

# Profanity Meant to Be Ugly, Insulting

SOME people have vocabularies large enough to express their thoughts in decent language. Many others resort to profanity.

Pollution of the language — and atmosphere — with blasphemy, ugliness and profane disrespect for persons now is commonly heard on television and radio, in movies and in public schools. Business places and sports events are polluted by profanity. Books, magazines and newspapers are sprinkled with "four letter words," bad ones.

Teachers say they blush to hear expressions used by pupils in classrooms and hallways. Besides imitating their TV and movie "heroes," pupils may be repeating language they hear at home.

Last Christmas, a Chicago Tribune writer told of a little girl in Sunday school for the first time. She listened to the story of the Savior's birth and heard the verse read from the Bible which said: "And they called His name Jesus."

She was horrified. "Why did they give such a sweet little baby a swear word?" she asked. She had

never before heard the name of Jesus Christ used in reverence.

Recently, the National Federation for Decency monitored 864 hours of prime time television and counted 1,054 profane utterances. The word "God" was the third most frequently used profanity tabulated.

This is hard to understand because many who use profanity do not otherwise acknowledge the existence of God. It is even more difficult to appreciate when used by those who profess faith in God, because the Scriptures clearly prohibit profanity.

Graffiti has been transplanted from rest room walls and back fences to T-shirts and bumper stickers. Perhaps wearers put their dirty thought on display in order to offend larger audiences.

Reliance upon profanity or obscenities to express emotions or ideas might be classified as evidence of personal deficiencies, perhaps a combination of moral, language and social illiteracy.

Reinhold Aman of Wisconsin says

he can curse in 200 languages and his ignoble goal is to collect and analyze every offensive term ever used on this planet. He publishes irregularly what he calls "Maledicta," the International Journal of Verbal Aggression.

Aman says cussing is socially important because it releases pent-up emotions and reveals crucial information. But he thinks Americans are generally poor at swearing because they usually fall back on the same 24 words or so.

Profanity has nothing to recommend it. It reflects the user's limited command of language and it is intended to be ugly, insulting or shocking to listeners. It is to many of us.

Some years ago a public speaker told an offensive story and then remarked: "I hope there are no ladies present." One of the audience responded: "There are no ladies but there are some gentlemen here, and we'd like an apology!"

Where are the ladies and gentlemen of today?