

My View on Nakedness

by Rev. David L. Hatton, RN

"WAIT, David! You're still a GUY!!! How do you deal with female nudity?"

"How can I work intimately with naked women without a moral problem?" For 25 years I had no adequate answer to this question, until coming to the understanding described below. What follows was originally written for those preparing for childbirth, who wanted more than a short answer to their concerns about hospital nudity. But it has become my standard reply to fellow Christians who, reasoning from their own "view on nakedness," doubt that anyone can keep a pure mind around it, even an ordained minister. While the research behind this essay confirmed my own experiences, it also exposed the dysfunction and danger in that latter viewpoint, which most of us were raised with. The more I studied, the more apparent it became that our society is controlled by ideas about the naked human body that are both damaging and destructive, even though they are generally presumed and mistakenly preached as "God's point of view."

My Surprising Discovery That NUDE IS NOT LEWD

If you had grown up in a society where it was strictly taught that the universe revolved around Earth, you might have been persecuted for teaching the fact that Earth actually revolves around the Sun. Not only was the world in error, but religious leaders pulled God Himself into the framework of this mythology because they considered it to be "divine truth." A small number of honest and intelligent scientists did suffer at ecclesiastical hands for telling the truth. But no matter what society believed and taught, the geocentric idea of astronomy eventually was corrected by a careful observation of reality. Although its daily rotation still makes it appear that everything in the heavens revolves around Earth, today even young school children know that our planet is only one of several others circling a relatively small star.

We have been raised in a culture where just as powerful a myth exists about nudity. We have been strictly taught that, without clothing on, the human body is an obscene stimulus for sexual lust. God Himself has been pulled into the logic of this indoctrination to give it a firm religious standing. This belief in the lewdness of nudity makes it a moral transgression to look at people of the opposite sex without their clothing, or to allow our own naked bodies to be seen by them. But, instead of a small number of observers exploding this myth, multiple millions of people, like myself, have discovered the real truth about simple nudity. Although the naked human body may seem lewd and lustful, from how society trains the mind to see it, it is really something beautifully designed by our Creator and never intended by Him to become what society has made of it.

The nature of my job in labor and delivery makes seeing nakedness a common occurrence. But as a male raised in our culture, *"How do I deal with female nudity?"* was once my own question. The question can also be turned around and asked from the perspective of my

patients, "*How do I deal with getting nude in front of this man I don't even know?*" My experiences with naked women have shown me that both I myself and the many ladies I've had the opportunity to work with have not had the problems that society predicts. The above two questions themselves only seem logical because they are asked in the context of a society that has abnormally "sexualized" the human body. Our own American society is notoriously guilty of doing this. It teaches us with religiously scrupulous zeal to think of nakedness almost exclusively in terms related to erotic titillation or sexual intercourse. My purpose in this essay is to show why such a social attitude is tragically erroneous, and why our society's strict insistence on perpetuating it is something truly "*shameful.*"

Early on in nursing school I occasionally saw female nudity. Later, as an emergency room nurse, I was frequently exposed to it. As a maternity nurse, exposure to the nakedness of women became a large part of my daily routine. But for as long as I can remember, I was taught to believe that seeing naked women would create impure thoughts. Such a prediction proved true in adolescent years whenever my curious eyes purveyed pornographic magazines. Of course, these were especially designed to stir up such lustful thinking. But I also found that my imagination could be even more troublesome when looking at fully clothed women. I clearly recall a high school teacher telling us that a woman in a bathing suit can draw more attention sexually than one without any clothes at all, because complete exposure short-circuits the imagination. When he said that, I did not believe him. Now I know how correct he was. My experiences in the hospital verified his statement. The foundation for my faith in the *nude-is-lewd* myth began to crumble on the day it was challenged by the following incident...

I was a nursing student on a clinical rotation in a convalescent hospital. My assignment was to give a bed bath to a middle-aged woman recently crippled on one side by a stroke. I had learned the proper method of preserving the patient's "modesty" by washing one part of the body at a time, while keeping the rest under a bath blanket. This I carefully began to do. With curtains drawn, I covered her with a blanket, then removed her gown underneath it. But my patient herself was a seasoned nurse, and her understanding of nakedness and her desire for efficiency had outgrown what the textbook prescribed. With the hand she could still use, she grabbed the blanket and pulled it off, leaving her body entirely nude.

"Just wash me," she said in a very matter-of-fact way. So I began to bathe her, more quickly and much more sensibly than by the textbook instructions. Although I could have declined her idea, I could not have argued against her "common sense" approach to the job. But it wasn't her logic that startled me. What caught me by surprise and held my attention was how I was responding to her nudity. Here I was, seeing and bathing a fully naked woman. Yes, I was married and knew what a naked woman looked like. In fact, the only naked woman I had ever seen in person was my wife, whose body I loved to look at. Now I was seeing another woman, who also had a nice-looking body. Yet, her nakedness stimulated no sexual feelings. Even when bathing those body parts that men were not supposed to see, let alone touch, I had no lustful thoughts. And even though a strange man was seeing everything her external anatomy had to show, this woman was surprisingly calm. Her calmness put me at ease as well.

When I had just about completed the bath, my nursing instructor suddenly stepped through the curtains to check on how I was doing. Before she could comment, I quickly blurted out, "She wanted it done that way!" It was only then that I felt embarrassed. It was social embarrassment for not following the academic standards of practice. But there was absolutely nothing in the nakedness of that lovely lady that caused me to feel any shame or embarrassment at seeing her nude body and bathing it. This was an unanticipated experience, happening with my very first female bed-bath in my very first nursing course. I had made no mental preparations for such a full view of a naked woman. My reaction, or lack of what I thought should have been my reaction, was a real and very reassuring surprise.

After that initial discovery, every other similar view of female nudity invariably resulted in the same total absence of sexual stimulation. In my long history of hospital nursing,

occurrences of naked encounters became myriad and routine, all without the *lust* that is commonly predicted. It's not because my constant exposure to nudity numbed my masculine attraction to the beauty of the opposite sex. I continue to delight in God's special design of the feminine figure. This masculine esteem, instead of diminishing over time, has only deepened. But appreciating the bare female anatomy as something especially beautiful, even when viewing very attractive and shapely women, always fails to bring me into the "lustful thinking" that society pronounces "unavoidable."

My own experience is identical to that of millions of others in similar situations where a mixed-gender exposure to nudity is common. Our unanimous testimony simply describes reality. The unrealistic view that everyone has been culturally taught is a presumption about nudity that betrays our culture's unhealthy preoccupation with sex. It is true that, assisted by this "sexualized" indoctrination about the human body, our society has taken advantage of nudity in some extremely lascivious ways. But I must reject the myth that in and of itself "nude is lewd." Even a brief exposure to what this concept proclaims as forbidden is sufficient to expose its error. Not only health-care workers, but others (massage therapists, tattoo artists, morticians, missionaries to naked cultures, artists who work from nude models, and especially those who skinny-dip at clothing-optional locations) discover exactly the same thing. This simple sight of the undressed body informs any healthy mind that there is nothing indecent about our God-given human anatomy or its gender-specific differentiation. All of it is very ordinary and natural and wholesome. However, nudity, when it's misused, does become obscene, because it forces the truth into the context of a lie. Our sex-crazed society is despicable in this kind of gross abuse and exploitation of the naked human form. But there is nothing lewd about the human body itself when seen without its cultural apparel. To deny this is to declare that our Creator was mistaken in calling the creation of our first parents in their naked state "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Discovering a Healthier Way of Viewing Nakedness

What happens in a culture where it is deemed morally wrong to look at the nudity of, or expose our bodies to the eyes of, members of the opposite sex? Such instruction unnaturally infuses the body's mere nudity with a "sexual" meaning and with shame. Our culture's rigid enforcement of this *body shame* mentality, or *body taboo*, trains us to equate mixed-gender nakedness automatically with lewdness or obscenity. However, we make contradictory exceptions to these rules, such as when undressing for a physical exam, or when admiring nudity in works of art, or when laughing at toddlers who strip and romp around in the sprinkler. These and many other contradictory examples clearly challenge the *body taboo*. But, because we honor this taboo as sacred, we try with religious zeal to shield it from rational examination. We have come up with memorized answers for the above-mentioned situations: "Oh, it's for medical reasons...." or "That's just art, of course...." or "Look how sweet! So innocent...." These explanatory comments are basically meaningless, as far as offering a reasoned basis for temporarily cancelling the rules. They are like reflexive responses to subject matter that people nervously want to avoid a thoughtful discussion about. They offer absolutely no rational thought process in explaining how the *body taboo* can be set aside, although the last one about naked toddlers is a reflex that points us in a healthy direction.

After many years of working so intimately with nakedness, I began some intense study of

the subject itself. The effect of all those years and of that time of research merged together in my mind to form two personal opinions about our culture's *body taboo*. First, theologically and historically, I believe the *body taboo* is a primeval deception, a latent legacy from our diabolically deceived first parents back in the Garden of Eden, a falsehood ignored by most of our ancestors, but slowly re-adopted over the past several centuries. Second, sociologically and psychologically, I believe this taboo's elimination of ordinary, nonsexual nakedness from occasional sight makes our society the perfect environment for strategically covering or uncovering the body for sexual display. It has laid an immensely powerful foundation for pornography and for its iron-grip on our society. I also discovered in my research that I was not alone in my experience of simple nudity as something normal and non-sexual. These discoveries led me to return to what I believe is a more godly and morally sound viewpoint. I say "return," because in my studies I quickly learned that accepting socially visible nudity as an ordinary, non-moral part of life has been a universal behavior for most of human history, including Bible times and the first few centuries of the early church.

An even better reason for returning to this healthier attitude is that the naked human form, out of everything else in naked creation, was specifically designed by God to bear the glory of His personal image (Genesis 1:27). He made the human body a beautiful attraction and a praiseworthy display of His creative genius (Psalm 139:14), which it continues to be today. In Christian theology, the believer's body is a temple for the Holy Spirit to indwell (1 Corinthians 6:19). God never infused it, whether naked or clothed, with any power on its own to incite sexual lust, because He created nothing that would tempt us (James 1:13-14). Lustful thoughts, as Jesus said, come "out of the heart" (Matthew 15:19). Unfortunately, our culture carefully and thoroughly grooms our hearts for associating nudity with this kind of sordid, lustful thinking, and as children of our culture, we can fall into an addiction to the pornography that such thinking engenders.

Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the explanatory warning of the *body taboo* actually prescribes a behavioral pattern that sets people up for a pornographic misuse of nakedness: "Nudity is lustful, therefore, when you see it, you will lust." When that kind of reasoning is socially and religiously believed, it trains us to think of nakedness exclusively in terms of sexuality. Those preaching this taboo often imagine the nude body to be a moral stumbling block, when, on the contrary, this concept itself is one of the biggest stumbling blocks over which our young people trip and fall into sexual impurity. How is that so? It's because the perpetually covered body prevents the wholesome satisfaction of the curiosity that it unnaturally creates, so that unwholesome patterns of satisfying that normal curiosity become a tempting pitfall. Also, the *body taboo* stimulates and sustains an unhealthy imagination about what actually lies hidden beneath clothing. The truth is that what garments zealously conceal is always substantially less than what can be invented within anyone's imagination. Even worse, the *body taboo*'s emphasis on the sexual nature of the body creates some very unrealistic ideas about what the naked body has to offer sexually. What seems tacitly promised by the secrecy of apparel can never actually be realized on clothing's removal, because more is hoped for in nakedness than realistically exists. When nudity fails to meet what people are led to anticipate, they may become addicted to progressively more depraved abuses of the human body in trying to fulfill those unrealistic expectations. Each of the above destructive avenues of thought are artificially created by the overshadowing idea that nakedness and sexual lust are intrinsically related. While this implication is not really true, the *body taboo*'s strict enforcement of it has a powerful influence on

the imagination, leading it down a path that is both emotionally frustrating and morally disastrous. The lust problem that the taboo was supposed to prevent, it ends up directly promoting in a major way. This is why traditional attempts to break addictions to the lie of pornography notoriously fail when they are based on strengthening and reinforcing the lies of *body shame* and the *body taboo*. Lies must be fought with truth, and in this case, "the naked truth."

The above understanding, in many cases, can prevent the tyranny of porn addiction and diminish the allure of pornography. But the truth can be rejected by the human will, and what I have shared cannot stop the misuse of nudity in our culture. The naked body can and does become a focal point for lustful thinking when accompanied by immodest behavior, such as facial expressions or body postures purposefully meant to arouse sexual desire (see the PORNOGRAPHY poem below). But the plain and simple nude body, no matter how attractive, is just too frank, too realistic, too ordinary and unsophisticated to create that lustful effect by itself alone. When average people (which exclude psychopaths and sex-fiends) find themselves in an environment free from the sexual expectations of our society's *body taboo*, it usually takes very little time for the sight of normal nakedness to dispel this dysfunctional pattern of thinking. There are still a few "naked cultures" in the world where even the genitals are publicly visible without any mental immodesty. Missionaries and foreign visitors coming into such an environment find that they adjust to the sight of nudity almost immediately, just as new nurses do in the hospital. From such a *naked culture's* perspective, our own social pattern of abusing nakedness for sexual display might be considered a form of insanity. That would be an accurate evaluation. The human mind must first be irrationally trained with a "sexualized" or "pornographic" view of the body for such a perverse practice to develop and persist. The undeniable proof of this is that our society's unhealthy indoctrination of the *body taboo* is so thorough and so successful that it undergirds and nourishes a flourishing pornography industry. We would first have to introduce the *body taboo* and get those living in a "naked culture" to fully adopt it, before pornography could ever invade and gain a foothold there. Unfortunately, multiple times in the past, Western society has done exactly that. As a minister of the church, I confess that my Christian ancestors in missions were blindly guilty of infusing their Gospel message with the *body taboo* and zealously spreading it in the name of God. They may have done so unwittingly, but it was nonetheless an adulteration of the simple "good news" of Christ. Modern missionaries, if they have been properly trained in cross-cultural principles, have learned not to make this grave moral mistake. Sadly, however, Western churches have failed to apologize publicly for this error, because to do so without hypocrisy, they would have to repent of the *body taboo* themselves, stop preaching it, and change their attitude toward the naked human body.

Despite our culture's devotion to dressing for show and its obsession with undressing for sex, the divine glory and appealing beauty in the bare human body remains as wholesome today as when God first created humans naked and without shame (Genesis 2:25). He sovereignly makes us remember that original fact each time we shamelessly rejoice with awesome delight at the birth of naked infants. Throughout the Bible, unless it alludes to or is the result of coercion, sexual misconduct, or physical or spiritual poverty, nakedness by itself is never portrayed as a shameful or immoral condition. Unless it is motivated by impure desires, seeing nakedness is not a shameful or immoral action. As I discovered almost 30 years ago upon becoming a nurse, a few moments of viewing a naked person of the opposite sex, in a normal, nonsexual context, can overturn a lifetime of false instruction about how the mind is supposed to react. It's a falsehood

with a history as far back as Eden, a lie embraced today sincerely and even religiously, but nonetheless a lie. Just as light dispels darkness, a brief dose of the "naked truth" can suffocate the oldest deceit the devil hopes to keep alive. The real obscenity hidden beneath clothing springs from our own confused and misdirected imagination. That "vain imagination" was born the day Adam and Eve, with their new, Satan-fed "knowledge," decided on their own, independently from God, that fig-leaf coverings were "good" and their own nakedness was "evil." If their new notion was that clothing was now a moral necessity for humans, then God's question to them points definitively to the real instigator of such thinking, "*Who told you that you were naked?*" (Genesis 3:11).

My Conclusions

This may seem to be a long answer to "*How do I deal with female nudity?*" I could say much, much more. For so many years I struggled intellectually with the conflict between the socially fostered *body taboo* and my routine, nonsexual involvement with nudity. At last I did my homework. Surprisingly, I found that historical, biblical, cultural and psycho-social research only confirmed the normalcy of my own experiences. It was the *body taboo* that proved to be abnormal.

I often distill my philosophical thoughts into poetry, and following this article is an APPENDIX with some poems I've written that give a poetic synopsis of many of the concepts shared in this essay. The first two poems summarize my initial research: "The Divine Story of Naked Glory" (p. 7) and "CHRISTIANS AND NAKEDNESS" (p. 8). The third poem, "I SING THE BODY IMMORTAL" (p. 10), confronts an unbiblical devaluation of matter and the physical human body which I believe was passed down from Gnosticism's influences on early Christian ideas of spirituality. Gnosticism may actually be the historical source responsible for the development of the *body taboo* in later Christian teaching. This poem also highlights the true biblical hope (Romans 8:23-24a) of which Walt Whitman's poem "I Sing the Body Electric" falls short, yet unwittingly anticipates. "PORNOGRAPHY" (p. 11) is an older poem of mine written to decry the pornographic misuse of the body without maligning nudity itself. The final one, "NURSES AND NUDITY" (p. 12), simply describes what I had learned from experience, but was never able to put into words until I discovered the truth about the phenomenon of human nudity through research.

During that research, I discovered a Bible teacher, Dr. James McKeever, whose study of Scripture supports much of what I've shared above. His view of nudity is explained in a chapter called "Nudity and Lust" from his book, *It's in the Bible*, which is now out of print. At the end of the Appendix I have included the text of that chapter (p. 14).

As both a nurse and an ordained minister, I wish to see a radical, biblical reform in the church's thinking. I'm in favor of a sober emancipation of the naked human form from its artificially-created social shame. But I totally oppose the pornography that enslaves souls by harnessing and harvesting the false shame of the *body taboo*, which so many well-meaning people, especially religious people, mistakenly continue to support and spread.

If your thinking has been challenged by what I've said, you may want to examine whether or not the challenge is valid. I have a page on my website called, "Rebuilding a Godly View of the Unclad Human Body" (<http://pastordavidrn.com/files/rebuilding-links.html>). At the bottom of

it are links to some of the research that stretched my own mind in this area. You may also email me at pastordavidrn@gmail.com with questions you may have. I realize my viewpoint is at odds with our society's common thinking, but I have seen how that common thinking is at odds with simple human nature, with healthy human experience, with most of human history, including Biblical history, and with a sound creational view of the human body. If you are in total agreement with the *body taboo* and decide to continue to support it, that is your personal choice. I feel it is a poor one, in light of theology, history, and the experiences of so many others who have discovered that the *body taboo* is not an honest description of reality. At the same time, I realize and accept the fact that each person is responsible before God to follow what their conscience allows or doesn't allow (Romans 14:12-23). My purpose and hope in writing this essay, however, is to strengthen the "weak" conscience (Roman 14:2,3) with the truth.

APPENDIX

THE DIVINE STORY OF NAKED GLORY

When God arrayed the heavens with the starry galaxies,
 Encircling Earth with ocean waves and atmospheric breeze;
 When He had summoned flowering plants and every fruitful vine,
 Creating dragonflies and birds, and fish to swim the brine,
 Repeatedly He stated that His craftsmanship was "good."
 His wisdom, might, and glory by these works are understood.

He called forth living animals to roam the fresh, new land,
 But when it came to us, into the soil He plunged His hand
 And breathed upon His likeness fashioned from a lump of clay,
 To house in naked flesh His holy image for display.
 Upon this crowning glory, placed within a gardened wood,
 God made His valuation with these two words: "very good."

Although the human bodies formed by God were fully bare,
 There was no shame or shyness in that male and female pair,
 Until they listened to the Snake who hated God's design
 And wanted shameless nakedness to end and cease to shine.
 They ate the fruit of knowledge independent from their Lord.
 Embarrassment at nudity became sin's false reward.

They hid from one another's eyes, in leafy textiles dressed,
 Forgetting how their nakedness was previously blessed.
 Their clothing was their own idea. They thought their bodies lewd,
 Confusing sinful guilt and shame with merely being nude.
 And when God sought to find them in their former naked skin,
 He questioned why they fled and who had led them into sin.

The penalty of death their disobedience made due
 Was paid that day by sacrifice of animals they knew
 Whose innocence was obvious, whose furs God used as wrap
 To clothe them with what paid for falling into Satan's trap---
 To cover or atone, and to protect, as they were banned
 From Eden's bliss into a harshness God had never planned.

Those sacrificial skins did not condemn our nudity.
 God's beauty in our bodies is still wonderful to see.
 In every part His image gleams, from naked head to toe,
 All lust comes from a sinful heart, not from that glory's glow.
 But Satan fuels that lust with lies through body-shame and fear
 To hide what's "very good" beneath ongoing fig-leaf gear.

The priests and pulpits, schools and courts, all seem attuned to heed
 That ancient demon's subtle trick, to make his scheme their creed,
 But while the loudest voices of society demean
 God's unclothed image as indecent, sinful, lewd, obscene...
 God has His will and makes us thrill and fills the world with mirth
 To watch new humans enter here stark naked in their birth.

-- *David L. Hatton, 12/29/2004*

to be in *POEMS BETWEEN BIRTH AND RESURRECTION*
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CHRISTIANS AND NAKEDNESS

Today we are not used to the body when it's bare,
 The skin beyond our face and arms beneath the clothes we wear.
 Untaught to see its beauty, we've learned to label "lewd"
 The "birthday suit" we started with, which God created nude.

It's true we make exceptions for toddlers full of glee
 Who run around in pure delight, stark naked, clothing-free.
 But those who rediscover this liberty so clean
 Are called, when they come back to it, "perverted and obscene."

Yet artists, who observe it in models posed unclad,
 Acknowledge how the human form is beautiful! Not bad!
 When health-care workers view it, no decency is gone.
 A patient's dignity remains when seen with nothing on.

It's found by missionaries, to naked peoples sent,
 That "porn" invades a culture's land to which "our clothing" went.
 It's known by skinny-dippers who bathe in sea and sun
 That recreation in the buff is simply healthy fun.

The church has failed her duty to guard and to proclaim
 That God's own image in our flesh is free from body-shame.
 Instead, the naked body is marketed for lust,
 Relinquished into sordid hands by pulpits breaking trust.

Are human bodies "sinful" without their textile wraps?
 Must children have to look for them in pornographic traps?
 Can't we who praise our Maker sustain our hungry youth
 Whose natural curiosity God meant to feast on truth?

False modesty is shameful! It sends the lovely breast
 Into a realm of carnal thoughts when mothers nurse undressed.
 It bans the Sistine Chapel, where nudes are plainly shown,
 And censures Michelangelo for sculpting them in stone.

We've grown quite unaccustomed to normal nudity.
 We even hide ourselves at home from friends and family.
 Some people hate their bodies, despising God's design,
 Embarrassed if they must disrobe and let His glory shine.

Yet most of our ancestors all bathed in open air.
 They lived and dressed in one-room homes and saw each other bare.
 We trim for sports and work-outs. Greek athletes did so stripped!
 And Christians went to Roman baths with just their towels equipped!

The ancients often labored like Peter, in the nude.
 When prophets preached without a stitch, nobody called it "Rude!"
 The early church's converts were naked when baptized.
 Though Bible scholars know these facts, they're never advertized!

Have we made better progress in our morality
 By pushing man-contrived taboos on human nudity?
 Did God create His likeness to foster sinful lust?
 Do we confirm the Serpent's scheme for souls God sheathed in dust?

If we could just recapture the ancient attitude
 That saw no scandal in a field of gardeners working nude,
 If we more often witnessed God's image on display,
 We might regain a wholesome view of nakedness today.

-- *David L. Hatton, 5/23/05*

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I SING THE BODY IMMORTAL

I sing the body immortal,
 inborn longing, reflexive wish, certain vision
 of flesh immune to death's decay and death.

Ignoring hope falsely borrowed
 from the fate of angels, holy or fallen
 (who never knew pilgrimage with matter,
 were never clothed in Adam's flesh,
 will never indwell these ashes from stars),
 I sing a physical resurrection
 and not some disembodied destiny.

I sing the body immortal,
 the lifting of sin's curse, end of creation's groaning,
 sole specific hope of human souls.

I sing the invitation from the Son of God and Man,
 daring to don the image of Himself
 to live our life and die our death
 to glorify that prototypic form,
 rising in it, ascending in it, returning in it,
 graciously calling us to join His reign
 within and above a seeming infinitude of Space
 strewn with myriad star-crowded galaxies
 waiting to be explored in the endless adventure
 of spirits wrapped immortally in cosmic clay.

I sing the body immortal,
 the new birth of God's originality
 in blowing His own breath into lifeless dust,
 eternal fulfillment of a divine design
 far beyond the wildest dreams imagined
 in Earth's long history of sages and prophets.

I sing a God-like spirit-soul humanity
 forever wed to worlds of molecules
 with wiggling toes and skipping feet
 and kneeling knees and dancing legs,
 with slender trunk and sturdy back,
 with distinguishing pubic shaft or cleft
 and unblemished skin over muscle and limb,

with masculine breadth in shoulders and chest
 or delicate fullness in feminine breasts
 and sparse hair, or missing, with color returned,
 with hands that can clasp and build and play
 and fingers that write and can sculpt and caress,
 with neck that can turn at the sound of a bird
 and eyes that are dazzled by beauty and form
 and ears that still revel in music and song
 and nose for enchantment with nature's perfumes,
 with mouth that can taste and delight in sweet fare
 and lips that can speak with a voice or a kiss.

I sing body and soul made finally whole,
 the mind and the will incarnate, connected,
 displaying the glory of God's naked image
 clad shamelessly in Jesus' merits alone,
 enjoying, encompassing, expressing
 eternal life in the true bodily resurrection
 promised by the resurrected Son of God and Man.

Because of Christ Jesus, Firstborn from the dead,
 I sing the body immortal.

-- *David L. Hatton, 5/5/2005*

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PORNOGRAPHY

A poet and pornographer were arguing out loud
 Upon a city street where their debate had drawn a crowd.
 But fed on mocking satire from the smut-shop marketeer,
 The gathering was led to chide the poet's "prudish" fear.

A screaming female cry rang out to cheer the rights of porn:
 "My naked beauty's mine to sell! Free speech!" she yelled with scorn.
 But then an aging prostitute brought silence with her shout:
 "My beauty's gone! Let's have free speech, and hear the poet out!"

Conviction filled the poet's voice: "I stand for womanhood!
 Who markets nudity for lust, no beauty understood!
 Who sold her flesh as slop to fill the feeding troughs of swine,
 Was swindled of her value, doesn't know her worth, or mine!"

"Our dignity as humans teach the secrecy of love.
 The privacy of mating is a treasure from above.
 But make the sacred common, and you lace the truth with lies:
 Love's intimacy wasn't meant for wanton public eyes!

"I welcome mothers' lovely breasts exposed to nurse their young!
 Bring on bare photographs of birth! Its beauties I have sung!
 Display a sculpted portrait of your wife, a gorgeous nude,
 But strip her for a show of sex, and you're a fool, and lewd!

"No healthy woman really wants the hurt that lust inspires,
 Nor can a spouse compete against a fantasy's desires.
 Just analyze the rapist's diet: what's his daily fare?
 Enticing looks that porno-pimps pay unclad girls to wear!

"The question's not of freedom, nor is it of rights denied.
 We've sold our children's safety, while our family honor died.
 An endless carnal thirst is gushing from pornography
 To drown the due respect that each man owes womanity.

"Unclothe the youthful nude they pay to twist the gawker's mind:
 Below the skin of powdered breasts and spreading legs you'll find
 A misled sister, daughter, cousin, mother, niece or wife
 Who's auctioned by a trade that drains her image of its life.

"Beneath the painted hide they hire to pose for filthy fame,
 A woman's raped of self-esteem and wrapped in sinful shame.
 But sons who buy their sister's theft have been the most untrue:
 They fail to guard the woman's worth that manhood calls them to!"

The prostitute began to clap . . . a teacher joined nearby,
 Some older men took off their caps . . . two girls began to cry.
 One mother lifted up her blouse to sing while baby nursed.
 But most were very quiet as the gathering dispersed.

-- *David L. Hatton, 5/29/96 (revised, 12/22/04)*

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NURSES AND NUDITY

"Stark naked," they say, is a state of the mind,
 and "nude" is a lesson in art.
 In nursing, I've studied their meanings combined
 in bodies and thoughts of the heart.

Exposed for exam, or a treatment, or bath,
 the work of our Maker is seen.
 In public His craft would elicit the wrath
 of being reputed "Obscene!"

We waver concerning our natural state,
 "indecent" by cultural whim.
 We zealously flaunt it or hide it with hate
 by standards of "shapely" and "slim."

Such trivial trifling is sentenced to die,
 when starkly the soul is laid bare.
 False modesty's game shows its shame as a lie,
 when clothes are relinquished for care.

Both patients and nurses discover what's real,
 when man-contrived fig leaves are gone:
 that humans are not what our dress makes us feel . . .
 we're more than the things we put on.

When porno pimps market the skin of our dust,
 society labels it "Wrong!"
 yet raises our young with temptations to lust
 by singing pornography's song.

The nurse sees this mockery stripped of its might,
 and patients are witnesses, too.
 Our simple humanity comes to the light
 when body parts come into view.

For people are people, dressed up or undressed,
 reflecting God's image divine.
 Our bodies are temples, and nurses are blessed
 to take care of Heaven's design.

--- *David L. Hatton, 1-14-2008*

The complete 7th chapter of the out-of-print book by Dr. James McKeever, *It's in the Bible* (Medford, OR; Omega Publications, 1988), pp. 73-80. [page numbering retained]

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It's in the Bible Chapter 7

NUDITY AND LUST

When God created Adam and Eve, they were created naked, and they lived that way until after the fall—until after they sinned. We do not know how long they lived in the garden before they sinned and fell. For all we know, it could have been thousands of years. (Genesis says that Adam lived eight hundred years after Seth was born, but the Bible does not say how long he had lived before then.) We dealt with this somewhat in the chapter on the “Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Let’s see specifically what happened.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the Garden.

9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

10 And he said, “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

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11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”. . .

22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—

23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. —Genesis 3

Adam and Eve had evidently been living nude. There was nothing wrong with that, since God certainly did not consider it to be sin. After they ate of the tree of the knowledge and good and evil, they themselves concluded that being naked was wrong. Therefore they made clothes for themselves. It is interesting to note that God never said nudity was wrong. That was their own conclusion.

Following this a step further, we find that God commanded Isaiah the prophet to go naked for three years:

1 In the year that the commander came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him and he fought against Ashdod and captured it,
 2 at that time the Lord spoke through Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go and loosen the sackcloth from your hips, and take your shoes off your feet.” And he did so, going naked and barefoot.
 3 And the Lord said, “Even as My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and token against Egypt and Cush,
 4 so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush,

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young and old, naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.
 —Isaiah 20

Some might think that God wanted Isaiah to go around in just his underwear, but verse 4 makes it absolutely clear that his buttocks were uncovered. So Isaiah went around totally nude—without even shoes on—for three years, because God commanded him to do this. We know that God would not command anyone to sin. Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that nudity is not a sin in God’s eyes. At least it was not a sin for Isaiah; it could be for someone else.

King Saul and the prophet Micah also were nude at times when doing God’s work:

24 And he also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” —1 Samuel 19

8 Because of this I must lament and wail,
 I must go barefoot and naked;
 I must make a lament like the jackals
 And a mourning like the ostriches. —Micah 1

There is a difference between being nude and being naked, just as there is a difference between being alone and being lonely. Being unclothed, when it is under God’s command or within His will, is not a shameful thing. However, being stripped naked can be a shameful thing. If poor people are naked, we are commanded to clothe them (Isaiah 58:7).

Just as an aside, the phrase “uncover the nakedness” in the Bible is a term for having

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intercourse. It is not referring to nudity. We find this numerous places, such as the following

18 ‘And you shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness.

19 ‘Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity’ —Leviticus 18

8 ‘You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife; it is your father’s

nakedness.

9 ‘The nakedness of your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover.

10 ‘The nakedness of your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover, for their nakedness is yours.

11 ‘The nakedness of your father’s wife’s daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nakedness . . . —Leviticus 18

We are not dealing here with “uncovering nakedness,” which is a different subject. What we are dealing with in this chapter is nudity totally apart from lust or sex. This would include nudity, such as found in the statue of David or a painting in our national art gallery of “The Three Muses.”

Even though nudity is not a sin, the Bible clearly says that sexual lust is a sin. A glamorous, young, female movie star could walk into a room wearing a gunnysack and men could lust after her. An old, fat, wrinkled woman could walk into that same room with her clothes off and the same men would likely have no lust whatsoever.

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It seems to me that the main problem with nudity is that it could create lust. If it did create lust, then nudity would be wrong. By the same token, wearing skimpy or sexy clothing, if it creates lust, would be equally as wrong. In fact, skimpy and sexy clothing can sometimes create far more lust than total nudity would. It is easy to preach or speak out against nudity. However, what we should be preaching against is lust. Perhaps the reason that some preachers don’t preach against lust as sin is that they might lose half of their congregation.

Lest you misunderstand, I am not advocating everyone taking off his clothes, joining a nudist colony or anything like that. It is just that I cannot find any command in Scriptures that says, “Thou shall not go nude.” On the other hand, I do find a Scripture where God commanded one of his prophets to go nude. Since God commanded it, nudity must not be, in and of itself, inherently sinful.

NUDE IN FRONT OF WHOM, FOR WHAT REASON

Obviously, at times during our lives, people are going to see us without our clothes on. The real question is whether it is ever sin and, if so, when. Since the Bible is silent, man would have to make up his own rules, which could become very complicated.

Most of us have showered with members of the same sex after P.E. class in junior high and high school, or after playing a football game and such. Therefore, let’s exclude being nude in front of members of the same sex as possibly being sin (at least for heterosexuals).

If we conclude that it is a sin to be nude in front of a member of the opposite sex, we run into difficulty in trying to devise our own law. For

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example, at what age should a mother stop bathing her son? When he is a tiny infant, it is

evidently not sin. But at some point along the way, in some people's thinking, it must begin to be sin. Let us say that occurred when he was ten years old. Does this mean that it was not a sin when he was nine years, eleven months and thirty days old, and then the next day it became sin? The reason that it is stopped at a certain point is usually to avoid potential lust in the future, not because the act of being nude suddenly became sin.

Another example would be a man's aged mother who was sick and totally bedridden. Let's say she needed a bath. Would it be sin for him to give her a bath?

Another question would arise as to whether we should have only women gynecologists. Certainly a male gynecologist not only sees a woman nude, but also touches her in a very intimate way.

What about the women whom the Nazis rounded up to take to concentration camps, who were forced to strip in front of their male guards? Were all of these women sinning?

In my early days, on my grandfather's farm and my great-uncle's farm, they had "three-holer" outhouses. If you had to go, it did not matter who was in there—male or female, old or young—you simply went in and joined them. In the early days in America, and most likely in biblical days as well, there was simply a one-room cabin. People took Saturday night baths while other people were in the room. There was nudity, but no lust.

When I was fifty-four I was in the hospital with a heart attack. Then nurses gave me baths. Again, there was nudity, but no lust involved.

NUDITY AROUND THE WORLD

Many people in Third World countries, who do not have indoor plumbing, bathe publicly in the

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rivers. This is common in Latin America, Africa, India and on some islands in the Caribbean.

In the ancient days of Japan, there was very little heat in some of the smaller villages. In the winter, after working all day, everyone would take off their clothes and get into the public bath. They would begin to add hot rocks from a fire which heated the water. In fact, it was a challenge to see who could stay in the very longest, as the water got progressively hotter.

In the movie, "Teahouse of the August Moon," the Okinawan philosopher said that on Okinawa it was all right to see a nude lady, but it was very improper to have picture or statue of a nude lady. In America, it was okay to have picture and statue of a nude lady in a park or art museum, but was very improper to see a nude lady. This was confusing to him.

There is a tribe, which lives on the island of West Kalimantan (formerly Dutch Borneo), who go nude because of the extreme heat. They go to church this way, and there are actually pictures of them taking communion (the Lord's supper) with the entire church nude.

To most Christians in America a nude communion scene would seem terrible. However, to Christians in other parts of the world, it would seem very normal and natural. It is a very difficult task to sort out in our minds what has come from our culture, our environment and our upbringing, and what is truly part of God's character. The thing that we need to be very careful of is not to create God in our own cultural image. We need to guard against attributing characteristics to Him based on the taboos of our society. The very worst thing is to take a false image of God that we have created and to try to impose this "god" on other cultures. Often

missionaries have equated Western culture with Christianity, such as the first missionaries to Hawaii. What we need to do is to

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introduce people to the real God of the Bible. If there are any modifications to their culture that need to be made, you can believe that God will take care of it.

In this chapter, we are not talking about pornography. There are federal laws defining pornography and prohibiting it. I think those laws should be first strictly enforced and then tightened. Child pornography and abusive sex are abominations. Bestiality, a practice depicted in some pornographic magazines, is strictly forbidden in the Bible:

15 'If there is a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal.

16 'If there is a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.' —Leviticus 20

Let me repeat once more: God wants us to be pure and clean, morally and sexually. He does not even want lust in our hearts, much less in our activities. But we cannot jump from that to a condemnation of all nudity. It occurs today in some circumstances and has through the centuries, at times even at God's command.

In no way am I advocating nudity. I am advocating a realistic view of God, the God who commanded one of His prophets to go nude for three years. Does your God condemn all nudity?