

THE BRADLEY CENTER
FOR PHILANTHROPY AND CIVIC RENEWAL

presents

VISION AND PHILANTHROPY
A Bradley Center Symposium

February 16, 2005

PANELISTS:

**Stuart Butler • Linda Chavez • Michael Cromartie • Pete du Pont • Barbara Elliott
Steven Hayward • Roger Hertog • Heather Higgins • Peb Jackson • Robert Kagan • Leon Kass
David Keene • William Kristol • Leonard A. Leo • Heather Mac Donald • Scott McConnell
Stephen Moore • Grover Norquist • James Piereson • Robert Woodson, Sr.**

MODERATOR: **Amy Kass**

Keynote Speaker
PETER WEHNER

Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Strategic Initiatives, White House

On Wednesday, February 16, Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal will bring together a group of prominent conservative thinkers, writers, and philanthropists to discuss two questions:

What is the conservative vision for America today?
How can philanthropy best promote it?

In preparation for the discussion, several of the panelists put down their thoughts on the questions in the following short essays.*

*The views expressed here are solely the views of the authors and do not reflect the views of Hudson Institute, its staff, members, contracted agencies, or other institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

VISION AND PHILANTHROPY

Wednesday, February 16, 2005
The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC
1150 22nd Street, N.W.
Ballroom Salons I-III

This event is by invitation only.

8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
8:30 Panel Discussion on
Conservative Vision
10:00 Coffee Break
10:15 Panel Discussion Continues:
Philanthropy's Role in Realizing
the Vision
12:00 p.m. Luncheon and Keynote Speech
1:30 Adjournment

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Stuart Butler
Vice President, The Heritage Foundation

To understand fully the conservative vision of the public interest and the key role of philanthropy in that vision, it's necessary to appreciate how conservatives view the balance between individual rights and the good of the community.

The idea of rights is as central to conservatism as it is to liberalism. In broad terms there is also a similar interpretation of the obligations of the wider society to protect rights, and to provide support for its poorer and weaker members. But there are three ways in which we conservatives see that relationship a little differently from most liberals.

First, we see assistance to the less fortunate as involving mutual obligation. It is not a one-way right and one-way obligation. To be sure, helping the poor and alleviating poverty are not so much acts of generosity or charity (in the common use of that word), but a moral imperative. Indeed the root of the biblical Hebrew word for charity—*tzedakah*—relates to justice, not generosity. Yet assistance to the poor is not a form of reparations, or necessarily a step towards a goal of material equality. Those receiving help have a corresponding obligation to use it, if they are able to do so, to improve their condition and rejoin the mainstream society. We can, and should, insist on self-improvement. This is why conservatives, unlike most liberals, are quite comfortable in conditioning welfare on work, or assistance for education on effort and results.

Second, conservatives are generally more ready to balance rights to assistance with the wider material and social interests of the community. So while rights must be respected and strengthened, they do not automatically trump the common good. This is why conservatives are so leery of the idea of the word “entitlement,” whether for welfare or for Medicare, where the law requires resources to be devoted to a program’s specified benefits without regard to the impact on competing community needs or desires. To conservatives, it is thus quite appropriate to weigh competing goals, such as supporting the health of the elderly or the welfare of the poor, in the balance with education for our children or national defense. A community’s commitments to its members must be reviewed regularly and adjusted.

And third, conservatives see “society” or “community” as an organic body that must balance these obligations and interests. Society rests on consensus values that evolve slowly over time—even though these values may be enshrined in the principles of legal documents and perhaps religious tenets. These values are often hotly debated as different people with contrasting visions of the good society struggle to make their case to others. Over time, this debate and the public’s reaction to experience slowly alter our social culture and goals of social policy. All conservatives see this constant debate over our values and social culture as an essential feature of a free society, just as some conservatives—but not all—feel that the debate must take place within boundaries that they consider bedrock truths or national principles. These truths and principles include such things as the inalienable right to liberty and the American commitment to tolerance.

We all recognize as well that America is a special place where freedom and diversity have fostered a wide range of smaller societies or communities, and institutions within them—the communities and institutions that have always caught the attention of visitors to our shores. The diversity and values of these smaller communities, from ethnic or religious neighborhoods to states, are part of what it is to be an American. That diversity adds to the constant debate over our national values and culture. Moreover, the institutions of these small communities—church, union, synagogue, farm bureau, family, PTA, and the like—constitute the “ground troops,” pursuing our wider social goals and helping focus and direct the efforts of individuals who seek to support social goals. Berger and Neuhaus famously described these institutions as

critical “mediating structures” that act as a bridge between the individual and the larger institutions of America, such as government, and humanize these more remote institutions.

Conservatives, more than liberals, see mediating structures as essential agents of the community—the national community as well as the local. We also see them as bulwarks of our society and its culture, protecting the values and interests of the individuals comprising society. And so we feel we must resist efforts by government to weaken them or bypass them, or to change their essence as a condition of partnering with them. That is why conservatives resist government imposing employment or religious restrictions on organizations that help to achieve public policy objectives, including where the organizations accept public funds from the government.

Conservatives deeply understand that philanthropy is vital to this whole vision of change and improvement in society. Throughout history the “patron” has been critical to the political, social and cultural evolution of free societies. Like the patron, today’s philanthropic foundations make it possible for new ideas and new ways of looking at the world to be developed and communicated, especially approaches that conflict with the current views of government or established elites. Government cannot fulfill that role. Philanthropic foundations actually play the same mediating structure role in a financial sense that the organizations they support do in a policy, cultural, or service sense. They provide the essential “seed capital” for many ventures in a community that enhance the public good but cannot be supported with public finance without risking their independence and uniqueness. Without philanthropic support, many a breakthrough idea or solution to a problem might literally be unknown or stay on the drawing board, and our society would be less vibrant, successful, and just.

Linda Chavez

President, Center for Equal Opportunity

The conservative vision embraces two goals: liberty for individuals and a society in which those individuals freely make the choice not to abuse the freedoms they enjoy. Libertarian conservatives place more emphasis on the former, while social conservatives emphasize the latter, but both are important. Although much has been written about the uneasy relationship between these two branches of the modern American conservative movement, they are indispensable to each other. For there to be less government control and interference in the lives of the people, the people themselves must be capable of controlling their own worst instincts.

Liberty is the central idea contained in our Founding documents, from the Declaration of Independence to the Bill of Rights, but the Founders understood that true liberty could only exist among a people capable of self-control and adherence to a moral order. Individuals should have a great deal of freedom in leading their lives—political, economic, and religious—but conservatives also want a society in which people choose voluntarily not to abuse their freedom. The two are interconnected, since an upstanding, hardworking people can be afforded more freedom than a bloodthirsty, lazy rabble. Conservatives want to keep government small but also want to encourage the “little platoons” that do so much to build community and morality. Most conservatives, it is safe to say, also believe that morality is difficult, if not impossible, without religion—that without God, everything is permitted, a theme repeated often in Dostoevsky’s work.

So who should nurture the little platoons that are so vital to maintaining our liberties? Obviously, conservatives don’t believe government is the answer—though most conservatives would argue that government should not be the stumbling block either. This nurturing role falls to the philanthropic community—to individuals and foundations.

Although the premise of the question we were asked to address assumes that “conservative foundations have been particularly successful at influencing American public policy,” I would not be so quick to claim victory. Yes, political conservatism seems safely the dominant political philosophy for American voters, with Republicans controlling both the White House and the Congress. But the zeal to roll back the size and reach of government has waned from the heady days of the Reagan revolution. And the conservative vision—especially with respect to moral issues—is virtually missing from the popular culture. Conservatives seem impotent to affect the culture in any meaningful way—it has become coarser and more destructive with each passing year. And even in other areas, conservatives seem to be losing the battle. Multiculturalism and racial preferences, both of which masquerade as “diversity,” dominate our schools and universities and have been embraced by the corporate world, not to mention government. Yet conservative foundations have devoted scant resources to trying to counter these trends.

No doubt part of the problem is that conservative philanthropy is less well-endowed than liberal philanthropy. Most conservative foundations simply cannot match the behemoths like the Ford Foundation or the Bill and Linda Gates Foundation. But having more limited resources makes it imperative for foundations that share a conservative vision to better coordinate their giving, to share ideas, to create synergy so that they can become more effective, not just in changing public policy but in fostering a society that reflects conservative values.

Barbara J. Elliott
Founder and President, Center for Renewal

The truths that have emerged and withstood the jagged shoals of time’s shores are the essence of the conservative credo. Russell Kirk, one of the distinguished fathers of the conservative intellectual movement in America, and the author of *The Conservative Mind*, shows us the immutable power of ideas in governing human affairs. He writes in *The American Cause*:

The success or failure of any human society depends upon how sound and true its ideas are. That a nation has prospered a great while—that it has been orderly and free and just and wealthy—is one very good proof that its ideas have been sound and true. Three groups of ideas, or bodies of principle, invisibly control any people.... The first, and most important, of these bodies of principle is the set of moral convictions which a people hold: their ideas about the relationship of God and man, about virtue and vice, honesty and dishonesty, honor and dishonor. The second of these bodies of principle is the set of political convictions which a people hold: their ideas about justice and injustice, freedom and tyranny, personal rights and power, and the whole complex problem of living together peaceably. The third of these bodies of principle is the set of economic convictions which a people hold: their ideas about wealth and property, public and private responsibilities in the affair of making a living, and the distribution of goods and services.¹

These three bodies of principles build on each other, and are intertwined. The political order we enjoy presupposes a set of moral convictions held in the hearts of its citizens. The success of the economic order depends directly on the political order for its framework. In America, we enjoy the remarkable freedom and prosperity we do because of the fruits of faith and character which have been harvested here. A democracy and a market economy are in one sense hollow vessels. They do not themselves possess the qualities that make them flourish, but are conduits producing results only as good as the citizens whose lives and convictions are poured into them.

The conservative renaissance of recent years has achieved some major public policy victories. Foundations have played a significant role in fostering this work by nurturing the thought leaders and the

¹ Russell Kirk, *The American Cause* (Chicago: Regnery and Company, 1957).

seeds of their ideas, by providing the soil and water for them in research institutions, then cultivating their application with the tools of intermediaries. The ideas were strewn across the country, pollinating in the shape of articles, books, and broadcasts. Where these ideas on political and economic order took root, they produced a harvest of public opinion that over time was reaped into public policy. Part of the success of the modern conservative movement in America is due to its intentionality in moving ideas along this path—from the seminal thinkers to the populizers of ideas, out to the grassroots where the ideas were planted, then to the harvest of national political implementation. The result has transformed most of a generation of political and economic reality, rolling back the welfare state.

But before we are too self-congratulatory, recall the words of Samuel Johnson, who reminds us “How small, of all that human hearts endure, that part which laws or kings can cause or cure.” Public policy, by its very nature, cannot penetrate the depth of the human soul. But the private sector is being asked to take on the care of those who have been weaned from public support. In caring for one another voluntarily, we learn the habits of the heart that foster character. Public policy cannot make men and women desire that which is good, nor can it instill virtue. It cannot create community. And yet it is precisely at the level of community that each individual lives and seeks fulfillment. It is here that convictions and relationships are formed, and that civilization breathes and is transmitted. The soil of civil society is the seedbed of personal virtue. Our deepest fulfillment is realized not only in goals for ourselves, but in other-relatedness. And yet so little is done to actively foster the growth of civil society, where the human heart is formed.

The character of America’s citizens—faith, virtue, and valor—makes possible the fruitful use of free political and economic institutions. It is a curious paradox that our form of government depends on the quality of the hearts and minds that are poured into a democracy and a market economy, but the government itself is incapable of fostering the traits of virtue and character it depends on for its survival. These virtues are fostered in the private realm, in civil society, in the home and at the hearth, in our houses of worship, and among neighbors and friends. Public order depends on private virtue.

So much time, money, and energy is expended in the debate on determining public policy. And while it is indeed important, it is not *the* most important issue. If Russell Kirk was right—and I believe he was—the most important body of principles rests on the right relationship of God and man. These are private matters, indeed, but they have public consequences. In a free society, the fruits of the spirit determine whether we live in order or anarchy, freedom or tyranny, because, as Edmund Burke reminds us, what is not governed from within must be governed from without. It is not the government’s rightful place to foster faith. That must be done in the private sector. But the failure to privately foster the fruits of faith will topple both the public and private order we still enjoy. Freedom cannot be sustained without virtue, and virtue cannot be sustained without faith in God.

The little seedbeds for fostering growth of the human spirit are all around us, in the scores of faith-based organizations that are quietly at work throughout America. These street saints are knitting up the tattered fabric of civil society as they foster generous habits of the heart. These groups are often marginalized by the philanthropic community—sometimes because they are small, or because they are so difficult to organize into a grand strategy. But make no mistake: the people of faith on the street are doing crucial work for the health of the nation. The philanthropic community should foster their growth and help them bloom in the deep places that policy can never reach. The soul of the nation depends on the spiritual fruit they produce.

Steven F. Hayward

F. K. Weyerhaeuser Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

Insofar as the term “vision” too often bespeaks imaginary worlds shaped by ideology and the will to power, “conservative vision” may be an oxymoron. All the various strains of conservatism—from the spontaneous and dynamic order that arises from free and open markets to the inherited wisdom passed along through tradition and custom—are united by one common thread: a principled skepticism that political action can achieve mastery of social conditions.

For the last two generations this has meant, as a practical matter, being primarily an opposition movement. It has meant deploying intellectual and political resources to turn back the pretensions of progressive liberalism. We have had to do this with our own institutions, a “counter-establishment,” as an adversary once put it. There have been notable policy successes (welfare reform, crime, de-regulation) and notable frustrations (public education/school choice, affirmative action, re-regulation). The conservative movement now seems better positioned than at any time in history to move many of its policy ideas, such as Social Security, legal, and tax reform. Conservative philanthropy deserves major credit for nurturing the institutions and intellectual seriousness that made this possible.

Our side of the larger argument has benefited from a central, powerful fact: liberalism’s view of social reality is not in accord with human nature. Whether regulating markets or regulating social behavior, the same principles from which we derive the axioms of limited government also suggest the limits of social and economic policy. In a common-sense way, more and more citizens have come to understand this, which is why bureaucracy is reviled and “social engineering” carries pejorative deadweight.

However, one must immediately take note of the cognitive dissonance in public opinion. However impressive our intellectual and political victories over the last generation, liberalism or statism still commands a residue of legitimacy in American opinion. (For example, too many Americans tell pollsters that there should be a right to health care.) Hence liberalism retains some momentum behind bad policy initiatives and the strength to block our sensible reform ideas. The next step in challenging liberalism requires attacking directly at the source of its remaining legitimacy.

Liberalism as a programmatic ideology derives much of its energy and legitimacy with the public by assuming to be the prime force of human progress. In practical terms “progress” means the continual—and in principle unlimited—expansion of government. This is why more and more spheres of economic and social life end up being politicized despite our best efforts, and is also why today’s liberals slide naturally into calling themselves “progressives” to avoid the unpopularity associated with the “liberal” label. Public opinion remains vulnerable to liberal/progressive appeals, which is why narrow cost/benefit analysis and similar approaches are not sufficient to turn back liberalism. Right now the conservative movement does not explicitly contest the Left over the terms of how human progress is understood.

As a historical matter, it was during the “Progressive Era” 100 years ago that both the intellectual foundations of modern liberalism, and the corruption of American constitutionalism, were set in place. The ideas spawned during the Progressive Era established the foundations of both the welfare state and the regulatory state. Progressive liberalism began as a broad-based intellectual movement, comprising economists, lawyers, political scientists, historians, journalists, and practical politicians. In the space of a generation this movement reshaped our understanding of our political system. It requires an equally vigorous and broad-based intellectual movement to reverse this.

In other words, we should seek to roll back the Progressive Era. This is less daunting and far-fetched than it may seem on the surface. Liberals today are largely unreflective about their own premises. Therefore, what is necessary is a sustained program to force liberalism to engage in arguments they avoid, or to

examine its unstated premises. Such a debate can be started with the usual means: books, conferences, placed media, journals, and research programs. The main prerequisite for a sustained program is a cadre of intellectuals, ongoing programs, and institutional capacity. All of the various strains of conservative thought have a narrative of what constitutes the nature of real human progress, and therefore have the wherewithal to engage such a competition.

An initial program to do this would comprise five practical aspects:

Leverage Existing Institutions and Programs

It is not necessary to found new institutions or generate a large number of new intellectuals for this program. What is needed is to bolster and knit together existing scholars, programs, and institutions in a coherent fashion so as to “train their guns,” so to speak, more directly on the main target.

Identify and Recruit a Core Group

There are numerous individual scholars and writers who understand the problem but who lack a program or institutional framework for deploying their knowledge effectively. Some kind of “steering committee,” or ad hoc organization similar to Midge Decter’s successful “Committee for the Free World” back in the 1970s and 1980s, might be established.

Promote Revisionist History

Liberalism derives much of its moral authority and legitimacy from its historical narrative of the supposed abuses of market capitalism. Debunking this narrative goes a long way toward kicking out the props underneath modern liberalism. Although recent scholarship has refuted most of the frothy liberal narrative, it is still the popular perception of the public.

Publications

It would be useful to have several sympathetic academic and intellectual publications participating actively in this effort, such as *The Public Interest*, *Journal of Law and Economics*, *City Journal*, and the *Claremont Review of Books*.

Academic Programs

The importance of academic programs should not be underestimated, even though their effect on public policy is indirect.

Of course, a sustained, results-oriented program would require much more thought about organization, project evaluation, and many other matters. My purpose here is simply to sketch a general strategy for consideration. “Rolling back the Progressive Era” may seem grandiose or pie-in-the-sky, but much the same thing was said about rolling back Communism. Yet today it is gone. We should take encouragement from that fact.

Robert Kagan

Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

To speak of a vision for America also means talking about America’s role in the world. This is not only because America is now the world’s most powerful nation and therefore shoulders the responsibilities that come with great power. How the country behaves internationally has always been part of how Americans define themselves as a people. From the founding generation onward, a sense of the nation’s great destiny combined pride in America’s founding principles and conviction that the superiority of those principles would make the United States a world power—probably *the* world power. Alexander Hamilton foresaw that America would “erelong, assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies—majestic,

efficient, and operative of great things. A noble career lies before it.” The coherent vision conservative foundations should support is that of an America that advances its principles at home and abroad, with an intelligent and informed understanding of the world, of the use of power in all its forms, and of America’s capacity to shape the international system.

This is hardly a new mission for conservative foundations. But it is also not one with deep historical roots. The United States consciously took on the role as “leader of the free world” after World War II, seeking to become the dominant global power responsible for upholding an international liberal order in the economic, political, and strategic realms. It did so out of the conviction that only by adopting such an expansive role could the United States protect its own interests and ideals and prevent a recurrence of the horrors of World War II. At the beginning, this was not the view of those described as “conservatives” at the time, and with a few exceptions, the think tanks that sprang up to address these problems in the postwar years were not “conservative.” Even in the conservative renaissance of the late 1970s and 1980s, conservative philanthropy and think tanks focused much more on domestic than on foreign policy.

Today there is an urgent need for conservatives to devote a large share of material and intellectual resources to the study of foreign and strategic policy. For one thing, American liberalism, still not recovered from the Vietnam era, has largely abandoned the vision that once animated Truman and Acheson and the Democratic Party more generally. If only by default, conservative philanthropies must take responsibility for ensuring that the next generation of American policy-makers has the knowledge and training to take on the enormous tasks ahead. They should seek to drive deep the pillars of an internationalist American foreign policy, committed to keeping America strong, preserving American dominance of the international strategic environment, and understanding that the defense and promotion of liberal principles is a critical part of America’s role in the world, benefiting others but also benefiting Americans. That is the best way to avoid the United States again taking what President Bush recently called a “sabbatical” in American foreign and defense policy.

There is of course more than one “conservative” perspective on foreign policy.

The debate within conservatism has been lively, and should remain so. In addition to the neoconservative foreign policy tradition—which sees the United States with a critical role to play in the world, as both a defender and promoter of liberal democracy—there also has been a realist tradition, which points to the limits of American power and the dangers of excessive idealism. This is a healthy debate. One of the characteristics of the current foreign policy discussion, ironically, is that the most vibrant debate continues to be among those commonly referred to as conservatives. This debate is worth preserving and extending.

Regardless of which of these positions conservatives support, there is a common need for more young men and women trained in the fields that contribute to intelligent foreign policy. In my view, the most important area that deserves support is history: regional history, religious history, military history, diplomatic history, and American history. The academy, as we all know, has just about destroyed serious study in these fields. There are few diplomatic history courses, for instance, and even fewer military history courses. Future generations of Americans will not know what is meant by “Munich” much less the much derided “lessons of Munich.” Illusions and myths about American foreign policy abound, especially about the founding era but also about the early Cold War and, one finds, even about the 1980s. While history is not an unerring guide to the present and the future, knowledge of history is essential to the intelligent understanding and formulation of current policy. I can think of no greater contribution by conservative philanthropy than to support historical scholarship at all levels: undergraduate, graduate, and professorships. I would worry less about promoting any particular school of foreign policy than about education itself. We can trust knowledge to produce intelligent policy.

Leon Kass
Hertog Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

Today, the guiding light of conservative political vision is freedom: freedom from terror, tyranny, and big brother bureaucrats; freedom for self-government, worship, and the pursuits of property and happiness. To conserve these goods in a world that threatens them is a cause both necessary and noble. But, as Tony Blair reminded churlish critics of President Bush's inaugural address, the defense and promotion of liberty was not a Tory but a liberal or progressive idea, which in truth it was and, for any true liberal, still is. In today's America, true liberals and true conservatives are and should be equally friends of freedom. But true conservatives are not simply libertarians—especially in those domains of social and private life that are properly beyond the purview of government. Much as they would protect liberty against the rule of prince or prelate, conservatives must care—today perhaps more than ever—also about social order, family life, and the general state of the culture.

In today's America, conservatives must attend especially to the preservation of human dignity against those degradations and debasements that spring not from the absence but from the misuse of liberty. Conservative thinkers have long taught that the conditions of free institutions and the cultivation of free citizens are not guaranteed by freedom itself, and surely not by free markets alone. Free institutions and free citizens depend ultimately on education, soul-craft, and character, even and especially because they are not the primary business of government. As President Bush put it in the 2005 State of the Union, we have a “great responsibility to our children and grandchildren . . . to honor and to pass along the values that sustain a free society.” Not an easy task, not ever, but especially not today.

The challenges to human dignity that we face today come from a variety of quarters: the nihilism of leading intellectuals that denies that life has meaning or purpose; the crudeness of the popular culture that debases tastes and flattens souls; the materialism of science that denies the soul's existence; the glut of gadgetry and tyrannical technologies that distorts lived experience and makes unmediated “real life” increasingly rare; the materialism of market worship that knows the price of a human being's time but nothing of his intrinsic human worth. Much of this is old news, and there are many conservative activities afoot to do combat with these sources of our social and psychic debasement.

But I would single out one area where the threat to human dignity is insufficiently understood, not by conservatives and not by liberals, in part because it comes from the honored precincts of biomedical science and technology whose fruits for saving life and curing disease we all crave with ever-increasing and boundless appetite. No matter that scientists have begun to: create human embryos solely to be experimental subjects; form hybrids and chimeras by mixing parts from human and animal embryos; harvest primordial organs from animal fetuses grown from embryos transferred into the wombs of animals; conceive new life other than by union of egg and sperm by using gametes derived from stem cells; screen early human life to see if it passes genetic muster; practice sex selection for non-medical reasons; file for patents on the products of mammalian cloning, including the human clone; or openly offer to pay \$50,000 for oocytes from tall coeds at Harvard or Stanford with high SATs. We want treatments for infertility. We want better children. We want cures for Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes, and spinal cord injury. We want a regenerative medicine that will replace all our worn-out parts. So we cut the scientists a lot of slack, willingly closing our eyes to the loss of humanity that is necessarily involved.

We do not ask whether we would be better off living longer or raising our genetically superior children in a world in which procreation has been turned into manufacture, in which human life is treated as a mere natural resource, in which the seeds of the next generation are bought and sold like caviar, in which artfully conceived children are denied a unique biological mother or father or must confess that their mom and dad were fetuses or stem cells, or in which the surprise and mystery of new life is sacrificed to the demand for prediction and perfection.

The future is almost here. Beyond therapy, we are witnessing the development of numerous techniques that will give us superior performance, ageless bodies, and happier souls: genetic enhancement of muscles, hormones and genetic fixes to slow senescence, drugs to erase troubling memories, alter basic desires, and induce feelings of ecstasy or sweet self-satisfaction. Yes, we can see how these new technologies will serve age-old human desires. But what kind of people will we become if we satisfy those desires by these inhuman means? What will it be like to live in a world in which human achievements depend largely on body engineers or in which the truths of our lived experience can be drugged into the dust heap or in which pleasure and self-esteem are divorced utterly from the activities and human attachments that are their true and most worthy source?

It is important to recognize that these threats to human dignity come not from the enemies of freedom but from freedom's friends and beneficiaries, men and women who are powerful well-wishers of humankind but who, alas, lack the education or the sensibility or the gravity or the reverence for the true humanity of human beings. Neither they nor we who love their gifts are sufficiently aware of the fact that these bittersweet fruits of freedom, offered humanely and generously, can gradually and without our realizing it drown the soul's capacity, energy, and desire for genuine self-command and human flourishing. Conservatives are today summoned above all to take up the cause of human dignity against what C. S. Lewis prophetically called the abolition of man.

David A. Keene
Chairman, American Conservative Union

In the century since Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller established their mega-foundations, thousands of foundations both big and small have come and gone. Many have bettered the lives of individuals and their families while others, for better or worse, have had an enduring impact on the very shape of the society in which we live.

Today there are more than 65,000 grant making foundations in this country with combined assets of something like half a trillion dollars, but while many of these foundations do "good" in the traditional sense, only a handful have leveraged their assets to advance a larger vision; to transform the very society in which they operate and in which we live.

Until a few decades ago, few of these could be described as "conservative" in the sense that we use the term here, though most may have been playing a conservative role in providing essentially private sector charitable assistance within the framework of a free society.

Indeed, those foundations with a vision invariably pushed public policy in a leftward direction, regardless of whether those whose wealth was used to endow them would have agreed.

The Carnegie Corporation, for example, provided the seed money that launched what became the Brookings Institution, one of the earliest effective public policy "think tanks" and gave Ralph Nader his start after earlier underwriting Gunnar Myrdal's 1944 book *An American Dilemma*, which shaped the debate over race in this country in the decades that followed. Carnegie and other foundations funded studies that led to the creation of such things as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the creation by Congress of programs that have channeled billions of dollars to higher education.

Whether these efforts reflected the desires of the foundation's founders or the non-profit managerial class that came to dominate the foundation world by the sixties and seventies is arguable. However, there is no

question that even before the advent of the advocacy-oriented foundations that exist today, they had a huge impact on the direction and content of public policy in this country.

As a cohesive intellectual conservative movement began to develop in the late fifties and early sixties, it was perhaps only a matter of time before foundations were launched reflecting this “new” vision (that is, new to the foundation world). These foundations and the “think tanks,” publications, and scholars they promoted began to develop a body of thought, literature, and expertise that would ultimately have far more impact than anyone could have predicted twenty or thirty years ago.

Their success is remarkable when one considers that their combined assets are miniscule when compared to those of the bigger establishment and liberal institutions that came to the “game” far earlier. It has to be attributed to the power of their vision, the strength of their ideas, and the fact that most of them didn’t just drift into the business of working for a different kind of society, but came into being with a world-changing vision and mission at their core.

They have proven, as Richard Weaver observed so famously, that ideas do indeed have consequences and have given conservatives the means to develop policies that deal with public problems in ways consistent with the modern conservative vision of a free society—in which markets, individuals, voluntary organizations, and communities, rather than centralized government bureaus, make the crucial decisions.

The vitality of this vision seems commonplace today, but the intellectual energy it unleashed as it took hold and was nurtured within the intellectual and political worlds gave those who shared it and funded the development of the public policy proposals that flowed from it an impact far greater than could have been predicted by simply measuring the funds at their disposal.

The challenge today is to retain that energy and find ways to creatively build on what has come before. Political and ideological movements have a tendency to lose their edge as they succeed and attract new adherents. As a movement grows, those who join tend to be less grounded in the basic values that give it strength than those who came before.

The challenge of a maturing movement and those who have nurtured it to maturity is to create a new generation of leaders, writers, and thinkers with the energy, imagination, and grounding of those who brought it this far.

Leonard A. Leo
Executive Vice President, The Federalist Society

God created man a rational being and conferred upon him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his actions. Individual freedom and personal responsibility are, therefore, essential attributes of our existence.

For government to be consistent with this human condition, there must be recognized and readily enforceable limitations on its power to control man. To be sure, freedom and personal responsibility cannot truly exist without a democratic government predicated upon consent. But pure democracy—the mere exercise of majority will—cannot in the end preserve the dignity of the human person. This is why the conservative movement has always placed a premium on the rule of law.

The American experiment in self-government is virtually unique. There have been many movements throughout human history directed at guaranteeing liberty or human dignity. The French Revolution comes to mind most readily. Yet, that political movement and most others have not fully recognized the

need to limit carefully and explicitly the power of the state. Movements premised simply upon a desire for rights or entitlements, which lead to more government power with few legal constraints, inevitably lead to a loss of self-determination and personal responsibility. And this takes us very far from the relationship we are to have with God, and the relationship He wants us to have with our fellow man.

These fundamental truths about human freedom and the role of the state have driven the American conservative movement, and its understanding of our system of government. American conservatives have always demonstrated a great devotion to our Constitution precisely because the Founders forged it with a keen understanding of these important truths about the human condition. For conservatives, the structure of our government—federalism, the separation of powers, and the enumeration of specific powers—are just as important as the particularized enumeration of rights in guaranteeing human dignity. This is because constraining and delineating government authorities in ways that can be enforced ensures that the enumeration of rights is more than just hortatory. For example, our Constitution does not simply guarantee freedom of religious conscience—it prohibits the state from establishing a national church to which we must all swear allegiance. Similarly, our Constitution does not merely announce a right to own private property—it prohibits governments from confiscating such property for anything other than a public purpose, and even then, only upon just compensation.

How can conservative philanthropy best ensure that this vision of the public interest continues to thrive here and elsewhere in the world?

First, better communication of these core ideals about human dignity and the role of government. The ideas are fully developed. The challenge is to find new and exciting ways to re-articulate these ideas so as to captivate the excitement and imagination of new generations of citizens. This is a standard business principle—new marketing and packaging are needed on occasion to rebuild interest, enthusiasm and goodwill. Creative writers and thinkers within the university community need to be supported in this effort, producing a new round of readable and readily accessible scholarship.

Second, develop effective policy solutions that will extend these ideals to a targeted set of modern problems. This is an exercise in practicality. We should be looking for problems that, when identified and communicated, will generate a groundswell for reform. And, moreover, we should be coming up with very specific proposals for adoption by the political process or the courts. Think tanks and other policy organizations need to be engaged in this effort, and, importantly, their work needs to be scrutinized using clear, action-oriented benchmarks for success.

Finally, conservative philanthropy needs to support the creation of infrastructures that can implement the policy solutions we know will work. These might be organizations that mobilize public opinion and grassroots activists, directly incentivize or hold elected officials accountable, or otherwise directly pressure the key chokepoints for policy change in our society (for example, key professions such as the press, business leaders, and the organized bar).

Heather Mac Donald

John M. Olin Fellow, Manhattan Institute

Let's face it: foundations have produced big-time cultural damage over the last four decades. Racial preferences, identity politics, gender studies, welfare and homeless rights—all were catapulted into nearly untouchable status by the biggest names in philanthropy: Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie. These charitable giants, despite their vaunted independence, all just happened to start promoting “social change” at exactly the same moment, decades after their fabled namesakes had passed away. The reason? The

tyranny of the “philanthropy expert,” soaked in “progressive” values and wholly untouched by the supposedly corrupting influence of the market.

Now those experts are working overtime to preserve their reign. Philanthropy schools have sprung up to teach the wealthy how to give. Predictably, the curriculum embraces the big-government, victocrat status quo with a vengeance. Rockefeller’s \$20,000 Course in Practical Philanthropy invites such left-wing advocacy groups as the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council to teach would-be donors what society’s problems are and how to fix them. Students learn to see the same “root causes” of poverty in New York and Rio de Janeiro—naturally, these would be unfair economic systems and inadequate government spending on the poor.

Fortunately, a few foundations, such as Bradley and Olin, have remained true to their founders’ values. The results have been vastly disproportionate to their size, producing such seismic cultural corrections as welfare reform and the law-and-economics movement. We need many more such foundations, needless to say. But I would add some additional insurance against future charitable disasters. Though it seems presumptuous to do so, I would advise would-be philanthropists to do the following.

First, support what you love, not what you feel you ought to support. If donors were guided first by their passions—whether for unknown 18th century operas or Civil War history—there would be a flourishing of wonderful new institutions that would increase *real* cultural and social diversity. Donors would be more likely to stay with causes that they know best. And the “experts” would be left to rave about “post-colonial structures of discourse among excluded peoples” without an audience.

Second, ignore the experts. But if experts you must have, my recommendation is: test their advice against your own values. Anyone who makes a fortune knows a little something about how the world works. He will have developed habits of mind that created opportunities not just for himself but for many others. He understands how to motivate people to do their best work. So when a philanthropy expert tells you: “The best way to help the poor is to increase their welfare entitlement and give them an unconditional right to shelter,” ask yourself: “Would these ‘benefits’ have helped me to succeed?” Better yet, ask the expert: “How many jobs have you created? To how many people have you given the chance to move up in life?”

The stupidity of the wealthy in the face of philanthropic expertise remains a wonder to behold. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is Exhibit A. The foundation recently announced a new initiative to improve high-school graduation rates among poor minority students. Its breakthrough concept? Putting low-skill students in specially created “college” courses starting in the 9th grade. The foundation noted that two-thirds of high-school graduates were unprepared for college work. The Gates solution: Have them start accumulating “college” credit in high school, so that by the time they graduate from high school, they will be half-way through “college.” If you are not following the logic here, don’t feel bad: there is none. Suppose Bill Gates or his father (who runs the foundation) had asked themselves: “Would calling illiteracy and innumeracy ‘college skills’ have helped me succeed? Would I hire anyone whose ‘college’ credits consisted of pseudo ‘college courses’ designed for 10th graders who can’t read?” Had they consulted their own experience, this ed-establishment lunacy would still be poking around for the cool \$30 mill. it has now pocketed from the Microsoft legacy. A successful entrepreneur could sign on to such nonsense only by totally suspending what he knows.

Third: if, after pursuing your passions, you still have time and inclination to do more, I would suggest the following opportunity: Give voice to grass-roots black conservatives. The Bradley Foundation taught me to look for them, and what I have found astounds and heartens me. In city after city there are courageous black men fighting for conservative values. Cincinnati’s Tom Jones has nothing but contempt for that city’s tyrannical race-hustler Damon Lynch III. While Lynch is comparing Cincinnati to apartheid South Africa, Jones is putting his life at risk trying to clear his neighborhood of drug dealers and working with

the police. Naturally, the media hangs on Lynch's every word and can't spend a minute with Jones. Jones has twice lost his bid for City Council; his presence on that body could begin to challenge the city's virulent race politics.

Hartford's Cornell Lewis, founder of the Men of Color Initiative, which escorts children safely to school, scoffs at blacks who call the police "the enemy" on Tuesday and Wednesday, and then on Thursday, when they get mugged, expect the cops to show up and provide assistance. Indianapolis's Olgen Williams, director of Christamore House, a self-help center, is fed up with "diversity" blather and just wants the elderly to be able to go to the store safely. Milwaukee's Sheriff David A. Clarke, Jr., wonders why his deputies get accused of "racial profiling" for merely going after criminals.

The press won't go near these iconoclasts, because they contradict the cultural elite's most cherished belief: that the U.S. remains an ineradicably racist society. These unsung radicals dare utter the heresy that self-discipline and hard work are the keys to success. Finding a way to make them heard will not be easy; the media's power to silence non-conformists is daunting. But if the victimologists' monopoly on what constitutes respectable "black thought" could be broken, efforts to eradicate minority poverty and underclass dysfunction may finally make some progress.

Scott McConnell
Executive Editor, The American Conservative

My view of what constitutes a coherent vision of the public interest has changed quite a bit over the past 15 years. Consequently, so has the way I would frame an answer to this question. I think conservative foundations may have been a little too successful and their vision of the good America a little too coherent for the country's own good.

I am not sure where the failure lies. Not, I don't think, in conservatism as an ideology. The classic conservative tradition remains as valid as ever: a certain predilection for the familiar; a recognition of man's innate flaws, or fallen nature as some might put it; and a consequent skepticism about vast schemes for social amelioration, whether that be spreading a Jacobin revolution throughout Europe in the 18th century, a war on poverty in the 20th, or a war to end evil in the 21st.

But this core of the conservative sensibility seems to have been forgotten or abandoned in the American conservative foundation world. I'm not exactly sure how that happened, but I don't think it's necessarily the fault of the foundations themselves. Foundation executives—I have been, at quite a low level, one myself—can be swept along by the tides of popular sentiment and elite cultural opinion. Perhaps the fault arises from the energy and sheer brainpower of the much talked about neoconservatives, whose global hubris marks a sharp departure from conservative tradition. (Almost any generalization about the neocons needs to be qualified: measured skepticism about big government and various forms of 1960s liberationism were the essence of neoconservative thought during the decade after *The Public Interest* was founded.)

Something unfortunate has happened to conservatism: as it has grown in influence, it has become less attractive, less skeptical, and less conservative—and the big foundations have something to do with this.

I wonder whether the undoubted success of conservative foundations in subsidizing both individual intellectuals and a certain body of thought has led, eventually, to those intellectuals becoming more constrained and less free-thinking than they would be had they followed more normal, pre-conservative-foundation career paths—in academia, for instance. At risk of heresy, I would say that foundation-funded thinkers are now more predictable and less nuanced than university thinkers—and I claim this despite the kind of political correctness that reigns in the academy, so well illustrated by the Larry Summers incident.

How this happened is puzzling, but my own sense of the intellectual world of conservatives—I'm speaking of people I know personally: writers, foundation executives, newspaper people, Bush administration appointees—is much more diverse, fuller of questioning and dissent than is apparent from the product they now put before the country.

Let me give an example, less interesting because I will shield the identity of the main subject, a friend whom I will call writer X. Writer X is a much admired conservative, author of many good books and articles. I happen to know that Writer X is also an opponent of the Iraq War and a serious skeptic of Bush foreign policy. When I was talking with X's significant other—suggesting that the magazine that I edit could really use a piece from Writer X—I was told, well, so and so—naming a prominent individual in the conservative publishing and foundation world (and evidently a big supporter of Bush's foreign policy)—pays Writer X's mortgage. 'Nuff said. This is the kind of power the foundation world now holds over conservative debate in America. Such a piece will likely never be written by Writer X.

In another era, someone like Writer X would have been teaching at a major university and thus would be perfectly free to express opinions that contravened that of the Bush administration, perfectly free to change his or her mind. I wonder if we have now developed a calcified establishment in which

conservative intellectuals, increasingly dependent on grants to maintain a middle-class standard of living, have sold themselves into a kind of gilded bondage, where they are less able to speak out or, more importantly, to change their minds.

On the surface, everything is hunky dory—polemical conservative works are on the bestseller lists, and the GOP dominates every level of government. But I don't see the kind of questioning and dissident spirit that was so much a part of conservatism in the 1960s and 1970s. It won't be published and it won't be funded.

I realize that I haven't quite addressed the question posed for the forum—instead, more sideswiped it. My sense of the public interest is that America should be a normal Western country, democratic at home, not belligerent abroad. Our own freedom would be better safeguarded by eschewing messianic visions and is especially endangered by two of these which are, of course, related. One is the immigrationist multicultural vision—America as the first universal nation—which holds that unlimited numbers of people can come here and the country will only gain in the process. This is ahistorical and unconservative. The second is a wildly ambitious foreign policy vision, expressed so well in George W. Bush's second inaugural address, which holds that America can only be secure in a democratic world—and so we must challenge much of the world, even threaten to invade it.

Conservative foundations ought to be at the forefront of challenging these ideas and fighting against them. But quite clearly they are not. That, I think, is a great misfortune for the country.

Stephen Moore

President, Free Enterprise Fund

Senior Fellow, Cato Institute

The conservative movement is in a triumphant position in America today. We are winning on most fronts. The United States and the world are moving in a free market capitalist direction—though on some issues the pace of progress has been frustratingly stifled. Still, the ideological and public policy shift to the right in the United States over the past 30 years has been both stunning and uplifting. John Micklethwait's 2004 book *The Right Nation* captures many of the conservative movement's victories over this period.

Let me mention a few that I believe have been most momentous. I will focus on the economic trends, because that is my area of expertise.

First, tax rates have fallen dramatically in the U.S. and around the world. When Reagan entered office the highest tax rate was 70%. Today the highest tax rate is 36%. A Heritage Foundation study recently discovered that across the globe, tax rates have fallen by an average of almost 20 percentage points. Russia and other Eastern European nations are adopting flat taxes.

Second, inflation has been tamed with the intellectual routing of the illogical Keynesian notion of the Phillips Curve and the idea that inflation and unemployment are a tradeoff. Inflation rates, which hit a high of 13% in 1980, have been replaced with stable prices.

Third, free trade is on the march, though this movement goes through political peaks and valleys. NAFTA and other trade agreements have led to lower tariffs globally.

Fourth, socialism has been routed and as Reagan put it, has been relegated to the "dustbin of history."

Fifth, welfare reform was enacted in the United States in 1996 and has been one of the great policy triumphs of the last 50 years.

And sixth, the policy debate in Washington as I write these remarks is dominated by talk of litigation reform, Social Security private accounts, a flat tax, and death tax repeal—to name a few.

These ideas of supply-side economics, welfare reform, free trade, an ownership society, and limited government have been triumphant politically in large part because conservatives have won the war of ideas against the ideology of income redistribution, collectivism, entitlement, and victimization, which are the rallying cries of the Left over the past quarter century.

The conservative foundations have done an enormous service in funding these ideas that have taken fruit. By building great institutions—Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, and state think tanks—the conservative movement has an intellectual infrastructure that never existed before the 1970s. The conservative foundations provided the seed corn for these great institutions and developed them with hundreds of millions of dollars of invested funds. But despite the large donations, it is still safe to say that the institutions of the Left—which include liberal foundations, the media, unions, and government itself—have outspent the Right by many multiples. The good news is that conservative foundations and individual donors have given their money more efficiently to bring about change.

It also has helped that on the issues: we are right, and they are wrong.

But now we are starting to see the Left's counterassault against conservative victories in the policy wars and in the elections. George Soros and other billionaire liberals recently vowed to raise \$100 million over the next two years to sponsor new thought and build new think tanks, new political machines, new grassroots operations.

Hence, we as conservatives cannot sit on our past policy victories or our recent electoral successes. This is a chess match against the Left and tactics that won twenty years ago may not be victorious over the next quarter century.

I would argue that going forward, there are four central challenges ahead for the conservative movement.

First, we must win the wars that are not complete. Social Security reform, legal reform, and tax reform are all at the top of the Bush agenda and it is clear that these corrupt and decaying institutions—the legal system, the tax code, and the Social Security program—are in dire need of modernization.

Second, the education system is getting worse, not better. Market-based education reforms are the next big clash between Left and Right in this country, and it's a fight we can't lose or our capitalist system will be in real jeopardy. We need to topple the educational blob—which is depriving at least half of American children from obtaining a successful financial future.

Third, we must seize control of the next generation of wealth. In the next 10-20 years, trillions of dollars of wealth will be passed on through trusts, foundations, and inheritances. The Left is looking to create the next generation of Ford and Rockefeller Foundations with these massive wealth holdings. We must protect against this and insure that money that is meant to build-up free market institutions isn't intercepted and used to tear them down.

Fourth, we need to create “do tanks” not more “think tanks.” Our movement is now well endowed with idea factories. The next generation of fighting vehicles for the conservative movement need to be groups oriented toward providing strategic policy advice for policy makers, building grass roots to match the

Left's troops, helping educate candidates, taking issues that are inside "red zone"—to use a football cliché—and figure out the best means to push them over the goal line. This means learning and then adopting some of the successful legislative strategies of the Left.

Finally, we need to continue to build out a conservative alternative media and work to penetrate Hollywood. We are in much better shape today in having a voice for conservatives, thanks to the internet, talk radio, and FOX News, but the mainstream media is as hostile as ever to free markets. We are nowhere near parity when it comes to media coverage of politics. Hollywood hates conservatives, though we are gaining footholds in the entertainment industry and we need to nurture, protect, and multiply the conservative presence in Hollywood.

My dear friend Fred Smith, president of the indispensable Competitive Enterprise Institute, often asks the question: "If we're so smart, why aren't we winning?" The answer is that we are winning, but not nearly as much as we should be given the superiority of our ideas and core beliefs. But Fred also notes that we now live in a \$25 trillion economy that is built on the foundation of free market capitalism. But only perhaps one-one thousandth of one percent of that money is used to protect the free market institutions that made the wealth possible. If we could raise this number up to one-one hundredth of one percent, the conservative movement would really shift into high gear. Is that level of giving asking so much, given the stakes? Why not spend at least as much each year on the preservation of capitalism as was spent to bring relief to the tsunami victims in Asia?

So we need the conservative foundations to help fund these new strategies for winning the war of ideas and we need MORE conservative foundations whose missions are never intercepted by the Left. Since most foundations begin with a conservative mandate from the original donors, but are soon captured by the Left, a program to safeguard the sanctity of donor intent would be a huge leap forward for the conservative movement and would have the double blessing of defunding the Left.

Grover Norquist
President, Americans for Tax Reform

Political observers of the Left have complained for several years now that they have been outgunned and outmaneuvered by conservative foundations providing leadership to the conservative movement.

This is an intriguing assertion since by any measure the opposite should be true. Left-leaning foundations are larger and more numerous by a factor of ten or more. There is no conservative Ford, Carnegie, Rockefeller, or MacArthur foundation. Nothing equivalent in size or scope.

Yet, the conservative vision has been gaining acceptance and political power in America since 1980. How is this affected by conservative foundations?

Theory one: Large foundations have little or no effect on the political life of a commercial republic. The Right is winning based on other strengths.

Theory two: Ideas do matter in a commercial republic but the United States is a commercial republic with a religious citizenry. Add to the Right's assets, not simply the Scaife, Bradley and Olin foundations, but the combined personnel, wealth, and engagement of many of American churches, synagogues, and mosques. The modern Left has been unsuccessfully peddling the new religions of socialism, pagan earth worship, and other various coercive utopian visions that have as many rules as Leviticus. They are trying to displace several already well-established religions.

Theory three: For both a commercial and religious people the ideas of the Left, however well presented, funded, and organized, face a more difficult audience in America than the ideas of the Right. Conservative ideas are paddling downstream with the current and Left/Liberal ideas are trying to paddle upstream—tough even with a large paddle.

Theory four: Conservative foundations have been able to present and strengthen a “coherent vision of the public interest” because the Right, unlike the Left, is internally consistent. Years ago people talked about several “wings” of the conservative movement: agrarian, libertarian and later the “three wings” of social, economic, and foreign policy conservatism. But since Reagan, the modern conservative movement has been consciously made up of groups and individuals that—on the issue that moves them to politics—want to be left alone by their central government. Taxpayers, businessmen, property owners, and investors do not want their income, assets, property or businesses taxed or regulated. Home schoolers want to be left alone to educate their children. Gun owners want to be left alone to hunt and defend their families. And all communities of faith wish to be left alone to practice their faith and bring up their children in that faith. All the various “groups” wish the central government to be limited, constrained, unambitious, and controlled by the people. No one on the right wants anything (on a primary issue) at the expense of anyone else in the movement. Ours is a low-maintenance coalition.

Lower taxes please all moving parts of the Right. Ditto tort reform. Spending limitation. Privatization. Removing monopoly powers from union bosses.

But on the Left the story is different.

Hillary Clinton, speaking at a New York fundraiser, suggested that the Left needed a regular coalition meeting like the “Wednesday Meeting” in Washington that this writer chairs weekly. When the press asked for a response to Hillary’s statement, I pointed out that while the Right can meet and agree on mutually satisfying restraints on government action and power the Left coalition is not a low-maintenance coalition.

Around the Left’s table are trial lawyers, labor union leaders, government workers associations, teachers unions, the aggressively secular Left and the coercive utopians who would admonish us not to eat meat, own toilets large enough to flush, buy cars large enough to fit families, wear leather, or date girls. This coalition remains happy as long as more money is coming in and everyone can have more. But as soon as we put our foot on the air hose—as soon as we say no new taxes and mean it—the groups on the left begin looking at each other like the next-to-the-last scene in those lifeboat movies, where they begin to ask whom to throw overboard and whom to eat. Trial lawyers, unions, and tax-and-spend politicians are not allies. They are not friends. They are competing parasites.

A foundation that promoted the interests of trial lawyers would be damaging unions and government workers. Radical environmental foundation work damages union members. Higher taxes to help government workers hurt trial lawyers, social liberals, and union members.

The consistent vision presented by the Right and its foundations since 1980 has been one of lower taxes, tort reform, replacing dependency with ownership, and self-governance in health care, pension reform, and housing. Putting forward choice in education to break up the education monopoly. Eliminating all government-created monopolies from the post office to the air traffic controllers. Promoting property rights and freedom of contract. And maintaining a strong and competent military that faces its guns outward in defense of our freedoms and an honest police force that protects property and life without oppressing.

Our team has an easier time of it. Our goals are complementary and self-reinforcing. And we have the added advantage that we are preserving a tradition embodied in the American Revolution and the Constitution. Our political policies are rooted in experience and tradition. We know our ideas work. They have for generations. The Left must harness the competing parasites to build castles in the clouds and sell that vision to a hardheaded, pragmatic people.

James Piereson

Executive Director, John M. Olin Foundation

Conservatism, as a self-conscious movement, is a new phenomenon in the United States, originating only in the 1950s with the founding of *National Review* by William F. Buckley, Jr. It began as an intellectual movement—a movement of ideas, if you will—and from there, gradually but relentlessly spread into politics—and from there, into the broader culture. The Republican Party, notwithstanding the Goldwater insurgency, resisted the pressures arising from conservatives through much of the 1970s. So much was this the case that President Ford, when he appointed a vice president in 1974, looked to none other than Nelson Rockefeller, the liberal governor of the most liberal state in the union. Only with Ronald Reagan’s victory in 1980 did the Republican Party become a self-conscious and self-described conservative party. Today, most Republican leaders are proud to call themselves “conservatives.”

Liberalism, by contrast, has an older pedigree, originating in the early 1900s with the rise of Progressivism. Every Democratic president in this century beginning with Woodrow Wilson has described himself as a “liberal.” President Wilson said that he could not understand how any thinking person could be anything other than a liberal. FDR said that he was “a proud liberal.” John F. Kennedy said in 1960 that he was a “liberal without illusions.” Today, though their party is certainly liberal, Democratic candidates for office resist this once proud designation.

The political landscape has thus been re-shaped and turned upside down over the past generation by these twin developments—the rise of conservatism and the fall of liberalism. Neither development was predictable. A generation ago, liberalism was plainly the governing philosophy of the nation, and liberals were certain beyond any doubt that they owned the future.

Yet today, fifty years after the founding of *National Review*, conservatism has emerged as the new governing philosophy, and conservatives can point to a growing list of achievements since 1980 that explains and justifies their new status. Conservatism is now, if anything, in a mature phase, sustained by a robust arsenal of ideas, an impressive array of institutions, and a broad base of support among the American people—none of which existed a generation ago. Having clawed their way into power, conservatives naturally wonder what they have to do to stay there.

Conservatism in America

What is the conservative vision for the future? One might say, in answer to this question that it is not in the nature of conservatives to pursue visions, as that is a game more typically played by liberals and radicals. Edmund Burke, after all, attacked the French revolutionaries for rejecting convention and experience as guides to political action and elevating “visionary designs” in their place. But in America, perhaps conservatives must be visionaries, too.

Even so, in querying conservatives, instead of asking, “What is your vision?” we might rather start with another question, namely, “What will you conserve?” This is the question posed by Disraeli to his British contemporaries, and one that might be posed today in assessing the achievements of modern conservatism and its hopes for the future. What do we hope to conserve?

Conservatives, it has been said, occupy a paradoxical position in a nation devoted to the ideals of democracy, equality, and progress. For this reason, Clinton Rossiter titled his 1954 book on the subject, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion*. How do conservatives act effectively in a polity seemingly devoted to liberal ideals? After all, they cannot promote or defend institutions favored by conservatives in other countries, such as an established church or a landed aristocracy. In a nation of constant movement and change, it is difficult to conserve much of anything for very long. What then can they conserve?

Modern American conservatives have instead done something different—yet still essentially conservative and American. They have deployed the conservative principles of realism and tradition to defend and strengthen the institutions of a liberal political order: liberty and property, a free economy, our Madisonian Constitution with its checks on governmental power, and a national government free to chart its own course in foreign affairs. They have, in addition, defended the morals and mores of middle class life, with its emphasis on religion, family, work, and individual responsibility.

They have done so because in our era, these institutions and morals have been under persistent attack from liberals, who have sought to re-write the Constitution by judicial fiat, extend the welfare state as far as possible, tie down American power in a web of international institutions, and eliminate all traces of religion and morality from the public square. This was a new and radicalized liberalism, one that took shape in the 1960s and thereafter; and, as a consequence, the conservatism that arose to challenge it was also in many ways new. In deploying conservative arguments to defend traditionally liberal institutions, modern conservatives have followed a path charted by illustrious predecessors such as Edmund Burke, Alexander Hamilton, and Winston Churchill.

Conservatives, in addition, owe many of their modern achievements to their willingness to act boldly, to break with precedent, and to take great risks with policy—contrary to the image of conservatism as the doctrine of caution and gradualism.

Ronald Reagan's tax cuts in 1981 were called a "riverboat gamble" by Howard Baker, yet they restored the economy to growth and started an 18-year bull market in stocks. Reagan's military budget, his "Star Wars" initiative, and his general challenge to the Soviet Union were all denounced as reckless and irresponsible, yet they brought down the Soviet Union and ended the Cold War. Experts said that the effort to remove Saddam Hussein from Iraq in 1991 would lead to a "bloodbath," yet that victory was won in a matter of days with minimal casualties. Rudy Giuliani's efforts to reduce crime in New York City were attacked as foolhardy and naive by social policy experts, yet by the time his term ended New York City was the safest large city in the nation, and its homicide rate had been reduced to levels not seen since 1960. Senator Moynihan, along with an army of experts, said that welfare reform would leave poor people "sleeping in the gutters," yet it has proved to be the most successful domestic reform of modern times. Now, it is much to be hoped, we may see a re-play of all this as the difficult intervention in Iraq runs its course.

These are not simply important or historic breakthroughs; they are staggering breakthroughs when viewed in relation to what the experts said and what was thought to be possible. They happened because conservatives did not act like the conservatives of old, listening to the experts, respecting precedent, acting cautiously. The conservative as "riverboat gambler" is a disconcerting image, but not an inaccurate one, at least in modern times.

So it is that conservatives have not been content simply to oppose the designs of liberals, but have taken the initiative to shape the future with policies of their own. It is in this sense that, in a modern democracy, every philosophy that seeks to govern is forced to adopt its own vision or plan for the future—contrary to

the core of conservatism as that may be. And today conservatives have a long list of policies designed to extend these gains, and to strengthen the institutions of a free society.

An argument of sorts has broken out among conservatives as to whether they should employ the power of the national government to advance conservative principles or simply scale back government power to leave maximum choice in the hands of individuals. This is a reprise of sorts of the original debate between Hamilton and Jefferson over the scope and purposes of federal power—and, more deeply, over their visions for the future of the nation. These contending visions have so far operated cooperatively under the umbrella of conservatism, albeit with growing tension, particularly in foreign affairs. It is noteworthy that both major poles of thought in American history—the Hamiltonian and the Jeffersonian—exist within the framework of modern conservatism, a sign at once of conservatism’s broad influence but also of its tendencies to division. There are not a few conservatives today who worry that contemporary conservatism looks too much like the liberalism of a few years ago.

Can a governing philosophy embrace the doctrine of minimal government while maintaining broad public support? Or, given the realities of the contemporary world, must it of necessity embrace a more active and energetic agenda of government? These questions are being answered as we speak by a conservative president who has advanced precisely such an active and energetic agenda—and one breathtakingly so in foreign affairs. In doing so, he has broken new ground, contradicted once more some traditional presumptions about conservatism, and perhaps oriented conservatism to its next phase.

Conservative Philanthropy

Conservative philanthropy, from the end of World War II down to the present, has gone through two distinct chapters, and is now entering a third.

The first chapter ran from the 1940s well into the 1970s, and was defined more by an interest in classical liberalism than in conservatism as it is understood today (or even as it was understood by Buckley and his associates in 1954). The main foundations, or donors, associated with this philanthropic campaign were the Volker Fund, the Relm and Earhart foundations, the Liberty Fund, and business executives like Jasper Crane of DuPont and Henry Weaver of General Electric. The Liberty Fund and the Earhart Foundation live on today, and continue to support important work; the Relm Foundation and the Volker Fund had self-limiting charters, and went out of business by the early 1970s.

The single greatest intellectual influence on these donors was Friedrich von Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944, which converted them to the cause of classical liberty and the fight against collectivism. Hayek, in fact, in a later essay, *The Intellectuals and Socialism* (1949), mapped out a general strategy for waging a war of ideas on behalf of liberty, which these donors and their grantees sought to implement. Hayek concluded that the great transformation from agricultural to modern society had given intellectuals great leverage over the direction of politics—and, moreover, that they had used this leverage to promote government planning and socialism. Thus the great challenge in his view was to train a new generation of thinkers to make the case for liberty.²

Hayek’s writings did have a more or less immediate impact in Great Britain, where Anthony Fisher (with Hayek’s encouragement) established the Institute for Economic Affairs in London in 1955 for the express

² Hayek, of course, in another famous essay, wrote that he was not a conservative at all, but a liberal of the old school. Thus perhaps it is technically inaccurate to consider this movement as a chapter in conservative thought. Still, the classical liberals generally made common cause with the conservatives in our era in fighting against communism and the advancing welfare state. Frank Meyer, writing for *National Review*, attempted to formulate a “fusion” between classical liberalism and conservatism.

purpose of advancing the market alternative to socialism and the welfare state. The IEA, true to Hayek's prediction, spent two decades making this case until a sympathetic friend, Margaret Thatcher, was elected Prime Minister. Such influence, however, proved harder to come by in the United States.

Looking back to the 1950s, we can see that the founding of *National Review* was a seminal event in the development of modern conservatism in the United States. Yet none of these donors was involved in the creation of this important enterprise. This was due both to their philosophical commitments to classical liberty and also to their wish to operate at a higher and more fundamental level of argument and debate. It was also the case that in the early 1950s the intellectual battle against collectivism was identified with individualism and classical liberalism rather than with conservatism. Indeed, conservatism, as an intellectual current, barely existed at all. Buckley was thus trying to do something quite new.

These foundations did advance an important and interesting body of work, nearly all of it focused on the intellectual battle to defend individual liberty against the gathering forces of statism. Most of their work in the 1950s and 1960s was oriented to economics, and the importance of the free individual in the marketplace. They helped Hayek secure an appointment at the University of Chicago as Professor of Moral Science in the Committee on Social Thought, after the Department Economics vetoed his appointment there; and they paid the salary at New York University for Ludwig von Mises, who could never secure a regular faculty appointment. They published numerous books, many them devoted to the elaboration of Austrian economics, and funded conferences for scholars on themes dealing with the ideals of a free society. They funded hundreds, perhaps thousands, of fellowships for graduate students, many of whom later became prominent scholars. The *Freeman*, a journal published by the Foundation for Economic Education, published articles by leading spokesmen for classical liberalism, and earned a dedicated readership of intellectuals, students, and (surprisingly) businessmen. These donors also created organizations to advance this point of view, most notably, the Foundation for Economic Education and the Institute for Humane Studies, both of which are still prospering. They accomplished a great deal working against the political and intellectual tides of the era.

Yet this intellectual movement never found its way beyond its circle of followers into the wider world of politics and policy debate. Hayek had advised his followers to maintain a distance from politics and policy, and to focus on the world of ideas for the purpose of converting the next generation of scholars, writers, and intellectuals. There was thus in this movement a certain disdain for political involvement and debate because, it was felt, ideals are corrupted and cheapened by politics, and exploited by cynical politicians. In addition, Hayek and his followers were aiming for influence beyond the daily headlines.

At the same time, they did not have great success in breaking into the world of academe, where broad philosophical argumentation is more the norm. This was not entirely their fault because the chaos and pandemonium on campuses during the 1960s drowned out the type of reasoned inquiry they sought to advance. By the time the tumult had died down, the American university was an even more inhospitable place for classical liberalism than it had been before. But without gaining a foothold in the academy, there was little hope to convert the next generation of academics and intellectuals to these important ideas. As a consequence, the range of influence of the classical liberals was limited and contained. And, through this period, the pace of change in the United States continued to move in the wrong direction.

A second, and quite different, chapter of conservative philanthropy took shape in the mid-1970s, through the efforts of a handful of other foundations, most especially, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Scaife Trusts, and later, the Bradley Foundation. These donors were more self-consciously conservative rather than libertarian. And while they were sympathetic to the ideals of classical liberalism, they adopted a broader intellectual framework that encompassed conservative work in several fields, including economics, foreign policy, the humanities, and religion. These new donors

were also eager to wage the war of ideas in a more direct and aggressive style by engaging the world of political controversy and policy debate.

In shaping their programs, these foundations were greatly influenced by the neoconservatives, most especially by Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Hilton Kramer, and Michael Novak, who coincidentally rose to prominence in the 1970s. These writers, for the most part, had spent their formative years on the left, and had been little influenced by the writings of the classical liberals.³ Yet they understood how the Leftists thought, which was a great advantage in countering them. They understood that the war of ideas is fought by engaging real controversies with stakes waged on the outcomes. And, thus, through their writings, and also through their advice, they helped to orient the conservative foundations to the ongoing contest to decide which ideas would govern the nation.

Through their key publications, *Commentary* and *The Public Interest*, the neoconservatives broadened the appeal of conservatism by drawing on social science to document the worrisome consequences of liberal policies. Just as importantly, they understood that the attacks on capitalism and markets arose from deeper cultural sources; thus in order to defend capitalism, they argued, it was necessary to invest in history, law, political theory, and religion. The conservative foundations, the John Olin Foundation especially, were eager to help the neoconservatives, and just as eager to follow their advice—and some of us, after all these years, still look to them with the greatest admiration.

The neoconservatives, along with the Straussians, brought a different approach and emphasis to conservatism, which broadened its appeal, brought in new subjects and new lines of argument, made it more effective in the political world, and helped it to adapt to the challenges of the time. It was a significant step in the history of conservative philanthropy when these foundations embraced the neoconservatives—without in any way, however, rejecting or diminishing other strands of conservative thought.

This chapter of conservative philanthropy coincided with the rise of conservatism and the notable successes mentioned earlier. From the late 1970s forward, these foundations worked to build an impressive network of conservative publications, university programs, and research centers that will continue to be influential in the years ahead. When Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, for example, he could turn for guidance to a small handful of conservative institutions—the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution, and the American Enterprise Institute. By the time George W. Bush was elected in 2000, however, he could look to conservative and free market organizations actively working in every area of policy. And these organizations, in turn, were augmented by journals and magazines, by university programs of various kinds, by public interest law firms, and by networks of scholars and writers that had achieved broad influence during the 1980s and 1990s. These organizations churned out arguments, ideas—and talent, which over time changed the balance of power between liberals and conservatives.

All of this was accomplished with modest financial resources, especially so when the conservative foundations are compared to their liberal counterparts. The five leading liberal foundations—Ford,

³ Hayek's influence on the neoconservatives, and particularly on Kristol, raises interesting questions. There are parallels between the ideas Hayek developed in "The Intellectuals and Socialism" and Kristol's writings in the 1970s on the role of intellectuals in politics. Kristol, borrowing from a book by Milovan Djilas with this title, wrote about a "new class" of intellectuals who augmented their own influence by attacking religion and promoting the expansion of government. Like Hayek, he criticized their utopianism and their tendency to criticize the real world from the standpoint of abstract standards of their own making. Kristol, once more like Hayek, sought to persuade business leaders to support thinkers who could defend capitalism against its growing body of critics. Kristol, however, was not a classical liberal, and he criticized the libertarian philosophy. Nor was he prepared to wait a full generation to exercise constructive influence. One might say that, leaving their philosophical differences aside, Kristol was more effective in implementing Hayek's strategy than Hayek's philosophical offspring.

Rockefeller, MacArthur, Pew, and Carnegie—reported assets in a recent year of some \$24 billion and annual expenditures of \$1.2 billion. The combined assets of the five leading conservative foundations do not exceed \$1.5 billion, and their annual expenditures do not reach \$100 million. Yet they were able to achieve much with focus and discipline—and by allying themselves with as talented a group of thinkers and writers as this nation has seen in a long time.

This is the past. What of the future?

First of all, this second chapter of conservative philanthropy has now run its course, partly because it has done its work, partly because conditions have changed, and partly because some of the old players are leaving the scene and new ones are entering. A third chapter of conservative philanthropy is waiting to be formulated. Whatever comes next will necessarily be different from what has gone before; and whatever shape it takes, there is no guarantee that it will be important or have lasting consequences.

Second, the proliferation of individual donors will probably mean that the larger conservative foundations will be less influential than in the past. The prosperity of the past few decades, along with the success of the conservative movement, has created a new generation of conservative donors, few of them fabulously rich, but many wealthy enough to make significant gifts. Grants from the larger foundations make up an ever diminishing share of the budgets of conservative think tanks and policy organizations. This is probably a positive development, as it broadens the financial bases of these organizations, makes them less dependent on a few donors, and gives our policy entrepreneurs an incentive to beat the bushes for new contributors. In the future, therefore, there will be much less strategic direction given to conservatism from a few donors.

Third, the preoccupations associated with governing, combined with the proliferation of individual donors, are gradually turning conservatism into a policy movement rather than a movement of ideas. This is an understandable evolution in a movement that now has the responsibility to govern, and thus always to have a workable agenda of policies to propose and enact. It also reflects the changing concerns of donors, who naturally wish to achieve something tangible and practical with their investment of funds. And what is more practical, in this realm, than the passage of a law or the adoption of a new program?

But a movement preoccupied by policy will be less compelling to prospective converts than one defined by broader ideas about politics, history, and religion. Few, after all, will become conservatives primarily because they like caps on malpractice awards or private accounts in social security. In this sense, both Hayek and the neoconservatives were right. Conservatives, to maintain and augment their influence, will ever have to wage the broader war of ideas, but to do so they will need the help of far-sighted philanthropists.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.

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Scholar Michael Novak, in his book *The Fire of Invention: Civil Society and the Future of the Corporation*, provides a compelling summary of the challenge America faces as it confronts its future. The challenge is this: how to prevail against internal forces that try to move the nation toward socialism. Novak writes, “After the collapse of the world’s leading example of actual socialism, the USSR, socialists (and in America, just plain ‘progressives’) without ever admitting their errors or correcting their way of thinking, still want to socialize the corporations. But now they want to do it through movements such as environmentalism, the philosophy of ‘stakeholders,’ children’s rights, and some forms of feminism and gay rights.”

The target today, however, goes far beyond just the corporations. It goes to all of America. And to Novak's list, one could add the civil rights movement and anti-poverty initiatives. Using all of those causes and more, the Left has sought to exploit one of the fundamental moral underpinnings of America. That is, "As ye do it unto the least of these, so shall ye do it also to me." A shadow of this sentiment is enshrined on our nation's Statue of Liberty, which says "Give me your wretched, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

Until the 1930s the care of the least among us was in the hands of our ethnic and religious groups and the local institutions they controlled. The government was careful to keep its hands off families and the networks that supported them. But the stock market crash and resulting economic failure of the Great Depression exhausted neighborhood support systems across the nation, and for the first time the government intervened in the economy on a large scale. Even when the programs of Franklin Delano Roosevelt that started as ambulance services morphed into transportation systems, American culture stayed intact.

In the 1960s the welfare state was enlarged into the "War on Poverty." Lyndon Baines Johnson dramatically increased the amount of money spent addressing poverty. In the '30s federal money went to the individual. In the '60s the money went to "services." This was a major paradigm shift. From it arose the poverty-industrial complex—an entire industry revolving around pathology. For every malady there was a Master's degree.

Rather than seeking to reform society, the Left sought to attack the foundations of American culture by using its imperfections (slave-owning Founding Fathers, the apparent inequities of capitalism) as *prima facie* evidence of its inherent wickedness. The Left used poor people to solidify its case that American social values were the cause of the afflictions of poor people. The noble civil rights movement degenerated into a race-grievance industry that substituted equal opportunity for a guarantee of results. As the racial and sexual revolutions merged with the rising welfare state, they formed a perfect storm that continues to demolish family structures. All of the resulting pathologies were laid at the feet of allegedly outmoded American social values. This tactical debasing of American culture has been enormously successful, to the point where those of us who hold onto traditional American ethics and Judeo-Christian values are now the counter-culture.

To paraphrase what Gertrude Himmelfarb wrote in her seminal book, *One Nation, Two Cultures*, for many blacks the benefits of the civil rights movement were partially negated by the cultural revolution that denigrated precisely those virtues that are conducive to economic improvement and social mobility. The Great Society, which intended to open the doors to opportunity, all too often drew minorities into the closed society of chronic dependency.

The question is how do we fight back? The answer is to take legitimate issues the Left employs as battering rams against America and use them to provide compelling examples of how our values produce better people and by extension a better country. The mistake the Right makes is by answering the claims of the Left solely with counter-data and intellectual debate. When Ralph Nader wanted to regulate automobile safety, he didn't only make his case with dry statistics. He showed up on television and before the press with a crying mother and a bloody fender. Conservative foundations have to be willing to fund more than counterarguments.

To create the examples that will prove their values, funders need to redefine themselves as venture philanthropists, looking for social entrepreneurs among low-income people and applying management assistance as well as capital. An outstanding example of this principle was carried out in San Antonio, Texas, recently, when some wealthy businessmen got together to help Victory Fellowship founder Pastor Freddie Garcia to create a new residence and training center. Not only did they provide resources, they

helped negotiate real estate deals, provided legal and finance experts to help with the details, and experts in construction to oversee the creation of the center. The result is a haven where individuals who were lost are transformed into citizens of value and character.

Conservative principles should be applied to the question of who should be funded. It is ironic that while the great fortunes that endowed many foundations were created by entrepreneurs who were risk-takers, those who dispense with these resources do not apply conservative values in making their choices. We should be applying market principles to the social economy. We should judge programs by their outcomes. Results, not professional credentials or academic degrees, should be the measure of what programs get funded.

It is among these grassroots groups like Victory Fellowship—that take the people that the poverty industry would say are throwaways—that I have found the highest degree of patriotism, the greatest defense of marriage, and support for abstinence and other “conservative” values.

People armed with experience will always prevail over people armed with only an argument. By funding conservative principles and working with people of faith to produce transformed people and communities, conservative foundations can demonstrate a culture that is worth maintaining and resurrecting. The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the Marcus Foundation, and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation have demonstrated the value of this approach. Not only have they given financial support to programs that provide examples of the success of conservative values, they validate them and hold them up to the larger world.

The Left derives its moral authority by talking about what it is “doing” for the poor and disenfranchised. But nothing undermines the moral authority of the Left more than if the people they purport to represent say, “They do not speak for me.” Conservatives first must “do.” They must join and support those institutions that help the least of God’s children. When they have done that, they will have the examples, the friends, and the right to speak for them.