

# The Retreat From Excellence

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Without intending to be pessimistic, it appears to me that our world has suffered by the large scale “retreat from excellence” in recent years. Those who are experts in the language arts fields are alarmed at the unconcern for grammatical correctness by our song writers, playwrights, speakers, and statesmen. It appears that somewhere we have abandoned the honored concept once generally held to strive for excellence and correctness in our speech habits. It is bad enough that such expressions as “ain’t,” “that’s where it’s at,” etc., and the common use of double negatives (“I don’t have none”) abound. It is much worse to consider how crude and profane the speech of the man and woman on the street has become. It seems a rule in the TV industry that unless a program is spiced with a half-dozen “hells” or “damns” every half hour it just doesn’t stand a chance in the ratings.

The same principle is observed in clothing, doubtless growing out of the dropped-out, drug-crazed Hippie sub-culture of several years ago. It seems ridiculous enough that clothing which would have been appropriate only for a hobo a few years ago, now commands top dollar at the major department stores. But this retreat from excellence also spawned such outrageous styles as the miniskirt, hotpants, and “see-through” fashions.

The principle could be illustrated in many other areas of our lives (surely there has been such a retreat in the field of popular music!). But I want to specify one other field, and it is the most important of all. In the realm of religion, there has been a wholesale retreat from excellence. Only one generation before mine was marked by an atmosphere that generally accepted the fact of the existence of God and considered the Bible to be the Word of God. Lamentably, our world has now been so duped by Satan that it has cast off these excellent concepts. Materialism and secularism describe the common frame of reference of the present. Even in the church, some are leading a retreat from God’s excellent plan. Paul urges us to “...approve the things that are excellent...” (Phi. 1:10).

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