

## 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, 5/23/2005*