

... By Any Other Name? by Tom Carbery

“A rose by any other name...” By *any* other name? Not necessarily so, I say.

Remarkable though it may seem to others, there is hardly a day goes by without my thanking Almighty God for the Holy Spirit - through the agency of Harry Clarke - introducing me to the world of the British Federation of Co-operative Youth and then that of the British Federation of Young Co-operators. Now, I readily acknowledge that all that makes me something of an oddity. Not all that many people in contemporary Britain acknowledge the existence of Almighty God and fewer still stop to thank Him for anything. For that matter, even fewer know about the B.F.C.Y and the B.F.Y.C. and only a very small select group knew and know the difference.

Getting the Address Right -

One of the many, many benefits I derived from and still enjoy from my membership of those wonderful organisations was an understanding - no, more than that, an appreciation - of the proper conduct of meetings. We took in Citrine's *ABC of Chairmanship* as readily as more gullible souls took in the writings of Marx and Engels - though, to be fair, some comrades took in all three. It did not take long for even the newest of members to learn and remember that all debate was through the Chair: that we referred to but did not address one another; and that the Chairman was 'Chairman', or 'Mr. Chairman', or 'Comrade Chairman'. The first and last of these designations were, of course, sexually neutral but, when we mixed with the Women's Guild, we soon learned that the form of address became 'Madame Chairman' and, if the lady became President of the Society - and to their credit many did - she was addressed as 'Madame President' or even 'President'.

- And the Name

Now, I readily acknowledge that forms of address and nomenclature can be important. My one-time colleague on the Independent Broadcasting Authority Billy Blease, now Lord Blease of Cromac, tells a salutary tale of the time when he was General Secretary of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish T.U.C. He engaged a bright-eyed young man called Trevor who was an Honours graduate from Queens, the local University. On his second day in post, Trevor was assigned to doing the first draft of a report on Unemployment - there being nothing new in the world of trade unions. After some 40/45 minutes, the 'inter-com' went. "Mr. Blease, sir, it is Trevor here. Mr. Blease, sir, I'm getting on quite well with this draft you wanted - at least, so far as the statistics go, but Mr. Blease, sir, I wonder if I could ask for your help. I know

I'm not supposed to say Ulster because it has one connotation, and not supposed to say Six Counties because that has another. But Mr. Blease, sir, I have said Northern Ireland 17 times on the first page and eight times so far on the second - is it all right if I say Province just the once?"

Especially In Northern Ireland -

What this story illustrates is that the sensitivity of the people of Northern Ireland to what each "community" sees as wounding nomenclature reaches its high water mark in place names. This has led to the DJs of the Belfast I.L.R. station and the jazzier presenters of the BBC's lighter programmes talking about 'Stroke' City. This is not because one is liable to have a stroke in that particular locality: on the contrary, it is because the majority community call the other big city Londonderry (except when they sing of Derry's walls), whereas the minority community (albeit the majority in the city) call it Derry. To use one term wounds those whose nomenclature is not used. Journalists circumnavigated this by writing about 'L/derry' - hence the DJs' and other broadcasters' references to Stroke City.

- And the Language of P.C.

All this I find sad but understandable. Yet that compassionate understanding does not extend to the 'Politically Correct' mania which has swept through American academia and the Women's movement everywhere. Even here I have been rebuked for saying "black" "coloured" and "Afro-Caribbean" - but in each case citing the term *after* it had been denounced. American academic registrars no longer talk of Red Indians but of Native Indigenous Americans and those descended from former slaves are currently officially known as "African-Americans".

Hier Stehe Ich . . .

All of which brings me back to Citrine, the B.F.Y.C. and the Women's Guild.

Chairman - yes!!

Madame Chairman - yes!!

Chair - no way!!!

Any organisation which insists on my addressing the person chairing the procedure of a meeting as though he or she was an inanimate object can have my resignation.

The way the world is going, I suppose I should now prepare to say goodbye to many good friends, including some female chairmen.

For the time being, the Lord's Prayer still starts "Our Father," but stand by for demands for innovation. Women priests in the Church of England? "You ain't seen nuttin, yet!" I must remember to thank God I am getting old.

Please Note . . .

Readers will wish to note that Lord Taylor of Gryfe has advised me that there was an error of fact in my piece in Journal 73 on CWS and SCWS directors - Mr. William Gallagher of Larkhall served as an SCWS director and he was a Roman Catholic.

The Author

PROFESSOR CARBERY recently retired from the University of Strathclyde where his teaching has ranged over Economics, Public Administration, Government - particularly British and American - and Information Technology. Some of his wider areas of service are the Labour movement, consumer affairs (including his book *Consumers in Politics*), broadcasting and the press and the Co-operative movement.

In Passing

*There is a time for some things
And a time for all things
A time for great things
And a time for small things*

Cervantes - Don Quixote