



"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

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Journal  
of  
Theology

**Church of the Lutheran Confession**

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THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II  
AN EXAMINATION

To place this examination into its proper setting, a bit of history is herewith given. The Roman Catholic Church regards Vatican II as the twenty-first Ecumenical Council. Looking back to 1869-1870, it also looks upon the council now completed as being more or less a continuation of the Vatican Council held in those years. Hence the designation now current and generally used is *Vatican II*. Convoked by Pope John XXIII, the council opened on October 11, 1962. Three sessions have been held: first session, October 11 to December 8, 1962; second session, September 29 to December 4, 1963; and the third and final session, September 14 to December 8, 1964. The first session was convened under the papacy of John XXIII. The second and third sessions were held under the papacy of Paul VI.

Comments on, evaluations of, and reactions to the council were not slow in coming. Long before official documents were at hand and proclaimed by the pope, Protestant leaders (some present as observers and others observers at a distance) expressed their pleasure at reforms which they saw coming out of the council. Many regarded the meeting at Rome as a long step toward healing the breach and as a portent of a widespread ecumenism. Rapprochement after rapprochement, dialog after dialog followed. In many areas the Reformation services took on a different content and form, with Roman Catholics even participating here and there. The wide cleft was all but disregarded. The ultimate was reached when Prof. Carl E. Braaten of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago urged church union on the basis of a Protestant "return to Rome." His plea was made in the June issue of *Una Sancta*, a Lutheran quarterly.

Our *Journal of Theology* has held off on any final judgment on the decrees and declarations of the council until the official text would be available. Now that the text is at hand, the time has come to subject the results of the council to a careful examination in the light of Holy Scripture. The official text is, of course, the Latin one, but English translations (though unofficial) are available. These have

been rendered by members of the Catholic hierarchy. The text which shall be referred to is from the volume *The Documents of Vatican II*, published by Guild Press—America Press—Association Press. The translation is presented under the editorship of Msgr. Joseph Gallagher and bears the "Nihil Obstat" of Felix F. Cardegna, SJ, STD, *ensor deputatus*, and the "Imprimatur" of Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, archbishop of Baltimore. For comparison, use will be made of the translations contained in *The Teachings of the Second Vatican Council*, published by the Newman Press. The sixteen documents are variously called constitutions, decrees, and declarations. It is difficult to arrive at a clear understanding regarding the distinctions to be found in these terms. However, it would appear from background material that the importance and immutability of the documents is indicated in a descending order by the terms constitution, decree, and declaration. The historian will want to keep his eyes open for any indication that this distinction may in the future be used to minimize or emphasize the importance and binding quality of any specific document. That we are not just engaging in a game of splitting the hair on this point may be seen from a discussion that arose in connection with the document on "The Church in the Modern World." This document was finally called a constitution, but an explanatory note had to be added to satisfy misgivings of some who felt that the term should not be used to designate a document that of its nature does not define or decree immutable dogma. In the explanatory note the observation was made that in part two of that document diverse elements were contained, some having permanent value and others only a transitory one. Even so, several hundred voted variously to substitute the term declaration, letter, exposition, or similar designation.

In order to treat the documents historically as well as doctrinally, the sequence followed in this examination will be governed by the dates of papal proclamation. The sixteen documents according to this order are the following: (1) The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), (2) Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*), (3) Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), (4) Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*), (5) Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis*

*Redintegratio*), (6) Decree on Priestly Formation (*Optatum Totius*), (7) Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*), (8) Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*), (9) Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), (10) Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church (*Christus Dominus*), (11) Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), (12) Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*), (13) Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*), (14) Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*), (15) Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), and (16) Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*).

#### 1. THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

This document (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, a title formed of the first words of the Latin text) was the first to be proclaimed by this pope (Paul VI). The date of its proclamation is December 4, 1963. Of this document Pope Paul said, "The liturgy was the first subject to be examined and the first too, in a sense, in intrinsic worth and in importance for the life of the Church." Had the pope substituted "justification" for "liturgy," then we might have wondered if some basic change in Rome were indeed in the offing. But the subject of "justification" was by-passed as an item for major consideration. Liturgy as an act of worship culminating in the so-called "sacrifice" of the mass is still considered as the accomplishment of the work of redemption. ("It is through the liturgy, especially the divine Eucharistic sacrifice, that 'the work of our redemption is exercised.'" —¶2. The translation by Luther Clifford Howell, SJ, has it this way: "The liturgy 'through which the work of our redemption is accomplished' most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist.") The great emphasis placed upon liturgy is indicated in ¶16: "The study of sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of studies; in theological faculties it is to rank among the principal subjects." Compare with this the following from the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "For the question at issue is, whether the observances of human

traditions are acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God. This is the point to be judged in this controversy, and when this is decided, it can afterwards be judged whether to the true unity of the Church it is necessary that human traditions should everywhere be alike. For if human traditions be not acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God, it follows that also they can be righteous and be the sons of God who have not the traditions which have been received elsewhere." —Trig. p. 239, Art. VII, VIII, ¶34. Cf. Col. 2:16-23.

Surely one must find himself in agreement with statements which put Christ in the center of the liturgy, statements which recommend that all take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully. But the element of law takes away the joy when we for instance read declarations such as these: "Popular devotions of the Christian people are warmly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church. Such is especially the case with devotions called for by the Apostolic See. Devotions proper to individual churches also have a special dignity if they are conducted by mandate of the bishops in accord with customs or books lawfully approved." —¶13. The change from traditional Latin to the vernacular is surely a step in the right direction and makes it possible for the laity to participate in the liturgy actively and with knowledge. However, this too is approved only within certain bounds and subject to the decision of territorial ecclesiastical authority. The retention of Latin for certain parts of the liturgy is provided for and is enjoined. ("Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites. . . ." —¶36. "Nevertheless steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them. And wherever a more extended use of the mother tongue within the Mass appears desirable, the regulation laid down in Article 40 of this Constitution is to be observed." —¶54. Article 40 refers to the authority of the territorial ecclesiastical body in such matters.)

When the constitution on the liturgy says that scripture is of paramount importance in the celebration of the liturgy and that the sermon is a part of the liturgical service, then

one would like to be able to take this as an indication that scripture is being returned to its proper place in the Roman Catholic rites and that all parts of the liturgy shall be performed in accord with scripture. But before such a conclusion can be reached one must put it to the test. And in so doing what do we find? We find that sermons are to be drawn not only from scriptural but also from liturgical sources (§35), that the Eucharist is presented as the *offering* of the Immaculate Victim (§48), that the veneration of authentic relics and images is to be continued (§111), that in the memorials to the martyrs and other saints it is to be remembered that they "offer prayers for us" (§104), and that Mary is to be given special honor ("In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, holy Church honors with special love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless model, that which she herself wholly desires and hopes to be." —§103). With regard to the sacraments there has been no material change. There are still seven. And it is significant to note that Rome here states: "They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it. . . ." —§59. The traditional sequence of hours in the praying of the Divine Office with all the legalistic trimmings is preserved and emphasized. —§§83-101. In view of all these considerations it is difficult to become as exuberant as some have become over Rome's reputed emphasis on and return to the scriptures. Tradition still plays an important role as may be seen from such statements as the following: "Care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing." —§23. For our own good we may take a lesson from a statement such as this: "The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's power of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation." —§34.

In conclusion may it be said that while the concession is made that certain elements of the liturgy are subject to change and indeed that some changes should be made, yet this

is granted only within certain well defined limits and under the careful control of the high order of the hierarchy. While there may seem to be a giving and a relaxing in some areas, the strong arm of the law is still in plain sight, and the freedom we have in the Gospel is submerged. And surely this is fundamental. In the final analysis this shows that the real difference between us and Rome still exists. But there will be more of this in future articles in this series.

CMG

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# == PAIDEIA ==

## DAYS SHOULD SPEAK

No thinking teacher can for long remain untouched by the transient thinking of his time. Because the climate of opinion surrounds both him and those he reads, "the world is too much with us" for him to keep with ease the independence of his mind. What is in fashion has a strong appeal, and he is rare who can resist it manfully.

Yet "days should speak." — Job 32:7. The genius of this philosophy was well possessed by the young Christian librarian who answered critics of her refusal to stock current novels: "A book that doesn't live ten years is not worth having in our library." She had a toughness of mind we wish to recommend.

New methods and ideas quite often hold much less of substance than they promised when they bloomed. Failure to note this marks the immature, but the insight becomes a saving attribute of those who end among the best of teachers for the young. Each decade has its passing saviors of the learning process, but days should speak with their voice of experience and salvage that which stands the test of time. And days *should* speak for what is good and lasting, lest pessimism in its massive backlash wipe away the gain that surely can be had.

The sifting is not easy. It takes a steady temper to sight the good and cling to its pursuit when remnants only seem to be the ultimate reward. The mark of genius seems to be required to hold a teacher to the course he *knows* will lead a given child to conquest of his troubles, goals, and problems. When all his works lay crushed in outward failure Pestalozzi rose above the rubble of his rejected school to proclaim that then he was the most assured that he was right. There is a certain death of life that must precede the winning of it. There is a laying down that comes before the

taking up for permanent possession.

But it takes time for days to speak. Some twenty years ago a much-read commentator, critic of the times, complained our education is too current. He called for lessons in the message of the ages, the steadiness that comes alone from knowledge of the sweep of things, a discipline that comes alone from history, art, and letters. And it would be amusing were it not so wry a joke upon the scholars of our times, should some kind universal mind reveal to every little prince and king and master of his chosen field the smallness of his world, could he be shocked into humility by the meagerness of what he knows. There are some traces here and there that in a given field of study, as in medicine, a single learner is not expected to know, by his own learning, what all is known among his colleagues down the hall. Some years ago a thousand years were said to be the time required for one to learn the mass that could be known in that one special field. So "days should speak," and each man in that field compelled to listen to someone else who knows his specialty.

Because men do not have the time to learn a millionth fraction of what is to be known, they come to "know" so very much that is not so. They take it on assumption. They absorb ideas from the atmosphere of their times. They inhale the climate of opinion. They know that democracy is the only form of government fit to live, having never learned the superior virtues of a republic. They know that nature is the product of evolution, not realizing that this has not been proved, not that its founders held the doctrine in but low regard. They know that "one church is as good as another" because everyone assumes it.

It is a further pitiful consequence that what people wrongly assume sometimes has a vengeful way of coming to be. Ideas, bad ones, also have their consequences. A kind of Gresham's Law operates here, the bad driving out the good, even as our silver half dollars have gone into hiding from our current sandwich coins. The voice of experience (days speaking) has found sound currency to be superior, and the latter is willing to lie low a while to win the final encounter with inflated currency, which everyone still knows is

money good enough. But days will speak, as they have done before, in the majority of Toynbee's nineteen civilizations that have gone down. It makes a difference in one's future, whether he assumes that his existence is shrouded in the obscurity of the animals and he stands bewildered now at the top, or whether he exists by the grace of a Creator-God and "he stands at the bottom of a stair whose top is invisible with light." —C. S. Lewis.

It makes one wish that men were not so sure that they know so much. Our schools seem sometimes to lead children to think that our age knows almost everything. "Of course" people will be happier with an adequate income (whatever that is), or so it is assumed. "Of course" people will be satisfied with an abundance of leisure time. Has that been proved? It is assumed. The "new morality" is moving in apace; it is assumed to be the better way. Divorce comes easy, says the climate of opinion; it is "of course" the better way to solve the problems of two who are not so compatible as once they thought, when just their drives of flesh and blood did mesh so well. A few tough-minded raps from men of days could well have pointed out some truth to those who know but a few years of this thing called life, presupposing that they know all about it, more, perhaps, than the moss-backs from the days of square and sadder times.

What can be done to rectify the course? What, short of reassertion of the fact that those who have learned much about the narrowed field of nature, may by that very token know much more about bare nature than they know of nature's God? Whence did this notion come, that knowledge of the current is somehow greater than a knowledge of the continuous? The six blind men of Hindustan were sure of each their little field of observation, but days with far-roving eye knew much more of the elephant.

There is reaction to the muddle here and there. Some corporations have begun to ask for leaders versed in studies of humanity. Some send their leaders back to school to learn philosophy (defined as knowledge of how things go in this wide world of nations, men, and trends). Even bankers beg for men of stuff and character, rusty old vocabulary — they will themselves train them how to use the punch-out cards of IBM and other programmed products of technology.

It's truly sad to note the great disinterest with which the surface mind of gadget-smothered people quickly picks things up and just as quickly puts them down again. "Why can't we get something new," said the little boy. "I've been watching television all my life." In 1962 a book was published asking, *Is Anybody Happy?* And children in our cities and our suburbs often cannot have a hole to dig, a tree to climb, or worms to put in pockets. Apartments aren't the place for life like that. Old men of days find such things hard on life. Or are *they* the maladjusted, and children find it easy to be happy in a world jam-packed with things of man-made here and now? The answer will come from days of their own life and experience; let the testimony of aging witnesses be disallowed in court for the moment.

The climate of opinion will one day have its test. The "of courses" of the moment will one day have to stand or fall. It is not particularly astute to be a slave to current snobbery. It is not obviously good to be a prisoner of the spirit of the age. That the old is not necessarily good because it is old is neatly balanced by the fact that the new is not necessarily good because it is new. Progress is not automatic, as many seem deceived to think. Time and ultimate finding out have a way of giving error its comeuppance.

It may just be the time is soon to come for Him that sitteth in the heavens to laugh once more — and God's laughter is the only laughter of which we can be sure that it is not funny; His tears are for salvation, but His laughter is for derision of that which deserves His wrath. The purest form of science, which undoubtedly is mathematics, was said by one of its finest mentors, Whitehead, to have the virtue that it enables us to carry on trains of reasoning without bothering about the subject matter. That may be its vulnerable heel — the enabling of mind to forget about subject matter. There was horror expressed at Los Alamos when Project Trinity (intended blasphemy?) issued the news, "The baby is born," to curse the future of mankind perhaps, as some involved in the undertaking feared and asserted. We do not make this judgment; we leave it for "days to speak." In another area the judgment has started to come in, or so say some who have dared ascend the bench: the child died that

educational psychology might live. And yet again: in theology, both ancient and modern, the climate of opinion, the "of courses" of the devotees, have come to "know" much that has meant death to the Good News of Him whose thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are high above the earth, whose good things of promise to mankind have not entered into the thoughts and minds of men unconverted and not reborn from above.

A nagging truth hangs on: each man is said to be the product of his age. "If the average intellectual during the Middle Ages did not really entertain the idea that Christianity might be false, the average intellectual today does not really entertain the idea that it might be true. He does not ask those essential questions, so insisted upon by Lewis:

Was it ever refuted (and if so by whom, where, and how conclusively) or did it merely die away as fashions do? If the latter, this tells us nothing about its truth or falsehood.' But of course it takes a remarkable man, and a remarkably free one, to insist upon those questions." —Jeffrey Hart, *National Review*, December 28, 1965, p. 1194. And C. S. Lewis again: "I take a very low view of 'climates of opinion.' In his own subject every man knows that all discoveries are made and all errors corrected by those who ignore the 'climate of opinion.'" Invention comes, and truth is found, when some brave soul is bold enough *not* to know what all the others know. Such is the road to learning here and now. We take an interest in it for we would be worthy of the time and place we occupy.

As men of God and teachers of the Christian way we catch from this a gleam of light and truth that flows unhampered from the still white throne above, revealed to us by Him who came to give us life and give it more abundantly. As days should speak in things of earth, so in the things of ultimate concern we all the more must be assured that Days Should Speak — The Ancient of Days.

Martin Galstad

## CHAPEL ADDRESS III

*While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

—Matthew 12:46-49

One at times hears things that haunt him. A word or a phrase enters the mind and continues to echo and re-echo itself. Just such a phrase came out of the hymn we sang in today's chapel service. The closing lines of the second stanza of Hymn Number 276 read, "But Thou hast bro't us gladness/And songs at break of day."

We can so easily be tempted to think that the day that lies ahead of us has no reason to be greeted with a song or songs. Because of past words or deeds on our part, we may hesitate to face anew the people we must face. Perhaps it were better to have darkness continue and day break not at all. Perhaps the day has problems we know not how to meet and so shrink back from it at its very entrance. Or it may be that we set our jaw firmly and decide to see it through come what may. But to see in the day with gladness and to greet it with songs as it breaks, that may seem impossible. And yet our text for today reminds us of this very truth, "Thou hast bro't us gladness/And songs at break of day."

Let us begin again. There is a prayer that all of us use regularly, a prayer we use many times a day. Before our meals we say, "Come, Lord Jesus, be *our guest*. . . ." We are extending an invitation to the Lord to come into our homes, to sit at our tables, to be part of our company. Sometimes our actions might give the picture that we did not extend the invitation seriously or that we had forgotten whom we had invited to be with us. But we do extend the invitation and the comforting fact is that Jesus does accept the invitation.

The Son of God, the Savior, delights in being welcomed into our homes. Scripture makes this abundantly clear. Jesus was pleased to be at the wedding at Cana; He was found in the home of Mary and Martha; Zachaeus and others found Him happy to be their guests.

What a glorious thing for us that Jesus is willing to be our guest! The text, however, calls attention to an even more assuring truth. He comes as our guest, but in extending an invitation in turn He does not only ask us to come as guests into His home, to be there only on occasions, but He invites us to be *members of His family!*

Now Jesus was a member of an earthly family. He had blood relatives. Scripture reminds us that He was of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. It is no secret that He was the son of David. Mary was His mother and He had blood relatives living at the time He lived on earth.

It is important for us to note, however, that when He was told that His mother and brethren were without seeking Him, His reply was, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?" And then He pointed to His disciples and declared, "Behold my mother and my brethren."

Membership in His divine family is not by reason of blood but by faith. As the disciples who clung to Him in simple trust were declared to be His family, so also it can be said of us. By faith we are bound to Him. He becomes our brother, we become members of His family.

Think of what that means for you. All things belong to Him. The cattle upon a thousand hills, the earth and all its fullness, heaven and earth, all these things are His. And you as His brother share in all this wealth. He tells us that He uses it for the welfare of His family. So also the wealth of each new day is His and is used for those who are members of His family.

Not only material blessings does He share with us, but above all His spiritual wealth. We shall be partakers together with Him of that new heaven and new earth when this one is destroyed. All this because He has shared His victory over sin, death, and the devil with us. Bountiful and endless are the blessings that He shares with those who by faith in

Him become His mother, His brother, His sister.

Do you understand now why we can greet each new day with songs? Do you realize why no matter what problems the day may bring we can look to our Savior and sing

*But Thou hast bro't us gladness  
And songs at break of day.*

#### CHAPEL ADDRESS IV

*And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

*And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.*

*And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.*

Fellow redeemed: The Surgeon General's Report a few years ago focused the spotlight on one of the most terrible and dreaded diseases today — cancer. Cancer starts out as a small, perhaps unnoticed growth and spreads and spreads until death results. If caught early enough the disease can be stopped, but there is no known cure for cancer. From the story of Cain and Abel we see that sin is a spiritual disease very much like cancer.

Sin started out in Cain as something that could not even be seen by men. It started out as a wrong attitude of heart, a wrong attitude toward God. For in the Book of Hebrews we read why Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's was accepted: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." The difference was not an outward difference, a difference in the methods of worship or in the offerings themselves. But Cain did not present his sacrifice to God out of faith. For it is through faith that our worship is viewed by God as acceptable. It is through the sacrifice of Christ that our sacrifices become God-pleasing.

But when Cain's offering was rejected, he in typical human fashion became angry — angry with God and angry with his brother Abel. He probably felt that the Lord was being partial to Abel for no good reason. Man doesn't easily accept the blame that is his.

God, being a merciful God, came to Cain and had a talk with him. He put it on the line to Cain. He told him: If you do well, your offering will be accepted, but if your offering isn't accepted then you aren't doing well. Watch out, Cain! Sin is lying at the door just waiting to take permanent possession of your heart. Wouldn't you think that this direct warning of God would have brought Cain to his knees in repentance. Why, if God had come to us, we surely would have listened. But God does come to us. He talks to us through His Word; He is talking to us right now. How often haven't we disregarded his voice?

Even after this warning Cain went out and killed his brother. God, then, came to him with yet another chance to repent. He asked Cain, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" But Cain had the audacity to lie to God. He tried to avoid God's question by asking Him another question, "Am I my brother's

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keeper?" God doesn't even have to answer this question. Cain stands before Him condemned of sin.

When God punished Cain to a life of wandering, what was Cain concerned about? About the sin he had just committed? About his brother or his folks? Not at all. He was concerned about himself — that someone finding him would kill him. Don't we so often see this same attitude in ourselves? When we have done something wrong, what is the first thing we think of? That we have sinned against God and against our crucified Savior? That we have endangered the welfare of our souls? Or do we wonder "Am I going to be found out?" If we aren't punished, then we think that everything is all right, that we haven't been found out. But like Cain we forget about almighty God, who sees all and knows all that we think and do.

From this story we see that sin is truly a terrible disease, a disease that, if it is permitted to remain, takes complete control over man. A disease that ends in death — not only physical death but, even worse, eternal death. From the viewpoint of man and what he can do there is no cure for this disease. And this disease is universal. "For that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Even if sin does not manifest itself in the act of murder or the act of adultery, our sinful heart is still with us.

All of us stand before God convicted and condemned of sin. Who here would claim that he has not sinned? Is there then no hope for us? Will sin result in death for us too? In this story itself we find the answer to this question. Don't forget that it is the story of Cain and *Abel*. And we heard that "by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." The cure is faith — faith in Jesus Christ. For through the blood of Christ, all our sins are removed. We put on Christ's righteousness and now stand before God holy and sinless. No matter what we have done, no matter what control sin has had over us, there is forgiveness through Christ. Rather than looking to ourselves for the power to fight sin, we should look to Christ and Christ alone. Let us realize both the seriousness of sin and the free forgiveness that is ours. And, cured of this disease, will we want to once more be infected? We must struggle and fight this disease all our lives!

## ==== PANORAMA =====

SPEAKING OF  
CLERGYMEN

Clergymen do a lot of speaking. They are also quite frequently spoken of by others. If we expect others to learn from what we say, we should be willing to learn from them — not only when they speak of us as we are, but particularly when they show what we can become. It is in this sense that we offer an article from *Christianity Today*. The author, Lance Zavitz, is described as a "journalist [who] aims a pointed pen at some ministerial fetishes." We offer the article in its entirety.

E. Reim

### CLERGYMEN I HAVE KNOWN

The tall, lean clergyman looked even more solemn than usual as he tentatively pushed open the city-room door of a large newspaper and asked a copy boy if he might see me.

"What's the matter?" I asked, with the familiarity of long acquaintance. "You look as though you'd lost your last friend."

"No," he replied with a forced smile, "but you know how these things are; I've just had a h— of a row with my choir director."

That was my first but by no means last experience with a type of clergyman who habitually uses slang, vulgarity, and sometimes actual profanity when talking to newspaper men — and to some other laymen as well. Clergymen of this type always have a "good story" to tell. The stories are usually earthy, to put it mildly. I have sometimes wondered whether such a preacher saves the stories he cannot use in the pulpit for occasions when he feels he must prove that he is a man among men, "of the earth, earthly."

Of course, not all clergymen who use profane language do so to impress others. Some of them think that the language of the study and the pulpit is too exalted and artificial for ordinary conversation and that they must revert to "everyday" language to be understood. With others the occasional use of profanity is a genuine slip of the tongue, the result of

years spent in circles where rough speech prevails, perhaps while working their way through seminary or serving as a war-time chaplain. Recently some poseurs among the clergy have adopted the use of four-letter words to prove their right to membership in the literary avant-garde.

Nearly half a century of association with clergymen of many faiths and various social strata has given me distinct impressions of the profanity-users and of other types. I have known scores of ministers who are a credit to their profession and, in my humble opinion, deserving of divine approval. These men are kindly, upright, dignified, dedicated. They give every indication of having a message from the God whom they serve and of having spent long hours in search of the precise words that would best convey that message. I have also known ministers who lack preaching ability but whose lives are an example and whose presence is a benediction.

However, there are others who are remembered for other characteristics. There are those who always speak with what they would like their congregations to believe is the "voice of God." They appear to have forgotten that even the Apostle Paul remarked on occasion, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord" (I Cor. 7:12). One waits in vain for such preachers to qualify some statements with even so simple a restriction as "I believe. . . ." Surely they must know that they are subject to misinterpreting a Scripture text, or not having all the facts, or erring in their judgment.

The voice of absolute authority is irritating enough when it issues from a pulpit once or twice a week, but it is much more so when it makes itself heard outside the church. One's daily newspaper will even contain pronouncements by some clergyman on such subjects as the proper depth at which a storm sewer should be laid and the kind of art that should be preferred by the current tenants of the White House.

There are other clergymen whom I should classify as politico-clerics. These men are thoroughly familiar with the political strategy not only of their own denomination but also of other major religious bodies that cooperate or compete with it. Such ministers know exactly how many votes are required to enact a piece of church legislation — and the

most effective method of securing them. They are experienced in the use of such tactics as appealing to the order of the day to close debate on a ticklish subject. Those with a real bent for politics can predict with great accuracy both the time when a controversial issue will be allowed to reach the floor and its probable fate within a dozen votes.

Other clergymen are notable for adopting the fetish-word or phrase of the moment as devotedly as a teenager adopts the latest slang. For several years I attended a church whose minister had been charmed by "brave, new world." The phrase dates itself. It was a by-product of the post-depression period, the early days of Social Security. For months not a sermon was delivered in that church that did not refer to the "brave, new world."

One of the more recent fetish-words is "relevant," which means "bearing upon, or applying to, the case in hand." It is something of a stock to hear a preacher question whether Christ's teaching is "relevant" to world conditions today and then reply in the negative, while declaring in the same sermon that Christianity should permeate every area of human experience. Another word now being bandied about with delight is "dialogue." A dialogue is little more than a conversation, though perhaps a somewhat formal one; yet it is now used by many clergymen to mean something involving more controversy, a "debate." Others use it with a less specific connotation. They no longer merely "talk" with people; they "have dialogue," whether it be about the state of theology today or how often the church lawn should be mowed.

In contrast to the fetish-word addicts are the cliché-lovers, who are found in all faiths and at all levels of the ministry. Men who adopted some pet expressions in seminary are still using them thirty or forty years later. Often one suspects that the original definitions have been forgotten. At any rate, the users clearly have not bothered to seek out synonyms, or new ways of expressing old ideas. In a Vatican Council press conference, a Catholic theologian who used a cliché was interrupted by laughter. Said one of his fellow theologians, "We all learned that word in seminary, but what does it mean today?" There are preachers who still talk about "marching out to meet the foe" in an age when the youth of their congregations are thinking in terms of spaceships

and satellites.

Another type of clergyman is the executive, who emanates more efficiency than sanctity. It is only fair to say that it is hard to know whether a minister is the executive type because he prefers to be or because his church board requires it of him. There comes to mind a spiritual crisis in which I sought the counsel of a prominent clergyman, only to be told by his secretary that I could have an appointment several days later. Perhaps it was unkind, but I could not refrain from asking, "Suppose I should die in the meantime?" The secretary could offer no solution.

Closely related to the executive type is the Madison Avenue man. In some parts of the country, almost every church advertisement in the Saturday newspapers contains a picture of the pastor. However, not every preacher has a face that will induce visitors to attend church. And the regular parishioners, of course, are very well acquainted with their pastor's appearance. The array of ministerial photographs on some newspaper pages brings to mind the words of our Lord concerning John the Baptist: "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses."

The advertising bent manifests itself in various ways. There is, for example, the tricky or even deliberately misleading sermon topic. Almost any newspaper church page will yield examples. I remember a minister who announced as his topic: "The Man Upside Down." I persuaded two friends who had abandoned church-going to accompany me to hear him. Not once during the sermon did he so much as mention the "man upside down." My friends never went back to that church.

A poor relative of the advertising-obsessed clergyman — who, after all, pays for his advertisement — is the one known disrespectfully in newspaper circles as a "publicity hound." A preacher of my acquaintance never sent the newspaper a copy of his sermon. He took the attitude that if the paper wanted to print his sermon, or parts of it, a reporter would have to sit through it. Then he went on vacation. On his return he rushed into the newspaper office waving a picture of himself and a friend with some twenty fish spread out on an overturned canoe. I refrained from quoting the words,

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Another annoying member of this group is the minister who thinks his church should have a special story when it does exactly what the denominational governing body has decreed each church in the denomination must do. His reasoning is that his church is large and important and that most of his people read the newspaper in which he wants the story printed. He brushes aside the argument that in all fairness thirty or forty other stories on the same matter should be printed. Yet this minister will inveigh against politicians who grant special favors to friends and relatives.

Two other types of clergymen are sure to be found in communities that have a considerable number of churches — the self-fancied intellectual, and the one who seems to have acquired an electronic computer.

The "intellectual" delves into history, quotes the classics, draws illustrations from the sciences, and leaves his hearers with the impression that he is sure he can solve the problems of the universe — even without God's help, if necessary.

Sermons of the computerized preacher follow the same pattern week after week with predictable accuracy. No matter what the text, or where the sermon begins, he is almost certain to arrive at the same conclusion. Many years ago I wondered how this was possible. Now with the advent of the computer I have found myself conjecturing. If all the verses in the Bible dealing with a given subject were fed into a computer, would the result be a usable sermon as effective as many to which long-suffering congregations listen week by week?

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