

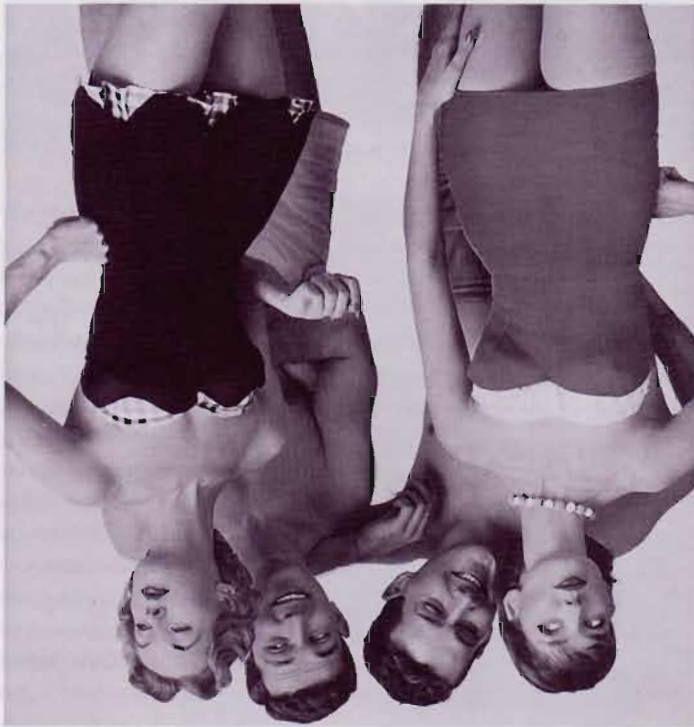
a spaghetti-strap tank worn over a t-shirt "is a tease. It invites the guy to think about what she'd look like without the modest shirt underneath." Thanks, creepy middle-aged guy, for giving us the mental image of you ogling teenagers.

Rebellion tries to head off any cries of sexism—or just plain misogyny—by reassuring readers that the survey is not intended to dictate what girls can and cannot wear: "We're just telling you what we, as guys, have to guard against." Furthermore, girls apparently wanted to know what their male counterparts thought about halter tops, mascara, and leotards. More than 200 girls and women provided Rebellion with a list of questions about their dress and appearance. In just a few days, more than 1,600 boys and men provided answers. The implication is that if girls asked for this information, it can't be sexist. The reality is that the Modesty Survey reinforces the tired and dangerous idea that women and girls are responsible for the lust-ting thoughts of men and boys—as one respondent notes, "I question a girl's motives for wearing a slit higher than the knee"—and that they must be vigilant, lest the slightest provocation lead to irrepresible male lust. But if that just does get unleashed, the Modesty Survey makes sure everyone knows who to blame.

*—Christine Siefert*

they're visible, there's something else wrong as well." Another teen thinks that the rogue bra strap "invites the mind to wander below the shirt and wonder what the rest looks like." And one young lad thinks the laws of physics themselves should bend to his will's will, writing, "Please don't let your chest bounce. I'm sorry, but that can really be distracting."

Not surprisingly, the survey reveals more about respondents' secret thoughts than about what lurks beneath a girl's jeggings (64.9 percent of respondents say no to those, by the way). One respondent from the 40- to 49-year-old category writes that



of surveyed guys say that behavior is potentially arousing. The survey refers to these just-launchers as "stumbling blocks"—dress or behavior that makes boys feel funny in their parts. A common stumbling block has to do with what girls are hiding, both underneath their clothes and in their hearts. **Even outfits that appear modest can still signal immodesty: 57.4 percent of respondents think that showing bra straps—even unintentionally—is a stumbling block because it reveals a girl's true character.** One 17-year-old notes that bra straps "aren't much of a deal but for the fact that 90 percent of the time

if you were wondering if your spaghetti-strap tank is too arousing for guys ages 12 and up, there's a site for that. The Modesty Survey is a project launched by Rebellion, a Christian website (tagline: "A teenage rebellion against low expectations") founded by Brett and Alex Harris, the young brothers of best-selling author and pastor Josh Harris. The survey, which began in 2007, was created in order to find out, once and for all, what young Christian men think women should be wearing—and the recently published results tell a depressingly familiar story.

Respondents to the survey were asked to agree or disagree with statements like "Bikini swimsuits are immodest." More than half of respondents strongly agreed; one 23-year-old man notes, "If you don't understand this, you need to start at square one." A 19-year-old writes, "[Bikinis are] really, really not helpful. You wouldn't go to the park dressed in something that revealing, and as far as limiting the possibility for temptation goes, I could scarcely design a more unhelpful garment...."

Other questions cover a range of dress and behavior: Is it okay for, say, swimsuit ties to stick out of dress and behavior? Is it okay to expose her lower back? Better be careful, ladies—63.6 percent

## INDECENT PROPOSAL: THE MODESTY SURVEY

