

Pastor Cancels Wedding Over 'Sexy Dress,' Persecuted for Modest Mindset

About a month ago, I asked a pointed question: "Why Do So Many 'Born-Again, Spirit-Filled' Women Show Off Cleavage in Church?" It set off a firestorm of debate but sparked a number of other stories and sermons on the issue. I got emails from folks telling me about various magazines and bloggers discussing the topic—and pastors preaching on the controversial subject of, yes, modesty.

I don't know if Apostle Michael Canty of the Truth Ministries Holiness Church saw my article or not. I haven't been able to reach him. But the apostolic pastor certainly created a stir in his local church when he refused to marry a bride and groom because he felt her dress was too "sexy," according to a report in . Here's a segment of the story:

"The wedding scheduled Saturday, Aug. 10, was scheduled for 3 p.m. At 2 p.m., the pastor greeted the bride and groom when he noticed the bride's dress. According to the bride's mother, the pastor jokingly asked, 'Where is the other half of the dress?' Not thinking anything of it, the family laughed it off and continued applying make-up on the bride. Around 2:30 p.m., the pastor asked a leader of the church to ask the bride and the family about the other part of her dress.

"The bride informed the leader, 'This is it.' The leader reported the news to the pastor and then the pastor informed personally the bride and groom at separate times he could not perform the wedding with the bride in her selected dress. The pastor told the bride she would have to cover up her breast area and find a way to add length to the dress. The bride informed the pastor there is no way to accomplish this with so

short of a notice and she has to wear her dress. Then the pastor informed her he would not be able to perform the ceremony then walked back to his office.”

Was this pastor, whose ministry is 14 months old and who runs a storefront church, out of line for ruining this young couple’s wedding day? Or did he take a stand for modesty that deserves applause? That depends on whom you ask:

“I am sad for the bride who wanted a church wedding in a hoochie mama dress, but even sadder for the pastor who missed his teachable moment,” commented Kim Trent.

“Can you wear this dress on the senate floor? Can you be a doctor and wear this dress at work? If the answer is NO then you cannot wear this to church as well. Just like the world has its proper decorum, so does the Church of Christ,” Marvin Pierre wrote.

“That was foolish of the Pastor—get out of the way and let somebody else do the ceremony. You don’t wait till the wedding day to embarrass people in front of their family & friends. They should sue him. It’s none of his business,” Marlin J. Reid wrote.

“I believe this pastor did the right thing. He wasn’t rude... he gave them multiple chances to add to the dress. It’s His right to honor God the way he sees fit. People come to church with different ideas, but purposeful pornography should never be celebrated,” Esosa Killingidols said.

“The pastor’s fashion sense overrode God’s will?!? There is NOTHING in scripture that mandates/governs what the bride shall not wear to her own wedding,” Lawrence H. Thompson says.

“God is not looking at her outfit, God is not looking at how ‘sexy’ she is. God is looking at the fact that a man and woman are coming together in unity to become one. We need to stop putting focus on the outside,” Rashad TrueGospel Tarpley

wrote.

"I respect him for standing up for the reverence of God and the sanctity of marriage. Her display of expression doesn't trump the Holiness of what God is expressing in marriage," wrote Dean Boyd.

"I feel this is the very reason that people turn away from the church, we as Christians are too religious to be real and be more like Christ who would not have turned away any sinner," Tricia E. Fields commented.

My opinion? Well, if you read my last article, you know where I stand. I don't believe women should come to church—even unsaved women looking for a pastor to perform a wedding ceremony—scantily clad. In my first article, some criticized me for not calling men to the same standard. I absolutely do. I don't want to see men's boxer shorts, bulging biceps and tight pants any more than I want to see a woman's cleavage.

But here's the point: For some reason, this issue is getting more and more attention in the body of Christ. You can lambaste me for bringing it up, but it's certainly hitting a nerve with anything-goes-anywhere-you-want and modest-minded people alike. I think Christians should model the way with their attire, just like we are supposed to do with our words and actions.

Paul said not to be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2), but when we dress like lingerie models in church—or anywhere else—we've given the spirit of the world too much influence. If God doesn't care what we wear, Scripture wouldn't tell us to adorn ourselves in modest apparel, in clothing that is proper for women professing godliness (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

The bottom line: We shouldn't wear clothes that contrast with the biblical command for modesty, which kicks off an entirely new debate of what modesty means. I can assure you, based on the photo of the wedding dress the bride chose, it was

anything but modest.

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