

A lead pipe cinch later on. Alright?

By J. B. Leftwich

Leonard Bradley Jr. my long-time friend and former pupil, who is a professor at Tusculum University in Greeneville, Tenn., describes his confusion with and an interest in two words most of us have dealt with and discarded for others to ponder.

Writes he:

“I frequently hear people, including myself, using the words ‘clinch’ and ‘cinch’ as though they were interchangeable, though I suspect they should not be, except that each has one purported meaning roughly indicating to ‘fix in place’ or ‘to tie down.’

“Some seem to vary their uses depending on whether they are kindred spirits of cowboys, sailors or carpenters. As a flyfisher, I do know that the ‘improved clinch knot’ is very handy for tying flies to a tippet, so I ignore the gnawing feeling that ‘improved cinch knot’ seems more appropriate since it involves a line and not a hammer. (I suppose that whoever discovers a star or a knot can name it whatever he wishes.) And why is the mother of all cinches the ‘lead pipe cinch?’

“(I often wonder the same thing about “founder” and “flounder,” which I am certain are not interchangeable, but one earth-shattering issue at a time is enough.)”

To which I responded:

Later on in your exploration of word usage perhaps you will ponder the question: Is “later on” any later than “later”? A companion question, of course, is: Is “early on” any earlier than “early”?

Later or later on, as the case may be, let us delve into the perplexing proposition: Is “right now” any sooner than “now?” Maybe. Or at least, it may be.

And may be we could determine why “already” is acceptable but “alright” [a word *The Tennessean* used in an editorial Tuesday] correctly used is “all right”.

We word hounds should get together later on and dangle a few participles. Or at least split a few infinitives.

+ + +

Philip Workman shot and killed a Memphis police officer in 1981, a highly expensive murder for the state of Tennessee which has devoted vast sums on appeal after appeal while newspaper reporter Tim Chavez and activist Joe Ingle wring their hands as the wheels of justice roll nearer to Workman’s execution.

My question: Does the Rev. Joe Ingle concern himself with prisoners serving long terms and claiming they are innocent? Or does Chavez moan over these same proclaimers of their innocence? Some behind bars say: "Not guilty." It appears that the reporter and the minister are saying to them, "Not interested."

+ + +

The new Tennessee automobile license tags have generated a bit of a controversy. The field of green, say some, is too dark and renders the numerals or letters overlapping the field less distinguishable. I agree. Law enforcement officers and witnesses of accidents may find the new tags more difficult to read.

There also are complaints about the rising sun some say is a symbol of Japan's former military might which took heavy tolls on American servicemen during World War II.

But is the sun the property of one nation?

During the power and threat of the Soviet Union when the word "red" was in disrepute in this country, some citizens wanted the Cincinnati Reds to change their team name.

The baseball team's response:

"Let them [the Soviets] change theirs. We had it first."

Thus they remain. The Cincinnati Reds.

+ + +

The printed prayer in our Sunday church program read:

"We are reluctant, O Author of Love, to set aside our hurt, our anger, our disappointment. Heal us with your tender touch that we might be cleansed of all unclean thoughts, all schemes of revenge, all hope of vindictive retribution. Open our eyes to the power of love shown to us in the unselfish sacrifice of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen."

It's a great prayer, but it cuts across the grain for many, including me, who are dedicated to getting even

+ + +

Sitting in church and unable to listen to the sermon because of a hearing disability, I was wondering how we came to have the portrait of Jesus universally popular in Christian churches.

I tried on the Internet to learn the identify of the artist but I was unsuccessful. Whoever the artist, his rendition in the minds of many is the way Jesus looked as an adult. This is the image some have seen in their dreams, even in shadows on a refrigerator. In reality nobody knows how Jesus looked. Wonder how a portrait showing a balding, clean shaven Jesus in sweat drenched clothes would go over?

Well, not so well, I guess.

(J.B. Leftwich is a veteran journalist and a columnist for *The Lebanon Democrat*.
Email: leftwichjb@charter.net)

<http://www.ajlambert.com>