



The Six Deadly Sins of Preaching: Becoming Responsible for the Faith We Proclaim

By Robert Stephen Reid, Lucy Lind Hogan

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This ethics of preaching text identifies vices of irresponsible preaching practices. Preachers who fail to develop deep respect for their listeners or drift into a lack of faithfulness to the Gospel can end up becoming:

- The Pretender (The Problem of In-authenticity)
- The Egoist (The Problem of Self-absorption)
- The Manipulator (The Problem of Greediness)
- The Panderer (The Problem of Trendiness)
- The Crusader (The Problem of Exploitation)
- The Demagogue (The Problem of Self-righteousness)

Just as the church historically derived its Seven Holy Virtues (chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, & humility) by naming Seven Deadly Sins (lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, & pride), Reid and Hogan call preachers to turn away from pulpit vices and strive to realize the homiletic virtues of becoming:

- Authentic (The Call to Be Genuine)
- Altruistic (The Call to Be Selfless)
- Careful (The Call to Exercise Self-Control)
- Passionate (The Call to Be Honest to God)
- Courteous (The Call to Woo a Reasoned Reception)
- A 'Namer' of God (The Call to Reveal an Ineffable God)

The Six Deadly Sins of Preaching explores the difference between the irresponsible practices, unfortunate missteps, and mere unthinking mistakes in preaching. A chapter is devoted to Preaching Missteps (problems that do not rise to the level of being irresponsible) that includes:

- Short Changing the Process
- Waving a Red Flag
- Thou Shall Not Bore the Congregation
- Through the Looking Glass Darkly

- The Mumbler
- TMI?Too Much Information
- Your Cup Do Runneth Over
- Where's This Sermon Going, Anyway?

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Robert Stephen Reid is Head of the Communication Department and Director of the Master of Communication degree program in Organizational Communication at the University of Dubuque, Dubuque Iowa. Both he and his wife Rev. Dr. Barbara Reid are ordained to the American Baptist Ministry (ABC/USA). Bob has served as the convener of the Rhetoric Working Group for the Academy of Homiletics since 2000. Most recently he edited, *Slow of Speech and Unclean Lips: Contemporary Images of Preaching* (Cascade, 2010) and co-wrote *Connecting with Your Audience: Making Public Speaking Matter* with Jenn Supple and Anne Marie Gruber (Kendall Hunt, 2010). He is the author of *The Four Voices of Preaching* (Brazos Press, 2006) and *Preaching Mark* (Chalice Press, 1999). He is co-author with Lucy Lind Hogan of *Connecting with the Congregation: Rhetoric and the Art of Preaching* (Abingdon, 1999).

Lucy Lind Hogan is Hugh LatimerElderdice Professor of Preaching and Worship at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C. Ordained in the Episcopal Church, Lucy has taught at Wesley since 1987. She received her M.Div. from Virginia Theological Seminary and her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Communication from the University of Maryland. Dr. Hogan is the past president of Societas Homiletica, the international homiletic society, and served as secretary of the North American Academy of Homiletics. Her books include Graceful Speech An Invitation to Preaching, *Lenten Services*, and a book she co-authored with Robert S. Reid, *Connecting with the Congregation: Rhetoric and the Art of Preaching*.

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