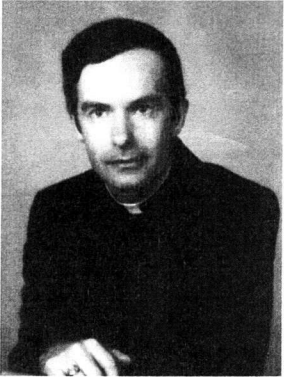


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd...



When two people first meet, conscious and subconscious assessments are made to form a first impression based on clues derived from physical appearance and how we speak. Our manner of speaking yields a trove of information about us - our quality of education, political philosophy, religious beliefs,

cultural values, reliability, even if we are Yankee or southern. Regional identification can be narrowed to specific areas. For example, Yankees might be distinguished as New Yorker or Bostonian and southerners as Georgian or Texan. Our speech not only affects how others perceive us, but also reveals how we see ourselves.

A recent phenomenon is gender confusion and the debate over pronoun usage; do we say he, she, they, it? Some people, for their own convenience, insist there is no absolute truth and all is relative pertaining to morals, values, ethics, historical facts, even gender. For them, reality is merely a state of mind and truth is only what one is told, desires, or finds convenient or popular to believe. They ignore the scriptural declaration, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Gen. 1:27) They ignore the obvious facts of biology, anatomy, and common sense. For them, seeing is not believing. In some locales, parents can legally designate the gender of their child as neutral, allowing the child to determine their own gender later according to how they feel. Landlords and people in business in NY can be fined up to \$250,000, while health workers in California can be jailed for refusing to refer to individuals by the gender designation of their preference.

The political, religious, and social implications of the power of the spoken word are unquestionable. In his novel 1984, George Orwell (Eric Blair) coined the term "newspeak." Used as a means of thought control, its purpose was to change the way people speak and thereby change the way they think and act. To promote an ideological agenda, undesired ideas and points of view might be expunged by silencing their verbal expression.

Consequently, what is not spoken of will be forgotten - out of sight, out of mind; out of hearing, out of mind. If laws applying to gender in California and NY are unchallenged and allowed to proliferate across the nation, a legal precedent will be established for the unconstitutional censorship of other values and points of view. This is not just about gender identity; it is one more attack on the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and religious practice. Even more pervasive is the attack on freedom of thinking.

Another term coined in 1984 is "doublethink". One might simultaneously hold two contradictory points of view without awareness of inconsistency. During a previous general election year, I encountered a driver who displayed bumper stickers against abortion and for a presidential candidate who advocated abortion. When asked to explain the discrepancy, they evaded the question, muttered irrationally, and quickly drove off. A second form of doublethink is to believe the opposite of what is true. Liberals call conservatives Fascists, yet liberals practice Fascist tactics. Liberals also engage in name-calling to put their opposition on the defensive, cast them with a negative public image, and deflect exposure to truth away from themselves. This applies to both current and historical incidents. The WBTS is persistently called the Civil War. A civil war is a conflagration between two forces within one nation. Yankees refuse to admit the reality and historical fact that the CSA was an independent nation. And, can the South truly be called free when it was beaten into submission and taken prisoner under martial law by the Union? Recently, liberals have called themselves progressives, seeking to evade the negative connotations associated with liberalism and implying that conservatives are opposed to progress. Global warming has been renamed climate change; weathermen now call a partly cloudy day partly sunny; items with an excessive price are called upscale instead of expensive; used cars are called preowned; a customer is dubbed a guest and a clerk an associate. In 1947, the War Department was renamed the Defense Department. All of these verbal games are played to superimpose a pseudo-positive image over the honest truth to change how we think and act.

What is in a name? Numerous prominent Biblical characters' names were changed to reflect more accurately their personal attributes. Abram became Abraham, meaning the father of a multitude. (Gen. 17:5) Jacob (supplanter, because he replaced his elder brother Essau) became Israel (one who prevails with God). (Gen. 32:28) A theory was erroneously postulated that if one's name were changed, their nature could be changed. As man's physical essence is composed of what he eats, so his spiritual essence is composed of what he thinks and believes, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he..." (Prov. 23:7) Thus, it is awareness of this that has encouraged the covert scheme to change man's nature, who we are, by changing the words we use and their meanings ultimately to alter and control subtly the way we think and act. What is really needed is a renaissance of respect for the human dignity of man as God's creation, of renewed value placed on individual freedom and independence, of possessing the courage and responsibility to face reality, and of acceptance of the Gospel message that Christ "...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (Jn. 1:14)

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