

The Bible – authorship attributed to Solomon ~ 950 BC

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 – English Standard Version (ESV)

What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us.

Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens – 1855-57 AD

Book 1, Chapter X – Containing the whole Science of Government

The Circumlocution Office was (as everybody knows without being told) the most important Department under Government. No public business of any kind could possibly be done at any time without the acquiescence of the Circumlocution Office. Its finger was in the largest public pie, and in the smallest public tart. It was equally impossible to do the plainest right and to undo the plainest wrong without the express authority of the Circumlocution Office. If another Gunpowder Plot had been discovered half an hour before the lighting of the match, nobody would have been justified in saving the parliament until there had been half a score of boards, half a bushel of minutes, several sacks of official memoranda, and a family-vault full of ungrammatical correspondence, on the part of the Circumlocution Office.

This glorious establishment had been early in the field, when the one sublime principle involving the difficult art of governing a country, was first distinctly revealed to statesmen. It had been foremost to study that bright revelation and to carry its shining influence through the whole of the official proceedings. Whatever was required to be done, the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving—HOW NOT TO DO IT.

Through this delicate perception, through the tact with which it invariably seized it, and through the genius with which it always acted on it, the Circumlocution Office had risen to over-top all the public departments; and the public condition had risen to be—what it was.

It is true that How not to do it was the great study and object of all public departments and professional politicians all round the Circumlocution Office. It is true that every new premier and every new government, coming in because they had upheld a certain thing as necessary to be done, were no sooner come in than they applied their utmost faculties to discovering How not to do it. It is true that from the moment when a general election was over, every returned man who had been raving on hustings because it hadn't been done, and who had been asking the friends of the honourable gentleman in the opposite interest on pain of impeachment to tell him why it hadn't been done, and who had been asserting that it must be done, and who had been pledging himself that it should be done, began to devise, How it was not to be done. It is true that the debates of both Houses of Parliament the whole session through, uniformly tended to the protracted deliberation, How not to do it. It is true that the royal speech at the opening of such session virtually said, My lords and gentlemen, you have a considerable stroke of work to do, and you will please to retire to your respective chambers, and discuss, How not to do it. It is true that the royal speech, at the close of such session, virtually said, My lords and gentlemen, you have through several laborious months been considering with great loyalty and patriotism, How not to do it, and you have found out; and with the blessing of Providence upon the harvest (natural, not political), I now dismiss you. All this is true, but the Circumlocution Office went beyond it.

Because the Circumlocution Office went on mechanically, every day, keeping this wonderful, all-sufficient wheel of statesmanship, How not to do it, in motion. Because the Circumlocution Office was down upon any ill-advised public servant who was going to do it, or who appeared to be by any surprising accident in remote danger of doing it, with a minute, and a memorandum, and a letter of instructions that extinguished him. It was this spirit of national efficiency in the Circumlocution Office that had gradually led to its having something to do with everything. Mechanics, natural philosophers, soldiers, sailors, petitioners, memorialists, people with grievances, people who wanted to prevent grievances, people who wanted to redress grievances, jobbing people, jobbed people, people

who couldn't get rewarded for merit, and people who couldn't get punished for demerit, were all indiscriminately tucked up under the foolscap paper of the Circumlocution Office.

Numbers of people were lost in the Circumlocution Office. Unfortunates with wrongs, or with projects for the general welfare (and they had better have had wrongs at first, than have taken that bitter English recipe for certainly getting them), who in slow lapse of time and agony had passed safely through other public departments; who, according to rule, had been bullied in this, over-reached by that, and evaded by the other; got referred at last to the Circumlocution Office, and never reappeared in the light of day. Boards sat upon them, secretaries minuted upon them, commissioners gabbled about them, clerks registered, entered, checked, and ticked them off, and they melted away. In short, all the business of the country went through the Circumlocution Office, except the business that never came out of it; and *its* name was Legion.

Sometimes, angry spirits attacked the Circumlocution Office. Sometimes, parliamentary questions were asked about it, and even parliamentary motions made or threatened about it by demagogues so low and ignorant as to hold that the real recipe of government was, How to do it. Then would the noble lord, or right honourable gentleman, in whose department it was to defend the Circumlocution Office, put an orange in his pocket, and make a regular field-day of the occasion. Then would he come down to that house with a slap upon the table, and meet the honourable gentleman foot to foot. Then would he be there to tell that honourable gentleman that the Circumlocution Office not only was blameless in this matter, but was commendable in this matter, was extollable to the skies in this matter. Then would he be there to tell that honourable gentleman that, although the Circumlocution Office was invariably right and wholly right, it never was so right as in this matter. Then would he be there to tell that honourable gentleman that it would have been more to his honour, more to his credit, more to his good taste, more to his good sense, more to half the dictionary of commonplaces, if he had left the Circumlocution Office alone, and never approached this matter. Then would he keep one eye upon a coach or crammer from the Circumlocution Office sitting below the bar, and smash the honourable gentleman with the Circumlocution Office account of this matter. And although one of two things always happened; namely, either that the Circumlocution Office had nothing to say and said it, or that it had something to say of which the noble lord, or right honourable gentleman, blundered one half and forgot the other; the Circumlocution Office was always voted immaculate by an accommodating majority.

Such a nursery of statesmen had the Department become in virtue of a long career of this nature, that several solemn lords had attained the reputation of being quite unearthly prodigies of business, solely from having practised, How not to do it, as the head of the Circumlocution Office. As to the minor priests and acolytes of that temple, the result of all this was that they stood divided into two classes, and, down to the junior messenger, either believed in the Circumlocution Office as a heaven-born institution that had an absolute right to do whatever it liked; or took refuge in total infidelity, and considered it a flagrant nuisance.

The Barnacle family had for some time helped to administer the Circumlocution Office. The Tite Barnacle Branch, indeed, considered themselves in a general way as having vested rights in that direction, and took it ill if any other family had much to say to it. The Barnacles were a very high family, and a very large family. They were dispersed all over the public offices, and held all sorts of public places. Either the nation was under a load of obligation to the Barnacles, or the Barnacles were under a load of obligation to the nation. It was not quite unanimously settled which; the Barnacles having their opinion, the nation theirs.

Washington, DC – Many sources over many decades

Continuing the ongoing saga of “The Swamp”

The United States Circumlocution Department is currently addressing issues pertaining to the election of Donald Trump, political and legislative activity and Supreme Court appointments prior to and since then, the Mueller Investigation and Report and antecedent and subsequent controversies, immigration, racism and sexism, intensely partisan politics, differing opinions about truth and falsehood, Teapot Dome, Communism, etc., etc.

Editorial Comments by Bill Morehouse – 2019 AD

The Ongoing Display of Human Nature

The problem we have with governance can be traced to what has been called “original sin” as memorialized in the Biblical account of the fall of Adam and Eve. They had everything given to them – a wonderful and secure place to dwell in, food, water, love and companionship with each other and God, and the entire creation at their beck and call. They were healthy and happy. Whenever they felt a need, God was present to give them wisdom about how to obtain it. There weren’t any one-percenters to envy or racial issues to struggle with, no taxes to pay, no health insurance disparities, no phobias or hatreds or insecurities. Until something happened...

Adam and Eve were given a choice: continue to seek God for understanding and wisdom about good and evil, listen to His voice and obey His guidance, and receive His ongoing blessing and provision OR listen to a persuasive element in creation that disagrees with God, choose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (i.e., decide what is good and evil by using their own understanding), ignore God’s voice, and follow their own way. When the choice was put before them to choose life with God or disobedience and death (deceptively rationalized as life), they became the first independent pro-choice human beings in recorded history. “Help me or get out of my way. I will take care of myself, become who I think I should be, and do what I think I should without consulting your God, and don’t you dare tell me otherwise.” They chose falsehood and death, placed their faith in themselves, became aware of their vulnerability, tried to cover themselves, hid from God, and lost their grip on goodness. Human beings have been estranged from God, confused, self-justifying, struggling, and wandering in their own self-will ever since.

In politics the problem boils down to this: Leaders rise up from among the people convinced that they have good ideas for the betterment of the body politic. Some leaders are among the privileged and others rise from the common man, but all have a sense, a program, a platform that they believe will be the best course of action to follow. New good things must be done and old bad things undone. But others – often similarly sincere people – disagree and have different ideas about what should be done. Earthly, fleshly, worldly, and sometimes downright demonically (Satan himself being known as Lucifer or “light bearer”) inspired ideas compete in the marketplace and wrestle for prominence in the halls of government. Dedicated civil servants of all persuasions and none fill the offices of government up to the highest places, each struggling in his or her own way to advance or oppose in their own strength the issue of the day. Many of these are the weeds in the swamp that compete for life with the plants that were originally placed there for the good of the community. It’s only by the amazing grace of God any good gets accomplished in our highly politicized world.

What kind of society do you want to see built? Colonial Britannia? The American Dream, whatever we conceive it to be? From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs? Socialism, capitalism, communism, democracy, republicanism, liberalism, conservatism, tribalism, anarchy...? What’s your dream?

Is anyone genuinely interested in getting untangled from the swamp of human sin and death by becoming fully reconciled to the God of Heaven and Earth, learning to understand His ways by reading His Word and listening to and obeying His voice in all things, and then joining with others in seeing the Beloved Community of the Kingdom of God grow in our midst? The only one who can save us from the manifold and ever-present snares of the Fowler who oversees the Circumlocution Department is Jesus. And when He does, He intercedes for us with the Father who then sends the Holy Spirit to be our guide, our strength, our wisdom, our comforter, our protector, and the one who leads us forth in victory. If God is for us, who can be against us?

