

## Moral re-examination of indecent dressing in the Anglican Church in Nigeria

### Author (s):

Peter O. Ottuh<sup>1</sup>  
Godwin O. Ujevwecha<sup>2</sup>

### Affiliation:

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

### Corresponding author:

Peter Ottuh  
[pottuh@delsu.edu.ng](mailto:pottuh@delsu.edu.ng)

### Dates:

Received: 17 Nov. 2019  
Accepted: 12 Jan., 2020  
Published: 14 Mar., 2020

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### Competing interests

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### Abstract

This paper is a moral re-examination of indecent dressing among Christian churches with a specific focus on the Anglican Church in Nigeria (Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion). It explored a variety of indecent dressing that is typical among youths and young women in Anglican churches. As theoretical research, the critical review of literature, historical, descriptive and phenomenological methods were utilized to achieve its aim. The findings revealed that indecent dressing erodes believers' faith, dilutes the church's image and identity, and causes the church to lose its values in the eyes of secular society. The paper concluded that dressing indecently is an affront to the Anglican Church and the Christian church in general; as well as a gross violation of African cultural values and customs. The paper recommended, therefore; that different workable strategies should be explored and employed to curb the menace of indecent dressing in the Anglican Church including encouraging priests, parents, and the church as a whole to teach and educate the youths on positive religious and societal moral values that portray decency.

**Keywords:** Moral, Re-Examination, Indecent Dressing, Anglican Church, Nigeria

## Introduction

The problem of indecent dressing is common in modern human society. Some people especially youths (boys and girls) including young women are seen on the streets and even homes and schools dressing indecently. This unethical way of dressing in the name of fashion has gradually found its presence in the Christian churches all over the country. It is frustrating to see decency, cultures and customs fade away in societies with so many socializing agencies. Dressing in a way that offends one's parents, culture, or religion is not civilization (Nnadi, 2010). Nowadays, most people do not care whether other people appreciate the way they dress or not. As bad as it is, there is scarcely any church in Nigeria that is not being tormented with this unpleasant phenomenon. The manner in which these individuals, particularly the females dress left a lot to be desired and reasoned.

Girls are not the only ones that dress inappropriately. Boys dress indecently as well. Boys are notorious for wearing filthy and unruly hairs, as well as filthy pants with holes purposefully formed around the knees and lower regions of the trousers (Omode, 2011). Their trousers' waists are also lowered and secured tightly in the centre of the two bottoms, revealing their boxers (pants). They are strolling, dragging their legs and one of their hands, especially the left one, which is occupying their middle scrotum as if they will collapse to the ground if they are not held. The revealing aspect of these garments, especially among the youth and women in the church, exposes the lamentable state of moral degradation among most church members. Indecent dressing is frowned upon in many churches, as evidenced by the way members dress to church strategically put on the walls to show new members or guests the appropriate manner of dress in the church. These churches believe that the human body is God's temple and it should be appropriately adorned (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Meanwhile, some churches, particularly the 'new generation' churches, pay little or no attention to how their members dress; these churches are predominantly youth-dominated (Oyeleye, 2012). In addition, leaderships and members of the 'new generation' churches consider that attire is unimportant in comparison to other kingdom concerns (Oyeleye, 2012). They believe that, how a believer dresses has no bearing on where he or she will spend their eternity after death. They often emphasize that God looks at the intents of the heart, not the physical appearance; therefore, members should come as they are (Ogunkunle & Oladokun, 2019). These dresses are not only skimpy and tight, but they are also transparent, displaying portions of the body that would normally be hidden under conventional clothing. All of this has lowered the moral and spiritual value of the Christian church to its lowest point.

Today, many young boys, girls and women in the Anglican Church in Nigeria dress indecently, as though modesty is no longer appreciated in the Anglican Communion. Although, such indecent attire is frowned upon by the leadership of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), the phenomenon has developed into a serious dilemma. The purpose of this research therefore, is to morally re-examine the phenomenon of indecent dressing found among young boys, girls and women in the churches of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

### Statement of the Problem

Both believers and unbelievers are concerned about inappropriate dressing among members of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Despite the fact that much has been written about indecent dressing in Nigeria's higher institutions and other public places, there appears to be little or nothing written about it in the Anglican Church in Nigeria. From observation, church members who engage in indecent dressing do so for a variety of reasons, including self-esteem, public recognition, lack of good parental upbringing, peer-group pressure, misconception of civilization and the church. Most Anglican priests have stopped preaching and teaching against indecent dressing in their churches for fear of losing their congregants.

As a result, they have failed and ceased to routinely emphasize decent dress and preach against indecent dressing as immoral, unbiblical and anti-Christian. As a result, a moral re-examination of indecent dressing in the Anglican Church in Nigeria is required in order to raise awareness of the risks associated with the problem among Anglicans in particular and Christians in general. Thus, the historical, descriptive, and phenomenological methodologies were used to achieve the stated goal.

### Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion): A Historical Overview

After the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, the Anglican Communion is the world's third-biggest Christian body with over eighty million members (Chapman, 2006; Gledhill, 2015). A primate is the archbishop of each of the thirty-eight provinces. Although all of these churches are Anglicans but their cultures are vastly different (Afatakpa, 2021). The Church of Nigeria is an autonomous Province of the Anglican Church. Its origins date back to 1906, when Bishops in Communion gathered in Lagos for a summit. The need for a West African province was recognized for the first time in that year (Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, 2020). Between 1951 and 1977, the two Dioceses of Nigeria (Lagos and Niger) gave birth to fourteen new ones.

The Niger Delta, Ibadan, and Ondo/Benin dioceses were all founded in 1952 (Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, 2020). An Episcopal Synod in Ado-Ekiti offered the chance on January 31, 1974. The Association of Anglican Dioceses in Nigeria (AADN) organized a Constitution Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Louis Mbanefo. On February 24, 1979, on St. Matthias Day, the Church of Nigeria was created. After the Church of England, the Anglican Church in Nigeria is the second-largest province in the Anglican Communion in the world in terms of baptized membership

(not attendance) (Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, 2020). Out of a total population of approximately 190 million people in Nigeria, the Church has about 18 million adherents (Gledhill, 2015). The current research only discussed the problem of indecent dressing as it affects the Anglican Church in Nigeria in general terms (That is, not limited to a particular local Anglican church).

### Conceptual Clarification

The following terms and phrase: modesty, decency, indecent and decent dressing are conceptually discussed in the light of this research.

### Decency and Modesty

The terms "modesty" and "decency" are two distinct concepts from a close investigation. Modesty refers to dressing that is appropriate for a particular occasion. In this sense, what is proper varies according to culture, customs, and the scenario at hand (Anderson, 2013). What is proper is determined by social norms, which may change over time. Dressing a certain way at one time, in one environment, and in one country, for example, is not necessarily appropriate for every other period, setting, or country, even if the costume is not inherently inappropriate. "Decency," on the other hand, refers to dressing that would entice others to lust (Pius XII, 2017). In the 1960s, a school of thought known as "situational ethics" emerged, arguing that divine moral precepts can be disregarded in some circumstances (Petrovich, 2013). A committed Christian, on the other hand, realizes that God's standards can never be altered.

The exposure of elements of the body, such as skin, hair, underwear, and intimate parts, is discouraged or forbidden by modesty standards, which differ by society. Wearing non-form-fitting clothing to obscure the shape of the body or sections of it may also be required by the requirements (Raber, Sheets & Gregory, 2019). There are other customs about changing clothing (for example, on a beach with no enclosed facilities) and closing or locking the door when changing or showering. Modesty standards differ by culture or generation, as well as by who is exposed, whose portions of the body are exposed, the duration of the exposure, the environment, and other factors. The setting could be one's own home, another family member's home, a friend's home, a semi-public location, such as a beach, swimming pool, changing rooms, or other public location. Wearing a bathing suit at the beach, for example, would not be regarded immodest, whereas it would most likely be in a street or an office. Prudishness is the term for excessive modesty (Sheila, 2021). It is also known as gymophobia as a medical issue (Scott, 1997). According to Sheila (2021), exhibitionism is the term for excessive modesty.

### Indecent and Decent Dressing

Dress, according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2004 cited in Erhunse, 2019), refers to the wearing of a specific type of cloth or in a specific manner. The dress can also refer to formal or ceremonial apparel used in the morning or evening. As a result, when one speaks about the dress code, one is just attempting to define what constitutes appropriate and suggested clothing for specific daily tasks. Going to religious activity, for example, necessitated appropriate dress; the same may be said for social gatherings, sporting events, working, and other activities that require appropriate attire.

Since the Stone Age, humans have used clothing to protect themselves from the elements. Dress styles, on the other hand, evolve as the world changes. People nowadays dress to suit a specific occasion as well as to protect themselves from the elements. Dressing decently simply means dressing appropriately for a certain function, culture, or belief while avoiding exposing any sensitive body areas. Simply said, it is the culture that our forefathers implanted in us. However, many people, particularly young ones, have abandoned this tradition in recent years. People purposely expose their bodies to the public in order to socialize. That is what is called indecent dressing, and it is quite upsetting.

Indecent dressing (also known as immodest dressing) is the deliberate public display of one's body. This approach is incompatible with any civilized society's acceptable norms and ideals. Indecent dressing is a major contributor to the different assaults and sexual harassment cases that have been documented in the Nigerian society over time (Adeboye, 2012). The way of dressing or appearance that is disruptive and distracting is known as indecent dressing. The following items are included in this way of dressing or appearance:

- i. Below-the-waist trousers and skirts.
- ii. Singlets, spaghetti blouses, and low-cut blouses with exposed breasts.
- ii. Skirts with an above-the-knee slit.
- iv. Transparent shirts, blouses, and dresses.
- v. Clothing having offensive or vulgar wordings printed on it.
- vi. Flaunting outfits such as miniskirts, etc.
- vii. Wearing slippers or bare feet to public places.
- viii. Clothing with sex, violence, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, death, gang or hate, slogans, or pictures, such as T-shirts.
- ix. Trousers, shirts, dresses, or skirts that are too tight.
- x. Sagging slacks.
- xi. Hair that is not naturally coloured.
- xii. Sunglasses, hats, and caps with odd signs and wrongly worn.
- xiii. Body piercing jewelry for women, except for the ears.
- xiv. Chains and wristbands that are worn inappropriately.
- xv. Tattoo with obscene wordings or images.
- xvi. Shoe heels that make a lot of noise.

The biggest difficulties related to dress decency today are strapless garments, bum shorts, short blouses, miniskirts/gowns, cleavage shirts, and sagging of pants by boys and even girls. Indecent dressing was originally unusual in Nigeria, but it is now becoming more popular, resulting in a rise in the rate of immorality in Nigeria. This conduct, often known as "dressing to kill," is quite frequent among female students in Nigeria's institutions of education, polytechnics, and universities. Instead of wearing responsibly, they dress in such a way in order to appear enticing, sensual, and attractive. As if this heinous behaviour was not bad enough, some kids additionally wear transparent clothing, exposing bodily anatomy that should not be seen in public. Because of the ever-evolving nature of fashion, there are a plethora of different wearing patterns to choose from.

Indecent dressing, on the other hand, refers to inappropriate and provocative clothing in relation to the society or culture in which it is practiced. That is to say, indecent dressing cannot be fully described

without taking into account community norms. What is indecent in Nigeria, however, may be acceptable elsewhere in the globe. This brings up the claim made by some schools of thought that obscene dress is mostly the result of foreign culture (Oyeleye et al., 2012). This kind of dressing is foreign to Nigerian culture, and hence an assault on the country's very existence and identity.

Indecent dressing, according to Egwim (2010), is the attitude of someone, male or female, who dresses to show off portions of the body such as the breasts, buttocks, or even underwear, particularly for women who need to be covered. Furthermore, some people believe that indecent clothes have a significant impact on morality, so they assign moral significance to it. This type of dressing, according to Olori (2003), is offensive, indecent, and ethically incorrect. These outfit designs are ethically repulsive and indicate our society's high rate of moral degradation. The prevalent conventions and acceptable methods of clothing in the society in which it is perpetrated might be used to understand indecent dressing. As a result, it is evident and understandable that the rationale for indecent dressing is influenced by cultural standards.

Indecent dressing, according to Oyeleye et al (2012), is merely the willful exposure of one's body to the public. This activity goes against society's recognized norms and morals. Moral degeneration, on the other hand, is a drop in the morality of a society. Indecent dressing, according to Adeboye (2012), is the wearing of the clothing that is inappropriate for a certain event or scenario. She went on to say that going naked in the bathroom, labour room, or bedroom with your partner is not indecent. Indecent attire, on the other hand, can be defined as a style of dress that is likely to shock or offend others.

Dressing that is clean, neat, and presentable is referred to as decent dressing. This comprises sleeveless dresses, shirts, and blouses, clean pants such as basic black or blue jeans with a clean T-shirt that covers the waist, skirt suits, dress or shirt with a jacket, clean Nigerian attires, and French suits, among other things. Clothing should cover regions of the body such as the stomach, belly button, back shoulders, chest, and legs below the knees. Small earrings and light make-up, low-heeled, noise-free shoes, and neat hair are all elements of good attire.

### **The Bible and the Church on Indecent Dressing**

Most world religions have attempted to address the moral concerns that occur in society and in human interactions as a result of people's sexuality. Each major religion has established moral codes that address concerns such as sexuality, morality, and ethics, among other things. Apart from other aspects of sexuality, these moral codes aim to control situations that may inspire sexual desire, as well as impact people's behaviour and activities that may attract such interest, or that exaggerate a person's sexuality (Thomas, 2002). These religious codes have always had a significant impact on people's attitudes toward modesty in dress, behaviour, and speech, among other things.

The church is made up of Christians who worship God; it is not a building but people who assemble in it (Fadeyi, 2021). Because they are the carriers of God whom they worship, the assembly is called a Church. God dwells within those who worship Him. The extent to which members of different churches are allowed to experiment with

modesty and fashion in their attire varies. Some groups, for example, may be less likely to condemn tight dresses as long as the church's distinctive style is maintained, or to condemn popular swimwear worn in groups or in public swimming; others, on the other hand, carefully observe and embrace their church's pattern for modest, distinct dress on all non-private occasions (Graybill, 2002; Hamilton & Hawley, 1999). The Bible says that adornment should not be an external one: combing the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or dressing in good clothes. The New Testament also says that the hidden character of the heart, manifested in the imperishable beauty of a gentle and serene temperament is priceless in God's sight. Many Trinitarian Christians value modesty highly, yet there are significant variations of view about its needs and goals (Anderson, 2013).

Historically, women in Christian denominations such as Anglican, Baptist, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, Oriental Orthodox, Reformed, and Roman Catholic women wore a head covering while worshipping or all the time, based on their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 (Morgan, 2010; Evans, 2012; Pius XII, 2017). While this practice has faded in certain parts of Nigeria, it is still prevalent in other parts of the world, such as Eastern Europe and South Asia (Flinn, 2014). Many Christians, especially girls, ladies, and women in today's Church, like displaying their bodies and dressing provocatively. People's faith is weakened by the effect of indecency in the church, because many have concluded that they do not need to attend church again, because the church, which should serve as a place to go for salvation and spiritual uplifting, has become a place to go and be seduced, leading many to stay at home.

Even unbelievers no longer place a value on church; the reason for this is that church immorality has caused it to lose its worth. Ironically, believers who come to church with their bodies exposed due to indecent dressing do not realize that Jesus Christ who is the head of the church died so that their nakedness would be put to an end (Fadéyi, 2021). Therefore, dressing modestly is not anti-fashion in this sense; it is pro-adornment in godly ways. Believers should adorn themselves in a discrete, seemly manner. If the way we dress causes others to stumble, we are accountable to God for how we seem to others.

Although, there are other causes of sexual self-consciousness, however, following the fall in the Garden of Eden, there is sexual self-consciousness, shame, and body covering (Gen. 3:10-11). The Bible's wisdom advises against falling into the traps of feminine shamelessness. The New Testament encourages women to be modest in their appearance, and in general, Christian women should have a gentle and quiet disposition (Nnadi, 2010). Dressing and acting modestly is an essential part of being a good Christian. Clothing should, in general, conceal rather than highlight the contour of the body. The importance of Christian moms, according to Okobo (2010), in instilling a true sense of Christian modesty in their children, particularly their daughters, from the time they are very young cannot be overstated.

Though the Bible's instruction is founded on principle and concept, it is unequivocal in its condemnation of indecent apparel. God trusts humans to make the right preparations before leaving their homes and

entering public locations on a daily basis. The world has a different standard of decency, yet instead of avoiding worldliness, many young Christians will try to seem as much like people in the world as possible. If Christians do not dress differently than most other people in the world who have little respect for godliness, they are clearly not behaving in a godly manner (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:11, 12). As if that were not awful enough, many Christian youngsters, particularly females, dress inappropriately to church. Some churches are doing very little to stop this, which is quite disturbing. They even used a well-known Bible verse such as 1 Samuel 16:7b "The things that humans are interested in are not of interest to the Lord, people care about outward appearances, but the Lord cares about the heart" to eloquently support it.

It should be made clear that this scripture is in no way implying that people should enter into God's house in a deplorable state. While God is concerned with the inside, the outside is also important because the Bible says that the human body is Christ's temple (...). To put it another way, we should treat it as if it were Jesus Christ. According to John Westly (cited in Akpan, 2018), anybody that aspires to serve God faithfully must be clean inside and out, including the clothes he wears to church.

#### **Causes of Indecent Dressing in the Anglican Church**

Young ladies and youths in the Anglican Church currently dress indecently to church services for a variety of reasons. Moreover, so many of them who dress indecently to the church today have their own personal reasons for doing so including recruiting life partners and garnering attention among others. Some of the reasons and causes are discussed under the headings below.

**To gain attention:** Women are the largest attendants of indecent dressing not just in the Anglican Church but across other churches in Nigeria. One of the reasons they dress indecently is to be recognized and recruit life partners. One of the motivations for dressing obscenely is to attract life partners and to be noticed. Women recognize that the church is one of the areas where they are most likely to find a big number of men willing to join them in ministry. The church becomes a strong target as a result of this. They plan to dress in see-through and other alluring clothing on Sundays and at other religious gatherings in order to lure the guys. When they succeed, the guys sometimes take them home and become life partners with them. Many people have various mentalities that drive and lead them. A beautiful girl who knows she is actually lovely may try to show the congregation what she is made of, and so feel pleasure in exhibiting the congregation either her laps or heap. Instead of paying attention to the sermon being delivered in the church, her thoughts turn to how to gain the attention of those in other areas of the building. The same can be said of today's young male kids. Some male youngsters who are interested in modeling go to church dressed indecently merely to show the crowd what they can do (Kwanuba & Sababa, 2020). The level of immorality in the church is increasing on a daily basis, and one of the reasons for this is that certain church members want to be noticed.

**Poor moral home upbringing and the environment:** A child, whether good or horrible, has a home and parents. Many Anglican



parents have turned a deaf ear to the church's legitimate moral teachings. Hence, to confront immorality in the congregations, it will be more beneficial to cultivate moral ideals in families. Proverb 22:6 says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it". The environment has a stronger impact on a child's growth. According to Nnadi (2007), the home is a child's first window to the outer world. What the parents do with the child at this age in terms of training and orientation has a big impact on which the child will be in the future. Because of their parents' choices, children live or die, thrive or wither (Gushee, 2004). The child learns about community values, beliefs, and other acceptable types of behaviour through his or her parents. Parents and other siblings teach the child these skills through instructions, observations, and practice. This implies that parents must be considered moral role models, as they are the most influential persons in their children's lives (Whiteburst, 2004). However, how many parents have a good moral character? How many of them give their children their undivided attention? As a result of their parents' departure from home for business and other social and spiritual obligations, children are left unattended (Omede & Omede, 2004). Many parents, particularly mothers, choose a variety of dresses for their children. To the humiliation of onlookers, mothers even go to great lengths to adorn their children with hair attachments, rosy chicks, and eye cosmetics. As the youngster grows older, it becomes increasingly difficult for her to abandon this way of life. When suitable values, ideas, and attitudes are correctly set in the childhood stage, such a child is more likely to grow and develop later in life well behaved.

**Gross misunderstandings about the Church:** When Christians understand that Jesus Christ came down and took on human form to die for their sins, they will toe a positive path in their dressing and the ladies and young men will turn a new leaf.

**Over modernization:** Young Anglicans have become ignorant of the difference between right and wrong as a result of over-modernization. The individuals assume they are following fashion in this case, but they are unaware their acts are diverting people's attention away from the church.

**Peer-group pressure:** One of the factors that cause young women to dress indecently in the church is peer pressure. When they see their friends dressed like that and receiving all the attention while they receive none in the church, they become dejected and have no choice but to join in. Once they join in and start receiving the attention as well, they enjoy it and never give up. A peer group is a force that brings friends together for good or harmful reasons. Many young people have been driven, sometimes against their choice, into bad or immoral behaviours by a need to belong and a fear of rejection (Oliver's Blogs, 2018). For fear of being ostracized, some of them lack the strong will to say no to evil. A youngster who has received proper home teaching, on the other hand, should be able to say no to evil and keep his integrity and the family's good name. When a youth has a solid parental upbringing and the fear of God in his or her life, peer pressure has little or no effect.

**The incorrect usage of social media:** Information and communication technology (ICT) has aided in bringing people together from all walks of life. While information and communication

technology (ICT) is beneficial to societal advancements; the prevalence of exploitation is disturbing. A blurry snapshot of a naked figure designed to arouse sexually, according to McCabe (2000) and Kwanuba and Sababa (2020), could be pornographic. The majority of young people are exposed to some of these unethical acts through films, pornography, music, and advertising.

**Non-patronage of indigenous culture:** Nigeria like other African nation has a diverse culture that should be explored and celebrated. However, due to non-patronage and modernization, many of Nigeria's most valued values are rapidly vanishing. Today's youth are unable to identify these ideals. For example, the magnificent Nigeria hairstyles of weaving, plaiting, and other techniques are being swapped for hair 'roasting' in saloons (Oliver's Blogs, 2018). Modern and dignified dress patterns are giving way to skimpy, transparent, and provocative dresses found all over the world. Many of these young people who wear immodestly may not even realize what they're doing is wrong because nothing tells them it is bad. The challenge now is how these adolescents might be different in a culture that lacks decent moral ideals to pass down to them as a legacy.

### **The Implication of Indecent Dressing for the Nigerian Society**

Pope Pius XII (2017) alluded to the lack of feminine modesty when he stated that girls do not see anything wrong with following certain shameless styles (fashion) like so many sheep. Pope Pius XII queried that, if only Christian mothers knew the future distress, peril, and ill-restrained shame that they are preparing for their sons and daughters by imprudently accustoming them to live barely clothed, and permitting them to lose the sense of modesty, they would be ashamed of themselves and of the harm done to the little children entrusted to them by God to be reared in a Christian dignity and culture. Some people go out in public bare-chested, in very tight slacks, or in very skimpy bathing costumes. As a result, they offend the virtue of modesty. They may also be a source of sin for one's neighbour both in thought or desire.

Those who expose their nakedness to others have no idea that they will be the ones to pay the consequences in the end. Girls who dress in various ways in the name of fashion, for example, are mocked whenever they pass by. Those who defile others by their clothing, according to Onaiyekene (2004), will face double retribution both on earth and in heaven. Many things are going wrong, and Nnadi (2005, 2010) claims that society has lost its values and that people no longer appreciate or reward positive values. In general, people in society are unconcerned about decadence. As a result, appropriate clothing is seldom rewarded, whereas obscene clothing is regarded as the standard. Nudity is not a sign of a good Christian, and it is used to publicize mothers who are sexually very weak and who want men to seek and welcome them. If their girls do not dress modestly, such mothers will find it difficult to correct them. Every outfit is a language that communicates with others and reveals who the wearer is.

Many marriages fall apart as a result of extramarital encounters on the part of husbands who leave their spouses at home to pursue young ladies dressed in revealing clothing. Women nowadays dress and expose their sensitive parts in order to entice the opposite sex to gaze at them with lust. As a result, many marriages have failed as a result

of married men's lust for these women (Nnadi, 2010). The marriage eventually comes to an end as a result of the gap formed and abusive remarks exchanged by both the wife and the husband concerning extramarital activities caused by the strange woman.

#### **Impact of Indecent Dressing on the Anglican Church in Nigeria**

In today's Anglican Church, there is a lot of obscenity. Because of the high level of indecency in dress in the Anglican Church, many priests have grown tired of warning against it, while others have continued to do everything they can to see if an impression can be made on the immoral congregations (Footygist, 2021). In the Anglican Church, there are numerous causes, justifications, and harmful consequences of the indecent dress. Some members of the Church come to worship for a variety of reasons.

On the other hand, there are causes and harmful consequences of indecency, which mostly involve indecent dress among church members. As a result, indecent dressing has a number of detrimental consequences in both the church and the surrounding community. The following are some of the consequences of indecent clothes in the church: a loss of faith, a reduction in moral habits, and a blackening of the church's image.

**Diminishes faith:** There has been a significant drop in the number of Christians who attend the church. Many people have concluded that they no longer need to attend church since the church, which was once a place to be spiritually elevated is now a place to be seduced. As a result, many people have chosen to worship their God in their homes rather than going to church on Sundays.

**Moral habits deterioration:** Because individuals attend church naked while pretending to put on clothing, many non-Christians regard obscenity as a positive notion. It has been claimed that indecent dressing in numerous churches is to be blamed for moral decay in the Nigeria (Footygist, 2021).

**Value depreciation:** It is a shame that the church's value and esteem have dwindled in recent years. Unlike in the past when people held the church in high regard. Respect is still present, but it is not as strong as it once was. Why is not the current church treated with the same reverence as it was in the past? The reason for this is that the church's immorality has caused it to lose some of its worth.

**Distraction:** Indecent dressing among members cause distractions to worshippers and even priests during worship and other church programmes.

#### **Attempted Solutions**

Although the problem of indecent dressing among church members still persists in the Anglican Church, several measures have been undertaken by the church to curb the problem in the past. Most often, the churches through their priests have been engage in instructing members about indecently dressing. Some priests have practically asked indecent dressed members to go home and change their dressing before attending worship services. Although, some people consider this practice to be embarrassing but the priests stood their ground even though some of such members may not return to the church later.

The categories of indecently dressed young ladies they send home from the church are those wearing trousers, micro skirts, and other form-fitting clothing. Boys who dress in gangster style and wearing 'low waist' trousers are also treated the same way. This measure has helped to save the moral dignity of the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church need to provide a warm, friendly, and enjoyable environment in which young people can serve God and openly express their views and feelings without fear of being criticized by exposing the Biblical scriptures that deal with modest way of dressing. This means that from time to time, the Anglican Church and her clergy should teach and preach against dressing.

Aside from the regular preaching, the church should organize special programmes such as seminars, moral talks, and workshops from time to time to educate young people in the church about the evil consequences of indecent dressing. This also mean, that those holding positions and elders in the church including older women and men dress decently in order to have a positive impact on youngsters in the church. Every youth in the church comes from one family or the other, in this sense, parents should take responsibility in their homes to teach and educate their children about peer-group pressure and the developmental demands of adolescence, since adolescents are the most common perpetrators of indecent dressing in the Anglican Church today. Mothers should live moral life by dressing modestly so that their children might follow in their footsteps. Christian mothers, according to Ebo (2006 cited in Nnadi, 2010 cf. Okobia, 2021), play a crucial role in establishing a true sense of Christian modesty in their children, especially their daughters, from a young age.

Following several complaints about certain young Anglicans indecently dressed and distracting worshippers during church worship in should prompt the Church authorities to issue a dress code for members. For instance, topless clothing and their kinds are now not permitted at church weddings, banquets, or services, cutesy of the Anglican Archdiocese of Enugu (Chukwuma, 2016). At Anglican churches in Enugu, veils covering topless wedding gowns are no longer permitted. The significance of this measure cannot be overstated. To sustain this novel effort, seminars and workshops should be conducted for fashion designers in the area to participate in this campaign.

To counteract indecent dressing in the Anglican Church in Nigeria, Christian literature, magazines, textbooks, tracts, pamphlets, and other items can be used. Curbing the menace of indecent dressing in the Anglican Church the crusade should not inside the church but should also be extended to outside the church. The crusade against indecent dressing should not be left to the priests alone, counselors, teachers and instructors in the church should preach, counsel, and educate members against immoral dressing.

#### **Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations made in this paper to tackle the problem of indecent dressing among members of the Anglican Church in Nigeria, all Christian churches, religious groups, and the society at-large:

1. The Anglican Church should organize programmes of enlightenment such as moral advocacy, workshops and seminars at regular intervals for young people in the church and outside the church with the aim of addressing issues of dressing and moral behaviours.
2. The evil of indecent dressing should be taught by the church on regular basis using biblical exposition to create clarity and authority.
3. Parents should instill moral education into their children and wards and help them toward finding a long-term solution to the problem of indecent dressing.
4. It is also recommended that Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) should establish a dressing code for its members.
5. Indecent dressing by potential couples who come to the church for wedding should be discouraged.

### Conclusion

From its discussion so far, the paper has established that the unethical manner of dressing among believers has infiltrated the Anglican Church and other Christian churches across Nigeria. The way these people dressed, particularly the young women, left a lot to be desired and explained. In many Anglican churches in Nigeria, indecent dressing is frowned upon unlike some churches, particularly those of the 'new generation, are unconcerned about how their members dress. People that indulge in indecent dressing do so for a variety of reasons, including boosting their self-esteem and gaining public attention. For fear of losing their congregants, several Anglican priests have stopped preaching against indecent dressing in their churches. The paper argued that biblical dress guidelines place a premium on modesty. This means, that dressing decently simply means avoiding revealing any sensitive body areas while dressing suitably for a specific function, culture, or ideology. On the other hand, the purposeful public exposure of one's body is indecent dressing.

Indecent dressing is categorically condemned by the Anglican Church in Nigeria. Although some Anglican churches are doing very little to prevent this, which is really a serious issue of concern. Indecent dressing is done for a variety of purposes by church members including attracting life partners and gaining attention, however, these reasons are not cogent enough. As a result of over-modernization, young Anglicans have lost sight of the difference between good and wrong. The way society presents itself to children and teenagers should be carefully considered too. People from all walks of life have been brought together thanks to information and communication technologies. Many of Anglican Church's most cherished values are fast fading away. Hair 'roasting' in saloons is replacing the wonderful God-given hair and traditional hairstyles of weaving, plaiting, and other beautiful techniques.

There is a lot of obscenity in today's Anglican Church as a result of indecent dressing among members. The phenomenon is having a variety of negative repercussions in Anglican churches in Nigeria. These include a loss of faith, a decrease in moral practices, and a tarnishing of the church's reputation among others. Therefore, the Anglican Church must provide a welcoming, cordial, and joyful atmosphere where the clergy can teach and preach against immoral dresses and dressing from time to time. In addition, counselors,

teachers, and instructors in the church should also preach, counsel, and educate members against immoral dressing, not just only the priests. Furthermore, indecent dressing among members should also be combated through the use of Christian literature, journals, textbooks, tracts, pamphlets, and other objects that can serve the purpose.

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