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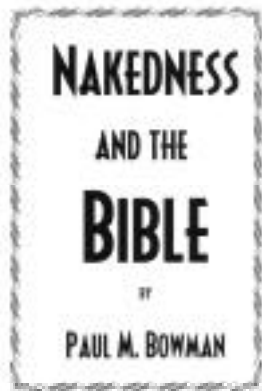
"Keeping Our Beaches Bare"

Book Review:

Nakedness and the Bible by Paul M. Bowman

Book Review By Michael Kush

More than two decades ago, Paul Bowman was told of some wonderful hot springs in Idaho. It sounded like an idyllic place to go with his wife and two-year-old daughter for a day's relaxation, so off they went. When they arrived, Paul found the natural hot



pools and surrounding area already occupied, by about 50 people, almost all of them quite naked.

Paul was – and is – an Evangelical Christian. And he was shocked. But

the shock didn't come so much from the sight of all those naked bodies. Paul had always been taught the Bible condemns nakedness, and that it leads to temptation and to sin. Yet, this scene was no orgy. This was no den of iniquity. Rather, it was a gathering of friends and chance acquaintances – young and old, and families with children – innocently enjoying nature and each other's company. This new Eden was just too compelling for him not to re-examine his thinking.

Paul did not become a naturist immediately. First, he had to reconcile this overwhelmingly positive initial encounter with his religious beliefs. Just what did the Bible say about nakedness? If, despite the seeming innocence of this experience, the Bible did condemn nudity outright, he could not as a Christian accept social nakedness. Paul immediately started consulting his large library of biblical references and concordances. His

findings are contained in this book, which examines all direct and indirect references to nakedness in both the Old and New Testaments. While some may not concur with all the conclusions Paul develops

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***– Karol Cardinal Wojtyla
(Pope John Paul II)***

here, it is nevertheless quite clear that there is no outright ban on social nudity in the Bible, and more than a few references to nakedness that found no objection in God's eye. Lust, promiscuity, infidelity – these are indeed condemned as sins – but nowhere is mere nakedness.

We know from the Bible that "for as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". Does this refer only to the physical death of the body? Does it not also refer to the spiritual death and loss of innocence of the Fall? And have we not already been restored to at least the potential of a regained innocence by the cross? In the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, the disciples ask Jesus, "When will you become revealed to us and when shall we see you?" His response: "When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then will you see the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid." Are not our bodies God's own creation? Saint Augustine said, "There is no saneness in those who dislike any part

of creation." (Confessions. 7: 14) More recently, Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) has said, "Because God created it, the human body can remain nude and uncovered and preserve intact its splendor and its beauty... Immodesty is present only when nakedness plays a negative role with regard to the value of the person... The human body is not in itself shameful... Shamelessness (just like shame and modesty) is a function of the interior of a person." (Love and Responsibility, 1981.)

This book is a "must have" for every Christian naturist. For those of other persuasions, it is an invaluable reference for refuting those who wrongly condemn social nudity on Biblical grounds. Buy one for yourself, and another for your state representative, county commissioner, or pastor. ☆

**Nakedness and the Bible
is available online at the
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American Express, Discover)

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