
Heart and Soul: A Symposium on Aim and Tone in American Conservatism

To mark American Experiment's tenth anniversary, center president Mitch Pearlstein asked a number of friends, in Minnesota and elsewhere in the United States, to offer ideas about making conservative ideas and policies more compelling and effective. Thirty writers, of all political stripes, responded to the following question:

"It has been said that the prime challenge for a liberal is to demonstrate an appropriately hard head, while the first job for a conservative is to manifest a similarly soft heart. Notwithstanding a certain snappy slogan coined by a certain presidential candidate about compassion, how might conservatism come across, especially to Minnesota skeptics, as more benevolent and fellow feeling in spirit?"

"More to the concrete point, how might conservative ideas actually be put to use in the service of more effective public policies as well as more uplifting 'habits of the heart'?"

"In answering, feel free to reject any of the above premises, explicitly stated or otherwise. This includes the suggestion that conservatives frequently suffer from what might be described as a 'tone' problem, particularly when dealing with issues of poverty, race, sex, homosexuality, and the like."

In a spirit of ecumenism, ideological and otherwise, their brief essays are listed alphabetically.

The New Conservatism: Politics of Principle

David Asp

Last year, Governor Jeb Bush resisted pressure from many conservatives, including Ward Connerly, to ban affirmative action. As an alternative, the governor introduced the One Florida initiative, which proposed ending racial preferences in admissions to Florida state universities while increasing financial aid and other opportunities to minority students.

The governor stressed that One Florida would not end affirmative action in Florida, yet his plan had barely been released before it was called “a sophisticated way of turning us back to segregation.” One student said that Bush would rather “have his picture taken with little black children than educate them.” The truth is, as African American columnist Clarence Page wrote, that One Florida “could provide even more racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.” Why then was Jeb Bush compared with the segregationists of years ago?

Bush’s problem lay not in his policies but in his public relations. The public generally presumes a stereotypical motive behind the actions of conservatives. Because Jeb Bush is a white southern Republican, many might have assumed that his agenda was aimed at repealing racial progress. This is not, however, what One Florida was attempting to do. The way Bush was immediately pigeonholed is indicative of the larger concern that nearly all conservatives face—a tone problem.

The conservative movement disguises its true ideology by focusing on the often-divisive aspects of controversial issues. As a result, opponents and even objective observers can misrepresent its basic ideological elements. This was obvious in Governor Jeb Bush’s case. His initial press release on One Florida claimed to “increase diversity” with an initiative that “ends racial preferences, racial set-asides, and race-based university admissions.” To many Florida citizens, this meant reinstating racist practices.

To prevent similar misunderstandings, conservatives must begin to espouse the principles that guide their political claims: personal freedom and responsibility, and the American values of fairness and equality.

Conservative leader Jack Kemp has been most successful in pointing out how conservative policies can best deal with divisive issues. In 1996 Kemp addressed affirmative action by talking about a “new civil rights agenda based upon expanding job opportunities [and] educational choice in our inner cities.” He was referring to the same basic principles that guided the One Florida program (neither Kemp nor Bush opposes affirmative action). The difference is that while Bush attacked systems that used racial preferences, Kemp attacked the system that made and continues to make racial preferences necessary. By making obvious the philosophy behind his policy, Kemp was successful in avoiding misrepresentation of his ideology.

But merely explaining the ideas that drive conservative political

thought will not convince those who are alienated by more divisive conservative forces. The rhetoric of successful conservatives must be framed in broader, more inclusive terms. The conservative movement must seek to engage traditionally alienated individuals in a new discussion centered on conservative ideas like freedom, justice, and equality. New conservatives must shed the image that being conservative means ignoring the needs of minorities, the poverty-stricken, and others. New conservatives must attempt to create a “big tent” that includes not only groups that historically have been ignored, but also those who refuse to be a part of any group that is not inclusive. The “big tent” must have room for disenchanted younger voters, students, and activists who may vote along conservative lines if not for what they perceive to be acrimonious forces in conservative politics.

The disenchantment factor explains the appeal of John McCain among young voters. McCain successfully avoided labels usually slapped on Republican presidential candidates. While McCain’s positions show that he is a conservative, his platform transcended party lines. McCain’s mission to “inspire young people for a cause greater than their own self-interest” shifted the focus of the debate to underlying principles like responsibility and honor. But McCain also broke through stereotypes and motivated voters not usually affiliated with traditional conservative groups by appealing to what Abraham Lincoln called the “the better angels of our nature.”

Raising the caliber of political debate is essential to solving the conservatives’ “tone problem.” New conservatives must focus their rhetoric on underlying principles like freedom, equality, and responsibility before their message can be clearly understood. Shifting the emphasis of political discussions from name-calling to a serious dialogue on values and ideals increases the significance of public discourse and can only help the conservative cause.

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Preaching What You Practice: Some Friendly Advice

Jo Michelle Beld

How might conservatives better convey the compassion that many enact in their own lives, both privately and publicly? And why should they do so?

Let me suggest an answer to the second question first. Many of us are heartily tired of partisan wrangling and political stalemate. Neither our political culture nor our public policy making flourishes when polemic unnecessarily divides both ordinary citizens and public officials. It’s in everyone’s interest for people of different political and ideological persuasions to speak as clearly as possible to the values they truly espouse. Conservatives who espouse an ethic of compassion (if not a politics of compassion) do us all a service if their discourse better reflects their commitments.

How might conservatives do this? Here are some suggestions.

Abandon the myth of “self-sufficiency.” The term “self-sufficient” has been used to make an artificial distinction between people who pay into the public purse and people who draw on it. The implication is that as long as your family is not receiving some kind of public assistance (principally welfare), your family is “self-sufficient.” But who among us is truly self-sufficient? When I itemize my deductions and claim the tax expenditures the tax code permits me as a home owner and a working parent who has to pay for child care, can I really maintain that I’m “self-sufficient”? Some of us pay into the public coffers, and some of us pay more than others; but all of us benefit. If conservatives need a new “hook” for social policies aimed at improving the well-being of the poorest among us, I’d advocate something more along the lines of reciprocity. All of us benefit from community resources, and all of us need to give back in some way. Good public policies promote proportional reciprocity.

Bring your skepticism to bear on private efforts to do good as well as on public efforts. To hear some conservatives speak, you’d think that the best way to predict whether a program was likely to succeed is to simply look at whether it is publicly or privately run. This is a simplistic view that overlooks both the government programs that work well and the private programs that work poorly. For all its foibles, the public sector (at least in a democracy) offers one systematic mechanism for improvement that the private sector does not—electoral accountability. In the absence of systematic accountability mechanisms,

the private sector needs the same kind of careful scrutiny that the public sector has received from conservative scholars and intellectuals. We need to learn from the failures of the private sector as well as from the successes of the public sector, especially in an age of collaboration and public-private partnerships. All of us, as citizen-clients of both sectors, will benefit.

Avoid claiming an exclusive right to “values” in policy debates. We’ve heard lots of rhetoric from the right about the need to restore values in American culture and public policy. Katherine Kersten recently defined a conservative as “somebody who holds up certain kinds of virtues [and] who believes there is truth, not just what’s true for you vs. what’s true for me.” But there are plenty of liberals, myself included, who espouse a virtue ethic as a viable basis for public policy and who also espouse an objectivist (although not necessarily absolutist) view of moral truth. Conservatives who speak as if they have cornered the market on virtues and values distract us from the hard task of figuring out how best to realize them in the complex world of policy making (and the even more complex world of policy implementation). The question is not “Who has values?” or even “Who has the best values?” Rather, the question is “Which values have priority in a given domain, and why?” Only then can we ask “What course of action is most consistent with those values?”

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Abraham Lincoln: Pragmatist, Idealist, Compassionate Conservative

Barry Casselman

Abraham Lincoln is the quintessential American political personality. He remains an almost endlessly complex human being whose writings, speeches, and behavior reveal extraordinary skills and perceptions. He remains to this day the greatest writer and speaker of the American English language. Beyond this, Lincoln was the first truly successful national Republican, and the original “compassionate conservative,” if you will.

History, contrary to the cliché, rarely repeats itself. But it always instructs us. I choose from all the stories about Lincoln and his presidency one little-known anecdote that may inform the discussion of contemporary compassionate conservatism.

In 1862, with the Civil War barely a year old and many Minnesota soldiers fighting on battlefields far away, an uprising of the Dakota tribes, responding to their treatment by white settlers, raged in Minnesota, resulting in great loss of life among settlers and Native Americans. By September, both sides were exhausted by the hostilities and near starvation. The Dakota chief, Red Iron, then surrendered and released his prisoners. Subsequently, 2,000 Dakota were taken into custody and a mass trial was held. In short and arbitrary hearings, almost 400 Dakota were tried and more than 300 were convicted and sentenced to death in what has been described as a “travesty of justice.”

Henry Whipple, Episcopal bishop of Minnesota, had been for years concerned about the treatment of the Dakota, and had traveled in 1860 to Washington to meet with Democratic President James Buchanan to seek help on their behalf. He was rebuffed, and after the carnage of the 1862 uprising, he went east again, this time to meet with Republican President Lincoln.

Lincoln was impressed and pledged that “the Indian system will be reformed.” At the same time, he told Whipple, his priority was to win the war against the South.

Whipple appealed to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, then meeting in New York. He was told not to bring politics into the House of Bishops, but, raising his infected hand—resulting from his caring for the wounded at a hospital in St. Peter, Minnesota—he angrily said, “My diocese is desolated by Indian war, eight hundred of our people are dead, and I have just come from a hospital of wounded and dying. I asked one of my brothers to sign this paper, and he responds by calling it ‘politics.’ ” The bishop of Pennsylvania then came to his support and obtained thirty-nine signatures to Whipple’s petition, which was sent to Lincoln.

Lincoln now had to make a decision. His fear that the Civil War might have to be fought on two fronts was now confirmed. He had promised Whipple reform, but he was preoccupied with the then faltering efforts of the Union army. (Gettysburg was more than six months away.) On December 6, 1862, Lincoln disappointed and angered many white

Minnesota settlers by discarding 264 of the death sentences. He personally wrote out the names of 39 Dakota who would be executed and sent them to Governor Sibley.

Like so many of Lincoln's important acts as president, the action was taken with an inspired blend of pragmatism, idealism, and compassion. His critics, then and now, miss the point of his genius because they want to impose abstractions on a human world. For example, death-penalty opponents today would likely condemn Lincoln, just as civil libertarians condemn his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and certain civil rights activists condemn his often-stated sentiment that he placed preserving the union over the abolition of slavery.

In the year 2000, we have no civil war, nor even a cold war. Instead of visible crisis, we have unprecedented prosperity, low unemployment, and astonishing technologies advancing all aspects of our lives at an astonishing velocity. We have the dilemma of how to integrate into our American society large groups of immigrants, including new generations of blacks, plus recent immigrations of Hispanic, Asian, and Islamic citizens. A conservative party, any party, that does not appeal to this important group of Americans cannot expect to be allowed to govern. A second, more invisible challenge, the integration of extraordinary new technologies into the lives of all Americans, is becoming more evident every day. A conservative party, any party, that does not prepare itself to address

these questions cannot expect to be allowed to govern.

The nation chose a conservative and compassionate politician in 1860. It remains to be seen if the conservative party will successfully offer the electorate another one seven score years later.

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An Activist, Compassionate Conservatism

Norm Coleman

"What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?"

—Abraham Lincoln, 1860

Like prescription drugs and batteries, certain words lose their potency and power over time. Presidential elections give us a regular opportunity to redefine what our political words mean to a majority of our people in the new circumstances of the time.

I like Mr. Lincoln's approach to defining conservatism. There are old ideas we have tried and found successful, to which we should continue to adhere. There are new ideas, and among them are some history will judge as "keepers" and others the passage of time will tell us to discard. But everything else being equal, the old is more likely to work than the new.

As mayor of Minnesota's second-largest city, I proudly say I am a conservative. I have governed with conservative principles, and St. Paul's progress

under those principles is unmistakable. Here is a short list that defines conservatism for me: “old and tried” ideas I’ve tried to adhere to, and some “new and untried” ideas Minnesota and the nation would be wise to avoid.

Old and Tried

Public welfare depends mostly on private initiative. Quality jobs in the private sector are our best sources of income, savings, and investment, and our best access to health care, education, and retirement security. Community and faith-based organizations provide public services cheaper, better, and more quickly. Government is the employer and service provider of last resort, and for the good of the people should do everything it can to work itself out of a job.

Lower taxes and better government build hope and confidence and yield investment. Private-sector dollars and personal involvement grow in a climate where government is a well-managed and reliable partner with businesses, neighborhoods, and families. Reducing government’s income is essential. It not only gives the private sector and families more to invest, it also stimulates government innovation, which builds further confidence.

Visionary leadership must be willing to take risks. From revolutionary days to today, leadership has been essential. The mark of that leadership—in fighting wars, expanding civil rights, and modernizing our economy—has been changing the moral tide of the people. Leadership that just reflects what the

people already want is not worthy of the name. Leaders must risk political capital to encourage people to sacrifice something they can see today for something better tomorrow that they cannot yet see.

More money, yes, but also more innovation in education. The urgency of our educational challenges demands not only more money but also a relentless search for new and better ways of achieving our goals. FDR said in 1932:

The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.

If we ever need that spirit in policy making, it is in education.

In St. Paul, these principles have led to six years of zero levy increases, consolidation and refocusing of city services, and seventeen new charter schools. Thirteen thousand new jobs and a broad-based renaissance of our neighborhoods later, we’re a city on the move, proud of what we’ve accomplished together.

New and Untried

Three relatively new trends nationally and in Minnesota politics belong in my category of approaches we would do best to discard.

Focus-group policy making. Keeping in touch with the people is essential, but policy making on complex issues is not a job for amateurs. We are a representative democracy, which means we

trust some who have devoted their lives to public service to make decisions based on a deeper knowledge and experience than the average citizen has time to obtain. The lowest common denominator will not get us very far, and taking polls is the wrong way to lead our state and nation.

Centralization and professionalization of problem-solving. If every problem needs a federal or state government program and a licensed professional to solve it, the needs of a great number of our citizens will never get met. We need to encourage solutions on the local, personal scale, with broad latitude for community and faith-based organizations to do what they do so well.

Government by emotion and celebrity. Leadership that is based on “feeling our pain” or “getting our juices flowing” runs the risk of leaving the populace desensitized on all the great issues of our time that lack sex appeal. The heightened awareness of emotionalism inevitably gives way to boredom and/or cynicism. We need to enhance the public dialogue, not cheapen it.

At the turn of the past century, Woodrow Wilson described a conservative as “a man who just sits and thinks, mostly sits.” In Minnesota in the year 2000, that more aptly describes those who occupy the left of the political spectrum. They are squatting around a status quo that is well funded and inert, and betrays the good intentions on which it was built. My response is an activist and compassionate conservatism that vigorously pursues tried-and-true ideas such as private initiative, limited government, vision-

ary leadership, and educational innovation. Those ideas have a shelf life well into this new century.

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Who Really Is Compassionate?

Ward Connerly

The presidential race is in full swing, and, with a bruising primary season over, George W. Bush is out to prove how compassionate he is. Conventional wisdom says that Republicans are not compassionate, especially when it comes to America’s race problems.

An image first invoked by President Johnson summarizes the entire debate over America’s race problems:

You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, “You are free to compete with all the others,” and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.

Ever since, apologists for and opponents of preference have skirmished over what it means.

The apologists throw the man in a wheelchair and push him to the finish line. Preference opponents, on the other hand, are content to provide the supports necessary for him to set and achieve his own goals.

This difference in approach appears to betray a difference in compassion. Many people have argued that apologists want to uplift the downtrodden

and left-behind, while opponents simply blame the victim. Many black and other “minority” Americans, for example, do struggle just to get by, and so being offered a free ride to a finish line, any finish line, is quite appealing.

Just getting to the finish line, though, is not the goal. If, at the end of the race, an individual has not developed the skills to continue, what has he gained? At some point, the preference system ends, and one must stand on his own legs. If he’s been carted around in a wheelchair, those legs probably won’t provide the support he needs.

An example from the University of California (UC) will illustrate. When UC’s Board of Regents ended the use of race in admissions decisions, minority enrollment at the system’s flagship campuses, Berkeley and UCLA, plummeted. Apologists crowed that these statistics proved the racist discriminatory nature of the SAT, and UC in general. That explanation, however, ignores the obvious: many minority students simply weren’t prepared for the rigors of a high-powered education.

Looked at in this way, the decline in minority enrollment puts the lie to the preference apologists and the claim that they are compassionate. While first-generation Asian immigrants have struggled to prepare themselves for college, many black students waste their days blaming the system for their plight. Under a preference regime, they correctly expected that the system would bail them out when the day of reckoning arrived. With the preference regime gone, they had to confront the reality that they were not prepared. The com-

passion they had enjoyed, it turns out, did little more than postpone the natural consequences of their inaction.

That the American people are looking at preferences in this light is apparent. Following a bitter campaign to end preferences statewide, California voters in 1996 approved, by a margin of 54 to 46, Proposition 209 (“The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting”). In 1998, Washington State voters approved I-200, a clone of Proposition 209, by an even wider margin. In Florida, despite desperate tactics by a few race advocates in the legislature, black and Latino likely voters have voiced overwhelming support for the Florida Civil Rights Initiative.

Americans no longer believe that preferences are compassionate. Many question whether they ever were. This is not to say that preference opponents can rest. Our public school system condemns most students to an education that will not prepare them for any college, let alone an elite university. We can and must show how school choice and charter schools provide the tools necessary for all students—regardless of race or ethnicity—to get the education they need. A truly compassionate policy helps individuals develop the skills they need to succeed on their own.

Do preference opponents, and conservatives generally, need to hone their message to overcome being viewed as callous? I can’t speak authoritatively on

other issues, but on the issue of race preferences, I think the answer is an emphatic no. Once popular figures like Jesse Jackson, whose entire existence depends on stirring the racial pot, are today viewed as race profiteers out for their own aggrandizement. Today, the message of racial unity, of ending preferences and getting rid of the race boxes on our government forms, is both the high and the popular ground. Ward Connerly is the author of *Creating Equal: My Fight Against Race Preferences*, a regent of the University of California, and chairman of the American Civil Rights Institute.

Compassionate Conservatism and Public Policy

Bryan Dowd

I would like to suggest three areas in which compassionate conservatism could make a difference in public policy: fiscal responsibility, the tax code, and our attitude toward our own nation. When people think of public compassion, they often think in terms of income redistribution from the relatively wealthy to the relatively poor. Compassion certainly does involve sharing one's resources—both time and money. If you consider yourself a conservative and aren't volunteering for a worthy organization, you should be. Do it today. Big Brothers and Big Sisters has a waiting list of children who simply would like to spend an hour a week with you at one of the Twin Cities' finer fast food restaurants.

Of course, sharing resources, per se, does not distinguish conservatives from

the political left, unless we make something of the fact that conservatives tend to emphasize redistribution of their own income, while the political left emphasizes redistribution of other people's income. I believe that in a variety of policy areas, conservatives need to promote the simpler and even more fundamental maxim of fiscal responsibility. Conservatives should pay their own bills rather than palming them off on someone else. A case in point is the Medicare program.

Sometime between 2010 and 2020, the Medicare trust fund that pays for hospital services (Part A) will be exhausted. At that same time, Medicare will begin a quick doubling of its current enrollment. The political left's response to this situation is "just raise taxes," and they have no doubt that if we wait until the crisis is upon us, the public will acquiesce. The problem, of course, is that when the crisis arrives, much of my generation will no longer be paying the payroll tax, which funds Part A. My generation, which has enjoyed relatively low payroll taxes all their working lives, will transfer a crushing burden of debt to their children. Conservatives should not allow that to happen. To bring projected Medicare costs and revenue into alignment, they should recommend improvements in program efficiency, limits on the government's financial obligation per beneficiary (including the possibility of means-testing the entitlement), and immediate, rather than postponed, increases in tax revenue.

A second, related area for compassionate conservatism concerns the tax

code. Unless we wish to dispense with all publicly funded services, including national defense, we are going to have a tax system. As long as the tax system contains exemptions for purchase of some types of goods and services, it will favor higher income purchasers of those goods and services relative to lower income purchasers. (This effect is enhanced by a progressive tax code such as the federal personal income tax, but applies anytime that tax-exempt consumption increases with income.) The value of the tax exemption of employment-based health insurance, for example, is positively related to the individual's tax bracket and to the amount of insurance purchased.

Unless conservatives want a tax code with no exemptions (and some may), they need to realize that their purchase of health insurance, their home, their second home, and a variety of other goods and services are subsidized through the tax code. Having enjoyed the benefits of those subsidies, they should try to develop a logically consistent position on similar subsidies for poor.

The final area of compassionate conservatism concerns our attitude toward our own nation. As a public health professional, I believe that the United States must be considered a significant threat to international public health. The reason is that so many people die trying to get into our country. They drown off the Florida coast and suffocate in overheated boxcars on the Mexican-American border. So many people have given their lives trying to reach our country that I suggest, in all

seriousness, that we should erect a monument to the dead on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Had those people survived, they would be, for the most part, poor minorities in this country—surely a puzzle to the political left who can't imagine any place worse than the United States for poor minorities.

The political left would have us believe that the most compassionate act Americans can perform toward people from different cultural and political backgrounds is to honor and perpetuate those differences. The political left is wrong. People don't risk death to reach a country that is just as good as the one they left. A far more compassionate response by Americans would be to perform an honest, rigorous, ongoing analysis of the factors that make our nation so compellingly attractive to people the world over, and to ensure that those factors are protected and preserved—a supreme act of conservation. I believe that such an analysis will reveal the pivotal role of a unique confluence of religious, economic, and political thought in the United States that elevates individuals—their preferences, their property, and their intrinsic worth—to a position of unprecedented importance, far greater than that achievable by membership in any race, gender, or class. Those systems of thought are the foundation of all compassion, and they are the things most worthy of conservation.

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A Cold Shower for Conservatives

Ronald E. Eibensteiner

Conservatism, as classically defined, rests upon a view that humans are inherently flawed, due both to a lack of knowledge and to a lack of good judgment. Any bystander to twentieth-century history, witnessing the rise of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia (to name just two glaring examples) could hardly disagree. Because humans are limited and fallible, we conservatives believe in dispersed decision making, which tends to limit the amount of harm any one person can do. This is good and right, and is the foundation of our federalist form of government.

Over the past decade, however, we have seen a particularly virulent form of this distrust, exemplified best by Judge Robert Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, emerge among some conservatives who have come to believe that America is rotting from within and doomed to destruction.

This attitude reached its apex during the impeachment of President Clinton. When they were faced with a public that apparently wished to retain its flawed president, some conservatives launched a broadside against the American people, accusing them of having lost their moral sense. Some even went so far as to announce that they would abandon the whole enterprise of politics, believing that America was beyond redemption.

These conservatives have lost their sense of proportion. Although classical

conservatism distrusts human nature, it does not view people as depraved beyond hope. Instead, people—as individuals, families, and communities—are capable of love, charity, and nobility.

I would suggest that we conservatives need to take a cold shower and remember that people, even though they are capable of great evil, also are capable of goodness. We should recall that most people work hard, try to raise good kids, and give a little back to their community. Most Americans are trying their best.

Once we have recalled this basic truth, the political prescription is easy. Instead of constantly railing against the evil, highlight the good. Instead of wagging our collective fingers in the face of America, seek to bring out the “better angels” of our nature. In short, give Americans credit for the good they do, and encourage them to do better.

These simple changes, if adopted widely, would do much good for conservatives in America.

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The Limits of the Public Sector

Kent E. Eklund

Much of the debate between conservatives and liberals gets framed as a “levels of analysis” problem. Conservatives focus on deficits of individuals, and liberals focus on deficits of institutional

supports for individuals. Both have elements of truth, but both are inadequate as the sole source of solutions.

I believe a more helpful way to frame the debate utilizes the concept of assets and discusses how assets can be developed in individuals of all ages and, more importantly, what assets differing institutions bring to the table to support individuals. Prime in the latter part of this discussion is a continuation of the current debate about the appropriate roles of each sector in our society. We clearly have arrived at conclusions about the limits of the public sector in terms of flexibility, tolerance for risk, and speed of change. How the other two sectors, private and nonprofit, bring their advantages to the development of assets in individuals will be the appropriate way to structure the debate in this new decade.

The private sector clearly thrives on careful listening to customers and markets: this connection with consumers creates a change-oriented approach to problem solving often unimpeded by the constraints of more democratic systems. This freedom provides the freshness so often missing in public debates about eliminating programs and services that clearly no longer meet public needs.

The nonprofit sector also demonstrates great flexibility in its resilience, its mission drive, and its own need to attend to a broad array of stakeholders. Though sometimes deficient in management and management systems, this sector, when it is coupled with strong boards of directors and dedicated, capa-

ble managers, provides a much more efficient and responsive delivery system than can often be developed within the current management constraints of the public sector.

Blending the unique strengths of each of the three sectors, which has always been a unique feature of the American experiment, will be a major theme of the next decades.

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Conservative Values in a Therapeutic Culture

Patrick M. Garry

The indictment against conservatives, as a Gore campaign aide put it, is that they “have no love, and no joy,” and in a culture that views its politics in the same light in which it views its relationship counselors, that indictment is devastating. The therapeutic culture that America has become during the Clinton years—a culture in which self-esteem is the great crusade, and public policy is simplistically labeled as either the politics-of-hate or the politics-of-love—is not one in which conservatives are at their strength. After all, a culture that derides Pope John Paul II as an insensitive conservative (a man who opposes the death penalty, who condemns the wasteful materialism of the world’s richest nations, and who calls on America to pay more attention to the impoverished people of the lesser developed countries than to the hectic schedules of soccer moms) is not a

culture that currently embraces the conservative message.

Never in human history has a society as rich as the United States been so singularly obsessed with trying to feel good. It is a country that couldn't stand the thought of losing one combat casualty in Kosovo, even as it bombed into oblivion a territory smaller than the state of Indiana. It is a country that cloaks every issue in the emotionally manipulative language of children, even as it categorizes abortion as mere choice. And it is a country that turned the channel when a woman described how the man who is America's president raped her.

Unfortunately, the longer the bar stays open at America's Dow Jones party, the more fragile its self-esteem seems to become. But indulging such self-absorption has never been a conservative value.

The danger of the coming elections, particularly the presidential election, is that conservatives will follow the path of liberals, who in the 1990s sacrificed nearly every principle they had just to put, and keep, Bill Clinton in the White House. The danger is that the Republican Party may prove to be the conservatives' Trojan horse—that it will lead conservatives in a sheepish retreat into therapeutic mushiness.

Yet when the time does come, conservatives should be able to show their "heart." One of the real strengths of conservatism is that it is so much more closely in touch with "the heart" of society than is liberalism. It is the conservative who gives primacy to all those "nongovernmental" aspects of

society: family, religion, neighborhood, and the plethora of society's voluntary organizations. But ever since Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose campaign of 1912 splintered away the socially conscious conservatives from the Republican Party, the image of conservatism in America has come to be that of a miserly old man who says no to everything. And in a sense, that's been true, because conservatives have spent the last ninety years in a state of reaction to the liberal agenda. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, they focused on trying to dismantle the New Deal. In the 1960s and 1970s, they fought—well, just about everything. Not until Reagan's presidency did conservatives finally find their own agenda. But then, during the Clinton years, they fell back on old habits (though of course they certainly had reason enough).

One of conservatives' biggest problems, in connection with their long reactionary fight against liberalism, has been to deny the existence of problems that liberals want to fix with big government programs. Conservatives have often been in denial about poverty, discrimination, pollution, and family violence. Or if they haven't completely denied those problems, they have held to a simplistic belief that the private sector will somehow magically remedy them. But this is just as naive as the liberal belief that every social ill can be healed with a government bureaucracy. As Robert Kennedy once observed: "In too much of our political dialogue, liberals have been those who wanted to spend more money, while conservatives have been those who wanted to

pretend that all problems should solve themselves.”

This tendency to deny social problems, however, has concealed the fact that the conservative agenda has often possessed a viable solution to those problems. Conservatives, for instance, were right on welfare. They were right on free trade. They were right on educational standards. They were right on fighting communist tyranny and opposing “the era of big government.” And they were right on the social impact of the breakdown of the family.

Perhaps conservatives just need to catch their breath—a breath that seems to have gone short just after the Contract with America was posted outside the Capitol, and a breath that has been sorely drained by all the Clinton scandals. They need to cast their ideas and their proposals in the affirmative, instead of as a footnote to their arguments against liberals. They need to use their principles not just to oppose, but to propose. And they need to unapologetically advocate policies that rest squarely on those conservative values that have made America the most free and open and prosperous democracy in the history of the world.

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Let's Try “Responsible Conservatism”

Steven Hayward

The character of contemporary liberalism has seldom been better described than in Kenneth Minogue's 1963 clas-

sic, *The Liberal Mind*. “Liberalism,” Minogue wrote,

develops from a sensibility which is dissatisfied with the world because it contains suffering. . . . The sufferings of any class of individuals is for liberals a political problem, and politics has been taken as an activity not so much for maximizing happiness as for minimizing suffering.

Hence the centrality of compassion to modern liberalism. And if it is the job of government to end suffering in all forms, then it is a short step to thinking that an end to your particular suffering is a right.

The ascendancy of compassion as the liberal virtue represents the triumph of Rousseau over Locke as the philosopher of liberalism. Rousseau legitimized compassion as a moral virtue, whereas for Locke and the classics, compassion had been understood as a passion—a thing to be governed by moral and intellectual virtue. For a liberal, compassion has become a substitute for individual moral goodness, if not the highest expression of moral goodness. That is why an obvious moral reprobate can gain political approval merely by saying “I feel your pain.” Liberals are politically virtuous because, well . . . because they just care, and by implication conservatives, by opposing “compassionate” policies, whether hospital stay mandates for new moms or new air quality regulations, don't care.

Compassion should be distinguished from charity, which is a Judeo-Christian duty rooted in our ultimate concern for the other fellow's eternal

soul. Compassion, on the other hand, is a largely self-indulgent and this-worldly virtue, especially on the political level. Look how good I am: I feel your pain. It is the rise of compassion as a moral virtue, and not single issues such as abortion, that is at the root of the so-called “gender gap.” And it is not fundamentally a gender question; this same sensibility is gradually catching on with SNAGs (Sensitive New Age Guys), the 1990s successor to the puppies of the 1980s.

Just as liberals consistently underestimated the appeal of Ronald Reagan, it would be a mistake for conservatives to underestimate the seriousness of this profound turn in our moral sensibilities. Conservative policies are actually more charitable than liberal policies in the classical sense of that virtue, but we need to be able to explain our policies in terms that bridge the compassion gap that is liberalism’s last refuge. Otherwise the gap may turn into an abyss, into which the political sense of the country will be swallowed up.

It is difficult to make a frontal assault against something that has established itself so fully in our moral furnishings. The attempts to do so account for much of the perception that conservatives are “mean” or uncaring. Hence it is understandable why Governor George W. Bush and others would try to articulate a “compassionate conservatism.” (California Governor Pete Wilson called his attempt at this “preventive government.”) However, employing the term compassion in any context concedes the moral ground to liberalism, and is

therefore a defensive creed. All this does is slow the speed of your retreat. Better to banish the term from our vocabulary altogether, and use older words that invoke an older, conservative moral tradition: charity, responsibility, duty. We might instead develop the theme of “responsible conservatism,” which acknowledges our duty to be charitable to those experiencing genuine suffering, while emphasizing the reciprocal duty to acquire the full virtues of citizenship.

Steven Hayward is a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute.

No Easy Answers

Peter Hutchinson

It must be tough being a public conservative, required by the stereotype to be tough, sure, and demanding. It must be tough wearing that fierce mask, like a hockey goalie, and never letting people see the person behind the mask. It must be tough feeling so much pressure to conform to the conservative caricature that you just can’t be yourself, tough and warm, sure and doubting, demanding and needy. It must be tough holding strong opinions about people you have never met, fearing that you will meet them and it won’t turn out to be so simple.

It must be tough being a private conservative, not liking some of what you have to be the rest of the time, but not feeling as though you have “permission” to wrestle with your doubts. It must be tough being thought of as what you espouse and not as the sum total of what you believe, or as a searcher in a

struggle to know what to believe. It must be tough condemning actions that turn out to be part of your own life, or the life of your family, or your friends. It must be tough knowing personally that the world is complicated, but having to act publicly as though it were simple.

Being a conservative means embracing one condition and one belief, and then struggling with how to act and what to do. First, we must embrace the fact that the forces of good and evil are at war in each and every one of us. We are caught up in a constant struggle. No one of us is exempt or above the fray. Then we must believe that each of us is capable of winning the war, though we may lose many of the battles, and we deserve one another's support. Conservative ideas will prevail only when they are grounded in both of these ideas. Fundamentally, conservative ideas must be about how to sustain and promote our better selves in a tough and challenging world. This requires aspirations that inspire, not absolutes that condemn. Success will come from combining challenges with support, from identifying the shortcoming along with the tool for improvement.

There is no shortcut. Being a conservative means thinking this through, for yourself and with your friends. It's hard work; it is tough.

I take it back; there is a shortcut. There is ideological bigotry. Adopting beliefs because they are "conservative." Using a list of beliefs as a litmus test to categorize and demonize our neighbors. We can put on the armor of our ideolo-

gy and use it as a defense against our doubts and all evidence to the contrary. But doing this breaks the fundamental rule that we think it through. Doing this means renting the beliefs of others, not owning them ourselves. Being a conservative means we have to buy our beliefs with the currency of our own hard work. Being a conservative means we have to think it through ourselves. Being a conservative means no easy answers. Being a conservative is tough.

So is being a liberal. So is being alive.

Peter Hutchinson is president of The Public Strategies Group, Inc., and a former member of the Center of the American Experiment Board of Advisers.

Substance and Style in the Conservative Message

Katherine A. Kersten

If you believe Peter Jennings and the New York Times, you think that American conservatives are a flint-hearted bunch, whose "uncaring" social policies are, by definition, highly suspect. Funny thing. We conservatives don't see ourselves that way. In fact, we believe that the policies we advocate are far more likely to help people, in long-term ways, than those of our liberal critics.

The battle over the nature and role of compassion in public policy is a flashpoint in America's culture wars. At its root lie the contradictory assumptions about human nature and social life that liberals and conservatives bring to the political arena.

The difference between the liberal and conservative worldviews can be summarized as follows. Liberals tend to believe that social problems, such as poverty, arise principally from unjust social arrangements. The way to solve such problems, they maintain, is to change social arrangements. If problems persist, it is because the people who hold power don't care enough about the victims of injustice to engineer social change. (Indeed, they probably benefit from the unjust status quo.) In the liberal view, people who profess compassion for the downtrodden—and who claim to grasp the form that optimal social arrangements should take—are best equipped to advance justice by rearranging social institutions.

Conservatives take a very different view. They believe that problems like poverty arise from limitations inherent in the human condition. Careful, incremental social change can improve life greatly, say conservatives, but we can never hope to banish suffering altogether. Indeed, overly ambitious social tinkering—no matter how well-intentioned—can exacerbate the very problems it seeks to solve. (Conservatives cite debacles from the welfare dependency spawned by Great Society programs to the white flight that followed race-based busing for school desegregation.) For this reason, in evaluating social policy, conservatives focus more on a policy's consequences than on the intentions of its framers. They prefer to entrust decisions about change not to "compassionate" bureaucrats who claim special expertise, but

to ordinary people who are likely to base their decisions on common sense and enlightened self-interest.

In short, liberals and conservatives both want a better world, but disagree as to how to get it. The challenge for conservatives—who must operate in a cultural climate dominated by liberals—is to translate their vision into terms that other Americans can understand: terms that will inspire their fellow citizens and capture their imagination.

We can do this—in the age of identity politics—by making conservatism an attractive identity, one that people will want to embrace. To succeed, we should emphasize four things.

Conservatives do care about the welfare of their fellow citizens. That's why conservatives demand more from public policy than the rhetoric of good intentions. We seek policies that don't just aim to improve lives, but actually do so. To make this point effectively, we should emphasize that conservatives wish to reduce the welfare state not primarily to save money or cut taxes, but to rescue those trapped in dependency. And we should demonstrate that we understand, and empathize with, the challenges that face those struggling with family breakdown and lack of education in the information age.

Conservatives, not liberals, are the true champions of equality and freedom. Two ideas—equality and individual freedom—are the touchstone of American political consciousness. Liberals often claim a monopoly on these ideas, portraying themselves as populist egal-

itarians who advocate freedom in the form of tolerance for all “lifestyle choices.”

Conservatives, however, are the real egalitarians. Unlike many liberals, we do not see disadvantaged citizens as incompetents who need to be rescued by the largesse of “caring” benefactors. We believe, on the contrary, that most Americans—regardless of their socio-economic status—are capable of taking charge of their lives and living as responsible and productive citizens. In the conservative view, one can be neither truly free nor truly equal as a permanent ward of the state. For this reason, conservatives support policies that extend temporary help to those in need. But they oppose policies that subsidize and encourage the self-destructive behavior that makes poverty inevitable.

Conservatives are progressive and future-oriented. Many Americans view conservatives as fearful of change and living in the past. We can combat this image by championing bold new ideas that highlight our belief in people’s ability to shape their own destiny. One such idea is school choice. (Nothing demonstrates the liberal establishment’s failures better than the dreadful condition of our nation’s inner-city public schools.) By insisting that poor Americans—indeed, all Americans—should be able to attend the school of their choice, we can lay the groundwork for real equality while building valuable alliances with minority leaders.

Conservatives have a vision of life that offers meaning in a confused and socially

fragmented world. The most potent weapon in the conservative arsenal is one we generally forget: we have an uplifting vision of what it means to be a human being and a citizen. In a society disoriented by the decline of religion and stripped of nobility by the triumph of psychology’s therapeutic paradigm, many Americans are searching for just such a vision. What they want is precisely what we can offer: a sense of moral purpose and a common civic project.

The substance of the conservative message is vital. But so is the style in which it is delivered. If we are to succeed in enhancing our image, conservatives must inspire our fellow citizens, not scold them. At a recent conference sponsored by the Heritage Foundation, a speaker assured conservative spokespeople that one of the most important things they can do when addressing the public is to smile. Likewise, we should remember Ronald Reagan’s maxim: One good story—one vivid picture of real people’s lives—is worth a thousand policy papers.

In building for the future, the conservative message to a liberal culture should be this: our vision for America is both inspiring and effective. It helps people in the most enduring way, because it draws not on what is weakest or basest in human beings, but on what is noblest: “the better angels of our nature.”

Writer Katherine Kersten is a director and former chairman of Center of the American Experiment.

Marketing the Conservative Agenda

Mary Kiffmeyer

“You can’t legislate morality!”

This phrase has been interjected into public policy debates so many times that people across the political spectrum seem to accept it as God’s own truth. Even I used to act as if it had legitimacy.

Then I realized that the answer to the puzzle is that you can’t legislate if you must leave out morality! The fact of the matter is that you can legislate only with morality. And every honest person must recognize that. Every single issue legislated has a moral basis as its foundation. Even the very establishment of government and its basic finance are moral issues; to have a government that takes an individual’s money for its operation requires a value judgment that the government has a more worthwhile purpose for it than the individual has.

The founders of this great country, built on strong religious principles, were very direct about the moral foundation underpinning their public policy ideas. They declared that we Americans deserve to make decisions for ourselves because we are endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights so we can live freely and pursue happiness. From that point forward, the course of our national public policy has been based on an important moral framework—a framework of which we should be proud and not let go.

Therefore, given that morality will be legislated, the real question is:

Whose morality will it be?

Now we come to the place of competing ideas. Whose morality will prevail is a matter of persuasion and building consensus.

First, we must expect competition in the marketplace of ideas. We have a right to have our say, but not a right to have our way. Our own moral code compels us to act morally even in our competition, recognizing that other people have the right to have their say, yet that they have no automatic right to have their way, either.

Second, we must be better promoters of our ideas. Advertising clutters the marketplace of ideas as much as it does the Saturday-morning television cartoons. Getting the support of the public requires not only that we have a good product—which we do—but also that we market it well. Sadly, the poorest products often have the best advertising campaigns supporting them.

Too often as conservatives we articulate our agenda in rational ways, giving straightforward strategies for policy implementation with rigorous facts and figures, without stating the most basic values underlying our ideas. We wind up looking simply cold and calculating, thinking only of our own pocketbooks.

We all know that being conservative means more than being an accountant for the waste and excess of bad government, and our rhetoric should show it. The compassion that we have for all human beings and the passion we have for freedom must be stated explicitly. At the same time, conservatives must recognize that there is a difference between beating others

over the head with a personal moral code and recruiting others onto our ideological team with mutually shared values. Good promotion of ideas and good recruitment of allies lays a good foundation for making public policy gains. I believe our moral values appeal broadly and our policy objectives resonate loudly when people are made readily to understand the connection between the two.

Third, we can speak publicly about our values with this approach. I speak my mind and talk about my values all the time—in a way that I believe appeals to a lot of people—and wherever I go, countless numbers of people come up to me and let me know how much they appreciate what I've said because it affirms what they believe.

If you are like me, and you are a conservative working for a better, increasingly moral America, just be sure to let people know it. People will listen to you. They will join you. They will support you.

Mary Kiffmeyer is Minnesota's twentieth secretary of state.

Whig Men with Tory Ideas

David Lebedoff

How might conservatism come across as more compassionate? This is a good question—but you have to read it over four or five times to realize just what it's really asking. Which is: Why don't people love conservatives? And the answer is, because people don't think that conservatives love them.

It's the salesmen, not the product, that's to blame. Conservative ideas are

selling very well in recent years. But who is selling them? Mostly Democrats. Bill Clinton has appropriated welfare reform, debt reduction, and many other items marked urgent on the conservative agenda. It is maddening to conservatives that he is taking credit for their product, just because he sold it door to door. But when conservatives (Reagan excepted) tried to peddle the same stuff, the doors were slammed in their faces. Why?

Disraeli said that what Englishmen really wanted was Tory men with Whig ideas. Today, it's just the opposite. Electorates all over the world seem to be demanding Whig men with Tory ideas (Bill Clinton, Tony Blair). Why?

It's certainly not a question of brains versus hearts. And if it were, which would be the better side? We have, after all, just completed a century in which principled reason finally freed and nourished billions, and unbridled emotion led only to genocide. Nor is it that one group is inherently superior to the other. I've spent enough time in both liberal and conservative circles to learn that neither has a monopoly on either brains or compassion. There are noble souls and rotten swine in both camps, the porcine invariably huddled at each extreme and the vast majority of either side quite similar in decency and good intentions.

Yet it's unarguable that conservatives have been losing the image war. "Hardhearted," "uncaring," and just plain "mean" are the epithets not merely flung, but caught.

It's partly the conservatives' fault.

The major mistake conservatives make is talking about means and not about ends. They're so obsessed with driving safely that they forget to mention their destination. Most people know where they themselves want to go, but what they don't know is that conservatives want to get there, too. It's just that they want to get there by another route and perhaps a little slower—but with the destination more assured.

And it's remarkably like the destination that the liberals have in mind. We don't have to guess what that is, because liberals are quick to tell us. In fact, that's all they tell us, for theirs is the opposite fault: they talk only about ends, not means.

Those ends are very attractive, especially monosyllabically condensed: kids, old, sick, poor, and so on, including the most important category of all, actually meriting a second syllable, victims. These become cardboard cutouts, carried from convention to convention and camera to camera over the decades, looming large and standing in for goals.

So when someone asks a liberal candidate what he or she is for, the answer is usually something like "Children. We have to insure a better life for children. And the elderly." A conservative would talk about vouchers or tax reform or health care, and have precisely the same goals in mind (assuming that cardboard cutouts are really goals).

But how would anyone know?

You can't just say you're for vouchers. You also have to say that you're for vouchers because you believe that more children—especially poor chil-

dren and minority children—will get a better chance to succeed in life. In their lives. This is in fact what real conservatives believe. So say it. Because if you don't, people won't know. If you want people's votes, you've got to kiss babies, not vouchers.

One conservative who understood this instinctively and perfectly was Ronald Reagan. His public speeches were studded with anecdotes. Anecdotes about people, real people—with names. Sometimes they were up there in the gallery, blushing at all the applause. His speeches meet Orwell's standard that a general proposition should always be followed by a specific example. The kind of people chosen to point out and praise are a clue to your own values, and your values are a clue to your goals.

Yes, this is shallow. And, yes, the more altruistic the speech, the more likely that the speaker is an opportunistic knave. It is admirable that those with real hearts don't like to wear them on their sleeves. But if those hearts do bleed, it's nothing to be ashamed of. If you favor welfare reform not to save tax payments but to rescue ghetto children from permanent hopelessness, then say so. Your enemies will ascribe to you the basest motives if you don't make your motives and your values clear and concrete.

The means are as important as the ends, because without a good road map no destination is reachable. But it helps to remind folks where you're heading.

There are other factors, too, for the public confusion of conservatism with Scrooge, including the strange conceit of

the congressional majority that the best way to fight the humorless ideologues is to become humorless ideologues.

The key to a better image is a better reality. If that reality is already principled, farsighted, and, yes, compassionate, then why continue to keep that a secret? Speak up—fully—and let the marketplace of ideas decide. When it has all the facts, it's never wrong.

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Building the Future of Conservatism

J. Stanley Marshall

Henry Kissinger recently canceled a speech at the University of Texas because university authorities couldn't assure him protection from unruly students. Several years ago George Bush and Jeane Kirkpatrick found themselves unable to address college audiences for the same reason. And Mitch Pearlstein's description of the hostility accorded Linda Chavez when she appeared with Angela Davis at Hamline University in 1992—by students who found Davis's radical Marxism more agreeable than Chavez's message that fathers matter and the increase in violent crime is tied to family breakdown—is fresh in my mind.

If we conservatives have a problem with young people—and we do—it is, I believe, due more to our lack of messengers than to the message. We know our core beliefs are true and, in their heart of hearts, many liberals do too.

But students, by and large, do not, and we fail to educate them. As a result, many are lured by the liberal feel-good philosophy into embracing the perverse incentive structure of the left, which penalizes work and self-improvement while it defines the poor as helpless "victims."

These kids accept the convoluted idea that if they feel enough of the pain of the downtrodden and oppressed, the pain will somehow go away. But for many it's only a matter of time before they grow up and, as someone said, "get mugged by reality."

Meanwhile, many conservative leaders—repulsed by the behavior of campus radicals—have written off the academy. I don't believe for a minute that there are no conservative students at Hamline or on any other campus you care to name. They're in the minority, sure, but they're there. Why then don't they show up to defend Chavez and the others? Very simple. There's nothing to be gained. They don't go for shouting down speakers or trashing storefronts or barricading streets. Ideas are their currency, not flaming rhetoric, and their time is better spent in the library or the computer lab or thinking about how to attract venture capital for the businesses they hope to start.

What then? Should we leave it at that, giving the stage to the disrupters?

Conservatives grant uncontested triumphs to the left in the apparent belief that rallying our troops is not worth the effort, and in this I believe we are wrong.

I do not mean to ignore or down-

play the laudable programs of CATO, the Independent Studies Institute, the Young America's Foundation, or other seminars and internships for college students. They are designed to do what I advocate, and they do it well. But it is just not enough; they are small pebbles dropped into a very large ocean. I believe what we need is a concerted effort to rally young conservatives—a serious, systematic, broad-scale, long-term effort.

If I had a zillion dollars, here's what I'd do.

Identify a couple of hundred conservative university faculty members in this country and give them the money and logistical support to set up conferences and seminars for upper-class college students—juniors and seniors mostly, a few graduate students—to hear some of our best, most dynamic conservative thinkers. These would be regional gatherings for students from colleges within, say, a hundred miles—weekends, Christmas vacation, spring break, weeklong summer conferences. All expenses paid. Come, bring an open mind, have fun, and listen to ideas you don't often hear.

Line up a dozen or so of the best minds and best speakers in the conservative galaxy and put them on the university lecture circuit for a year. Repeat with another group next year. Pay them well.

Provide funding for campus newspapers that present conservative ideas to compete with the papers that usually lean heavily to the left and are often subsidized by the university.

Sponsor statewide or regional essay contests for college students in several

states, giving generous awards to the winners and seeing that their essays are given wide distribution in popular publications.

Conservative ideology has tough going on most campuses for a very simple reason: the politics of most faculty members is to the left, and while they are influencing their students, we are largely silent. By default, then, the loudest voices on campus come to belong to the most liberal students, who eventually graduate and begin careers as journalists, or teachers, or social workers. Many of them will remain on the left, but let a few years pass and many will move right. Meanwhile, another group of undergraduates will follow, be subjected to the same indoctrination, will shout down thoughtful speakers, and we conservatives will continue to write off the academy.

It's time we help young people get it right.

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Conservatives Care about Their Neighbors, Too

Tom Neuville

How can we convince voters and the media that conservatives care about their neighbors?

In my first campaign for the Minnesota Senate in 1990, everyone knew that I was pro-life and did not support gay rights. I argued for less state spending and tax cuts.

Many liberals, and my opponent, said that I lacked compassion. Some

even described me as “right of the Ayatollah Khomeini.” Many citizens believed the stereotype that Republicans only care about rich people and big business.

I have now been in office for nine years and seldom hear those same descriptions and criticisms. While many of my liberal constituents still disagree with my voting positions, they never accuse me of being extreme, closed minded, or insincere.

I have worked hard to earn the respect of my opposition. I think it is important to define myself. Following are the principles I use to convince my constituents that I care about them.

Courage to articulate our convictions builds trust. It’s not easy to take a position that is contrary to public opinion polls, newspaper editorials, or college liberals. But courage is indispensable when facing a crowd of strident union members or angry welfare recipients. Courage gives you the strength to say the same thing before a liberal crowd as you do before a more friendly conservative crowd. In the long run, courage and consistency will earn people’s trust and respect. Today, when many conservatives say “I care about you,” people don’t believe us.

To be accepted as caring, conservatives must become more trustworthy.

Listen to those who disagree with us. I seldom turn down an invitation to meet with people who have never voted for me. Going into the “lion’s den” is the best way to convince liberals that you’re open-minded. Many conservatives are painted as closed-minded extremists. It’s hard to pin that

label on us if we take the time to listen to people with whom we have a strong philosophical disagreement.

Effective conservative legislators should welcome public challenges to their principles and philosophies. If I give liberals time to persuade me, then they’ll be more likely to give me a chance to persuade them. Staunch liberals still won’t vote for me, but they’ll have to concede my willingness to listen. This proves compassion!

Acknowledge problems that government can solve, but don’t manufacture crises. Both conservatives and liberals engage in demagoguery. Liberals are adept at manufacturing crises on social issues like homelessness, poverty, and health care. Republicans do the same with respect to crime, taxes, and the business climate.

Each year, the political caucuses routinely announce their “legislative agenda,” whether the public desires legislative action or not. Many legislators think that this is one way of saying “we really care about you.” In the long run, people feel manipulated, and cynicism grows. Real compassion is truthful, and does not seek to scare the citizenry for political advantage.

Incrementalism is okay. There’s a story about how to cook a frog. If you put the frog into boiling water it will quickly jump out. But place the frog in cool water, slowly heat it, and it will stay in the water without resistance until it is cooked.

Too often, conservatives try to solve a difficult issue all at once. Dramatic change is perceived as punitive and uncompassionate. Incremental change

achieves the same goal over time with less complaint from those most affected. Liberals use this tactic much better than conservatives. Sometimes we lose—and don't even know how it happened.

Be humble. Exaggeration leads to distrust and cynicism. Humility is one of the cornerstones of credibility. Humility prevents us from judging others unfairly or from accepting credit that is not earned.

Conservatives should admit that we don't have the answer to every problem. Often we are accused of being heartless because we allow the perception that we are better than others. To become the majority philosophy in Minnesota, conservatives must convince voters that we understand their concerns—because we're just like them. Then we have to prove it by our words and deeds.

Senator Tom Neuville of Northfield represents the 25th District in the Minnesota Senate.

Combating False Portrayals of Conservatism

Grover Norquist

American liberals accuse conservatives and their politics of being “racist,” “mean-spirited,” “sexist,” and “for the rich.”

Should conservatives care? Is there something we could do to make liberals stop this name calling? What, if anything, should conservatives do in reaction?

Some weak links in the conservative movement would react, as liberals hope, by arguing to jettison conserva-

tive principles and policies. If liberals say tax cuts are racist—as they have—then we should limit or abandon tax cuts. But this would simply give the left a victory and their rhetoric would continue unabated against our failure to support the next policy objective of the left. Appeasement simply validates the left's original charges and whets the left's appetite for more.

One plausible option is to do nothing. Liberals have been calling conservatives names for decades and yet we elected Ronald Reagan three times and have won Republican (if not conservative) majorities in the House and Senate three elections in a row and have thirty Republican governors. The electorate is not buying the liberal name calling—or at least 51 percent of them are not.

I would suggest two strategies. The most important is to win. The left charged that conservatives were warmongers, that a stronger America would lead to war, that socialism was a superior economic arrangement to capitalism, that socialism was the future, that there was better health care in the Soviet Union . . . until the day Reagan broke the back of the Soviet empire. We no longer waste time trying to refute the political screeds of the left's legions of useful idiots. We won. Welfare reform was the same fight. December 1994, a month before Newt Gingrich became Speaker, both *Time* and *Newsweek* had front covers about “the Gingrich who stole Christmas” and how cruel Gingrich would be to the poor—with Tiny Tim with broken crutch. These cover stories were

denunciations of welfare reform as anti-poor. We passed welfare reform three times. Clinton signed it the third time. Now even liberals revel in the delights of welfare reform.

Change the realities on the ground. Their hearts and minds will follow.

Today, we are seeing a growing conservative victory over the politics of envy, class warfare, and anticorporate ranting. Why? Because the fastest-growing demographic trend in America is the number of Americans who own stock. In 1965 it was only 10 percent, and politicians could loudly call to tax, regulate, and even nationalize industries. In 1980 it was 20 percent. Today, 48 percent of Americans own shares of stock. Republicans cut the capital gains tax in 1997 with one-tenth the heated rhetoric from the left that defeated our efforts to do the same in 1989. The death tax was repealed by the House and Senate (vetoed by Clinton) in the summer of 1999. Where were the war whoops of class envy? Silence from the left because their donor base now owns stock.

The passage of NAFTA and the expansion of trade exposes the lies protectionists told about the “great sucking sound” and creates millions of Americans who know their jobs and prosperity flow from trade.

A second strategy to defeat the left's efforts to falsely portray conservatism as uncaring is to focus on the real effects of policies—not the self-proclaimed intentions of liberals. School choice: we stand with poor and inner-city parents and their children in wishing to give them the best education. The liberals stand like George Wallace in the

schoolhouse door shouting “never.” Teacher union pay and perks are more important to the left than the futures of children. Social security: liberals want to continue a program that loots black men of the chance to pass on a lifetime of savings to their children. The average American could accumulate an estate of hundreds of thousands of dollars if his Social Security taxes were invested in a personal savings account rather than spent by Washington politicians. Millions of lives have been hurt by this Ponzi scheme.

The left lies about the effects of conservative policies. Enacting our policies gives the lie to their claims. Let us be cruel. Let us win and expose the left's lies, then let us tell the truth about the broken families, destroyed neighborhoods, lost futures and lives liberalism has wrought. The left has blood on its hands. Justice is overdue.

Grover Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform in Washington, D.C.

Conservatives and the New Lepers

Marvin Olasky

To come across to the skeptical as more benevolent and fellow feeling, more conservatives need to invest time, not just money, in helping those who have it rough through no fault of their own. Albert Schweitzer gained respect for his work among lepers, and Mother Teresa and her sisters were honored for their work with the poorest of the poor. Few of us can reach those levels of dedication, but lots of us can tutor needy children or mentor troubled adults. We

can be Big Brothers, Big Sisters, or Little League coaches for kids without dads. We can counsel women going through crisis pregnancies. We can adopt hard-to-place children.

On a trip to Minneapolis last summer I met Fred Myers, then sixty-five, an ordinary person who is doing extraordinary things with alcoholics and addicts who are trying to change their lives. Myers in the 1980s envisioned a program with a built-in support system: recovering people would work alongside others who were in the same post-fix fix, sharing problems and deliverance from day-to-day temptations. A local church, St. Stephen's, raised start-up money for what became Rebuild Resources. Today, Rebuild is a suburban Minneapolis home and workplace for people recovering from alcoholism and addiction, often with prison time behind them. Such individuals, Myers said, are "the new lepers."

Because they are new lepers, few residential support systems for ex-alcoholics and ex-addicts exist. Myers complained vehemently of bureaucrats who "run a program for a few weeks and then dump a guy on the street with no community or family support. The government types say treatment, treatment, treatment. But treatment is a bridge to a support system, and these guys have no support system." Churches sometimes help, and Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous can play a useful role, but long-term, faith-based residential facilities are needed. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a conservative who sets up such a program will do more good (and more image-improving) than

a thousand speeches could accomplish.

Here's another candidate for new leper status: there is still uncertainty about the numbers, but one (probably conservative) estimate is that between 7,000 and 12,000 children are born each year with fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effects, a devastating effect of maternal negligence. These kids are available for adoption in large numbers because most of their birth mothers don't want them or can't raise them. Many of the babies are so demanding that they require round-the-clock supervision. Adoptive parents often seek governmental help because the financial costs are also high. When these kids make it to eighteen, some continue to live at home, but others hit the streets, often adding to societal problems of drugs, alcohol, crime, and prostitution.

Conservatives should become involved in establishing supervised group homes for these folks. Some, with proper education, can sustain various kinds of employment. The Arizona legislature last year passed a bill to study the impact of fetal alcohol syndrome on special education programs, health and welfare programs, criminal justice, and housing. One Republican legislator said he opposed helping these children because the mothers chose to drink too much; he was asking, in essence, "Are we those mothers' keepers, and is there any reason for others to become involved when the sins of the mothers are visited on their children?" Given that there are more than a hundred Washington-based disability-centered lobbying groups, such beliefs and

comments won't get conservatives very far in dealing with these problems or refurbishing their reputation. A hands-off policy will also play into liberal hands; the alternative to malign neglect will not be benign neglect, but new governmental programs.

Other lepers today include the mentally ill, and here also conservatives need to come up with creative programs. Many current, sad stories of the mentally ill homeless have their start with the success of the 1960s and 1970s deinstitutionalization movement. Its strange bedfellows included conservative budget cutters (who did not want to pay for asylums) and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest radicals (who thought crazy folks were the truly sane among us). Tax credits could help some faith-based organizations to bear more of the burden, and conservatives who took the lead in helping some of the least among us would truly be doing good—and doing well for conservatism at the same time.

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Conservative Ideas Need Not Play Defense

Sally C. Pipes

The public would surely think it odd if, after the Super Bowl or Wimbledon, the media first interviewed the losers. They would think it downright strange if the media requested that the winners apologize for their success. That, unfortunately, is where we are because the

media culture is still dominated by partisans of the losing team and holds pre-fabricated ideas about conservatism.

Private enterprise is inherently exploitive and discriminatory. Government agencies are inherently good. Minorities cannot succeed without government help and racial preferences. Those who favor government action and higher taxes are compassionate while those who favor private enterprise and lower taxes are greedy. And so on.

That is the mind-set of the dominant media culture, and for conservatives, it amounts to perpetually playing on the road, before a hostile crowd. But conservatives need not remain in the defensive posture betrayed by slogans trumpeting their personal compassion. They can take a cue from the coach who told his players that when they got into the end zone to act as though they had been there before. As a glance at Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan will verify, conservatives have winning ideas, and should act like they do. But just as liberals like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair have profited by co-opting those ideas, conservatives can stay on the offense by co-opting the vocabulary of the opposition and the media culture.

For example, when people move from welfare to work, this obviously constitutes progress, both for the individuals and society as a whole. It follows that, if moving people from welfare to work is the truly progressive policy, then policies that keep people on welfare are reactionary, and should be so labeled. Such policies belong in the past, and their current supporters

seek to turn back the clock to the days of bureaucratic expansionism. It has long been clear that welfare cultivates crime, dependence, broken families, and other ills, all part of the violence inherent in the system. Because of these grim realities, those who think welfare is a good thing and want to keep people on it may be said to lack compassion.

Not only so, but they put the interests of the system over those of people. The welfare bureaucracy, after all, has a vested interest in expanding the number of people on welfare and keeping them there. The same is true of the powerful public education monopoly.

Many in this vast bureaucratic complex send their own children to private schools while maintaining policies that keep inner-city kids captive in failing government schools. This is a clear case of a growing gap between the haves and the have-nots, a blatant example of institutional discrimination that puts monopoly power before people and turns many into second-class citizens. In some cases it also reveals a country club mentality.

Mere tinkering around the edges won't do. In all major policy areas we need deep, systemic change. But this change will not come easily because those who seek to maintain the status quo in welfare and education are not simply partisans of different opinion. Rather, these liberals are afraid of social change, particularly change that might threaten their privileged position. They need to realize that if they are not part of the problem they are part of the solution. They are serving the interests of the special interests of the power structure, instead of those of the people.

Other ideas will come to mind, but the principle is clear. Don't let the opposition define the terms. Offense trumps defense, but there is no need to raise one's voice. Speak softly and carry big facts. Never separate ideas from consequences. Never concede the moral high ground to those who have no right to it. And never forget that it's not what you say but how you say it. But this is not, it should be stressed, merely playing with words.

Given their proper content, all of the above is true. Thousands of years of history, particularly, of the last hundred, the 1930s, 1960s, and 1980s, have taught us what works and what does not. In other words, conservative ideas are on the right side of history, and those who advance them should act like it.

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Gardeners Know What Compassion Really Is

Allen Quist

Last summer, several of our daughters planted and cared for a garden—a marvelously productive garden, I might add. I remember well seeing the gardeners ambitiously laboring under the heat of the sun on a hot, humid July day. “Might as well tan while you work,” they said. I remember seeing weeds flying in all directions as the gardeners became mother hens to the onions, tomatoes, green beans, and carrots. The garden plants thrived as a consequence of all the tender loving care. There was no compassion at all for the weeds,

however. The weeds were pulled up by their roots and left to wither and die under the hot summer sun.

So it is with gardeners. The desired plants are cared for, but there is no tolerance when it comes to weeds. Every gardener knows that compassion for the garden plants requires subduing the weeds.

People, of course, are not weeds. Our Declaration of Independence correctly asserts that all people have intrinsic value and possess certain God-given rights that government exists to protect. These rights are described by the Declaration as including equality, life, liberty, and property. People are not weeds. At the same time, however, people can sometimes act more like weeds than like garden plants. That is, people can and do behave in ways that choke out those entities that have genuine worth.

For that reason, real compassion, as in the case of dealing with alcoholism, for example, requires that we refuse to tolerate the alcohol abuse and all the lies that go with it. Covering for the alcoholic—enabling the choking weeds to grow and spread—is an act of destruction, not compassion. Real compassion, like real love, is tough. Genuine compassion may appear harsh, but it is actually the opposite. It may appear harsh because it refuses to quietly sidle over to the other side of the road while people's lives are being destroyed by deep-rooted evil.

That truth should be obvious enough, but it's not. The reason is that too many people appear to be oblivious to the self-destructiveness and other

evil that is inherent in the human condition. Dennis Prager described this reality as follows:

Having been a camp counselor and camp director for ten years, I know that few things come more naturally to many children than meanness, petty cruelty, bullying, and a lack of empathy for less fortunate peers. . . .

To believe that human nature is basically good—after Auschwitz, the Gulag, Rwanda, Armenia, and Tibet, just to mention some of the horrors of the twentieth century alone—is a statement of faith as nonempirical as the most wishful religious belief. Whenever I meet people who persist in believing in the essential goodness of human nature, I know I have met people for whom evidence is irrelevant.

A generation ago, Karl Menninger lamented the fact that the word sin had virtually disappeared from public discourse. How often is sin used in our day? Did sin stop happening? Or did we stop being willing to recognize it and decide, instead, to repress the reality of sin in our lives into our collective subconscious? How often do we even hear somewhat milder words like evil or wrong used in our day? An action may be publicly judged to be "inappropriate," but how often is it declared to be "wrong"?

On the contrary, those who publicly oppose evil are too often accosted for supposedly being "hateful" and "intolerant." This shoot-the-messenger mentality is also part of the human condition. We would do far better to leave the ad hominem and other emo-

tional distortions behind and concentrate instead on what compassion for the vulnerable, approached in a rational way, is really all about. This principle holds true in both our public and our private lives.

Is it rational, for example, to extend compassion to the poor and support state-run gambling simultaneously? Are we compassionate toward our children by failing to teach them to resist the temptations of alcohol, illicit drugs, and promiscuity? Our governor appears to be tolerant of prostitution. Can we be compassionate to the women trapped in prostitution and be tolerant of prostitution at the same time? I think not.

There are many other areas where our unwillingness to confront evil precludes our being compassionate. Are we being considerate to the cause of freedom for coming generations, for instance, when we tolerate judges who hand down edicts that place themselves above the highest law of the land? Can we be compassionate toward our children and at the same time allow divorce for any and every reason? Do we demonstrate compassion for our nation's unborn children while we allow abortion on demand? Can we be compassionate to our teachers and students while we allow government bureaucrats to tell our teachers what they must teach and how they must teach it?

Our government and culture have tried compassion while not admitting to the reality of evil. It has been like trying to garden while pretending the weeds are really our friends. As a result,

the weeds are taking over the garden.

Maybe we compassion-seeking people need to recognize that real gardeners, compassionate gardeners, of necessity have no compassion at all for the weeds.

Postscript: Conservatism is best defined as adherence to our nation's foundational principles as described in the Declaration of Independence. These foundational principles have produced one of the most compassionate nations that the world has ever known. The Declaration, and our subsequent Constitution, everywhere presuppose the reality of evil (referenced as "repeated injuries," "usurpations," and "absolute tyranny" by the Declaration). What happens, however, to a nation that no longer recognizes evil? Vulnerable people no longer are aided and protected. They are exploited instead. Without recognition of evil, compassion will always be sacrificed to license. Allen Quist, a three-term legislator from St. Peter, Minnesota, and twice a candidate for governor, teaches world politics at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato.

To Change Minds, Change the Terms of Debate

Lawrence W. Ræd

I prefer not to use the tired old dichotomy of "liberals" on the one hand versus "conservatives" on the other. Those terms, unfortunately, have become excuses for people to stop thinking and instead to simply pigeon-hole others in convenient but often superficial fashion.

If we must label people as this or

that, I suggest we do so in more meaningful ways. Here's one: those who are satisfied with rhetoric versus those who demand results.

People who advocate government-financed and government-directed efforts to address problems once widely regarded as personal, private, or "civil society" responsibilities almost always settle for rhetoric alone. Perhaps that's because their handiwork rarely produces results that are worth bragging about. To these people, whom you might regard as "liberal," it is usually enough for one to simply declare his concern for the poor to prove that he really cares. It doesn't matter that government programs to help the poor have decisively accomplished the very opposite, a painful fact that both experience and economics should have forecast in advance.

People who advocate nongovernmental solutions—changes in attitudes and behavior, strengthening of the family, the involvement of churches and private associations, for example—are not typically animated by rhetoric. They are focused on results, and they have the incredible story of "the American experiment" to proudly point to. It wasn't rhetoric that carved a great civilization out of wilderness; it wasn't self-righteous breast-beating or mere professions of concern that fed, clothed, and housed more people at higher levels than any other society ever known in history. It was a combination of strong families, rugged self-reliance, effective volunteer associations, wealth-creating private initiative and entrepreneurship.

Here's another, more meaningful way to categorize people's thinking: those who are happy with short-term answers versus those who plan for the long run.

In this regard, we once again find those who favor government "solutions" to be on the short end of the stick. The primary answer they offer to problems such as poverty is to toss the poor a government check. They observe the subject spending the check on groceries and conclude that they have done good. But those who support nongovernment solutions know the meaning of the old adage "Give me a fish and I eat for a day; teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime." They don't see today's groceries as the answer to tomorrow's hunger, and they know that more fundamental things than a government check are required to prepare for a brighter future.

Yet another method of categorizing: those who exhibit little interest in liberty versus those who understand that without liberty, little else either matters or is possible.

People who push government to "tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect" (in the words of FDR brain-truster Harry Hopkins) are more than willing to sacrifice a little liberty for the sake of a handout. More appropriately, they are willing to sacrifice the liberties of everyone for the sake of handouts for a few. Those who prefer private, nongovernmental measures to address problems understand that (1) government has nothing to give anybody except what it first takes from somebody and (2) government that is big enough to give you everything you want has become big enough to take

away everything you've got.

I know you asked, in essence, that my short essay explain how “conservatives” can become more successful in the battle of ideas against “liberals.” It seems to me that we should concentrate on explaining to people that the only policies worth supporting are those that are tested and found worthwhile because they produce results, not rhetoric; that the only policies worth supporting are those that do not mortgage the future for the sake of the present; and, finally, that the only policies worth supporting are those that do not treat other people's liberty as though it were so much scrap paper waiting to be cleared away.

If this is where our focus is, I am confident that by and large, the message you call “conservative” will succeed and the message you call “liberal” will die on the vine.

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Lincoln, the Gentle Conservative

Bruce Sanborn

Almost everyone who met Abraham Lincoln liked him. Pick up his speeches, and you sense his gentleness and decency. Not only conservatism's skeptics but also its fans win by knowing Lincoln better. Mine his speeches and deeds, and you unearth the what, how, and why of American conservatism.

Right at the foundation of America, Lincoln found a moral principle. The self-evident truth proclaimed in the

Declaration of Independence—“that all men are created equal”—“is the father of all moral principle among us,” Lincoln said. He saw that the Framers had discovered the principle of equality in “the laws of nature and nature's God” and laid it down as America's cornerstone. The principle of equality—and the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution that embody it—describe precisely what Americans must conserve. On all that, Lincoln was clear.

How are we to proceed? “With malice toward none” and “with charity for all,” Lincoln said. In that way he approached even the most controversial political issues. For instance, Lincoln was among those who founded the Republican Party and wrote its controversial platform. Animated by the principle of equality and acting with charity for all, Lincoln advanced on the Republican Party Platform of 1856, which was resolved against “those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy and Slavery.”

One man engaging in multiple marriages: that is polygamy, a personal matter of sex, marriage, and family. Nonetheless, personal matters are often social and shape the civic order. In polygamy men display the markings of tyrants and harem masters: tyrants take favors from whom they want as they will. Beyond saying that, how might a Lincoln-type conservative speak about such personal matters?

“As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master”: that, Lincoln said, defined democracy and self-government. That is, just as the Constitution supported self-government through

the separation of powers and through checks and balances like a bicameral congress, so also the Founders supported self-government (self-control) in citizens' personal lives. American citizens were to govern their passions. Even today it still may be safe to say that trifling with women, children, or men (in order to indulge sexual or other passions) does not promote self-government. And it may still be safe to say such behavior does not constitute a natural right—natural rights being those things our government was instituted to secure (roll on, O Declaration!).

The democratic argument against slavery proceeds along the same lines as the one against polygamy. Again, slavery sets up some as masters. Where one man rules another man without that man's reasonable consent, self-control and self-government get lost. No man can reasonably consent to be a slave (Lincoln echoed the Founders here), for that would violate the natural order of things: no man is a god, fit to be master of other men, and no man is a brute animal, for other men to saddle and ride, to paraphrase a Founder. Accordingly, Lincoln, the gentle man, firmly resisted "popular sovereignty," "local government," and "states' rights" arguments that suggested otherwise.

Lincoln proved wrong those who asserted that government in America would be democratic as long as a popular majority voted in its laws and institutions. There is no right to do wrong, Lincoln explained, at any level, even if a majority favors the wrong. So, Lincoln resisted local governments that would institute slavery in the territo-

ries. He rejected "states' rights" arguments for slavery and Southern secession. For him, the core issue was not the number of votes cast or the level of feeling and compassion shown. Rather, the test of a democratic republic was this: Is the government limited? Does it limit itself to securing the natural rights set forth in the Declaration and the Constitution?

Lincoln was benevolent and gentle, but the war came. Lincoln was called bad names, but he was as firm as he was gentle.

Finally, Lincoln was shot dead, but not before he told us Americans what to preserve: the principle of equality, the Declaration, and the Constitution. He showed us how: "with malice toward none; with charity for all; and with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." Finally, he told us why: "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

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A Conservative Balancing Act

Joe Selvaggio

Psychologists tell us that sex occupies a man's mind more than any other topic (women, being on a higher plane, apparently split first place among sex, love, kids, careers, and soccer errands). If all of this is true, I suspect the strug-

gle between conservative principles and liberal inclinations comes in a close second.

I've always considered myself a conservative. I grew up with strong family values. I liked making money, engaging in free, fair competition, and honoring country and past traditions. But the liberal values of sharing the wealth, being tolerant of others and open to change also had some appeal.

I take pride, as a conservative, that our strong economy was brought about by conservative principles of hard work, open markets, and less interference from the government on formation and investment of capital. Yet I give credit to the liberals for not fighting it, for reminding us that great wealth creation can be shared with the total community—not by handouts, but by investments in the broader community so more players can play and more wealth can be created. Enriching the poor does not mean we have to impoverish the rich.

Let's look at a few issues with a conservative perspective, but without rigidity.

Wealth and poverty. Let's keep our conservative principles of hard work and investments in the future, but let's expand them to inner cities, underdeveloped rural areas, and developing nations. If all communities are put to work, it will take the pressure off all those wanting to migrate to the cities or to America itself. There are a great number of poor people out there with potential. Not investing to develop those potentials into actual talents and skills is like sitting on a gold mine and

being too cheap to mine it.

Race and gender. Certain industries, like sports and entertainment, have been much more open to minorities and women for a long time. And how our lives have been enriched because of it. Scientists who have been examining genes of all races tell us we are 99.9 percent alike. Why focus on our differences? The teachers at Edison-Project for Pride in Living school, in the inner city of Minneapolis, tell me that the younger children, both boys and girls, have diverse interests and talents. If they are "taught to fish" with these talents, they will develop. Then, when the students are ready to enter the workforce, all industries will be served by all races and genders. Not only will those students have meaningful careers, the whole community will be well-served and empowered. If all industries were to go beyond opening the door to all races and sexes, on the ability to compete, pleasures, riches, and wisdom would come, not only to them, but to the whole community. If we pigeonhole people in careers based on race and gender stereotypes, we'll all lose.

Population. Maybe conservatives and liberals could agree on one ideal goal—say, "all babies born should be wanted babies." Who can expect babies to grow into mature, well-adjusted human beings if the parents didn't want them in the first place? All studies show that educated populations have a much smaller percentage of babies born into poverty and desperation. Correct sex education promotes prudence and abstinence, not promiscuity. Let's concentrate on the much valued principle

of self-interest. Currently it's said we have "survival of the unfittest" rather than "survival of the fittest" because so many poor and ill-equipped parents, through lack of education, are having unwanted babies. Education can become one tool all can agree on to make abortion rates decline.

Tax distribution. When it comes to spending tax money, I like to compare it to three sets of affluent parents. The first set of parents spends all the money on themselves with a bare minimum of gifts or investments in the kids. The second set gives each kid on their eighteenth birthday a new Mercedes-Benz, with a promise of a trade-in for the next four years. The third set invests an equal amount in each kid's education, whether it is college, trade school, or whatever their particular talent requires. Which parents are going to be more satisfied that they have invested wisely in their children's long-term future? In debating expenditures of tax dollars, we should make the same comparisons.

My prejudice is showing. I'm proud of my conservative principles, but I want some balance. And balance in reality, not just in "tone" or "coming across" as someone with a heart. Those words remind me of the pathetic Willie Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. He had all the right superficial features—the smile, the goal of being well-liked—but he had no underlying solid principles, conservative or liberal. He was the cowboy with "all hat and no cattle." If we want to "come across" as caring for our youth but vote against every investment in children because it is at cross-purposes with our piling up more

money, then we are being just as phony as Willy Loman.

As one speaker said, "Give it the rocking-chair test." When you're old and in a rocking chair, will you want to look at your life as a hard-nosed conservative who cared only about your narrow self-interest and the marketplace? That would be OK, but I suspect you'd be more proud, more comforted, to look back and say, "I brought good hard-nosed principles to bear in my daily decisions, but I also had some flexibility, some heart, some compassion. I helped some people the marketplace couldn't help. I had a head and a heart—and the courage to use both."

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The Conservative Commitment to Women

Rita J. Simon

As we listen to the current national political debates that are focused primarily on the Republican and Democratic Party presidential candidates, a question arises about which side, the liberals or the conservatives, advocates more compassionate policies. A related question is what conservatives can and should do so that they will be perceived as being more compassionate on many of the important public issues.

For more than half the people in the country—namely, American women—the answer to the first question is abundantly clear. It is the conservatives, the libertarians, and the free-market economists who have demonstrated a

greater concern for their well-being, especially vis-à-vis their work life, than have the old-line liberals who consistently demean women by claiming they need special privileges because they cannot make it on their own. But the conservatives have to work harder to get their message out. Perhaps groups like the Women's Freedom Network and Independent Women's Forum should be urged to become more actively involved in the debate. The paragraphs that follow describe the conservative record on one major aspect of women's lives, namely, their participation in the workforce.

Way back when the first women's movement was organized in the 1830s, the feminists of that day called for greater freedom for themselves and for an end to slavery. Today it is the free-market feminists, along with libertarians and conservative groups in this country, who recognize and support women's legal, political, and economic rights. It is these groups who consistently affirm women's freedom to choose to compete in a free market.

In President Clinton's last State of the Union address to the nation in January 2000 he called attention to one of the major phony charges made by the liberal establishment and pleaded for legislative change. The phony charge is that women's salaries are 75 percent that of men's. Clinton asserted the 75 percent ratio, even though careful studies have shown that when women's time in the labor force, type of work, age, and education are taken into account, women's and men's salaries are

on par. Indeed, in some fields in academia, for example, women are paid more than men. The free market and capitalism benefit women. They maximize women's opportunities. And clearly women have taken advantage of these opportunities, as witnessed by the fact that there are more than 7.7 million women-owned businesses in the United States that generate more than \$1.4 trillion in sales and employ more than 15 million people. As of 1999, women-owned businesses were one of the fastest-growing segments of our economy, and women continue to start businesses at twice the rate of men.

In a recent book, *Free-Market Feminism*, economist David Conway writes that the attacks on the free market led by the current group of radical feminists have resulted in an "oppressive form of tyranny." They view women as victims and seek greater protection of them rather than greater freedom for them. Ironically, it is the contemporary feminist movement and its "liberal" supporters in the larger political arena (read Clinton, Gore, Bradley, etc.) who view women in the most traditional sense as being in need of protection and support from—who else?—men. Women cannot make it on their own in the workforce and other spheres of life and must have "special" help in the form of affirmative action, wage laws, and other government interventions. Indeed, this view of women as victims that liberals hold so dear and the radical feminists favor, along with the belief that men are our enemies, generalizes to a broad range of policies that

are demeaning to women. In academia, the liberals and the feminists advocate lowering standards for the admission of women students and the hiring of women faculty—in the name of diversity, and making up for past discriminatory policies.

But it is not only on women's issues that the conservatives and the libertarians advocate positions and use rhetoric that show greater compassion and understanding of the human condition than do today's liberals. On such issues as immigration and children (especially transracial adoptions), it is more likely to be the conservative or libertarian who takes the more humane position or advocates making decisions on the basis of the legal standard of best interest of the child.

So while the stereotype still holds, and the liberals and the current crop of feminist leaders still like to envelop themselves in the warm fuzzy cocoon of compassionate commitment to the betterment of the people, on an issue-by-issue basis, it often comes down to the enhancement of the state and its powers that they are passionate about, and desirous of expanding.

On a final note, look at the issue of morals. With few exceptions (Senator Lieberman, for example), very few liberals put themselves on the line and spoke out against Bill Clinton and his behavior vis-à-vis Monica Lewinsky, plus any number of other women. Now, maybe morality is too straitlaced, too stiff-necked a concept for liberals to support, but for those who are the victims of immorality, the support they receive can feel very compassionate.

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Tactful—or Effective?

Penny Steele

Conservatism is compassionate because it first and foremost promotes freedom. The ability to pursue happiness and live one's life without the excessive constraints of government allows the individual to achieve to the best of his or her ability.

So why is there a “tone” problem for conservatives? Perhaps a short story best illustrates the point.

There once was a village full of hungry children. They were hungry because their parents had all left the village to look for a fountain of youth that promised all kinds of wonderful benefits.

A group of well-meaning people decided they must do something about this problem. They took money from another group of people and purchased food to send to the hungry children. They felt good because they had made such a kind, compassionate gesture. The glow of their deed made them sleep well at night.

There was only one problem: the children never received the food because it spoiled on the way to the village. Meanwhile, the village children were running out of the little bit of food that was left. Another group of people who were quite annoyed at the lack of responsibility on the part of the

parents (not to mention their secondary annoyance at having their money confiscated for food that never reached the children) went to find the irresponsible parents.

After quite a search they found them. Because they were so irritated, they threw out tact and gentility when speaking to the parents and were quite direct. "What's wrong with you? Don't you know your children are going to starve if you don't take care of them?" The parents didn't appreciate the tone of the message but realized they had been shortsighted in their choices and immediately went back to caring for their children.

The parents were glad to be back with their children and were glad no calamities had come as a result of their bad choices. They thought about the two groups of people who intervened on their children's behalf. One group said many nice things, took resources from others, and was completely ineffective at helping the children. The other group was direct and to the point and, without using resources from other people, solved the situation and saved the children. Which group was more compassionate? Which group sounded more compassionate?

Penny Steele is a Hennepin County commissioner.

The Benevolence of Freedom

Brian F. Sullivan

Using the rhetoric of compassion while discarding our founding principles, lib-

erals have reinvented our government. Government is no longer satisfied preserving our basic freedoms, as our Founders intended. Instead, it administers major portions of our daily lives. In so doing, liberals have engaged our country in a thirty-five-year experiment, and failed. Their programs have diminished the quality of life for those they intended to help while eroding the basic freedoms our government was established to protect. For conservatives to assert a preeminent role in our political life, they must first hold liberals to account for these failures. They must then remind Americans why a return to our founding principles will lead to a society that is not only richer economically, but also fair, good, and ultimately compassionate.

The irony of twentieth-century liberalism is that there is arguably no political movement in our history that has lasted so long with results so poor. What do we have to thank liberals for? We spend more money per child on education than any other country in the world and get schools that rank toward the bottom. We spend trillions of dollars to reduce poverty and instead trap generations in crime-ridden inner cities. We create programs for the middle class but tax them so much they cannot save for their retirement. In short, liberals have demonstrated a perverse ability to win the political battle for themselves while losing the war for the rest of us.

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and the Republican Congress in 1994 suggested that Americans were

waking up to liberal excesses. These victories were conditional, however, since they resulted in a divided federal government. Americans may acknowledge the problems of liberal policies, but they are not yet convinced that conservatives have the answers.

How do conservatives convince Americans that our ideas and policies will create a healthier country?

First, conservatives must remind Americans what the true role of government is—to promote justice, to protect our freedoms, and to secure our inherent equality. A government based on these principles will be limited in scope, not burdensome. It will promote equality of opportunity rather than dictate equal outcomes. It will treat all citizens the same and not pit one group against another. Families, and not bureaucrats, will make the important decisions of daily life. Ultimately, the genius of the American system is that by respecting man's basic nature, it unlocks each man's potential and creates unlimited prospects for society as a whole. By making our founding principles living guides to our future, conservatives can lead America to higher ground.

Second, conservatives must relentlessly remind Americans that the power Republicans won in 1980 and 1994 led to significant improvement in the country's general welfare. Lower marginal tax rates, slowed growth in government spending, tougher stances on crime, and reformed welfare programs were all due to Republican efforts in the Oval Office, in Congress, in city halls. The results of these poli-

cies—unprecedented economic expansion, reduction in crime, and smaller welfare rolls—were felt within twelve months of their implementation. Liberal policies, on the other hand, decades after implementation, not only failed to deliver on their promise, they made the problems they intended to solve worse. Most galling, liberals have typically used the disastrous results of their policies to justify the need for even more programs.

Finally, conservatives must challenge the false compassion of the liberals. We must ask them what is compassionate about sentencing generations of single young girls and their children to poverty, welfare dependency, and illegitimacy. We must ask why it is compassionate to prevent lower-income families from sending their children to the schools of their choice, when more affluent Americans can. We must demand to know where the compassion is in burdening struggling middle-income families with taxes so high that they cannot save for their retirement.

Under the limited government we enjoyed for the first 150 years of our history, self-reliant citizens experienced the benevolence that flows from freedom each day. Our government was a true champion of the people. Under liberalism, though, our government has made half the population dependent on it. In earlier generations we did not mistake this for compassion; we recognized it as a large step toward tyranny. Promoting the principles of our founding, and the benefits that flow from

them, holds the keys for future conservative electoral success and a more just, truly compassionate society.

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Government on a Leash

Pam von Gohren

A former Minnesota state senator, who shall be nameless, enlightened me on liberal and conservative during the 1987 legislative session. The Definition of School bill, which legalized home-based education and affirmed that parents have the primary responsibility for seeing that their offspring become educated, was under discussion. "You (expletive deleted) liberals!" I was admonished. "You don't expect us to let old hippies decide what kids are going to learn, do you?" Me, who'd always voted Republican, a liberal?!

In the 1990s, home schooling became a commonly uncommon style of providing for a child's academic development. Through the years (my husband and I began teaching our children ourselves in 1977), I've noticed four styles influencing home educators.

One group has concern for social action; they actively support social change and are preparing their children to be the intellectual, social, and spiritual leaders of tomorrow.

Then there are those who desire a more simple, independent lifestyle, often involving self-sufficient living skills. They are ecologically aware and frequently have their own businesses.

Others assemble around the concept of the family unit, believing that by nourishing character and developing strong relationships, the family, as the fundamental social building block, will restore society.

The final group, parents whose children have been poorly served by government schools, wants children caught up academically with enthusiasm for learning renewed. Some use quite traditional materials; others become "unschoolers" who eschew formal curricula to follow pupils' interests, interjecting formal skill lessons only as needed.

Now, who are the conservatives and who are the liberals in the preceding descriptions?

Surveys and questionnaires repeatedly show that people home educate because they want to impart the worldview and life values that they have found to be true and faithful; 85 percent of those families actively practice Christianity. Barry Goldwater's definition of a conservative was this: someone who takes into account the whole man, not just his material nature. Parent-educators know that while school is mostly a true-false operation, life is an essay question, and they pursue the notion that standards, measurable high ones, and accountability are a good thing. In the public policy arena, they tend to make coalition with those who agree that government should be kept on a leash, and a pretty short one at that.

Yet home-educating families are not self-absorbed. They practice "uplifting habits of the heart" as common activi-

ty. Go over to Brooklyn Park, where a twelve-year-old friend of mine spends afternoons reading to low-income elementary children, infecting the kids with enthusiasm for the adventures possible through the printed word. Travel up to the Red River Valley, where folks are putting on story times in the migrant worker camps. A small yet growing phenomenon among home educators is adoption of hard-to-place sibling groups or older children. Of course, more traditional activities such as visiting nursing homes, delivering Meals on Wheels, volunteering at food shelves, and environmental cleanups are legion. These families aren't part of "programs" nor are they concerned with fanfare about their efforts. Heeding the instruction of an old English hymn—"leave all resultings, just do the next thing"—they simply practice the Golden Rule, making their corner of the world a better place.

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Conservative Speed Bumps

Tim Wilkin

It is often said that Barry Goldwater ran for president in 1964 and won in 1980 with the victory of his ideological soul mate, Ronald Reagan. While it is always dangerous to attribute success or failure in any election to just one or two factors, we can reasonably say that tone was one major variable that affected these two races.

Goldwater is credited with breaking ground for the eventual Reagan victory. Reagan's personality, marked by unbridled optimism and a self-deprecating manner, helped endear him to the American public, while he delivered much the same message as Goldwater. This was a welcome relief to a populace that was weary of constant crises and of a president who frequently appeared on television in a sweater telling us to turn down our thermostats.

Goldwater lost in part due to a manner and tone that were easily exploited by his political opponents. Even though his ideas were common sense, it was easy for Lyndon Johnson to tar him as a warmonger (remember the little girl with the daisy in her hand and the mushroom cloud in the background?). It was far too difficult for Reagan's opponents to effectively portray him as the warmonger (they did try) due to his style and tone.

Today, the biggest challenge for conservatives is to advance a positive and aggressive agenda that solves the problems Minnesotans are experiencing. When I first entered the legislature, my friend Tim Pawlenty, who was House majority leader, said, "We can't just be whining speed bumps slowing down the DFL agenda." This is wise advice from an experienced politician who knows that Minnesotans expect government to solve many problems that conservatives do not necessarily feel are the responsibility of government. The trick is to come up with innovative conservative approaches without establishing big government programs.

The conservative agenda is by definition the absence of government programs. While liberals woo their constituencies with promises of new programs (paid for with—what else?—their own money), conservatives must make the case for leaving the taxpayer alone. This can be trickier than one might think. Remember, we not only need conservative votes, we also need enough of those in the middle to make a majority of the electorate.

Obviously, we do need to make a case against new government programs on the merits—or the lack thereof—of the proposals. The most effective means of combating new programs, however, is to show the voters the damage that high taxes and big government do to the family.

For example, one of the most common reasons—if not the most common reason—for the breakup of marriage is money. During my last campaign, I spoke to a local high school class and pointed out this fact. One girl stood up in the back of the class with tears in her eyes and spoke of the breakup of her parents due to their arguments over money. While we cannot blame government for every couple that breaks up over money problems, our high rate of taxation and the stress it puts on families is undeniably a major factor. When families feel they must have both parents working when they would like to keep one parent home with the kids, it is clear government is making too many of our financial decisions by virtue of confiscatory tax policies.

All too often, little thought is given to the long-term consequences when

new programs or expansion of current programs are proposed. Government continues to increase the financial burden on families and wonders why there are so many new problems. For instance, the quickest way to get a child into poverty is to have a single parent. When families break up, one household becomes two. If liberals would like to solve the affordable-housing problem, just imagine how many fewer housing units we would need if we cut the divorce rate in half.

The list could go on and on, but the key is not just showing voters why a proposed program is wrong, but demonstrating to them in a constructive way how it does not justify taking money out of the hands of the families who earned it. Voters respond when they are shown how your vision will affect their daily lives. That was one of the keys to Reagan's success.

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A New Conservatism

Robert L. Woodson Sr.

Conservatism can and should demonstrate that it is possible to embody conservative principles with a concern about those less fortunate in our society. But this cannot be achieved by trying to “outliberal” liberals by embracing the liberal agenda of race and patronizing charity toward the poor. When conservatives have tried to make entrée to minority and low-income groups with the assumption that this is the door that they must enter, they have done more harm to

themselves than if they had just remained aloof and indifferent.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a fundamental belief shared by conservatives and liberals alike that low-income, untutored elements of our society are incapable of making informed judgments about themselves. They only view them differently. Perhaps this is what Bill Bennett meant when he said, “When liberals look at minorities, they see a sea of victims. When conservatives look at minorities, they see a sea of aliens.”

Both, however, believe their approach to the poor must be one of benevolent concern or charity. That paradigm must change. As Thoreau said, “If someone comes to you with your best interests at heart—run for your life.” Many low-income people share this view. If conservatives only come with charity and their political interests at heart, they need not even bother.

Conventional wisdom says that assisting low-income, minority people requires that something must be given for which there is no return. That basic assumption must be challenged. It is elitist and chauvinist.

Conservatives must understand where their beliefs and goals are in confluence with low-income people, and look for an exchange. It is a fundamental belief of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise that there is no place for charity in the war on poverty.

Conservatism believes in the basic principles of the marketplace—as do most low-income and minority individuals. Conservatism believes strongly in

family values, that a father and mother in a home raising children is the best “institution” for children. So do low-income people and minorities. Conservatism believes that public safety is of paramount importance and that people should be held to a single standard of justice when they violate the law. This, too, is a deeply held belief on the part of most minority and low-income Americans.

The challenge, then, is how to connect the dots between these basic and fundamental conservative principles and those that embody these principles, and those members of low-income and minority communities who share these same beliefs.

The first step toward connecting the dots is for conservatives to confront their fundamental elitism and draw upon their understanding of how the market system works. They know, for instance, that most of the jobs generated in a healthy economy are created by entrepreneurs. Further, it’s been demonstrated that there is an inverse relationship between formal education and success as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs tend to be C students who come back to endow the universities where the A students are teaching.

There are many grassroots leaders in low-income communities who have successfully raised children who are not dropping out of school, in jail, or on drugs, who are able to use their experiences through their faith in God to transform the lives of others and lead them to paths of social construction. They are social entrepreneurs who share much in common with business

entrepreneurs. They may lack formal education, but they have wisdom that can be of enormous benefit to the rest of society.

For instance, it has been predicted that this economy will begin to slowly atrophy because it does not have enough qualified employees to meet the ever-growing demand. If we were to look to the inner cities and support those neighborhood healing agents that have demonstrated that they can transform those who have succumbed to drugs and violence into ambassadors of peace, there would be no need to amend immigration laws to meet this need. We have seen hundreds of bright young people transformed into motivated, work-ready employees for the worlds of telecommunications and technology by grassroots organizations. They represent a much-needed resource to society, if we will invest in them.

Another point of connection is a practical one. Columbine has been described as the Pearl Harbor of modern social policy, because the sons and daughters of the affluent, enjoying all the fruits of material society, were not expected to commit acts of wanton violence. And yet they engage in activity that we normally associate with the inner-city poor. Thus, if grassroots social entrepreneurs are able to produce young people—without the material advantages—who do not engage in this type of behavior, perhaps these grassroots healers have much to teach the affluent. This is another point of confluence, a bridge that can be built, an exchange of value.

America's moral and spiritual health is in a state of decline. If low-income people have been able to help those who have fallen to crime, violence, and destruction resurrect their lives and recycle them, they have lessons that can be valuable to the non-poor. And perhaps these represent the building blocks of whole new coalitions. These are just a few of the issues on which the interests of conservatives are compatible and intersect with those of low-income and minority populations, and there are many others.

Conservatism must be more than rhetoric. It must demonstrate that it is committed to the uplift of all and the inclusion of everyone in society in the fruits of what this society produces. Conservatives need only reach out to this vast network of grassroots healing agents, like those the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise has been working with, and join in common community with them. The result can be a civic restoration that can help undergird a prosperous, healthy economy.

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Reflections on Being Conservative

Stephen B. Yung

The moral question of whether conservative views on public policy fall short of an acceptable standard by which well-meaning people should live their lives has been a creature of history, part of the rhetoric of a certain age. As history

moves on, the terms of our intellectual debate should move along as well.

First, let us reflect on the historical fact that what today is called “conservative” was not always so named.

The public philosophy that values private property, free markets, stable currencies, the rule of law, transparency of transactions, government as the servant of the people and subordinate to their educational and cultural preferences, freedom of speech and religious belief, elections to public office, separation of powers to achieve checks and balances, equal rights to opportunities, and living according to one’s conscience was born as “liberalism.”

It was primarily the creation of Anglo-American thinkers, writers, and political leaders such as John Locke, Adam Smith, David Hume, William Blackstone, Edmund Burke, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, James Wilson, John Marshall, Thomas Babington Macaulay, John Stuart Mill, Abraham Lincoln, and many others.

This was the political philosophy that brought to the world constitutional democracy in place of tyranny, the material blessings of the industrial revolution, the intellectual uplift of free thought in politics through an educated citizenry, and an end to slavery.

In this century, this political philosophy defeated fascism and communism, systems whose crimes are denominated by the deaths of tens of millions of innocents.

What’s not to like about historical liberalism?

Today we call it the conservative approach.

In the changing of the name—merely the play of rhetorical convention—classical liberalism suffered a defeat.

“Liberalism” in the beginning did not suffer the charge that it lacks compassion; that it is haughty, exclusive, a plaything of the rich and famous, hard-hearted, always blaming the victim. It was the vision of opportunity, of inclusion, of what immigrants in this land came to call the “American Dream.”

For example, there was a time when nearly all African Americans were Republican—the party of liberalism—and the Democrats supported racial segregation as a prerogative of states’ rights.

But in the twentieth century names got inverted.

Liberalism got attacked from the left, from a call for equality of economic results mostly known as socialism. The private initiatives so dear to liberalism—called capitalism in the economic sphere—were described as creating injustice and therefore in need of control by government. The “socialist” crusade, from the soft socialism of a welfare state through the horrors of Stalinism to the irrational cruelty of Mao and Pol Pot, elevated government and police power over all other human activity.

This state tyranny was the antithesis of liberalism. But liberalism had prevailed in the world by 1989.

In the United States, as the thought-form of government regulation over the economy and then over the society grew in popularity, names

changed. Liberalism was the good word and socialism a bad word. Proponents of government-directed social and economic engineering did not call themselves socialists. Rather, they began as “progressives,” seeking to change the status quo and improve it.

The status quo from the point of view of institutions was the liberalism of the post-Civil War Republican Party. In reality, a liberal society is never in stasis; it is always changing through economic incentives and the spread of wealth and new technology, which bring in turn unprogrammed cultural changes in the roles of women and children. The institutional change agenda was Woodrow Wilson’s program of regulation and FDR’s New Deal. The political success of the New Deal brought soft socialism to the United States in the form of a welfare state.

Starting in the 1950s, a few intellectual voices protested the creation of a welfare state. Most notable was William F. Buckley and his *National Review* magazine. Building on the work of free-market believers such as Friedrich von Hayek, Buckley and Russell Kirk called themselves “conservative.”

In some ways it was an apt name. This group wanted to “conserve” something; they wanted to go back and undo the imposition of government social engineering brought about by the Democratic Party. What they believed in, however, was classical liberalism.

They defined their opposition as “liberals,” giving up claim to the proper use of that word and its glorious heritage.

Calling the Democrats liberal made some sense because they saw them-

selves as “liberal” in the cold war confrontation with communism. Communism was the left, which had been driven out of the Democratic Party by Hubert Humphrey and others in the late 1940s. Finding a good name for themselves, these Democrats appropriated “liberal” and gave it a twist, loosening it from its historic context.

Liberal now was married by the Democrats to the goal of equality of outcomes. The civil rights movement of the 1960s and Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign, in which he claimed to be the “conscience of conservatives,” gave the new use of the words liberal and conservative currency in the public mind.

The resulting trope in rhetoric was that liberals wanted good things for people and conservatives didn’t. Liberalism took on the connotation of “liberality,” of giving freely and allowing others to enjoy the resulting indulgence.

As the old “liberals,” now restyled “conservative,” attacked the failures and excesses of the welfare state—stagnation, breakdown of values, the dysfunctions of welfare, infringements of freedoms and property rights—they were hit with the “lack of compassion” accusation, a powerful rhetoric in today’s America.

In the New Testament tradition, brought to the founding of America by the Pilgrims and the Puritans, Americans care about others. Our Constitution worries about promoting the “general welfare” and seeks the “blessings of liberty” for all, not just a chosen few. Americans generally pull back from those who are mean, stingy, hard-

hearted, cruel, selfish, insensitive.

We ought to change names again. True philosophic liberals should again become liberals, supporting the core values of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

The Democrats should be called for what they are: the New Left of social engineers, of “isms”—feminism, multiculturalism, gay/lesbianism, racialism with its quotas and life outlook determined by skin color and shape of eyes and noses, religious environmentalism with its tyranny over all human activity. This is not liberalism; this does not reflect the core values of America. This is rank intellectual idiocy threatening the health of a just society.

With the end of the cold war and the collapse of communism, the time is right for a change of nomenclature.

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