

# Partners in Preaching: Clergy and Laity in Dialogue

by Reuel L Howe  
New York: The Seabury Press

Reuel Howe was professor of pastoral theology, first at Philadelphia Divinity School, then at the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia. He founded the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

From the style of writing readers will note quite quickly that *Partners in Preaching* was published more than 50 years ago. Especially in the imagined opening discussion among disgruntled listeners (chapter 1), the language and emphases of the 1960's come across clearly.

Confessional Lutheran readers will also recognize an approach to theology that compromises the authority of Scripture and that at times embraces liberation theology.

Yet despite the book's "age," and the need to read it with theological discernment, it offers much insightful food for thought when it comes to making the most of our partnership in preaching with our hearers. A single sentence captures well the main thrust of the book: "Laymen cannot be allowed to stand on the sidelines and irresponsibly either criticize or praise the preacher. They must be encouraged and trained for constructive participation" (102).

The most helpful sections of the book are the many practical ideas for how a pastor might go about strengthening his partnership with the pew. While this reviewer has found a couple more recent publications that treat this subject, none of them offers the amount of useful assistance that Howe's book provides to pastors for developing a working partnership with our hearers before, during, and after the preaching of the sermon. One particularly helpful section can be found in its entirety on this web site.