine clothes have a natural tendency to make a man sick of pride; plain clothes have not.”⁹³ When expounding the vanity of wearing costly attires, Wesley uses reasoning based on human conscience and conviction: “You know in your hearts... the more you indulge this foolish desire, the more it grows upon you.”⁹⁴

Finally, in his appeal, Wesley convinces his Methodist congregation to accept cheap and plain attires for the sake of God, themselves, and his sake. He says,

For God’s sake, for your own soul’s sake. . . all who have any regard for *me*, show me before I go hence, that I have not labored, even in this respect, in vain, for near half a century. Let me see, before I die, a Methodist congregation, full as plain dressed as a Quaker congregation.⁹⁵

This quotation shows that Wesley used “reason and experience” of about fifty years in the ministry to convince his followers to abide by plain dress.

As demonstrated above, the study shows John Wesley’s hermeneutical approach is based on Wesleyan Quadrilateral. Even though Wesley did not coin the

⁹² Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 9.

⁹³ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 10.

⁹⁴ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 11.

⁹⁵ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 26.

term “Wesleyan quadrilateral,”⁹⁶ He uses “the Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience”⁹⁷ as his hermeneutics method.

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral has shortcomings. As Norman R. Gulley points out, “John Wesley went beyond the reformation principle of ... (*Sola Scriptura*), to only a primary authority... (*prima Scriptura*). For it includes traditions, reason, and experience as added authorities with Scripture.”⁹⁸ “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” is Wesley’s pitfall because he categorizes the Holy Scriptures at the same level as human “tradition, experience, and reason.”⁹⁹ Therefore, Wesley’s teaching of modesty in dressing and adornment is based on “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” not in “the Bible alone,” as he claims.¹⁰⁰

John Wesley’s View of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

This section presents the view of John Wesley on modesty in dressing and adornment. This section will examine how John Wesley formulated his view of modesty in dressing and adornment from the Holy Scriptures. Using the words of Thomas C. Oden, “in the 18th century, Christian doctrines were taught in preaching sermons.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Whidden, “*Sola Scriptura* Inerrantist Fundamentalism, and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Is Creed but the Bible’s workable solution?” 211-226.

⁹⁷ Outler, *Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 83.

⁹⁸ Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, 557.

⁹⁹ Gulley using the argument of Guy, a supporter of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral who supports (*prima Scriptura*) and rejects *sola scriptura*; demonstrates that Wesleyan Quadrilateral ranks the Scripture first, followed by human tradition, experience, and reason. See Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, 558.

¹⁰⁰ Wesley, *Sermon 1-53*, 5.

¹⁰¹ Oden, *John Wesley’s Teachings*, Volume 1, 22.

Wesley states that “In the book of Genesis, humans were created in God’s image and likeness,” which was reflected in their natural, moral, and spiritual condition.¹⁰² This means, humans’ bodies and minds reflect God’s glory.¹⁰³ Though naked, human beings did not need dress or adornment and had no reason to be ashamed.¹⁰⁴ Here, Wesley presents the principle of clothing that glorifies God.

Wesley observes that “clothes came in with sin.”¹⁰⁵ When Adam and Eve sinned, they realized their nakedness and made aprons “to cover, at least, part of their shame one from another.”¹⁰⁶ The nakedness humans experienced and the artificial clothes they made after the fall indicated their departure from God.¹⁰⁷ Fallen human beings were attracted to: “pride and self-will ... appetites and desires.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, human desires, thoughts, and deeds were inclined to selfishness and needs of the world, but not to God and his righteousness.¹⁰⁹ In this case, Wesley presents the principle of ungodly, selfish and worldly clothing.

Parents should maintain modesty in dressing and adornment and set a good example for their children. Wesley says:

I have one word more to say to parents; to mothers in particular. If, in spite of all the apostle can say, you encourage your children by your example to “adorn” themselves “with gold, or pearls, or costly apparel,” you and they must drop into the pit together. But if they do it, though you set them a better example, still it is yours, as well as their fault; for if you did not put any

¹⁰² Wesley, *Notes on Genesis* 1:27.

¹⁰³ Wesley, *Sermon* 138, 3.1.

¹⁰⁴ Wesley, *Notes on Genesis* 2:25.

¹⁰⁵ Wesley, *Notes on Genesis* 3:10.

¹⁰⁶ Wesley, *Notes on Genesis* 2:8.

¹⁰⁷ Wesley, *Sermon* 138, 3.1.

¹⁰⁸ Wesley, *Sermon* 45, I.2, 45.I.4.

¹⁰⁹ Wesley, *Sermon* 44, 2.8.

ornament on your little child that you would not wear yourself, (which would be utter distraction, and far more inexcusable than putting it on your own arms or head,) yet you did not inure them to obey you from their infancy, and teach them the duty of it, from at least two years old. Otherwise, they would not have dared to do anything, great or small, contrary to your will. Whenever, therefore, I see the fine-dressed daughter of a plain-dressed mother, I see at once! The mother is defective¹¹⁰

At this point, female parents need to maintain modesty in dressing their children, especially by avoiding fine clothes and jewelry. Using the illustration of Priest Eli (1Sam 2:23), Wesley counsels parents not just to tell children that what they do is wrong but “parents should speak to children decisively and imperatively to love the plain dress and hate the fine dress.”¹¹¹ This is the principle of exemplary clothing.

In addition, humanity should resist the bondage of the flesh and embrace the adoption of being sons and daughters of God. Wesley opines that a Christian should not clothe himself or herself “in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day ... For, indeed, this is the sum of worldly happiness; to dress, and visit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and rise up to play.”¹¹² Wesley further warns that “if men and women do not guard themselves every moment, they will continually fall in the eye’s desire, which craves for greater, more beautiful, or even uncommon food, dress, or furniture, which shall never satisfy the appetite of an immortal spirit.”¹¹³ Also parents are cautioned not to yield to their children’s desire for the eyes by giving them attractive playthings, sparkling toys, admirable buttons, gorgeous buckles, fine clothes, or

¹¹⁰ Wesley, *Sermon* 94, 4.

¹¹¹ Wesley, *Sermon* 94, 5.

¹¹² Wesley, *Sermon* 9, 5.

¹¹³ Wesley, *Sermon* 9, 6.

unnecessary ornaments.¹¹⁴ At this juncture, the principle of avoiding bondage of flesh in dressing and adornment is demonstrated.

Wesley further associates “plain clothing with modesty; and fine clothing with prostitution or loose woman.”¹¹⁵ Wesley asks his audience:

Have you taken this advice? Have you all, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, laid aside all those needless ornaments which I particularly objected to? Are you all exemplarily plain in your apparel; as plain as Quakers (so called,) or Moravians? If not, if you are still dressed like the generality of people of your own rank and fortune, you declare hereby, to all the world, that you will not obey them that are over you in the Lord.

At this point, the principle of “plainness” in apparel or dressings without ornaments is developed.

John Wesley also points out that “1 Pet 3:3 and 1 Tim 2:9-10 are express texts which deal with Christian apparel.”¹¹⁶ Then he uses Rom 12:2 in calling “Christians to be transformed by the renewal of their minds’ and ... not to be ‘conformed to this world.’”¹¹⁷ He emphasizes that: though “Everything created by God is good and nothing should be rejected,” whether dressing in sack clothes or adornment with precious stones;¹¹⁸ Christians should not follow worldly “wisdom . . . manners and customs.”¹¹⁹ Also, Christians should not retreat by listening to someone who makes a statement against those who “*dress plain.*”¹²⁰ Here the principle of plainness in dressing is emphasized.

¹¹⁴ Wesley, *Sermon* 95, 21.

¹¹⁵ Wesley, *Sermon* 95, 21.

¹¹⁶ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 2.

¹¹⁷ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 1.

¹¹⁸ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 3.

¹¹⁹ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 1.

¹²⁰ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 4.

Regarding 1Tim 2:9, 10, and 1 Pet 3:3, Wesley asks four questions: “What is then the meaning of these Scriptures? What is it which they forbid? But why? What harm is there therein?”¹²¹ In answering these questions, Wesley first puts aside the explanation of 1Tim 2:9, 10, and 1 Pet 3:3. He introduces Luke 7:25 to illustrate how the Bible favors the distinction of dressing and adornment between government officers and ordinary people. Then he proceeds to discuss the harms of immodesty in dressing and adornment among ordinary Christians who were ranked in the lower and middle class of his time.

In the preamble to Wesley’s sermon on *Dress*, he introduces two mistakes that must be corrected in dressing and adornment. First, he discusses the issue of slovenliness in religion and quotes Herbert’s statement, “Cleanliness is . . . next to godliness.”¹²² This is the principle of cleanliness and tidiness in dressing and appearance.

Then Wesley mentions the second mistake among Christianity in the following words:

It has been supposed by some, there ought to be no difference at all in the apparel of Christians. But neither these texts, nor any other in the book of God, teach any such thing or direct that the dress of the master or the mistress should be nothing different from that of their servants. There may, undoubtedly, be a moderate difference of apparel between persons of different stations.¹²³

In the above statement, Wesley differs from some individuals who oppose differences in dress and adornment among Christians of different ranks. He further gives an

¹²¹ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 8.

¹²² Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 5.

¹²³ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 6.

example of how the Bible favors the distinction of dressing and adornment among government officials.¹²⁴ He clears doubts with a Bible text that:

Yea, it may be doubted, whether any part of Scripture forbids (at least I know not any) those in any nation that is invested with supreme authority, to be arrayed in gold and costly apparel; or to adorn their immediate attendants, or magistrates, or officers, with the same. It is not improbable that our blessed Lord intended to give countenance to this custom when he said, without the least mark of censure or disapprobation, ‘Behold, those that wear gorgeous,’ splendid, ‘apparel are in kings’ courts.’ (Luke 7:25).¹²⁵

From the above proclamation, Wesley argues that he does not know any Bible text that forbids the distinction between kings, government officials, and ordinary citizens in dressing and adornment. He comments that Jesus tolerated this custom because he did not condemn or criticize it. Then Wesley refers to Luke 7:25 as an example of the text that favors distinction in dressing and adornment among different people. For illustration, he compares and contrasts John the Baptist's dressing with King Herod's (Luke 7:25).

About Joseph's inauguration as the prime minister of Egypt, Wesley demonstrates that: “Pharaoh gave Joseph his own ring as a ratification of his commission, and ... he put fine clothes upon him instead of his prison garments, and adorned him with a chain of gold.”¹²⁶ This means, Joseph's attire shows that the pharaoh put distinctive dressing upon him instead of his prison garments to invest him with executive powers to deliberate duties which were only second to the pharaoh.

Wesley further illustrates that Mordecai wore:

Royal apparel-his outward garment, which was made of purple, interwoven with gold, as *Justin* and *Cartius* relate... That ring which he had formerly given to *Haman* he now gives to *Mordecai*, and with it that power whereof

¹²⁴ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 6.

¹²⁵ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 7.

¹²⁶ Wesley, *Notes on Genesis* 41:42.

this ring was a sign, making him, as *Haman* had been, the keeper of his signet.¹²⁷

The above words indicate that Mordecai was adorned with the “**Great crown**-Which the chief of the *Persian* princes were permitted to wear but with sufficient distinction from the king’s crown.”¹²⁸ In other words, there is distinction in dressing and adornment of the kings, queens, and government officers in the account of Mordecai.

Wesley’s *Sermon on Dress and Notes on the Bible*, concludes that Luke 7:24-25; 1 Tim 2:9-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-4 “Manifestly forbid ordinary Christians, those in the lower or middle ranks of life, to be adorned with gold, or pearls, or costly apparel.”¹²⁹ This means there is distinctive dressing and adornment between government officers and ordinary people.

There several reasons why ordinary Christians should maintain modesty in dressing and adornment. Wesley states that “Adornment in gold, pearls, and other costly arrays may increase a person’s pride.”¹³⁰ He further explains that “Experience shows that fine clothes have a natural tendency to make a man sick of pride; plain clothes have not ... Therefore, all that desire to be clothed with humility, abstain from that poison.”¹³¹ Using experience and reason, Wesley illustrates that in most cases, “the wearer of fine clothes and jewelry feels better and more significant in value than others.”¹³² Here, Wesley demonstrates the principle of avoiding jewelry that generates pride.

¹²⁷ Wesley, *Notes on Esther* 8:2, 15.

¹²⁸ Wesley, *Notes on Esther* 8:2, 15.

¹²⁹ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 8.

¹³⁰ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 9.

¹³¹ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 10.

¹³² Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 10.

Also, Wesley states that “Dressing in costly apparel has an evil and dangerous effect on the wearer.”¹³³ For illustration, he says: “It tends to increase vanity . . . and desire of being admired and praised;”¹³⁴ besides causing “anger, turbulent and uneasy passion.”¹³⁵ This means attires and adornments do not give a person inner peace. In addition, Wesley reasons that there is an increased “tendency of lust” which may be created or kindled by immodest dressing and adornment.¹³⁶ In other words, he believes that inappropriate attires may contribute to “sexual desires and immorality,” leading both the wearer and the other participant into hell. Here, Wesley demonstrates the principle of avoiding dressing that promotes immorality.

Finally, Wesley urges “Christians to be adorned with good works,”¹³⁷ and “the hidden man of the heart; that is, the whole image of God.”¹³⁸ In this case, Christians are supposed to reflect God’s image and maintain modesty in dressing and adornment.

The next chapter is a biblical theological evaluation of John Wesley’s view of modesty in dressing and adornment in the light of the Holy Scripture.

¹³³ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 11.

¹³⁴ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 11.

¹³⁵ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 12.

¹³⁶ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 12.

¹³⁷ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 14.

¹³⁸ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 19.

CHAPTER 4
A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OF JOHN WESLEY’S VIEW OF MODESTY
IN DRESSING AND ADORNMENT

Christian behavior and lifestyle, especially the theology of modesty in dressing and adornment, is a sensitive and controversial issue. Nevertheless, the Word of God should be used as a tool to evaluate all doctrines and teachings, including the topic under investigation. This chapter has two subdivisions. The first subdivision evaluates the biblical view of modesty in dressing and adornment and Ellen G. White’s view of modesty in dressing and adornment. The second subdivision is a biblical theological evaluation of Wesley’s view using the Scriptures, followed by a short conclusion.

**The Biblical View of Modesty in
Dressing and Adornment**

This section presents a brief exegesis on the three texts (Luke 7:24 -25; 1 Tim 2:8-9; 1 Pet 3:3-4) used by John Wesley in developing his view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Then the principles obtained from the biblical perspective will be used to evaluate John Wesley’s view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Paul orders Christians to “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess 5:22-23).

Gulley observes that all people have some presuppositions and “presumptions of biblical interpretation.”¹ Therefore the following are some hermeneutic presuppositions that will affect the biblical exegesis process presented in this chapter.

The first hermeneutic presupposition of this paper is anchored on the “Bible alone (*Sola Scriptura*)” as the inspired Word of God, which is adequate for salvation, teaching all doctrines and Christian experience (2 Tim 3:15-17).² This hermeneutic presupposition emphasizes the “Primacy ... and Sufficiency of Scripture as recorded in the law and the testimony (Isa 8:20)” without leaning on other authorities like “human tradition (Matt 15:3, 6)... philosophy (Col 2:8)... and human knowledge (1 Tim 6:20).”³

The second and third hermeneutic presuppositions “is the totality of Scripture (*tota scriptura*) ... and ‘the analogy (or harmony) of Scripture’ (*analogia scripturae*).”⁴ This means the entire Bible is united as one unit, and it is its own interpreter.

The fourth hermeneutic presupposition is that the “spiritual things are spiritually discerned (*Spiritalia spiritualiter examinatur*) 1 Cor 2:11-14.”⁵ This means the whole process of inspiration and interpretation of the Word of God must be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, 654.

² Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 59.

³ Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 59.

⁴ Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 59-60.

⁵ Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 66-68.

Therefore, this exegesis seeks to discover the inspired message, the intended meaning to the primary audience, and its application to Christians living during Wesley's time and the postmodern period. This is because all these persons have lived in different times and periods, with different cultures, traditions, and social structures. Also, their geographical environment, climate, animals, and plants are different. In addition, their civil institutions and political and government structures were different. Finally, the languages of the Bible times, that is, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, are different from that of the people living in Wesley's time and the postmodern era.

Luke 7:24-25

John Wesley used Luke 7:24-25 to support his view on dressing and adornment. The interpretation of this text is important in evaluating his distinctive view of modesty in dressing and adornment for government officials and ordinary citizens.

The specific genre of Luke 7:24-25 is a speech in the general genre, the Gospel. These verses are from the Gospel, according to Saint Luke. Luke, around A.D. '60s, authored this "Gospel and the book of Acts."⁶ Luke was born at the beginning of the first century in Antioch, Syria.⁷ This means Luke was a Greek or a Gentile. Luke was also "a doctor, or a medical physician" (Col 4:11), in the company of the apostle Paul.⁸

⁶ Annette Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke: Insights of Ancient Medical Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 365.

⁷ Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke*, 365.

⁸ The book of *Acts* and Pauline's epistles show that Luke accompanied Paul at Troas in c. 51 AD during his second missionary journey and stayed with him. Luke is called "We" (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-38; 21:1-18; 27:1-44; 28:1-16). Towards the end of his ministry, Paul states that only Luke was with him (2 Tim 4:11). In another account, he mentioned the name of Luke or Lucas as one of his coworkers in Christ's vineyard (Phlm 24).

According to Luke, the theological motif of the Gospel is salvation to all people, both Jews and Gentles (Luke 24:47). Thus, the purpose of this Gospel is to reveal to gentiles that Jesus is the messiah and the Redeemer of lost world (Luke 19:10). This Good News was proclaimed by John the Baptist (Luke 2:11; 3:18) and continued by Jesus Christ himself (Luke 2:34; 4:18). Both John the Baptist and Jesus called people to confess and repent to inherit everlasting life (Luke 1:16-17; 3:3-4; 5:32; 15:7-10).

The Gospel is addressed to “most excellent Theophilus” (Luke 1:3). This is a Greek word Θεόφιλος which is translated as “friend of God” or “lover of God.”⁹ Luke is referring to “Theophilus” as a real person by calling him “most excellent Theophilus” (Luke 1:3). As Green puts it, “Theophilus” was a title of “a senior government officer” or “an aristocrat” during Luke’s time; or Luke used it referring to his patron, as well as to his audience: thus, “Theophilus” represents “Luke’s community.”¹⁰ It is worth noting that Saint Luke lived “in the ancient Mediterranean world economy when sharing determined social relations.”¹¹ Therefore, Luke’s community or audience cuts across “high, middle, and low-class people.”¹²

The context of Luke 7:24-25 is the questions and responses of Jesus to the congregation soon after the departure of John’s disciples. This occurrence took place

⁹ Joel B. Green, “Gospel of Luke,” *Dictionary of Jesus and Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown & Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 549.

¹⁰ Green, “Gospel of Luke,” 549.

¹¹ Green, “Gospel of Luke,” 549.

¹² Luke has highlighted the socioeconomic marginality of the poor who lacked basic needs like housing, quoting how Jesus had nowhere to sleep (Luke 9:58). Luke also shows how Jesus associated with the rich in the society, like the tax collectors and Pharisees (Luke 7:34, 36). Therefore, Luke emphasized Jesus’ teachings, calling the rich to help the needy. For illustration: “No one can serve two masters” (Luke 16:13). A call for disciples to give everything and follow Jesus (Luke 14:33); “the Parable of the rich young man” (Luke 18:18-24).

during Jesus' ministry at Galilee, as it is recorded in Luke 4:14 - 9:50. John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas, and he was informed of the mighty deeds which Jesus Christ performed (Luke 7:18). John expected Jesus to perform a miracle to release him from the prison. However, Jesus did not do so. Therefore, John developed doubts and "Sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' (Luke 7:19)." Jesus, before responding to the messengers, he cured the ill, evicted demons, and reinstated the sight of the blind (Luke 7:20-21). Then He turned to the disciples of John and said "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard" (Luke 7:22).

When John's disciples departed, Jesus turned to his crowd and asked questions. In verse 24, he asked the first and second questions, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" (Luke 7:24). These questions made Jesus' audience think about what they went out to see in the wilderness. Liefeld shows that "These were rhetorical questions, and Jesus expected His audiences to respond negatively."¹³ People did not go to the wilderness or along the river Jordan to see a reed shaken by the wind.

Then Jesus asked two more questions "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments?" After that, he said, "Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts" (Luke 7:25). Jesus opened His third question with the conjunction 'but' in Luke 7:25. The Greek word ἀλλά, "but," indicates that it is introducing a clause or phrase which is contrasting what was said earlier. The verb ἐξήλθατε which is aorist second person plural, suggests that people "went out to the wilderness" to see or behold something with understanding (ἰδεῖν).

¹³ Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke" *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (TEBC) 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 901.

In Luke 7:24-26 Jesus contrasts two groups of people dressed differently and living in different places. Cross-examination of verses 24 and 26 against verse 25 shows that Jesus compares and contrasts someone “in the wilderness” and another “in the king’s courts.” The question is, what did the people “Go out to see in the wilderness?” (Luke 7:24, 26). “A person living in luxury and dressed in gorgeous apparel?” (Luke 7:25). The answer is no!

On the one hand, the Greek phrase μαλακοῖς ἱματίοις “soft garments” in verse 25 literally refers to an outer garment, mostly a cloak or a mantle worn by most people who lived in a luxurious palace. For example, King Herod wore soft and gorgeous clothes (c.f. Acts 12:21). In verse 25, people did not go out to see a man gorgeously appareled because such a person could not be found living in the desert.

On the other hand, Jesus contrasts the person in verse 25 with another person living “in the wilderness” or a place with “A reed shaken by the wind” in Luke 7:24, 26. The people did not move out to see “the wilderness” environment or John’s attire in these verses. What did they go out to see? “A man clothed in soft garments” or gorgeous apparel? (Luke 7:25). The conjunction ἀλλὰ, “but,” answers these questions with a sense of contrast. Thus, they did not go out to see the above but something else. Jesus answered these questions with a positive answer: “Yes, I say to you and more than a prophet” (Luke 7:26). Jesus here is using a Greek participle “ναί,” (*nai*), meaning that “truly,” or “assuredly,” the people went out to see a prophet.

The Bible records that from the birth of John the Baptist it was prophesied that he will become a great prophet who was to live in the desert (Luke 1:80). Also, it is recorded that “John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea ... And John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist” (Matt 3:1,4; c.f. Mark 1:6). John’s garment was rough and coarse, mentioned only in

the Gospel of Matt 3:4 and Mark 1:6.¹⁴ As Philip L. Shuler, puts it, “clothing made of camel’s hair is a common form of dress in the Middle East even today.”¹⁵ In other words, John’s greatness was not in his environment or the clothing he put on but in his preaching.

In Luke 7:26-37, Jesus gives a testimony of John the Baptist greatness. Jesus says, “This is *he* of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.’ For I say to you, among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:27-28). Here, Jesus confirms the fulfillment of the Bible prophecy recorded in Isa 40:3 and Mal 3:1 in “the ministry of John the Baptist” as His herald.¹⁶ This means that the greatness of John rested on the fact he was the peculiar prophet who prepared the way for Jesus Christ’s ministry. Perhaps, that why Knight records that “John the Baptist is” depicted by Luke as the second most famous person besides Jesus Christ as His forerunner.¹⁷ Later, Jesus compared and contrasted Himself with John the Baptist (Luke 7:33-34).

The “meant,” or Jesus’ message to his audience from Luke 7:24-25 centered on John the Baptist as a great prophet who lived “in the wilderness.” John was firm and could not be moved as “the wind carried the reed.” Furthermore, John did not wear the luxurious clothes of the people who lived “in the king’s palace” (Luke 7:24-25).

¹⁴ Liefeld, “Luke,” 109.

¹⁵ Philip L. Shuler, “Camel’s hair,” in *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, Rev. Ed.* ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (New York: Harper Collins, 1985), 165.

¹⁶ Jonathan Knight, *Luke’s Gospel* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 34.

¹⁷ Knight, *Luke’s Gospel*, 60.

The application of Luke 7:24-25, or the “means” of the passage to the Christians, is that being great servants of God is not based on ones attires or resident. Secondly, being firm servants of God does not prevent one from suffering injustice.

There are some biblical principles in this passage. Firstly, firmness and dedication are essential in the gospel ministry. Secondly, the dressing may be determined by ones occupation, role, office, and environment.

The researcher acknowledges that in Luke 7:24-25, there is a social distinction in attires for people living “in the wilderness” and “the king’s palace.” In other words, there is a distinction between kings and citizens. This means people in different positions are dressed differently. However, this distinction in dress and adornment does not exempt any from observing biblical principles of modesty.

1 Timothy 2:9 -10

John Wesley also uses 1 Tim 2:9-10 to support his view of modesty in dressing and adornment. The specific genre of this text is Paul’s counsel to Timothy on how to deal with the church of Ephesus. The general genre is Pauline’s Pastoral Epistles.

The first Epistle to Timothy was written by the apostle Paul, most likely in Macedonia at around A.D. 65-66.¹⁸ Nevertheless, some Bible critics challenge Paul’s authorship of the first Epistle to Timothy alongside other pastoral epistles.¹⁹ However, evidence shows that the apostle Paul wrote these letters historically, linguistically,

¹⁸ Ministerial Association of the SDA General Conference, *Minister’s Bible* (Madrid, Spain: Safeliz, 2015), 1048.

¹⁹ The authorship of the Second Epistle of Paul to *Timothy* and *Titus* is also challenged.

theologically, and ethically.²⁰ Jefferey A. D. Weima, and S.M. Baugh, state that the style of writing and vocabulary variation in Pastoral Epistles compared to other Pauline writings were not a result of different authors; but was an outcome of the use of scribes who assisted Paul in writing his thoughts and communication.²¹ Another piece of evidence is that the recipients of the Pastoral Epistles differed from those of the other epistles, thus making the language different throughout Paul's epistles.²² In conclusion, even though the Pastoral Epistles are not written in similar language and styles to other Pauline letters, he is the one who wrote them, including the Epistle, which is being studied in this paper.

The recipient of this Epistle was Timothy, a young pastor who served the church of Ephesus in Asia Minor during the first century.²³ The name "Timothy is derived from two Greek words", "*Timao*," which means "I honor," and "*Theo*," meaning "God," which means "I honor God."²⁴ During the time of writing, Timothy was faced with a lot of challenges ranging from being single, young, timid, and inexperienced in leadership (1 Tim 4:2). Timothy was also supposed to deal with attacks from false teachers or "wolves" (Acts 20:29), and spiritual immaturity of the Christians who were converted from paganism.²⁵ Timothy had to abide by the charge

²⁰ John Stott, ed., *The message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 23.

²¹ Jefferey A. D. Weima, and S.M. Baugh, *Zondervan Illustration Backgrounds Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 43-44.

²² Weima and Baugh, *Zondervan Illustration Backgrounds Commentary*, 43-44.

²³ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: Timothy I & II, Titus* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1963), 35.

²⁴ Samuel Ngewa, *The African Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 9.

²⁵ Charles E. Bradford, *Timothy & Titus*, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (ALBA)* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1994), 27.

apostle Paul gave him during his ordination. He was tasked with preaching, teaching, rebuking, and exhorting with humility and patience (2 Tim 4:1-5).

As Köstenberger and Schreiner put it, Timothy ministered in Ephesus, a Greek colony called a “business city.”²⁶ During this time, some Ephesus congregation members were wealthy businesspeople of the high class and others of the middle and low classes. Also, Ephesus had a polytheistic religion whereby men served as priests. At the same time, women played the role of “dancing and man-slaying.”²⁷ The men offered sacrifices to idols. In contrast, the women participated in dancing and doing activities that stimulated men sexually and were also used to kill men to some extent.²⁸

In the context of 1 Tim 2:8-15, Paul gives the order to be followed in church worship. The men were to “pray lifting hands without anger or quarrel,” while the women were to “learn in silence” (1 Tim 2:9, 11). Women were also “to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearl, or costly clothing” (1 Tim 2:9).²⁹

When Paul was writing this Epistle, the hairstyle was a big issue. Most Ephesian women were affected by the hairstyles of the Romans. The previous Ephesian hairstyle was a simple one that they had inherited from ancient Greek culture. On the contrary, the Roman hairstyle was an elegant way of spending money

²⁶ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, ed., *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-10*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 16-17.

²⁷ Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, ed., *Women in the Church*, 19.

²⁸ Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, ed., *Women in the Church*, 20.

²⁹ Fred D. Gealy, “Exegesis of the First and Second Epistles to Timothy and Epistle to Titus” *Interpreter’s Bible (IB)*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), 11:404.

with “braids and gold or pearls.”³⁰ Using the words of Bacchiocchi “What Paul condemns here is not fixing the hair in an orderly, becoming manner, but elaborate hair styles.”³¹ Bradford further explains that “The key objective of Paul’s Message to Timothy was to uphold order, maintain peace, and stress serenity in the house of God.”³²

In the contextual analysis of 1 Tim 2:8-11, it is important to note three things. First, the passage begins with the Greek word ὡσαύτως “*hōsautōs*,” translated as “in like manner” (NKJV), “Similarly” (NAB), or “I also” (NIV). Herndriksen, says, “Using the word similarly” meant that both men and women had problems in worship.³³ The men lifted hands that were supposed to be holy in prayers but were full of “anger and disputes” (1 Tim 2:8 NIV). The women’s problems involved dressing, adornment, godliness, and goodness (1 Tim 2:9-10 NIV).

The next Greek word is “*kosmēw*,” translated as “adornment.” During the pre-Socratic period, “adornment” referred to “putting order system and adornment.”³⁴ Herndriksen comments on using the word “adornment” that women needed to prepare for worship by considering the character and good works, not by putting on jewelry, engaging in extravagance, and show-off in adornment.³⁵ The *SDA Bible Commentary* says that “*kosmos*,” which is being “modest, well arranged, or in good taste,” refers to

³⁰ Andreas J. and Thomas, *Women in the Church*, 35.

³¹ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 66.

³² Charles E. Bradford, *Timothy & Titus*, 27.

³³ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: I & II Timothy & Titus* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 105.

³⁴ Moisés Silva, *New International Dictionary of Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed., Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 730.

³⁵ Verlyn, *NIV Theological Dictionary*, 108.

one “being conservative.”³⁶ In this context, Paul counseled female worshippers to dress modestly, not with hair weaved with ornaments of gold and silver.³⁷ While women may arrange or put their hair and attires in order, they should avoid using jewelry.

The “meant” of 1 Tim 2:9-10 was Paul’s counsel to Timothy on handling matters of worship. Firstly, men are supposed to lead holy prayers with lifted hands and without anger or disputes in their hearts. Secondly, Paul advised women on how to conduct themselves in the place of worship; that is, women should dress and adorn themselves appropriately by avoiding fancy attires and adornment with gold and silver. Thirdly, Paul wanted women to be careful with their attires and character during public worship.

The application or “means” of 1 Tim 2:9-10 is a call to Christians to maintain order in church worship. All believers are to pray without wrath and doubt. Also, women should be without expensive dressing and jewelry like gold or pearls; and exercise godliness and good works.

Some biblical principles can be drawn from 1 Tim 2:9-10. The first principle is untainted heartedness during prayers and worship. The second principle is simplicity and moderation in dressing and adornment. The third principle is godliness and respectable works.

The investigator admits that there are general principles of modesty in dressing and adornment in 1 Tim 2:9-10 as demonstrated above. However, the researcher observes that this passage does not address the distinction between

³⁶ “Modest” [1 Tim 2:9], *Seventh-day Adventist Commentary* (SDABC), rev. ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976-1980), 7:295.

³⁷ Charles E. Bradford, *Timothy & Titus*, 50-51.

modesty in dressing and adornment between government officials and ordinary Christians. This is because the principles of modesty drawn are objective and not subjective. In other words, principles of modesty are universal and applicable to all Christians.

1 Peter 3:3-4

Another text used by John Wesley in developing his theology of dressing and adornment is 1 Pet 3:3-4. The specific genre of this passage is a teaching on the submission of wives to husbands. The general genre is the Catholic Epistle. Internal evidence shows that this book was authored by Simon Peter (1 Pet 1:1), “the apostle of Jesus Christ, also called Cephas.”³⁸ This Epistle was most likely written in Babylon around AD 60.³⁹ The audience of this letter was the scattered saints in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1). The purpose of the message in this book was to encourage the suffering saints and feed the flock (1 Pet 1:6; 2:11-12 cf. Luke 22:32 John 21:15-17).

The broader context of 1 Pet 3:3–4 is how Christians should relate with non-believers, especially civic leaders (1 Pet 2:13-17. Also, how Christian enslavers and enslaved people should connect (1 Pet 2:18-25). Then the narrower context of 1 Pet 3:3–4 is how Christian wives should relate with non-believing husbands, especially by being “submissive to ... their husbands” (1 Pet 3:1-2).

In continuation, Peter gives the counsel recorded in the passage under study 1 Pet 3:3-4. The text is translated as follows:

³⁸ The apostle Peter was one of the disciples called by Jesus cf. Matt 4:18; Mark 3:16; Luke 5:3-10; John 1:40- 42.

³⁹ Andrews University, *Andrews Study Bible: Light. Depth. Truth* (Berrien Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 2010), 1626.

Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward – arranging the hair, weaving gold, or putting on fine apparel- rather, *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God (NKJV)

Here, the main phrase which needs to be understood clearly is: “Do not let ... be *merely* ... rather *let it be*” (NKJV) “Should not come from . . . rather it should be (NIV); “Let not yours be . . . but let it be (RSV); “Do not be concerned about ... Be (Living Bible); “Must not be *merely* ... but *let it be*” (NASB). Rodríguez, comments that the phrase “let not” in verse three looked at in connection with the conjunction “but” instead “let it be,” the second clause gives an impression of “double negative imperative negating adornment.”⁴⁰ These words *estō ouch* and *alla*, translated as “not so much as,” negate external adornment and promote the internal one.⁴¹

Therefore, the “meant” in this passage comprises three commands to women. First, avoid elaborate hair braiding (*emplokē trichōn evmplokh/j tricw/n*). In Peter’s days, some wealthy women braided their hair by adding gold, pearl, and other precious stones.⁴² For example, the “Portrait sculpture of the Flavian period” highlights the type of hairstyles and jewelry forbidden in 1 Tim 2:9 and 1 Pet 3:3. As Ferguson, puts it “The hair braiding was very elaborate and ostentatious, quite unlike the simple braid of modern times.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 55.

⁴¹ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 55.

⁴² Norman Hiller, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 95.

⁴³ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 97.

The second is to avoid wearing gold jewelry (*peritheseō chrusiōn periqesewj crusiwn*). Many wealthy women in Peter's time decorated their bodies with earrings, necklaces, and bracelets made of gold.⁴⁴

The third is avoiding inappropriate clothes (*enduseō imatiōn evndusewj i`matiwn*). Peter is not commanding women to walk naked without clothes, but he is against fine clothes being wrong for Christian women.⁴⁵ He is also opposing the dressing of the nobles of his times.⁴⁶ Further Rodríguez, states that, "This type of dress could be very simple or sophisticated, becoming an adornment and establishing social distinction (Luke 7:25)."⁴⁷

The apostle here is opposed to a particular style of braiding hair and adding gold ornaments of earrings, necklaces, and bracelets.⁴⁸ Paul prohibits only specific types of dress, which do not glorify God, but not all clothing.⁴⁹ He is counseling Christian women to focus on internal attributes rather than external beautification.

The *Andrews Study Bible* comments:

This passage is best understood for its meaning as, 'Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by' . . . arranging the hair [a description of extreme hairstyles of the day]; . . . wearing gold [jewelry such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets, etc.]; and . . . putting on fine apparel, clothing that emphasized social status and created social distinctions in the church.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Celas Spicq, *Les épîtres de saint Pierre* (Paris, France: J. Gabalda, 1966), 118

⁴⁵ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 54.

⁴⁶ W. Radly, *Himation garment, Cloak in Exegetical Dictionary of the NT*, Vol. 2, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 183.

⁴⁷ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 54.

⁴⁸ Rodríguez, *Jewelry in the Bible*, 53, 56.

⁴⁹ Bo Reicke, *The Epistle of James, Peter, and Jude* (Golden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 100.

⁵⁰ Andrews University, *Andrews Study Bible*, 1630.

The *Andrews Study Bible* further states, “Peter’s instruction to wives has the purpose of promoting honorable conduct in the context of the first Mediterranean culture.”⁵¹ Peter refers to submissiveness and obedience as the inner beauty that should be embraced more than the external beauty of dressing and adornment.

The application, or “means” from this passage advocate for Christian men and women to avoid extravagancy in decorating themselves with ornaments like earrings, nose rings, necklaces, bangles, and finger rings, and braiding, weaving, arranging, or twisting of hair and tattooing their bodies. Also, Christians should avoid fancy clothes like wearing transparent attires, very tight trousers, mini dresses, or miniskirts that expose private body parts. Most importantly, Christian married women should treasure inner beauty by being submissive and obedient to their husbands.

The biblical principles drawn from this passage are avoiding extravagance in dressing and adornment; and avoiding immodesty in putting on jewelry and arranging the hair, contrary to treasuring inward beauty.

The researcher observes that 1 Pet 3:3-4 does not teach the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment between any groups of people. On the contrary, the biblical principles from this text apply to all people of all ranks.

Ellen G. White’s View of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

This section is on Ellen G. White’s view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Ellen White states, “Little heed is given to the Bible, and the LORD has

⁵¹ Andrews University, *Andrews Study Bible*, 1630.

given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.”⁵² The Writings of Ellen White, in this case, are referred to as the lesser light, leading to the Bible, which is referred to as the greater light. Concerning the primacy of the Bible, White recommends to her readers “The Word of God as the rule of faith and practice.”⁵³ She further states that God has given her “visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of his people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”⁵⁴ In this section, Ellen G. White’s view of modesty in dressing and adornment is the Bible’s teaching of modesty in dressing and adornment.

Though the first couple was naked, they wore clothes of light like angels.⁵⁵ Ellen G. White states that: after the fall, “the robe of light which had enshrouded them, now disappeared, and to supply its place, they endeavored to fashion for themselves a covering.”⁵⁶ This means, fashions and immodesty in human dressing and adornment came into existence after the fall.

Distinctive clothes singled out people in power long before the monarchy. For instance, Ellen G. White referring to Joseph’s coat of many colors, she states that it “was usually worn by persons of distinction.”⁵⁷ This means Joseph’s coat distinguished him from the other family members. In this case, Mrs. White is basing her distinction on the ancient world’s cultures and political governments.

⁵² Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, 20 January 1903, accessed 24 May 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org> See the quote in Ellen G. White *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), 125.

⁵³ Ellen G. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1851), 64. See reprint in Ellen G. White *Early Writings* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 2005), 78.

⁵⁴ E. G. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, 78.

⁵⁵ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2005), 45.

⁵⁶ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 57.

⁵⁷ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 209.

In addition, the Israelite leaders wore distinctive clothes and adornments. For instance, Saul wore scarlet apparel and adorned himself with gold ornaments (2 Sam 1:24), and he also wore “garments that betokened his rank.”⁵⁸ King Saul wore distinctive attire, which signified his civic position. This was a result of the Israelites demanding to be like their neighboring nations (1 Sam 7:5). Furthermore, Mrs. White states: “Priests and elders, clothed in the garments of their sacred office, officers and soldiers with glittering spear and helmet, and ... David was arrayed in the royal robe.”⁵⁹ Priests wore distinctive clothes to show their holy ministry in the Sanctuary.⁶⁰ Depending on their respective offices, kings, priests, elders, and soldiers wore distinctive clothes.

Mrs. White also advises Christians to wear “a modest, convenient, and healthful mode of dress, which is in accordance with the Bible.”⁶¹ In other words Christians should maintain simplicity, humility, and dignity, besides, avoiding extravagance and display of pride.⁶² This means, Christians should be free from the display of ornaments and jewelry of any kind.⁶³ The above quotations are giving general principles in dressing and adornment, which apply to everyone everywhere.

Commenting on the dressing and adornment of John the Baptist in (Luke 7:25), Mrs. White states that:

⁵⁸ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 654.

⁵⁹ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 702.

⁶⁰ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 350, 351, 425, 427.

⁶¹ White, *Messages to Young People*, 350.

⁶² Ellen G. White, *Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1962), 180-181.

⁶³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 3:366.

The apparel worn by John was the opposite of that worn in royal palaces ... The wilderness is not the place to find those who live delicately and clothe themselves in rich, soft apparel... The prophet wore a plain, rough garment, possessing no beauty, but answering the purpose for which clothing was first designed... There was no outward display in John's dress to attract or awaken admiration.⁶⁴

The above quotation compares and contrasts John the Baptist's dressing with Salome, Herodias's daughter. Mrs. White says: "Salome was decorated with costly garlands and flowers, sparkling jewels and flashing bracelets. With little covering and less modesty."⁶⁵ Salome's attire made Herod's guests not to be "governed by enlightened reason, refined taste, and sensitive conscience ... virtue and principle."⁶⁶ Immodesty in dressing and adornment may negatively affect rational thinking.

There is distinction in dress between people living in the palace and those in the wilderness or other places (Luke 7:25). However, there are normative principles in dressing and adornment to be observed by all people because they are equal before God. The wealthy are not to be honored above the poor, and there should be no distinction in principles of dressing and adornment because "you are all brethren (Matt 23:8)."⁶⁷ God, the Maker of all humanity, recognizes no distinction based on nationality, race, or caste (Gal 3:28; Eph 2:13).⁶⁸ All people "are of one family by creation, all through Christ's redemptive blood; neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free."⁶⁹ "Christ illustrates the beauty that Heaven values, the modest grace, the

⁶⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1884), 2:73.

⁶⁵ White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 2:75.

⁶⁶ White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 2:77.

⁶⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:101.

⁶⁸ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1900) 386.

⁶⁹ White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 386.

simplicity, the purity, the appropriateness that would make our attire pleasing to Him.”⁷⁰

In brief, there are general principles to be considered by Christians in dressing and adornment from Ellen G. White’s writings. For instance Mrs. White says “our clothing, while modest and simple, should be of good quality, of becoming colors, and suited for service.”⁷¹ Christians should be economical, avoid extravagance, and consider the needy: widows, orphans, naked, hungry, and homeless; and the mission to reach people unreached with the good news.⁷² In addition, Christians’ dressing and adornment need to consider the grace God received in inner beauty⁷³ and the appropriateness of natural simplicity.⁷⁴

Though there is distinction in attires, as mentioned in Luke 7:24-25,⁷⁵ however, there is not distinction of modesty in dress and adornment among Christians. Therefore, without considering humans status, Christians should maintain modesty in dressing and adornment.

In conclusion, there are some general principles from Ellen G. White views in dressing and adornment. In brief, this sub-section of the study presents the following principles of dress and adornment applicable to all people. Firstly, clothes should be able to protect the body from injury and violent environments like cold and excessive heat.⁷⁶ Secondly, the dressing “should be modest and simple, should be of good

⁷⁰ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students*, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1962), 302, 303.

⁷¹ White, *Messages to Young People*, 351.

⁷² Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1980 175.

⁷³ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:246.

⁷⁴ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 176.

⁷⁵ White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 2:77.

⁷⁶ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 61.

quality, of becoming colors, and suited for service.”⁷⁷ Thirdly, dressing and adornment should consider stewardship of possession by being economical,⁷⁸ and avoiding extravagance to support the church’s mission and assist the needy in society.⁷⁹ Fourthly, dressing and adornment should be superseded by inner beauty, which aims to praise God in everything.⁸⁰

A Biblical Theological Evaluation of John Wesley’s View of Modesty in Dressing and Adornment

This section is a biblical theological evaluation of John Wesley’s view of modesty in dressing and adornment in the light of the Scriptures. This evaluation compares and contrasts Wesley’s view with the biblical view. 1 Tim 2:9-10, 1 Pet 3:3, and Luke 7:25 are the key texts used by John Wesley’s in developing his view of modesty in dressing and adornment.

John Wesley emphasis on “plainness in apparel,”⁸¹ avoiding jewelry that “generates pride,”⁸² avoiding dressing and adornment that “promotes immorality,” and prioritizing the adornment of good works is in harmony with the biblical teaching on dress and adornment.⁸³ Wesley argues that Luke 7:24-25, 1 Tim 2:9-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-4 “manifestly forbid ordinary Christians, those in the lower or middle ranks of

⁷⁷ White, *Messages to Young People*, 352.

⁷⁸ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:246.

⁷⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 364.

⁸⁰ White, *Messages to Young People*, 354.

⁸¹ Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 4.

⁸² Wesley, *Sermon 88*, 10.

⁸³ Wesley, *Sermon 41*, I.4.

life, to be adorned with gold, pearls, or costly apparel.”⁸⁴ However, Wesley’s exemption of Christian government officers from following this teaching is a contradiction.

The researcher, as per the exegesis of Luke 7:24-25 acknowledges that there is a social distinction in attires of different peoples in the society based on their civic positions. It is true during Jesus’s time, there was a distinction, and it will continue to be there. However, no difference between modesty in dressing and adornment between groups of people can be concluded from the Bible passages used by Wesley. The biblical principles drawn from these passages apply to all cultures, traditions, experiences, economic status, and other factors.

⁸⁴ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 8.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter summarizes, concludes, and considers the study's implications on John Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a summary of the significant findings. The second section is the conclusion of the study. The third section is the implications of the results of the investigation.

Summary

This study is a biblical-theological evaluation of John Wesley's view of modesty in dressing and adornment. Wesley asserts that kings and government "officers" may wear expensive clothes and jewelry, but "ordinary Christians" should exercise modesty.¹ He claims that all his teachings are based on the Holy Scriptures alone.² The purpose of the study is to find out if Wesley's view is biblically correct.

Three views are reviewed concerning the distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment. The first view is in favor, the second is against, and the third view is neutral. The first view recognizes the distinction of dress and adornment depending on gender, social, economic, religious, and political status and limits modesty to the ordinary people. The second view propagated by the Church Fathers, church

¹ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 7, 8.

² Wesley, *Sermon* 1-53, 5.

reformers, and some postmodern scholars, while recognizing differences in dress according to function, urges all Christians to maintain modesty in dressing and adornment. The third view is neither in favor nor against the distinction of modesty between civic leaders and ordinary citizens. The proponents of this view support beauty and jewelry for both civic leaders and ordinary citizens.

The study shows that the cultural, political, and philosophical environment in which John Wesley lived significantly shaped his view of modesty in dress and adornment. Wesley lived in Great Britain in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century during the renaissance period when art and literature revival affected the dressing culture of one's gender, occupation, and social status both in the family and society.³ He lived in England when religion and politics were merged.⁴ However, he did not support the union between the church and the state and instead decided to proclaim the gospel simply, logically, lucidly, and practically.⁵ The philosophical thinking of the Church Fathers may also have impacted John Wesley's theology.⁶ While at Oxford University, he read the epistles of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp.⁷

³ Clinch, *English Costume from Prehistoric Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 115.

⁴ Woloch, *Eighteenth-Century Europe: Tradition and Progress 1715-1789*, 298.

⁵ Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, from Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850*, 146.

⁶ Wesley, "Further Thoughts on Separation from the Church," 538.

⁷ Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity*, 16.

Wesley's theological background combines influences from the Church of England,⁸ Pietism and the Puritans,⁹ the Moravians,¹⁰ and the theology of Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor.¹¹ The Church of England is where John Wesley was brought up.¹² He borrowed 24 articles from the 39 articles of the Church of England.¹³ Pietism and the Puritans further influenced John Wesley's theology of modesty in dressing adornment.¹⁴ Using the words of Bacchiocchi, Pietism and the Puritans were known for their zeal for "lifestyle reformation in the Church of England" through maintaining modesty in outward dressing and adornment by avoiding "portentous vestments" in worship and ornamentation in general clothing.¹⁵ The Moravians also influenced Wesley's theology. The Moravians influenced his theology and practices, especially in experiential religion.¹⁶ His ethical sermons, such as: *Redeeming Time, Health, Sleep, Marriage, Money, Dress*, and many more, leaned on practical theology.¹⁷ Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor are critical individuals in John

⁸ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (20 September 1740). Charles Wallace Jr. ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 33-34.

⁹ The Methodist Church, "Minutes of the Methodist Church," 713, Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, (1739-41).

¹⁰ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Wednesday (7 June 1738).

¹¹ Wesley, *Sermon 79*, 2.18., and Wesley, *Sermon 117*, 1.15.

¹² Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (12 April 1789).

¹³ Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, 12.

¹⁴ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 24 May 1738. See also, The Methodist Church, "Minutes of the Methodist Church," (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1765-1860), Vol. 1, (1862), 713, accessed 22 June 2020, <https://archive.org/details/minutesofmethodi00wesl/page/713/mode/1up?ref=ol&view=theater>.

¹⁵ Bacchiocchi, *Christian Dress & Adornment*, 90.

¹⁶ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Wednesday (7 June 1738).

¹⁷ Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, from Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850*, 146.

Wesley's theological background.¹⁸ His respect for these two theologians is said to have been "next to the Bible."¹⁹ He esteemed them so much that he desired to associate with individuals who accepted and practiced their teachings.²⁰

In addition to the influences from Wesley's cultural, political, and philosophical environment and his theological background, his theological method determined his distinction of modesty in dress and adornment. First, Wesley supported the verbal inspiration of the Bible.²¹ God dictated word for word as the Bible writers wrote down what He said. He believed in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures.²² Second, Wesley used literal interpretation.²³ He thought every word or punctuation should be taken literally when interpreting the Bible.²⁴ Third, Wesley employed a Quadrilateral theological method that combined the Bible with tradition, experience, and reason.²⁵ He categorized "the Holy Scriptures at the same level as human tradition, experience, and reason."²⁶ Thus, the Wesleyan Quadrilateral undermined the principle of "The Bible as the first and primary authority in matters of belief and practice."²⁷

¹⁸ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Wednesday (24 May 1738).

¹⁹ Telford, *The Life of John Wesley*, 48.

²⁰ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Thursday (27 December 1738).

²¹ Wesley, *Notes on Revelation* 1: 20.

²² Jones, *Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, 10.

²³ Wesley, *Sermon 25*, 5.2.1.

²⁴ Wesley, *Sermon 25*, 5.2.1.

²⁵ Oden, *John Wesley's Teachings*, Volume 1, 83.

²⁶ Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, 558.

²⁷ Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, 558.

Wesley believes there should be differences in dress and adornment among Christians of different ranks. He argued that he did not know any Bible text that forbids distinction in dressing and adornment between government officials and ordinary citizens.²⁸ Wesley assumes that, Jesus tolerated this custom because He “neither condemned nor criticized it.”²⁹ Luke 7:25 is Wesley’s main text to support the distinction in dress and adornment among different people. He, however, applied the principle of modesty in 1 Tim 2:9-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-4 to the ordinary citizens but not to those in high ranks.

Wesley concludes that Luke 7:24-25 and 1 Tim 2:9-10 “manifestly forbid ordinary Christians, those in the lower or middle ranks of life, to be adorned with gold, or pearls, or costly apparel.”³⁰ Though 1 Tim 2:9-10 gives principles of modesty in dressing and adornment, it, however, does not address the distinction in dressing and adornment between civic leaders and ordinary Christians. The principles apply to all Christians regardless of their status. Paul addressed all men and all women on how to conduct themselves in public worship. There is no indication in this passage that the worshippers’ attire should be categorized based on their political and civic status.

Peter’s instruction to wives in 1 Pet 3:3, 4 aimed to “promote honorable conduct in the context of the first-century Mediterranean culture.”³¹ He referred to submissiveness and obedience as the inner beauty that should be embraced more than the external beauty of dressing and adornment. Using the words of Miroslav M. Kiš, dressing and adornment, have three “general principles ... of frugality ... modesty ...

²⁸ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 7.

²⁹ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 7.

³⁰ Wesley, *Sermon* 88, 8.

³¹ Andrews University, *Andrews Study Bible*, 1630.

and inward beauty.”³² “The principle of frugality” calls for one to save finances and resources by considering the quality of the dress and its appropriate occasion.³³ “The principle of modesty” centers on avoiding extremes in appearance, as recorded in 1 Tim 2:9.³⁴ The third principle of “inward beauty” turns attention from outward appearance to the heart (1 Pet 3:3-4).³⁵ Dressing and adornment should be motivated by these principles which apply to every person, every place, at every time.

Ellen G. White is on record that, there are general principles to be considered by Christians in dressing and adornment. These principles are: “modesty, simplicity,”³⁶ “durability, and color that appeals;”³⁷ stewardship of life and possession, such as: being economical or avoiding extravagance; considering the needy, widows, orphans, naked, hungry, and homeless; and considering the mission to people unreached by the good news.³⁸ Christians’ dressing and adornment need to consider the grace of God received, inner beauty, and the appropriateness of natural simplicity.³⁹ White acknowledges a distinction in attires,⁴⁰ as mentioned in Luke 7:24-25, but not a distinction of modesty in dress and adornment among Christians. Without considering their status, Christians should maintain modesty in dressing and adornment.

³² Kiš, “Christian Lifestyle and Behavior” 707.

³³ Kiš, “Christian Lifestyle and Behavior” 707.

³⁴ Kiš, “Christian Lifestyle and Behavior” 707.

³⁵ Kiš, “Christian Lifestyle and Behavior” 707.

³⁶ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:376.

³⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:246.

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, 175.

³⁹ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:246.

⁴⁰ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 209.

Conclusion

Although John Wesley claims to use “the Bible alone” in all his teachings,⁴¹ including the topic on the dress, a biblical interpretation of Luke 7:24-25, 1 Tim 2:9-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-4 does not support his view of distinction of modesty in dressing and adornment between Christian government officials and ordinary citizens. This is because, while Christians may wear distinctive clothes based on gender, function, and climate, all should observe the principles of modesty, decency, and inner beauty and avoid all potential signs of harlotry and idolatry.

Implications

The study has implications for church ministry and mission. Firstly, the church should teach both members and new believers that biblical principles of dressing and adornment are for all people despite their status. Secondly, the church should teach members and new believers who wear distinctive clothes in their places of work and other people to maintain “general principles ... of frugality ... modesty ... and inward beauty” in public and worship places.⁴² Thirdly, the church should teach members and new believers to avoid all potential signs of harlotry and idolatry in dressing and adornment.

⁴¹ Wesley, *Sermon* 1-53, 5.

⁴² Kiš, “Christian Lifestyle and Behavior” 707.

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Sep. 2019-Oct. 2020	SDA, Gatang'a District	Pastor
Jan. 2017-Sep. 2019	SDA, Karobangi District	Pastor

Jan. 2016-Dec. 2016	SDA, Gatundu District	Pastor
Jul. 2014-Dec. 2015	SDA, Mutitu TTC	College Chaplain
Mar. 2011-Jun. 2014	SDA, Githunguri District	Pastor
Jan. 2009-Feb. 2011	SDA, Maua-Igembe District	Pastor
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Sep. 2005-Jun. 2006	University of Arusha	Assistant Chaplain
Mar. 2005-Sep. 2005	Meru Peak Secondary School	Acting Head Master
Sep. 2003-Mar. 2005	University of Arusha	Baker and Food Attendant
Jul. 2003-Sep. 2003	HHES-Nairobi	Literature Evangelist
Jul. 2003-Sep. 2003	HHES-Gaborone	Literature Evangelist
Feb. 1999-Nov. 2000	HHES-Embu	Literature Evangelist
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