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A Marriage Made in Heaven, Now Destined for Doom? The Long-Term Prospects for the New Right

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Abstract
As analysts and pundits scrambled feverishly to publish their obituaries on the Grand Old Party in the wake of the November 2012 Presidential Election, Republicans wandered aimlessly in a state of stunned morosity, searching for answers to questions thought previously to be imponderable regarding the future viability of the Party.

From the latter stages of the 20th century to the early years of the 21st century, America witnessed two different versions of the Republican Party, marked by their contrasting attitudes toward conservatism. The early Grand Old Party, led by fiscal conservatives and foreign policy hawks, and exemplified vividly by the Hoover, Taft, and Eisenhower presidential administrations, was hinged firmly on a vision of free market economics. However, Republican leaders, amidst the cultural and fiscal uncertainties of the 1970s, recognized that the problems of the nation extended well beyond the economic realm. They sensed correctly that Americans desired a Party whose fiscal conservative principles would be guided by a moral compass. It was at this point that members of the burgeoning Christian Right movement and of the Republican Party, understanding the inextricable ties between each of their conservative philosophies, united to form the New Right movement. Ultimately, the alliance between social and fiscal conservatism translated into an extremely compelling dual-dimensioned Republican platform that propelled conservatives, notably, Ronald Reagan, into power and transformed the GOP into a national brand supported by a diverse bipartisan coalition.

As some of the luster of the New Right movement faded in the early 21st century, many Republicans overreacted by shunning publicly the alliance between the Christian Right and the Party. Even worse than the attacks by their critics and Democratic opponents, persistent Republican infighting regarding the appropriate balance of the fiscal and social principles of conservatism undermined Party unity and portended a reversion to one-dimensional politics.

As an interested observer, I am convinced that ignoring the social roots of conservatism will be perilous for the future of the Party. As such, I intend to provide the reader with an understanding of the core ideological ties that bind the conservative philosophy and the various wings of the Republican Party. In this process, I will attempt to explain the relatively recent circumstances that led Republican leaders, particularly presidential candidates Mitt Romney and John McCain, to resort to the doomed monotonic messaging of the early 20th century. Lastly, I will emphasize the urgency with which the Party must utilize the historical blueprint of the New Right era to advance proposals to reinvigorate the dual-dimensional components of the conservative philosophy. Critically, I believe the nation has reached an inflection point, with many Americans demanding that Republican leaders must arise and unite with an unwavering commitment to conservatism.

Keywords

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A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN, NOW DESTINED FOR DOOM?
THE LONG-TERM PROSPECTS FOR THE NEW RIGHT

By

Courtney Elizabeth Albini

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE WITH DISTINCTION

AT THE
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2013

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ABSTRACT

As analysts and pundits scrambled feverishly to publish their obituaries on the *Grand Old Party* in the wake of the November 2012 Presidential Election, Republicans wandered aimlessly in a state of stunned morosity, searching for answers to questions thought previously to be imponderable regarding the future viability of the Party.

From the latter stages of the 20th century to the early years of the 21st century, America witnessed two different versions of the Republican Party, marked by their contrasting attitudes toward conservatism. The early *Grand Old Party*, led by fiscal conservatives and foreign policy hawks, and exemplified vividly by the Hoover, Taft, and Eisenhower presidential administrations, was hinged firmly on a vision of free market economics. However, Republican leaders, amidst the cultural and fiscal uncertainties of the 1970s, recognized that the problems of the nation extended well beyond the economic realm. They sensed correctly that Americans desired a Party whose fiscal conservative principles would be guided by a moral compass. It was at this point that members of the burgeoning Christian Right movement and of the Republican Party, understanding the inextricable ties between each of their conservative philosophies, united to form the New Right movement. Ultimately, the alliance between social and fiscal conservatism translated into an extremely compelling dual-dimensioned Republican platform that propelled conservatives, notably, Ronald Reagan, into power and transformed the GOP into a national brand supported by a diverse bipartisan coalition.

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PART ONE:
Paradise Lost---A Party in Crisis
I. Introduction

Even before the final numbers were crunched and the confetti rained down from the ceiling at the Obama Campaign headquarters, the apocalyptic chorus began, first as a whisper and later as a roar. “Republicans must adapt or die,” quipped journalists at *USA TODAY*.1 “The Grand Old white Party has gasped its last breath,” chortled a gleeful MSNBC anchor.2 As proclaimed by Huffington Post columnist, Carl Gibson, the “party of pro-lifers, gun hoarders, and venture capitalists” had finally imploded, leaving a delightfully infinite vacuum for the Democratic Party to fill during the 21st century.3 Yet, the harsh post-election critiques and dismal outlooks were not confined simply to those on the Left, as a number of Republican strategists and commentators seemed paralyzed in the immediate wake of November 6, 2012 by a foreboding glimpse of the future electoral landscape.4 Suddenly, the shadowy “elephant in the room” that had lurked within Republican gatherings since President Obama’s triumphant presidential campaign in 2008, emerged with full force and presence, in the form of the question: “Where does the Party go from here?”

It is this weighty question, and derivatives of such, that has inspired the central inquiries of my research. Observing the debate regarding the future of the Republican Party through both a historical and political lens, I wish to devote this thesis to answering the following:

* a) What are the core ideological ties that bind together the various wings of the Republican Party?

* b) After recognizing finally the overlap between social and fiscal conservatism in the 1970s, why has the Republican Party drifted back to its one-dimensional platform and messaging?

* c) Has the Party reached yet another point in its history, where the temporal and cultural circumstances of the nation demand that its various wings unite again in order to illuminate the full extent of the conservative philosophy?

***
In the close, but devastating, election defeat, Republicans not only faced a loss at the presidential level with Governor Mitt Romney, but also fell short in ousting vulnerable Democratic Senate incumbents. In the following weeks, the infighting among conservative think tanks, political action committees (PACs), and party leaders reached an uncomfortably discordant tenor. For some outspoken conservative critics, including Colin Powell, former Secretary of State under George W. Bush, the Republican losses resulted inevitably from the Party’s stubborn commitment to the “New Right Majority” voters of the Reagan era, and simultaneous ignorance of the shifting U.S. demographics of the last two decades. Extending this notion, Reid Wilson, columnist and editor-in-chief at the National Journal, stated explicitly that the aforementioned New Right coalition, which attempts to weave together the interests of a scattered network of evangelicals, social conservatives, Libertarians and war hawks, is far too unwieldy to counter meaningfully an increasingly formidable and active Democratic voting bloc. Similar complaints have been expressed by conservative columnist of the New York Daily News, Stanley Crouch, who feels strongly that evangelical Christian voters, once considered a bedrock conservative constituency, now represent a metaphorical albatross hanging from the neck of the Republican Party. Further, he feels that continuing to cater to the narrow concerns and increasingly “outdated” demands of this constituency will hamstring efforts of Republican candidates to “widen the tent of the Party” in order to attract younger and more diverse constituencies. Contrasting the infamous “illegitimate rape” statements of Tea Party social conservative, Todd Akin, in August 2012, with the more acutely focused fiscal platform of popular Republican moderate and current New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie, former Republican aide and author of The Party Is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless and the Middle Class Got Shafted, Mike Lofgren, believes that the conservative platform paradox could not be more profound. Speaking on behalf of a number of skeptical observers and frustrated strategists, he
questions: “How can the Party that advocates “small government” and “free enterprise” be the same Party that wants to stipulate what you do in the privacy of your home?”"
II. Literature Review: Analyzing the Republican Paradox---Its Past and Future

As an active conservative, who has experienced politics through multiple paradigms, I have wrestled with questions regarding the long-term endurance of the New Right coalition and, relatedly, the two-pronged social-fiscal Republican platform. My questions seemed only to intensify in the wake of the 2012 Election, as I felt I was witnessing a Republican Party whose principles seemed ill suited for the interests and needs of contemporary society.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to discuss my observations with peers and respected scholars at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington DC, where I attended forums devoted to analyzing the mistakes of the Republican Party over the last four years, while brainstorming strategies for the future growth of a conservative coalition. I approached the sessions optimistically, believing that there exist long-term solutions based on fundamental ideals, such as free enterprise, small government and family values, for attracting a wide cross-section of Americans.

Instead, I was confronted by remarkable pessimism and negativity. Specifically, many with whom I interacted, had lost faith in the New Right coalition and, correspondingly, felt that the Republican Party should allow its nearly four-decade relationship with the Christian Right to lapse. Quoting a Libertarian peer, who spent his last several summers working at the Cato Institute, “The Christian social platform has monopolized the Party. Our pro-life, anti-gay marriage stances are the reason we lost Generation X and will continue to lose in the future when faced with youth-energized, social-media driven-campaigns like those of Obama.”

Continuing his eulogy, my colleague predicted that the only way Republicans would ever attain their small-government ideal and offer Americans a “truly free” fiscal and social environment, would be through widespread support of emerging Libertarian candidates, such as Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky.
Support for a Republican shift to libertarianism is not novel. It has been voiced quietly, but persistently, over the last decade, especially among strong fiscal conservatives in opposition to the large-entitlement spending mandated by President George W. Bush’s “compassionate conservative” agenda. Now, with ideological dissension being discussed more publicly, many express openly that the Republican Party must diminish the prominence of Judeo-Christian messages and offer citizens “alternatives” in matters of abortion, drug use, and marriage. Vocal advocates of a “Libertarian” platform, such as David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute and author of The Libertarian Vote: Swing Voters, Tea Parties, and the Fiscally Conservative, Socially Liberal Center, believe that the ideological principles of Christianity and conservatism are inherently incompatible, and in actuality, the union between the two was flawed from the outset in the 1970s. Like moths drawn to a flame, a number of authors and pundits have theorized aggressively that the “New Right” alliance was nothing more than a stopgap alliance born of electoral necessity in preparation for the 1980 Reagan Campaign.

Not surprisingly, Democrats express the most confusion and frustration that Republicans can continue to monopolize the “moral God card” given their “hard-lined” economic policies. At the Democratic National Convention in August 2012, Dick Durbin, Democratic Senator from Illinois, shocked television viewers with his outburst, “Why does the Republican Party think they own God?” when queried by Fox Special Report anchor, Bret Baier, as to why Democrats had removed religious references from their platform. Joe Trippi, former head campaign advisor for the 2004 Howard Dean Presidential Campaign, often poses the question, “Why can’t the Democratic Party make headway with voters in the ‘Moral Majority’?” These often spontaneous inquiries from Democrats are joined by extensive pieces from authors and religious figures, including Pastor Robin R. Meyers and Reverend Scotty McLennan, whose research has been devoted to exposing the hypocrisies of the Republican moral platform. Specifically, in their work, Bill Press, author of How the Republicans Stole
Religion: Why the Religious Right is Wrong about Faith, and Clint Willis, author of Jesus is Not a Republican: The Religious Right’s War on America, suggest that religion has served simply as a proxy for Republicans to carry out aggressive overseas imperialism and trickle-down economics.\(^{19}\) In the 1980s, Deborah Huntington and Ruth Kaplan, two active evangelicals representing the Youth for Christ movement at the time, reconstructed a paper trail of financial transactions and internal memos between Republican PACs and religious organizations, such as the Moral Majority, to unveil the insidious corruption at the root of such alliances.\(^{20}\) Furthermore, in the months following the 2012 Presidential Election, it now appears to a number of commentators and popular journalists that Governor Romney’s conspicuous distance from evangelical organizations during his campaign, as well as his continued unwillingness to speak extensively on his shifting stances related to abortion and marriage, may be tangible evidence that the “socially-engineered” union has run its course.\(^{21}\)

Over the last fifteen years, prominent conservative evangelicals, such as Steve Bruce and Charles Marsh, have also offered their unique assessments of the exploitation of Christianity at the hands of the Republican establishment. Addressing what he believes to be a morally bankrupt contemporary American culture in The Rise and Fall of The New Christian Right: Conservative Protest Politics in America, 1978-1988, Bruce suggests that the allure of money and feelings of vulnerability following the 1960s led historically independent Christian churches and organizations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention and the Council of Christian Churches, to broker alliances with unlikely partners—the fiscal conservatives of the Republican Party.\(^{22}\) Blinded by the allure of a Republican affiliation, magnetic Christian televangelists, such as Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham and Pat Robertson, cast aside Biblical dogma and organizational standards to align harmoniously with Republican orthodoxy.\(^{23}\) During the 1980s, the massive popularity of such religious-political figures influenced a number of evangelicals to become registered Republicans.\(^{24}\) As Bruce laments, positions once antithetical to Christian religion, such as an aggressive foreign policy, tax breaks for the highest
income brackets, gun ownership and the death penalty, suddenly became rationalized and deemed acceptable by a majority of conservative evangelicals.\textsuperscript{25}

Ultimately, Bruce theorizes that the incongruous philosophical assumptions of Christianity and conservatism, which were seemingly “swept under the rug” in the 1970s and 1980s, have proven difficult to surmount by the 21\textsuperscript{st} century Republican Party. Relatedly, he closes his work with a sober proclamation that, in wrapping itself awkwardly in the mantle of religion, the Republican Party has irreversibly exploited and pillaged American Christianity.\textsuperscript{26} Agreeing wholeheartedly with Bruce’s sentiments in his book, \textit{Wayward Christian Soldiers: Freeing the Gospel from Political Captivity}, Marsh also blames the “morally bankrupt” state of modern society on the Republican Party’s exploitation of religious dogma over the last three decades.\textsuperscript{27} Correspondingly, he implores desperately that Christians should extract themselves from politics in order to reinstate their holy and honest connection with God.\textsuperscript{28} Relying upon the notes from “strategizing sessions” between Falwell, Graham, and the “pioneer” of conservative direct mail campaigning, Viguerie, as evidence of the rampant corruption, Marsh contends that the New Right coalition is a superficial and limited enterprise in the immediate future.\textsuperscript{29} Undeniably, it has been the statements of Marsh, Bruce and others, which have provided the fuel for those who believe the Democratic Party has a sterling chance to reclaim the loyalty of Bible Belt evangelicals during the next decade.\textsuperscript{30}
III. “Fissures” in Conservative Politics

Unfortunately, for Republicans, internal prophecies of decline compounded with external criticism directed at the Party, can become self-fulfilling exercises. Simply put, the current dissension fomenting at multiple levels within the Republican establishment only serves to embolden the Democratic Party, while undermining efforts at conveying a unified message in the future. Though under President Obama, conservative factions within Congress have engaged in contentious debates related to the “Bush tax cuts,” the debt ceiling and immigration reform, the unsettling of the New Right majority at its core stems from infighting among Republican Party activists regarding the future balance of “social” and “economic” conservatism. Once bound together by their conviction that the success of a free market hinges fundamentally on important cultural and moral factors as well as strong civil institutions, conservative think tanks, such as the CATO Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Family Research Council, have engaged in heated exchanges over the continued viability of a Judeo-Christian-based Republican platform. Even conservative PACs, have engaged in “gang warfare” over supporting true “conservatives” versus “moderate Republicans.” With emotions still burning from the 2012 Presidential Election defeat, former Senior Advisor and Deputy Chief of Staff under the George W. Bush Administration, Karl Rove, who had previously expressed severe misgivings regarding Governor Romney’s “conservative credentials,” reportedly went “rogue” from traditional Republican PACs to create the Conservative Victory Fund, an extension of his older and larger fundraising organization, Crossroads GPS. According to Rove, the mission of the Conservative Victory Fund is solely to endorse “hard-lined” conservative candidates, such as Senator Ted Cruz and former Congressman Allen West, who will pass both the economic and social litmus tests of “true conservatism.” Unsurprisingly, Rove has been the target of stern criticism from a number of Republicans, including Iowa Governor, Terry Branstad, who allegedly told Rove that his actions are “counterproductive” to the Party. Additionally, in this debate, a number of
“establishment” Republicans feel that the new political winds necessitate a more palatable compromise to principled conservatism. Even former Vice President, Dick Cheney, who has historically personally supported gay marriage, offered forceful statements in the wake of the election indicating that it is time for the Republicans to move on this issue. While such examples capture only the surface tensions in state and national Republican organizations, it is clear that the underlying fractures that have existed in the Party for several years now, were torn wide open in the aftermath of the 2012 Presidential Election. More alarming however, is that as Republicans continue to focus acutely on these issues, the Party as a whole remains distracted from its critical preparations for the 2014 Midterm Congressional Elections.
IV. Transcending the Debate

The question posed by American Enterprise Institute Resident Scholar, syndicated columnist, and National Review Online editor, Jonah Goldberg, summarized perfectly my 2012 post-election fears regarding the demise of the Republican Party:

*Will enough Americans remain committed, or at least open, to the bundle of principles that define modern American Conservatism to sustain the movement and the Republican Party, which imperfectly carries its banner?* 38

Undoubtedly, the demographic trends and generational shifts have transformed the electoral landscape into a tortuous path for a Party that has relied historically on the loyalty and electoral strength of the “white evangelical voter.” 39 Regardless, I believe the current problems with the Republican Party stem from a series of unforced errors committed by its members through much of the 21st century. Specifically, I feel that in progressively obfuscating its integrated social-fiscal platform, and failing to make the moral argument for its policies, the GOP has strayed from the fundamental heart of conservatism that was not only illuminated during the New Right era, but saved the Party from complete oblivion in America.

Conservatism at its core will always remain a two-pronged philosophy grounded in its overlapping social and fiscal principles. Through much of the 20th century, the Republican Party rarely deviated from its conservative fiscal platform, while concurrent Christian organizations, though preaching social conservative messages, remained predominantly non-partisan. 40 However, these two forces would find each other naturally at critical inflection points in American history: first, during the height of the Communist scare in the 1950s; and second, in the midst of the cultural and fiscal uncertainty of the 1970s. 41 While some do attest that the eventual alliance between the Party and the Christian Right involved a radical, and perhaps, superficial “re-creation” of the Republican Party, I argue alternatively that the inception of the New Right movement and the subsequent adoption of a
dual-dimensioned social and fiscal Republican platform, involved a much belated recognition of the strong ideological ties that bound these formerly independent groups together.

As such, the Republican Party of today is not the Party of the early 20th century, nor should it hope to be again. According to the Administration and Cost of Elections Project (ACE), “[political] parties tend to be deeply and durably entrenched in specific substructures of… society” and “can link the governmental institutions to the elements of the civil society… which is “necessary for any modern democratic system.”

However, the Grand Old Party of President Herbert Hoover, or even the Republican Party of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, never fulfilled this critical function, as the narrow interpretation of conservatism practiced by “old guard” Republicans added an overt exclusivity to the Party that limited severely its connection with the majority of “civil society.”

Although this approach worked for Republicans sporadically during the 20th century, the constraints the Party had imposed on its own membership and platform threatened to make American conservatism an endangered ideology by the 1960s. Fortunately, innovative pioneers of the New Right movement recognized clearly that the Republican Party had devolved over the prior decades into a one-dimensional form of its founding philosophy. Finding an emerging ally in the Christian Right, Ronald Reagan and certain other Republican leaders, along with Republican strategists, Vigerie and Paul Weyrich, embraced conservatism vigorously and widened its scope to address the multi-faceted needs of the American people.

Sadly, Republicans have appeared to be ignoring the critical lessons of history through much of the 21st century, and have subsequently, failed to extend conservatism rhetorically and legislatively to the full depths of its potential. Thus, the Party that was once able to inspire a nation by demonstrating how its principles connected families with liberty and opportunity, has now been relegated to a role as a distant establishment that is out of touch with the plights and circumstances of the average American.
V. “The Way Forward”: Reinvigoration, Not Reinvention

Two days after the election, esteemed conservative political commentator, Charles Krauthammer, provided an unmistakable directional signal to the Republican Party in a striking opinion-editorial within *The Washington Post*, titled “The Way Forward.” In just 590 words, Krauthammer issued a forceful demand that Republicans stop “whimpering and whining” and scrambling frantically to devise a strategy of party reform when “none is needed.”46 Krauthammer then went on to label Romney the ideological and generational “transitional figure” similar to President Gerald Ford in 1976. Like Ford, Romney’s mechanical nature and inability to provide the moral arguments for conservatism failed to inspire the loyalty of grassroots social conservatives and the “independent” voters needed desperately to win critical swing states.47 Thus, Krauthammer’s perspective is that Romney’s defeat is similar to that of Ford in that it will serve to catalyze a great revitalization of the Republican Party’s philosophical platform. In the 1970s, this revitalization manifested itself in the construction of the New Right majority. Today, Krauthammer believes that the “revitalization” will flourish only if the Republican Party can remember its New Right origins, and work to construct a social-fiscal platform similar to the one that had compelled such a formidable bipartisan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s.48

In subsequent televised interviews, Krauthammer validated his arguments through the central precepts of political periodization, of which American political theorists, such as Byron E. Shafer, offer that the country experiences an inevitable cycle of conservative and liberal political “eras” that result partially from the natural fickleness of American voters, but predominantly from external cultural forces temporarily making one party’s message more salient than that of the other party.49 While acknowledging that Republicans may need to develop more proactive policies on certain issues, such as immigration reform and health care, Krauthammer believes that the basic philosophy underlying the diverse coalition of evangelicals, Libertarians, war hawks, and fiscal conservatives
formed in the 1970s need not be altered meaningfully. Guiding his television audience back to their history textbooks, Krauthammer predicts an inevitable end to the current liberal political era that will prove similar to the backlashes occurring following the Johnson and Carter Administrations in the 1970s. At this time, according to Krauthammer, Americans will observe the implosion of increasingly unsustainable social democratic policies and will rush once more to distance themselves from intrusive “big government paternalism.” He feels such trends and forces will catalyze a grassroots conservative movement similar to that which had naturally favored the Republican Party as a champion for its causes in the 1970s. Ultimately, Krauthammer predicts that the Party will be pushed organically by both the demands of its loyal base of social conservatives and evangelicals, and more broadly, by the needs and anxieties expressed by the majority of the American populace, to promote once again the intertwined causes of the family and the free market.

While political theories and historical comparisons are imperfect predictors, I subscribe to Krauthammer’s analyses. Most importantly, I agree with him that the next generation of young Republicans, including Chris Christie, Marco Rubio, Alan West, Kelly Ayotte, Ted Cruz, Bobby Jindal, Scott Walker, Nikki Haley, and Mitch Daniels, will contribute critical diversity and vigor to the platform, and can serve essentially as unifying “Ronald Reagan” figures that embody the principles of a cohesive socially and fiscally conservative platform.

More so, my optimism for the rebirth of conservatism is resolute, based partly on the following critical indicators of the country’s current ideological sentiment, despite President Obama’s 2012 victory:

1. The closeness of the final popular vote totals (Obama: 65,899,660; Romney: 60,929,152), in combination with the breakdown of the electoral map, suggest that the state results were skewed heavily by densely populated urban areas that have trended historically Democratic. This inference is validated by the breakdown of the Election Day 2012 exit poll data, which reveals that, although voters from “areas with populations of 50,000-500,000” and “areas with populations over 500,000” swung heavily in favor of President Obama, voters from the “suburbs,” “areas with populations of 10,000-50,000,” and “rural areas” favored Governor
Romney by two percentage points, fourteen percentage points, and 24 percentage points, respectively;\textsuperscript{53}

2. Exit polls from Election Day 2012 revealed that Independents favored Governor Romney by five percentage points over President Obama. This statistic contrasted with Senator McCain’s eight percentage point deficit within the same constituency in 2008. Interestingly, November 2012 was only the second presidential election since 1992 with Independents leaning in favor of the Republican ticket;\textsuperscript{54}

3. Exit polls also revealed that 51 percent of American voters “believe the government does too much,” while 63 percent “hold an inherent distrust for big government.” The percentages suggest a growing dissatisfaction among the populace with the rapid escalation in the number and size of federal agencies and programs.\textsuperscript{55}

According to Krauthammer, collectively, these statistics suggest that candidates who are willing to respond to the concerns of Americans, by publicly defining personal sovereignty and liberty as “independence from government intrusion and meddling” and promoting moral policies that allow the individual to flourish, will be able to “win the ideological future.”\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, from his perspective rooted in recent political history, Krauthammer feels that once again, the GOP should be able to unify an extremely broad base of support by adhering to positive messages and committing itself unwaveringly to a platform based on God, small government, family, and the free market.\textsuperscript{57}
VI. Thesis Roadmap

Krauthammer’s historical connection to the formation of the New Right in the 1970s and his confidence that a similar coalition can re-emerge, sparked my desire to devote this project to defend the organic formation and endurance of the New Right majority, as well as to offer my suggestions as to how the Republican Party can diversify and reinvigorate the “conservative brand” over the next decade. Ultimately, my ambition is to convince readers that the Republican Party needs neither to “reinvent itself” nor “abandon [its] philosophical anchor.”58 Rather, as Krauthammer suggests, the GOP must “do conservatism, but do it better.”59

Although in Parts Five and Six, I offer my recommendations and prophecies to the Republican Party, the thesis is not limited to simple speculation and theorizing about the future political landscape. Instead, I will utilize the pattern of history, as well as the theoretical overlaps existing between social conservative and fiscal conservative principles, to attempt to disprove the pundits and authors who assert that the New Right coalition is untenable in the 21st century. Fundamentally, I hope to convey that the motivations that helped to unify and solidify the coalition in the 1970s were neither manufactured nor contrived but, rather, a natural product of the recognition of the “strikingly complementary aspects of the social and economic goals.”60 After discussing the evolution of the New Right platform leading to the election of President Reagan, I will shift my analysis to the ebbs and flows of the New Right majority over the first twelve years of the 21st century. Lastly, I will use this analysis as a platform from which I can offer proposals to revive the message of the Republican Party and most importantly, connect it once more with the hopes and aspirations of the widest section of the American populace.
PART TWO:
From the “Old Guard” to the New Right: A Tale of Two Parties
I. Paving the Way to the New Right: Understanding the First Wave of Christian Activism

According to Daniel K. Williams, author of *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*, an accurate understanding of the evolution of the Christian Right and the New Right majority is critical to evaluating the trajectory of American politics since the late 1960s. Contrary to the assumptions of a number of historians, the Christian Right movement that emerged to “transform the Republican Party, the national political agenda, and evangelical Christianity” did not arise spontaneously as an organization during the 1970s. Rather, the Christian movement, led by preeminent religious organizations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Thomas Road Baptist Church, had grown in size and strength over the 20th century in a largely bipartisan manner. During that period, the Christian movement had aligned itself with causes that included: female suffrage; the temperance movement; Progressive era corporation regulation; the Civil Rights Movement; Southern political electoral realignment; the emergence of the Sunbelt region; and the anti-Communist movement. Given this background, Williams divides the historical interaction between the Christian Right and the Republican Party into two waves. The first wave, from the 1940s to the 1960s, involved an increasing majority of socially conservative Protestants who embraced the GOP as the bulwark against Communism and the protectors of a “Protestant-based moral order.” The second wave, beginning in the late 1960s, involved grassroots conservatives shifting their attention from the Cold War to the American cultural wars, and discovering an ally to advance their causes in the Republican Party.

Unfortunately, in haste to divide political history into distinct eras rather than overlapping phases, analysts fail to appreciate that the ultimate solidification of the alliance during the 1970s had its roots in the first wave of Christian Right activism, when Billy Graham and other evangelicals found common cause with moderate Republican leaders, such as President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice
President Richard M. Nixon. During the 1940s, evangelicals and fundamentalists began forming political coalitions and lobbying organizations, with the most prominent being the National Association of Evangelicals, to advance a partisan platform advocating pro-family legislation, a free-market economy, and an aggressive anti-Communist foreign policy. Citing his desire to “reclaim America’s Christian identity through politics,” Graham consulted to the White House on matters of social and fiscal policy. Unknown by many historians, Graham influenced President Eisenhower, a former Jehovah’s Witness, to convert to Presbyterianism, and to eventually believe that a deep religious faith could protect America from the “Godless forces of anti-Christ Communism.”

However, the largest challenges to the alliance between the Christian Right and the Republican Party during the era were fissures among evangelicals related to the movement’s position on civil rights legislation. The polarizing impact of this issue between devout fundamentalists and more moderate evangelicals weakened temporarily the electoral force of the Christian Right during the 1960s, particularly in the 1964 Republican Primaries, when the loyalty of Christian voters was split between centrist, pro-Civil Rights Republicans, such as Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller, and hard line, anti-Civil Rights conservatives, such as Barry Goldwater and Strom Thurmond.

Though there is a wealth of information that can be conveyed about the shifting conservative Christian political coalitions prior to the late 1960s, a full analysis of such is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, with this brief background, the reader should gain an understanding that the New Right movement of the 1970s was founded on the coalition-building efforts and activism from earlier decades. The history and preexisting relationships between social conservatives and Republican leaders facilitated their recognition that each side possessed compatible social and fiscal agendas directed towards reclaiming America’s identity in the world.

One interesting difference between the two waves of Christian activism is that the New Right movement of the 1970s experienced a profound shift in the socio-economic status and objectives of evangelicals. On this point, Williams believes that Christians’ greater class mobility offered them more
time to become well versed on the cultural climates of cities, towns, and educational institutions across
the nation. 71 Specifically, in transferring their focus from Communism to cultural issues, mainly
feminism, abortion, pornography, and gay rights, the once diffuse Christian organizations coalesced
against secularism at the same time that the Republican Party was attacking “big government.” With
relative ease, the two forces combined their platforms to launch the most compelling campaign for
conservatism: one that painted the rapidly expanding government as an enemy to “traditional religious
and economic values.” 72 Subsequently, the Christian Right movement became the driving force of the
messages and substantive policies of a revitalized Republican Party. 73
II. The Liberal Decade---The Spark, the Flame, the Dousing…

The 1960s will stand colorfully in textbooks as the decade of profound political, social, and cultural change. It was a decade characterized as the pinnacle of the “liberal consensus,” when the confluence of cultural strains, civil disobedience and social movements provided the spark that ignited the very debates regarding the future of America throughout the 1970s. More specifically, scholars identify several important events and trends of the 1960s, including the: civil rights movement; anti-war movement; assassinations of prominent national leaders; urban and campus riots; expansion of higher education opportunities for females; and an increase in the number of married women with children working outside the home; that would empower a generation of liberal leaders to rebel in the decade thereafter. Ultimately, through adoption of “anti-establishment” tactics and methodology, by the turn of the 1960s, “secular” movements, ranging from the feminist movement to the gay rights movement, were able to carve out an auspicious space where their voices could not only be heard, but also taken seriously.  

Fueled by the momentum gained through national “consciousness raising,” these secular inspired movements blazed through the early years of the 1970s with hopes of extending the liberal freedoms of the 1960s, and legitimizing the “identities” of historically disenfranchised minority groups.” Undoubtedly, the most emblematic of such liberal causes, and what appeared to be the greatest affront to “traditional America,” was the feminist movement. Looking to solidify the legislative gains in gender equality that were fundamental to the movement’s mobilization, on August 26, 1970, the fiftieth anniversary of female suffrage, thousands of women marched to demand that Congress pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Two years later, Congress yielded to the movement’s demands by sending the ERA to the states for ratification. In 1973, feminists celebrated another victory as the Supreme Court shocked the nation with their Roe v. Wade decision, which recognized a woman’s constitutional right to obtain an abortion in all 50 states. The weight of these
two landmark achievements for feminism reverberated nationally.\textsuperscript{77} In the wake, polls revealed large subsets of Americans agreeing that the United States “was on the brink of becoming a nonsexist society.”\textsuperscript{78} Reflecting nostalgically on this period, Pamela Johnston Conover, then Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, proclaimed, “The future for women had never been brighter.”\textsuperscript{79}

Yet, just one decade later, the burning energy associated with such liberal causes was doused unceremoniously. Once prompting cheers, the word “feminism” now elicited jeers, as an increasing number of Americans indicated their disapproval of such causes in public opinion surveys conducted through the period.\textsuperscript{80} Even popular media and prime-television no longer seemed friendly to the feminist cause. Specifically, television shows like \textit{Cagney and Lacey}, famous for highlighting the ideal feminist “working women,” began progressively limiting the airtime of these characters. Appearing to hammer the last nail on the coffin, in 1976, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) produced a popular special documenting the demise of feminism, titled \textit{After the Revolution}.\textsuperscript{81} However, historians such as Dr. Thomas Sugrue of the University of Pennsylvania, feel that the feminist movement was actually an unfortunate causality of Americans’ greater distaste for the expansive liberal social agenda of the prior decade.\textsuperscript{82} As such, the wave of anti-secular sentiment that had notably congealed during the mid-1970s and reached its epochal stage by the election of President Reagan in 1980, had symbolically defeated the liberal feminist agenda when the ERA failed to be ratified on June 30, 1982. The pain of the monumental legislative drowning was compounded by a succession of congressional appropriation bills and Supreme Court decisions that limited severely government-subsidized abortions. Concurrently, the “pro-family” advocates of the New Right had captured national attention through their strident protests and appeals to Congress to prohibit all forms of abortion and to vote against future legislation related to gender equality. In the wake of a conservative congressional sweep in 1983, the fire of the feminist movement, and more broadly, the liberal agenda, was finally extinguished. Such devastating defeats would shatter what was left of the
movement, and diminish the national visibility of many like-minded secular goals for over a decade and a half.\textsuperscript{83}
III. Awaking a Sleeping Giant: The Christians Rise Again

When analyzing this era, historians ponder heavily the manner in which the appeal of the liberal cultural and economic agenda was extinguished so handily in just a matter of a decade. Particularly, were the defeats of social movements like the feminist movement, and the simultaneous refutation of Great Society entitlements, the result of separate counter-attacks launched by the Republican Party and evangelical Christians? Or, rather, was the defeat of the comprehensive Democratic agenda the result of a formidable, united conservative coalition? Though intellectual analyses of the cultural backlash against the societal radicalism of the 1960s have been limited historically, a flow of theories has emerged recently illuminating the serendipitous syncretism of various single-issue evangelical social groups. As mentioned prior, such groups, which had mobilized previously in support of an aggressive conservative foreign policy during the Cold War era, had remained largely political outsiders during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. More so, it is likely that in a different era of the 20th century, these social and religious organizations would have continued to remain quiescent, lacking the dynamism to enter the national consciousness. However, the 1970s and 1980s provided a unique setting in political history: a period of “collective sadness,” disillusionment and cultural agitation stemming from the failures of the prior Leftist generation in fulfilling the “questions they had originally posed [to] American society.” Historians feel that by this time, the Left’s presentation of a new freedom, where “men and women found their purpose within themselves… disdain[ed] additional crutches, like God and flag,” and whimsically constructed a “new anti-bourgeoisie morality,” had collapsed on itself and was unable “to cope with the economics of the seventies.” Analyzing the circumstances, Michael Harrington, political activist and author of The Other America: Poverty in the United States (1962), concluded that the continued economic suffering, inequality, tension, and dearth of governmental answers provided the opportunity for the formation of a resurgent Right that could continue promoting laissez-faire economics, while dynamically widening
its platform to offer Americans a refreshing dose of God, morality, and patriotism. Realizing that the “Old Right” had failed in expanding its constituency, New Right politicians sought to adopt a social platform that could speak to the fears of working class Americans. Simultaneously, single-issue social groups embraced opportunistically the Republican Party as a vehicle through which they could broadcast their views and platform to a wider slice of the U.S. citizenry.

Drifting Back into the Dirty World of Politics

Critics are incorrect in their assertions that the Christian Right was merely "a technologically driven movement spawned by the master manipulation” of opportunistic Republican elites and Christian televangelists. In reality, the formation of such alliance was directed primarily by the long-term goals of ordinary Christian activists, who yearned to gain a more prominent national platform to promote their pro-family, pro-traditional marriage, and pro-life messages. Eventually, it was these very grassroots activists who became the central drivers of the Republican Party’s political agenda until the mid 1990s.

As discussed above, Christian Right activism can be categorized in two waves through the 20th century. Following the first wave in the 1940s-1950s where Christians engaged in a period of intense anti-Communist activism, the then unofficial religious coalition, centralized primarily across the South, the Midwest, and the Southwest, heeded temporarily to the warnings of their ministers “to steer clear of secular politics and focus their energies on their salvation.” However, the movement’s political “time-out” proved brief, for the social freedom promoted in the 1960s appeared a threat to the familial bonds Christians held sacred. Fearing an inevitable implosion of the American religious identity, Christian activists were re-inspired to organize in support of religion and family values. The about-face by Christian ministers was no less rapid, and suddenly, the same leaders who cautioned political activity only several years prior, now counseled their followers to:
Reject the division of human affairs into the secular and sacred and insist instead, that there is no arena of human activity, including law and politics, which is outside of God's lordship. The task is not to avoid this world, but to declare God's Kingdom in it.⁹³

However, both Christian leaders and activists recognized that their concerns would fail to be translated effectively into substantive political legislation unless they revitalized their ties with politicians who shared their beliefs.
IV. Timing Makes for Strange Bedfellows

The 1970s was a period where historically glaring economic inequities were overshadowed by growing cultural inequities. In the midst of this setting, which historian Jefferson Cowie describes as a “form of colossal conflict that was more internal and psychological, pivoting on social power and self-worth rather than outward contests with powerful forces,” the fundamental concepts of order, free enterprise, and family provided a comforting sense of stability for individuals who had struggled to stay afloat in the raging currents of 1960s counterculture. Hoping to exploit the social turmoil, the Republican Party sought to connect the threats of the 1960s counterculture with the detestable “Liberal Elite.” Identifying themselves as the party of tradition and order, Republicans offered a bridge back to the “golden age.”

However, Republicans realized the New Right would have to adopt a multi-dimensional social platform that could complement its historical appeals to free enterprise. Fortuitously, the New Right discovered a landscape teeming with grassroots anti-feminist and religious organizations, whose platforms could be woven readily into the broader Republican Party’s commitment to order, tradition, and capitalism. The attraction was mutual, as the grassroots organizations grasped the leverage they would gain from a connection to the Republican Party. Throughout the decade, the relationship paid large dividends to all of the involved parties. The New Right now had a compelling platform to attract members of the working class who had grown psychologically isolated from the government. Simultaneously, evangelical organizations, such as Southern Baptist Convention, the National Association for Evangelicals (NAE), and the National Council of Churches, had a formidable vehicle through which to convey their messages forcefully and consistently. Relying progressively on New Right rhetoric, strategies and resources, the once diffuse Christian organizations became streamlined into a unified movement that soon dominated the national conversation.

Killing Two Birds With One Stone: Philosophical Compatibility
Initially, a minority of Old Right conservatives and Libertarians were skeptical at the thought of adopting a social platform. In turn, evangelical Christian organizations feared being co-opted by the Republican party. Nonetheless, both forces would realize eventually the compatibility of their platforms and the potential to magnify their influence by utilizing each other’s growing network of constituents.99 First, Republicans realized that, the ERA and abortion rights were two emotional issues that readily fit their needs to unite conservatives against liberals. Most importantly though, New Right strategists believed that Christian rhetoric could be stretched to broadly symbolize the defense of basic conservative principles, and subsequently be pivotal in arousing “quiescent conservative masses,” like suburban homemakers and evangelicals.100 Ultimately, they foresaw that the eventual defeat of these two critical feminist agenda items would represent a fundamental conservative sweep of New Deal liberalism and “cultural relativism” that had surged in the 1960s.101

A broad network of Christian organizations would warm to the alliance upon the realization that alone they would never amass the capacity to compete against powerful movements, particularly the feminist movement, which derived meaningful financial support from upper class Democrats and had already established robust lobbying agents by 1966, particularly the National Organization for Women (NOW). However, sheltered by the New Right “umbrella,” the Christian Right became recognized as the selfless defenders of American cultural values, traditional lifestyles and patriotism. With revived waves of conservatism and fundamentalism sweeping the country, liberal issues, such as the ERA and abortion rights, endorsed by President Carter, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, and Senator Walter Mondale in 1976, suddenly appeared as threats to the fragile balance of civilization, the authority of the church, and the Biblical hierarchy of “God-man-woman.”102 Capitalizing on these sentiments and now buoyed by their association with the New Right, prominent Christian Right organizations, like the Eagle Forum and the American Family Association, began issuing reports
declaring that gender equality would skew the Biblically sanctioned gender roles, usurp the family, and force society back into a primitive state of barbarism.

-Man and woman have never been equal, aren’t equal and can never be equal as long as they exist. Each was given a different role, a role that complimented (sic) the other, roles that blend into a harmonious unit. This unit is called the family and the family is the core of society... It [society] either possesses order or chaos depending on the degree in which the male and female sex roles are accepted or rejected. Thus, it is that moral degeneration replaces moral virtues...\textsuperscript{103}

Relatedly, social conservative leaders, Phyllis Schlafly, Anita Bryant, and Beverly LaHaye warned that condoning the killing of fetuses in abortion was equivalent to butchering the social contract. They predicted that with the legalized capacity to exterminate “undesirables,” women would engage next in a Nazi-like killing spree of the elderly and the handicapped.\textsuperscript{104} Borrowing the rhetoric and themes from publications of the John Birch Society, \textit{National Review}, and \textit{Conservative Digest}, Christian Right organizations characterized feminists as murderers and anarchists harboring a totalitarian impulse.\textsuperscript{105} As the war waged on between the two camps, popular media, which had largely been in support of the feminist movement during the 1960s, now begin to wane in its enthusiasm, especially as feminists were increasingly being personified as radical anarchists. Although \textit{The New York Times} would continue providing positive publicity for feminist leaders like Gloria Steinem, while refusing to cover any activities of the STOP ERA movement, beginning in the mid-1970s, prominent domestic magazines including \textit{Good Housekeeping} and \textit{Better Homes in Garden}, published sharply toned articles echoing the warnings voiced by Schlafly, Bryant, and LaHaye, and advocating strongly for the re-affirmation of traditional gender roles within the family.\textsuperscript{106}

Emerging at the forefront to rally Americans to stem the "Communist agenda" of the feminist movement were prominent New Right leaders such as: Jerry Falwell, evangelical Southern Baptist pastor, “televangelist,” founder of the Moral Majority, and a prominent figure within the Christian Right movement; Viguerie, New Right strategist and publisher of the \textit{Conservative Digest}; and Schlafly, who eventually became the embodiment of the collective female opposition to the feminist
movement. Ultimately, fears incited by New Right proclamations like, “Sexual freedom has dissolved the bonds of the society, leaving nothing but a quasi-criminal anarchy in the home, the workplace, and the school,” struck a chord within many Americans, who felt increasingly that the nation was being submerged by a current of juvenile delinquency, sexual promiscuity, lawlessness, and moral floundering. Evangelicals targeted the feminist movement as the root of the chaos, and concluded decisively that its followers were agents of liberalism that sought to undermine the power of men as husbands and fathers. Suggesting that America was on the brink of “superpower suicide,” social conservatives warned urgently that the only way the social and economic problems could be corrected was to strengthen laws against gender equality and push “American women to return to the kitchen and bedroom.”
V. Pro-Life Gives New Life to New Right

It was axiomatic that the New Right had struck gold in choosing to adopt the social causes of the Christian Right, particularly, the anti-feminists. Indeed, Richard Nixon in 1972 could credit partially the fury of religious organizations in helping to solidify the ever-expanding boundaries of his “Silent Majority” constituency. However, it was the watershed victory of self-described social conservative Reagan that truly justified the inclusion of the new pro-family platform. In fact, Reagan, more so than any Republican president, would publicize his adherence to anti-feminist and Christian concerns through famous statements where he espoused his abhorrence of abortion under all conditions, a notable shift from his prior stance as Governor of California,

*The real question today is not when human life begins, but “What is the value of human life?” The abortionists who reassemble the arms and legs of a tiny baby to make sure all its parts have been torn from its mother's body can hardly doubt whether it is a human being. The real question for him and for all of us is whether than tiny human life has a God-given right to be protected by the law—the same right we have…*

It was clear that visible political recognition like this made the formerly independent single-issue social groups, the greatest benefactors of this relationship. Relying on relatively meager private donations and inconsistent leadership, while utilizing collective action techniques such as sit-ins, peaceful protests, and picketing, Christian organizations opposed to feminism remained overshadowed by their liberal opponents during the 1960s. However, following integration into the New Right, anti-feminists gained ready access to bountiful financial support and opportunities to disseminate their messages widely through radio talk shows and direct mail networks established previously by the Republican Party. Republican politicians, other than Reagan, also played a considerable role in the publication of social conservative causes through their own speeches, where they would verbally lump “feminism” and “abortion” with the radicalism and uncertainties of liberalism. Due to these efforts, a forceful backlash against secular causes, particularly feminism, from all conservative sects would come to fruition by the mid-1970s.
Another great benefit derived from the New Right by Christian organizations was the adoption of indirect lobbying. In the 1960s, the Republican Party perfected the use of PACs to gather considerable amounts of money for conservative politicians and their causes. Having gained access to such PAC funds, anti-feminists were able to pour money into campaigns to defeat liberal, pro-choice, ERA-supportive congressmen, as well as apply pressure on incumbents to vote against feminist legislation. Eventually, specific social conservative PACs were created, such as the: Life Amendment Political Action Committee (LAPAC); National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA); National Pro-Life Political Action Committee (NLPAC), Life-Pac, and National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC). Almost immediately, the NCPAC would emerge as the most successful source of financial support for social conservative causes, raising $5.8 million between 1981 and 1982.

Aside from adopting new collective action strategies, and gaining a broader constituency from its association with the New Right, the Christian Right solidified a tectonic connection to prominent political entrepreneurs and organizations. While initially skeptical of being associated with faith-based organizations, prominent Republican leaders would recognize progressively the natural affinity between “free enterprise” conservatism and “traditional-values” conservatism, and thus move to adopt social conservative platforms. Specifically, Viguerie chose to align with anti-feminists in 1974 after feeling distraught that President Ford selected the pro-choice Nelson Rockefeller as his vice-president. Incensed at what he saw as a feminist intrusion into his Party, Viguerie bluntly attacked the leaders of the movement in his periodical, while lending his direct-mail expertise and services to Christian organizations. Unlike Viguerie, Pat Robertson, son of U.S. Senator A. Willis Robertson, and eventual member of the Reagan Administration, possessed a historic abhorrence of abortion and preached openly against it on television. He cited the favorable decision in Roe v. Wade as the final straw that pushed him decisively into action against feminism. Robertson’s contributions to social conservative causes were critical, as he addressed Americans aggressively through television, radio
and in writing about the “totalitarian impulse” of the feminist movement. His graphic characterizations of feminists as “Anti-God,” “Anti-Religion,” and “Anti-America” reinforced the new linkage between the Republican Party and the Religious Right, while advancing the idea that feminists were a subversive minority whose shared ambition was to dismantle society. His activism and efforts would eventually coincide with that of prominent Christian televangelist Jerry Falwell. While some observers would question Falwell’s motives for uniting so publicly with the Republican Party, he undoubtedly would serve as a critical linkage between the various wings of the New Right movement. In his famous book, *Listen, America!*, Falwell would attempt to garner public support for the New Right by frightening Americans of the “atheistic nature” of feminists and liberals in general through his bold proclamation,

> *I believe that at the foundation of the women’s liberation movement there is a minority core of women who were once bored with life, whose real problems are spiritual problems. Many women have never accepted their God-given roles. They live in disobedience to God’s laws and have promoted their godless philosophy throughout our society.*

Predicting that “the twilight of [the] nation could well be at hand,” Falwell believed he had been commanded by God to lend his talents to the Republican Party. Disgustedly labeling the ERA as a “delusion” that “strikes at the foundation of our entire social structure,” he successfully sensationalized the meaning of the proposed legislation in the minds of Americans by warning that its passage would lead to the elimination of special protections for women, such as draft exemption, workplace safeties, female restrooms, and divorce-related child-support. Becoming the authoritative voice of the STOP ERA movement, Falwell commanded tremendous media attention, and was credited as one of the principal contributors to the blockage of the ERA.

George Gilder, outspoken Republican activist, self-described techno-utopian intellectual, and prominent author, was also indignant at feminist demands, which he equated to those of Communists and welfare “free-loaders.” Throughout his life, he stirred controversy with his national best sellers, including *Wealth and Poverty* (1981), an argument for the pragmatic and moral existence of
capitalism, and *Visible Man: A True Story of Post-Racist America* (1978), which bemoaned an indolent welfare system. However, prior, he would shock the country with his incredibly provocative work, *Sexual Suicide* (1973), written in the wake of *Roe v. Wade*, where he disparaged the onset of “a warlike climate of male-female relationships…fostered by radical feminism.” In this striking criticism of society, Gilder asserted zealously that a profound crisis faced the social order as “traditional family relationships have become almost unrecognizable,

> Yet what is our new leading social movement? It’s Women’s Liberation, with a whole array of nostrums designed to emancipate us. From what? From the very institution that is most indispensable to overcoming our present social crisis: the family. They want to make marriage more open, flexible, revocable, at a time when it is already opening up all over the country and spewing forth swarms of delinquents and neurotics, or swarms of middle-aged men and women looking for a sexual utopia that is advertised everywhere, delivered nowhere, but paid for through the nose (and other improbable erogenous zones). At a time when modernity is placing ever greater strains on the institutions of male socialization—our families, sports, men’s organizations—the women’s movement wants to weaken them further, make them optional, bisexual androgyous. Most of the books of the feminist speak of the need to “humanize” (emasculate?) men.”

Further predicting the repercussions of a liberal agenda accepting of feminism, Gilder lamented the ambush of gender distinctions that he asserted were the pillars of societal order. He then predicted a future increase in the number of single males who lacked the moral feminine guidance to encourage them to marry. This in turn, he theorized, would lead to the rapid escalation of national poverty. Invoking the wrath of feminists across the country, *Sexual Suicide*, became one of the most authoritative “bibles” of social conservative organizations. After the book's publishing, Gilder remained relentless in his opposition to the feminist movement and persisted in his self-proclaimed role as “America’s number one anti-feminist.” During the late 1970s, Gilder also focused heavily on the character of the feminists, whom he denounced graphically as:

> A myopic crowd of happy hookers, Dr. Feelgoods, black panthers, white rats, answer men, evangelical lesbians, sensuous psychiatrists, retired baseball players, pornographers, dolphins, swinging priests, displaced revolutionaries, polymorphous perverts, and Playboy philosophers—all bouncing around on waterbeds and typewriters and television talk shows, making “freedom” ring the cash registers of the revolution.
Though the words were interpreted humorously by some, for other Americans who had been scathed by the radicalism of the 1960s, Gilder’s message suggested another cultural apocalypse. More so, his hyperbolic portrayal of feminists as outcasts reinforced Americans’ growing suspicion that this movement existed beyond the moral boundaries of society. Overall, it would be comments like these, which so fundamentally obscured the true intent of feminism, that would work to stigmatize liberal movements and temporarily blemish all Democratic politicians supportive of legislation related to female causes.

Phyllis Schlafly: The Anti-Feminists’ “Iron Lady”

Unequivocally though, the paramount figure in the social conservative crusade against the feminist movement was Schlafly, who will likely be venerated forever for championing the causes of a “Female Silent Majority” that felt relentlessly castigated by the largely upper-class liberal feminist movement.129 Ironically, Schlafly was not considered a “founder” of the social conservative movement being that she had never spent much time in the home or championing religious causes.130 Instead, after attaining her law degree at Washington University in St. Louis, Schlafly became a prominent foreign defense expert, highly respected for her keen intellect, multi-dimensional analytical skills, and sharp rhetoric. As she attained higher status within the Republican Party, Schlafly attracted the attention of grassroots pro-family organizations that recognized her potential to raise national awareness of the “feminist menace.” Over time, she acknowledged that her talents could serve the GOP in areas beyond foreign defense. After much contemplation, she finally agreed in 1971 to represent the newly unified pro-family organizations in a public debate against representatives from NOW.131

Schlafly believed unwaveringly that ratification of the ERA would unleash disturbing transformations of society. Constitutionally, Schlafly was convinced the ERA symbolized another federal intrusion into areas that should remain reserved to states and families. Even worse, passage of
the ERA would facilitate unprecedented changes to the nuclear family, specifically the housewife’s function within the family.132 Like Gilder, Schlafly foresaw words in the ERA that could be stretched so liberally to even legitimize homosexual marriages, mandated unisex toilets, national access to abortions, female military drafts, and a husband’s prerogative to refuse financial support to his wife.133 Fueled by burning antipathy toward feminism, and aided by the skills she honed as an entrepreneur, Schlafly surged forward furiously to establish the bulwark STOP ERA movement in October 1972. With financing from her previously established Eagle Trust Fund, and access to a communication network that included the 3,000 recipients of the Phyllis Schlafly Report, Schlafly ballooned STOP ERA into a national movement with its own 30,000-subscriber newsletter and state offices.134

While Schlafly’s organizational skills were essential to such a formidable movement, it was her transcendent rhetoric that enabled her to amass an incredible depth of support. Her ability to connect feminist issues with the Democratic platform, and insist that the aim of liberal administrations was to “mandate the gender-free, rigid, absolute equality of treatment of men and women under every federal and state law, bureaucratic regulation and court decision, and in every aspect of our lives… touched by public funding,” provoked hysteria among an array of already agitated populations, including working class women, suburban homemakers, conservative males, and evangelicals.135 In essence, Schlafly guaranteed to her followers that their lives would be exorbitantly and permanently revolutionized by secularist legislation like the ERA.

According to historian Carol Falsenthal, by February 1973, Schlafly’s name was mentioned in nearly every ERA-related news story and a growing number of conservative publications.136 With the seemingly daily proliferation of her following, and local associations organizing for the purpose of executing STOP ERA activities, the early momentum for ERA ratification had diminished dramatically. Buoyed by her early progress, in late 1973, Schlafly initiated a triumphant state-by-state campaign in each of fifteen states to convince legislators to vote against ratification of the ERA. Her
tactics and persuasive appeals proved so extraordinary, that she even convinced legislators in Nebraska to rescind their earlier vote of ERA approval. ¹³⁷

New Right officials of the Republican Party witnessed approvingly the fiery resentment of feminism Schlafly was igniting across the country. They decided that her passion and dedication to cultural morality should become one of the defining pillars of the New Right social platform. Encouraging her to expand her voice and leadership to other critical pro-family issues, the New Right eventually made Schlafly a key figure in the campaign. ¹³⁸ Schlafly never backed down from her call of duty, and adopted wholly the core principles of the New Right, “God, Home, and Country,” as the rallying cries of her various organizations, including her most famous, the Eagle Forum. ¹³⁹ With Schlafly’s presence and ample funding from the New Right, the Eagle Forum, which described itself as “a national organization of women and men who believe in God, Home, and Country, and are determined to defend the values that have made America the greatest nation in the world,” recruited over 50,000 members. ¹⁴⁰ From its inception and through today, it is recognized as one of the foremost socially conservative interest groups and distinguished PACs.

Individually, Viguerie, Robertson, Falwell, Gilder, and Schlafly were powerful beacons of social conservative platforms. However, once these individuals were recruited as prominent leaders in the Republican Party, their ideas could be synthesized and magnified in the realm of the culture wars. Synchronically, with the guiding hand of the Republican Party, they could combine their skills and associate organizations to address dire cultural controversies throughout the country, such as: the Kenawha County school textbook controversy in 1974; various states’ ERA ratification proceedings; the Supreme Court’s favorable decision in Roe v. Wade; Anita Bryant’s crusade against gay rights in Dade County, Florida; the elimination of prayer in public schools; the busing problems in Boston and Los Angeles; and the federally-funded 1977 International Women’s Year (IWY) Conference in Houston. ¹⁴¹ Regardless of the situation, their message to their various audiences was consistent: the feminist movement, a microcosm of the larger liberal movement, was the conspiring force behind the
unsettling cultural chaos in America. Also, each speaker would publicly emphasize the idea that
liberals would not be satisfied until they could rewrite the Constitution. Ultimately, the combined
impact of Vigerie, Robertson, Falwell, Gilder, and Schlafly was eminent and unprecedented, as they
successfully preached to the fear in anxious Americans who longed to “turn back the clock” to the
golden ages of homogeneity, tradition, and cultural stabilization.\textsuperscript{142}
VI. It’s a Family Affair

To broaden the appeal of its new social platform to a wider sect of the American public, the Republican Party expanded their attack on ERA and abortion rights, to now include defending any attacks on “family.” Suddenly finding the Party’s goals more “inclusive,” Old Right and religious organizations, which had been historically reluctant to enter politics, were spurred into action. Admiring the tactics of the early social-conservative pioneers like Schlafly and Falwell, groups as diverse as the: Catholic Church; Protestant Church; American Conservative Union; Congress of Freedom; National States’ Rights Party; Liberty Lobby; American Legislative Exchange Council; Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress; and National Conservative Political Action Committee would rally around the “defense of the family.”

Rapidly unifying their positions through the decade, this eclectic coalition would become more aggressive in their commitment to defeat the “disgusting display of open lesbian affection and homosexual didos (sic) [that] literally traumatized those of us who believed in traditional moral values.”

As a New Right rallying point and one of the key centerpieces of the conservative backlash, the word “family” represented “the claims and ambitions that the nation as a whole embodied.”

Sprinkled generously throughout New Right rhetoric, “family” summoned nostalgia for a common, God-fearing America. Furthermore, politicians hoped it would reawaken Americans to live up to their obligations as loyal citizens and patriots. Therefore, defending “family” meant defending society against atheism, sex education in schools, government-subsidized abortion, homosexual rights, racial integration, and “welfare queens.”

Analyzing the bloated meaning ascribed to this word during this period, in his article “Reagan’s Code Words,” Minneapolis Tribune columnist Richard Cohen, elaborated:

*To be pro-family is to be against the ERA, abortion, and everything feminists advocate. To be feminist is, by the same token, to be anti-family. To be against the family is to be the enemy of one of highest symbols in our society.*
Casting themselves into a formidable Republican social shield, social conservatives and evangelicals migrated from the margins of political life toward a center stage where, suddenly, the “personal became political.” Empowered by their solidarity, these organizations fought their battles with the rhetoric “of high moral warfare,” that will be remembered for its urgency, militancy, and over-arching sense of purpose.148 Famously, Falwell proclaimed to his followers, “We are born into a war zone where the forces of God do battle with the forces of evil.”149 Randall Terry, co-founder of the Moral Majority, reminded his followers fervently as they participated in a blockade at the entrance of an abortion clinic, “Warriors fight to win! Warriors are prepared to die.”150 LaHaye, of Concerned Women for America, rallied her followers with statements like, “We have no other alternative but to wage warfare against those who would destroy our children, our families, our religious liberties.”151 Ultimately, in forming a coalition that co-opted all cultural and secular issues effectively into one broader platform, evangelicals found themselves with an incredible numerical and organizational advantage over the once more dominant feminist movement. With the realization that “there are millions of us— and only a handful of them,” the formerly independent social conservative groups gained tremendous relevance on the national stage.152
VII. The War of Words: So Much Worse than Sticks and Stones

From the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, the power of the “liberal consensus” was manifested most readily in the appeal of the feminist movement. Indeed, similar to the liberal cultural agenda of the prior decade, the feminist movement appeared as an indomitable force, energized by the “sisterhood” and united aspirations of its followers. Feminists prided themselves on promoting a common language, a common experience, and a common cause to unite against patriarchy and authority, two adversaries equated with a conservative philosophy. Furthermore, the movement’s leaders promised its ardent followers that they would not cease their mission until the ERA was passed, national abortion rights had been achieved, and the differences between genders were erased. To external observers, the feminist movement, and liberalism in general, appeared inviolable.

However, Adrienne Rich and other prominent feminist leaders admit more recently that even during the peak of the movement “the realities of division and contention” among members were ugly obstacles that clashed with the dream of creating an authentic and representative feminist voice.

Expanding on Rich’s thoughts, historian Daniel T. Rogers notes:

At the cutting intellectual edges of feminism, women’s writing collectives dueled with manifestos and countermanifestos. Caucuses organized and split apart, vied with each other over members, tactics, programs, and interpretations of the struggle. Minimalists with their eye on concrete legal changes clashed with maximalists, eager to transform the culture of patriarchy from the ground up; within both camps the tension between a desire to build up the identity of woman and the need to tear down the confining category of “woman” recurred, in a fissure that, in Ann Sintow’s words, “runs, twisting and turning, right through [Feminist] Movement history.”

The ERA Apocalypse… Or So It Seemed

Social conservative leaders were not blind to the gradual erosion of feminist platforms, and the widening division among the movement’s followers. Working closely with Republican politicians, individuals like Schlafly recognized that the impending demise of feminism was symbolic of an America souring on the “anything goes attitude” of the entire liberal movement. Specifically, she equated the public’s increasing reluctance to support a feminist movement that shifted so unpredictably
in their commentary regarding sexual promiscuity, female liberation, workplace equality, “no-fault” divorces, and child care rights, with the electorate’s rising discomfort with the Democratic Party’s capricious stance on marriage, the open practice of religion, and the content taught in schools. Looking to exploit the deepening fractures of the movement, Schlafly and Falwell employed divisive rhetoric when addressing feminists to emphasize their racial, ethnic, class, and religious differences. Schlafly was particularly successful using the word “class” to incite tension among feminists, as well as among individuals considering joining the movement, by describing the movement’s leaders as “upper middle class Yuppies,” whose concerns discordantly clashed with those of the mainstream.156 Further attempting to highlight the movement’s goals as elitist and not reflective of the majority of Americans, Schlafly issued a grave warning to a group of Southern women in 1977,

*The more I work with the issue of the ERA, the more I realize that the women’s liberation movement is antifamily… They are for the ERA, which would take away the marvelous legal rights of a woman to be a full-time wife and mother in the home supported by her husband. They are for abortion on demand, financed by the government, and taught in the schools. They are for privileges for lesbians and homosexuals to teach in the schools and to adopt children. They are for the government assuming the main responsibility for childcare because they think it is oppressive and unfair that society expects mothers to look after their babies. All their goals and dogmas are antifamily. They believe that God made a mistake when He made two different kinds of people.*

157

By characterizing forthrightly the “greediness” of feminist goals, Schlafly introduced a sense of “class warfare” among the movement’s membership, as well as among lower class women who had considered supporting the ERA.158 Though, the Republican Party as a whole, had remained distant from the ERA battle in the early 1970s, the growing appeal of Schlafly’s campaign, catalyzed early fissures in the Party’s formerly neglected social stance. Specifically, while the more moderate Rockefeller Republicans followed the lead of President Ford and First Lady Betty Ford, in supporting the ERA, other branches of the Party, that would include then Governor Reagan, sought to validate their “conservative credentials” by embracing fully the stance of Schlafly.159 Following her direction, this increasingly powerful group of newly identified, “social conservatives,” would not stop there, but rather continue extending this metaphor to paint Democratic politicians and sympathizers as “Ivy
League,” northeastern elites who looked critically on those who “cling to their Bibles and guns.” Ultimately, Schlafly’s tactic succeeded brilliantly in not only rupturing the already weakened ties of the feminist movement, but creating an unwelcome perception of the Democratic Party as hostile to mainstream Americans, who increasingly felt uncomfortable with the new direction of liberalism.

**Communists, Liberals, Lesbians, Feminists… Oh My!**

Harnessing momentum from these initial successes, conservatives continued to use the purity of their social conservative messages to foment disdain for liberalism from the broader American public. Several years earlier, the New Right had pioneered the use of codified language to paint minorities, radicals, and welfare recipients as “outsiders,” whose demands conflicted with those of the national majority. Continuing this practice, Republicans adopted “trigger words” related to “lesbianism,” “communism,” and “socialism,” to suggest that liberals, particularly feminists, existed on the fringe of society. In her acclaimed book, *The New Traditional Woman* (1982), Marshner Connaught, prominent conservative activist and Heritage Foundation Scholar, attempted to elicit an emotional response from her readers by presenting a stereotypical “macho-feminist,” whom she characterizes as a selfish, lesbian woman who disregards the needs of others:

> Feminism replaced the saccharine sentimentalizations of women and home life and projected instead a new image of women: a drab, macho feminism of hard-faced and hard-hearted women who were bound and determined to carve their place in the world, no matter whose bodies they have to climb over to do it... Macho feminism despises anything which seeks to interfere with the desires of Number One. A relationship which proves burdensome? Drop it! A husband whose needs cannot be conveniently met? Forget him! Children who may wake up in the middle of the night? No way! To this breed of thought, family interferes with self-fulfillment, and given the choice between family and self, the self is going to come out on top in their world. This macho feminism is intrinsically anti-family. It is anti-men as well. Even lesbianism is exalted by some feminists as the ultimate form of feminism. In their opinion, lesbianism will help solve the world population problem.

With harsh verbal imagery like this, conservatives like Connaught sought to frighten Americans into believing that every feminist was a greedy, masculine, crazed lesbian. She also perpetuated a chilling stereotype of a nihilistic feminist who viewed procreation as an unfair, repressive burden.
Additionally, Connaught postulated that the “liberation” of women would result inevitably in the diminished importance of husbands and children. Overall, in writing this book, she momentously expanded the dialogue of the Republican Party, while legitimizing a new intensity of attacks. Almost instantly, themes of this nature became dominant motifs within subsequent New Right publications.

**Playboy Philosophies and Feminist Hot Air**

Through the 1970s, social conservatives would find additional success in linking their goals with the New Right’s promotion of law and order. In this approach, they systematically attacked the feminist platform as one that threatened organized religion, “traditional” family values, the nation’s future, and the free-enterprise economy. Gilder warned gravely that feminists’ promotion of “Playboy philosophies,” gender equality, and liberation would obliterate the social fabric of America. Taking aim at what he believed to be corrupters of society, Gilder stunned Americans with his proclamations:

*The movement barges into all the private ceremonies, sexual mystiques, and religious devotions of the society as if they were optional indulgences rather than the definitive processes of our lives. In a world in which most men and women everywhere, throughout history, have spent most of their time and energy in elaborate rituals of differentiation, the feminists advance the preposterous idea that we are all just individual “human beings,” only secondarily identified by sex or family. This assumption is statistically convenient. But it is a myth. And this myth makes the women unable to understand almost everything that happens in the society or to comprehend what is important in motivating men and women.*

Liberally spicing his text with fervent statements, Gilder warned his readers that the feminist movement runs on fickle impulse, flighty principles, and hysterical conceptions of a male dominated society. In his typical melodramatic fashion, he left readers with a chilling mental vision of a future society dominated by feminists who “are counseling us to walk off a cliff in the evident wish that our society can be kept afloat on feminist hot air.”

Gilder’s words encouraged other conservatives and members of the media to discount the merit of the feminist movement, and by extension, other liberal movements, unabashedly. A new focal point
for attack highlighted by Gilder in Sexual Suicide was feminists’ tendencies to view themselves as “victims of intolerable oppression,” whose plight was no different than that of blacks or war veterans. In her piece, “The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Feminism,” Midge Dector, an active anti-feminist and Scholar at the Heritage Foundation, channeled Gilder’s indigence toward feminists’ claims, and demanded that these “selfish, indulgent” women cease their assertions that the world was conspiring against them. Conservative periodicals, such as The Nation and National Review, and even British magazine, New Statesman, attempted to counter the myth of female victimhood by publishing testimonies of women like Beatrice Webb, who proclaimed,

I reacted against the narrow outlook and exasperated tone of some of the pioneers of women’s liberation. But the root of anti-feminism lay in the fact that I have never myself suffered the disabilities assumed to arise from my sex.

Channeling the momentum of this sentiment, Schlafly took the helm in abating feminists’ cries of victimhood with her compelling book, The Power of the Positive Woman. In what became a cardinal piece of anti-feminist literature, Schlafly transcended the “victimhood” debate by reclaiming the word “feminist” as someone who is intelligent, responsible, determined, and morally responsible. She urged her followers to seize life with vigor and persistence, and to perform their God-given duties as “Positive Women,”

...like every human being born into this world, the Positive Woman has her share of sorrows and sufferings, of unfulfilled desires and bitter defeats. But she will never be crushed by life’s disappointments, because her positive mental attitude has built her an inner security that the actions of other people can never fracture. The other Positive Woman, her particular set of problems in not a conspiracy against her, but a challenge to her character and her capabilities.

Ultimately, though, it was the New Right movement that would prove to be the greatest beneficiary in the use of this narrative. By extending the “victimhood” label to tar a number of social movements associated with the Democratic Party, Republican politicians were able to contrast more vividly the growing population of Americans who felt “entitled” to special benefits, against the ordinary,
hardworking individuals who never asked for a handout. This strategy would not only prove to be an effective extension of Nixon’s “Silent Majority” strategy from earlier in the decade, but it would serve to reinforce the message that the Republican Party was prepared to stand up for mainstream America. As a result, former Democrats, particularly from suburbs in the Northeast and in the South, would flock to the Republican Party in droves between 1976 and 1980. In fact, according to Michael Barone, Washington Times journalist and Resident Scholar at American Enterprise Institute, in 1980, the Christian Right constituency contained nearly an equal number of lifetime Republicans and former Democrats. 171

Preserving the Image of Adam and Eve

Anti-feminists also attracted followers with their accusations that feminists were attempting to rewrite the laws of gender biology. In a lyrical poem published in the June 1973 issue of Harpers, anti-feminist Doris Lessing, celebrated the unique childbearing capacity of women, then lamented individuals “who are conditioned to be one way and are trying to be another.”172 She closed her poem by declaring dramatically that girls who oppose getting married or having children are “trying to cheat on their biology…” Yet, arguably the most maddening part of Lessing’s poem for the opposition would be her subtle linkage between the feminists and the Communist heroines of The Golden Notebook, Anna and Molly. Connecting Lessing’s basic premise with Biblical validation, American singer, beauty queen, and gay rights opponent, Anita Bryant, in “Lord Teach Me to Submit,” begged women to lovingly and trustingly will themselves towards God’s chosen path as laid out in Ephesians 5:22-24:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 173
Defining “submission” as a “voluntary act of love and trust… in obedience to God’s plan for your life,” Bryan proclaimed that women who refuse to respect their husband’s authority are stepping out of God’s light and, resultanty, will be condemned to a life of suffering and misery. She concluded her thoughts with a willful plea for females to stop nagging and undermining “the man God gave us to love” and, instead, loyally live up to their roles as child-bearers and homemakers. As Schlafly had done in The Power of the Positive Woman, Bryant verbally transcended the bitter fray of feminism and unveiled “God’s blueprints” of a society of separate, yet equally dignified gender roles. Bolstered by more positive and optimistic assertions, and with Bryant’s book providing Biblical rationalization of male supremacy, other anti-feminists authors felt empowered to continue producing literary pieces that glorified women’s special role in society through the late 1970s. As Bryant suggested, women were the mothers of society who were expected to yield their bodies selflessly to “bear with grace the burdens life imposed on them,” including childbearing. Contrarily, feminists were discarding their roles callously by demanding control over their own sexuality. Following the model proscribed by Bryant, activists within the New Right movement, warned that the dissolution of gender roles would fracture societal certainty and order.

Extending this fearful rhetoric, pro-life advocates claimed that the true reason feminists favored abortion was for the purpose of “destroy[ing] the precious essence of womanliness nurturance” by negating “the one irrefutable difference between men and women.” Embracing Christian rhetoric as well, pro-life advocates equated the act of abortion to an individual’s dismissal of her societal responsibilities and “a widespread eagerness to evade very troublesome inconveniences which all members of society must bear.” Almost immediately, conservative politicians asserted publicly that abortion and welfare were alternatives for freeloaders who shirked their social obligations and resided in a separate avenue of morality. In The Preservation of Individual Character, Ralph Potter, notable Presbyterian minister, asserted,
... the ban on abortion functions not simply to uphold a particular code of behavior, let alone a peculiar code of sexual behavior. It upholds character, the type of character that is indispensable to good citizenship. The virtues necessary to sustain the true family are the virtues necessary to sustain the state. The virtues and vices exposed in dealing with matters of sex, family life, and procreation pervade the entire character and find expression in civil relations. The state has a stake in the promotion of self-restraint rather than self-indulgence, responsibility rather than irresponsibility, and selfless adaptability rather than selfish rigidity.... The fear is rather that it will lead to a general decline of individual character through lax enforcement of responsibility.\textsuperscript{179}

Unlike other pro-life writers, Potter moved beyond the argument that legal abortion would lead to increased sexual promiscuity. Instead, he focused on the imminent decline of society’s character and sense of responsibility. Potter’s views struck a nerve within a majority of Americans in the wake of Roe v. Wade. In response to his own question, “What would legalized abortion mean to the future of America?” Potter offered a discomforting answer, “we shall plummet ever faster towards a brave new world in which the only barrier to the manipulation of fellow human beings will be lack of power and technique.”\textsuperscript{180}

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Fundamentally, the true genius of anti-feminists was nested in their ability to identify liberalism and feminism rhetorically as the root causes of cultural changes that agitated and threatened conservative Americans. By infusing the words “feminism,” “abortion,” and “ERA” with ominous meanings that represented an upheaval of conservative ideals, anti-feminists were able to bring to a boil the internal feelings of turmoil felt by millions of Americans. Concurrently, anti-feminists offered the trusted combination antidote of family, tradition, and cultural morality. Their cries to action, blended artfully with senses of urgency, solidarity, and selflessness, rallied Americans considerably. On the ERA, anti-feminists warned of an imminent apocalypse in the case of ratification. On abortion rights, they appealed to Americans to cease and desist condoning the murder of fellow citizens. Critical to the success of the anti-feminists was the conviction that framed their efforts in an age of growing fragmentation and disillusionment. Ultimately, anti-feminist leaders made their followers feel collectively successful in achieving the paramount goal of restoring American virtues by making the
“right choice” for their future: “Society can be good or depraved, civilized or uncivilized. It either possesses order or chaos depending on the degree in which the male and female sex roles are accepted or rejected.”\textsuperscript{181}
VIII. Temporary Death of the “Liberal Consensus”: A Birth to the New Right

Historians agree that the rise and fall of social movements, like the feminist movement, between the 1960s and 1970s, is broadly representative of the trajectory of the “liberal consensus” during the same span. Indeed, buoyed by the cries of sisterhood and liberation at the beginning of the 1970s, the feminist movement, sought vigorously to earn legislative validation for equality in the workplace and abortion rights. Culturally, they endeavored to expand the boundaries for women, which included promoting the idea that marriage and children were optional, sexual promiscuity was acceptable, and authenticity was essential. Upending traditional gender repression and limited avenues of social life, feminists yearned to advance the female voice to the forefront, in direct deviance of unwritten codes of male censorship. Compelling followers with their strident demands of liberation, the feminist movement garnered unprecedented support during the early 1970s.

Yet, a mere ten years thereafter, the feminist vision and the liberal agenda had been vanquished. Though initially compelling, the brightly colored economic promises of the Great Society now evoked suspicion, and the dreams of “civil disobedience” and “social liberation,” seemed childish when unemployment rates were at double digits and stagflation was crippling the dreams of many. Clearly, the political and cultural winds had shifted, and Americans longed to re-discover the traditional values that they had grown up believing. The final death toll to the “liberal consensus” would be the election of 1980—an election where Governor Reagan, a grandfatherly figure who proclaimed confidently that American exceptionalism was no myth, would defeat Carter in one of the most lopsided victories in presidential history. Preaching the soothing tones of Reagan, Republicans would also capture the Senate for the first time since 1954. Even legislatively, Americans seemed to be refuting the liberal agenda. The ratification of the ERA, once considered a foregone conclusion, had been thwarted convincingly, eliminating the one remaining thread that kept the remainder of
feminist followers united. Optimism for true social liberation pitifully shrunk, and for years public protests and demands were silenced.  

Analyzing this abrupt paralyzation, scholars debate the primary reason for the demise of liberalism and the Democratic Party: Did it succumb to the heavy weight of its own platform? Did the internal dissension among its constituency undermine its leadership? Or, did Americans suddenly find liberals’ demands irrelevant in the context of more pressing economic issues and energy concerns? In some ways, one could answer “Yes” to each of the questions above. Though advancing an arguable theory, a number of conservatives, including Barone of American Enterprise Institute, and William Kristol, American political analyst and editor of The Weekly Standard, believe that the Democratic Party of the 1960s, and its menagerie of social causes, which included rights for Chicanos, Blacks, gays, and feminists; universal access to birth control; the protection of the environment and an end to the Vietnam War, never offered one cohesive platform or message. Worse though, the campaigns of its leaders, like President Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale, suffered internally from a myriad of conflicting interpretations of the future direction of the Party. Additionally, the 1970s, described as the “Me” decade, was a period defined by attitudes of introspection and self-interest, as Americans retreated into their own lives and paid less attention to the demands of groups that had already had their “day” in the 1960s. Though there are elements of logic to the above explanations, it appears that the overwhelming cause of the premature termination of support for the Democratic Party and the “liberal consensus” stemmed from the powerful societal shifts back to traditionalism and fundamentalism as a forceful backlash to the countercultural attitudes and actions of the 1960s. Riding the wave of this transition was the Republican Party and the Christian Right, each of which recognized the formidable synergies to be gained in attaining their individual and collective goals by merging their platforms.

Moving From Offense to Defense
Ultimately, the syncretism between the GOP and the Christian Right movement was mutually fruitful. For the Republican Party, it meant accessing and employing a historically entrenched Democratic constituency that yearned for a restoration of societal morals. For evangelicals and social conservatives, it meant access to funding, organization, and strategies that elevated its causes to national prominence. With the tension, resentment, and the steeling of identities inherent to the 1970s, social conservatives capitalized by recruiting traditionally non-political working class and middle class families. Simultaneously, the Democratic Party, and movements like the feminist movement, which was increasingly portrayed as being comprised principally of middle class and upper class females, were marginalized for their perceived “elitism.” So decisive was the swamping of liberalism during the decade that many strategists and leaders in the Democratic Party are hesitant even to this day to re-embrace controversial legislation like the ERA, or align themselves with polarizing social causes, particularly gay rights.

Nevertheless, the legacy of the Christian Right should not be defined solely by the derailment of the ERA and the temporary thwarting of the “liberal consensus.” Rather, the lasting achievement of the movement, rooted in its staunch defense of traditional values and morals, was in eventually transitioning from simply a “defender of tradition,” to a tenacious offensive force capable of promoting legislation to strengthen the family. Exemplifying this change of status, in 1982, Schlafly opened a Washington office dedicated to supporting abstinence education, marriage, religion, patriotism, and textbooks free of liberal influence. In the same year, Republican Senators Paul Laxalt and Roger Jepsen introduced the Family Protection Act, a bill that sought to “reestablish prayer in public schools, eliminate federal funding for school textbooks that portray women in non-traditional roles, and prevent sex-mixed sports.” Throughout the 1980s, social conservatives proposed additional pro-family legislation, conducted seminars on the importance of adhering to God’s vision of society, and collected money through PACs to be used to help defeat pro-choice politicians. As a testament to the growing influence of Christian Right activism, liberal movements, like the feminist movement, were
transformed into far less visible, defensive organizations that clung desperately to the status and recognition they had earned over a decade earlier. Most remarkably, though not always smooth, the relationship forged between the Christian Right and the Republican Party during the 1970s has endured into the current day, with integrated social and fiscal principles still entrenched in the overall conservative platform.

However, as I will discuss in detail through the next sections, the credence paid by Republicans to the social platform is never stagnant. Indeed, shifting transitions in Party leadership, as well as the overarching partisan shifts in America, appear to exist in parallel with the ebbs and flows of the Christian Right movement. Particularly, as evident by the actions and rhetoric of the Republican Party during the Clinton Administration, as well as through the first term of the Obama Administration, conservatives do spend noticeably less time promoting religious messages when out of the White House. Whether this tactic is effective, always remains up for debate. Unquestionably though, strategists and analysts do agree that when social conservative messages are muted in the platform and in presidential campaigns, infighting inevitably occurs within the national Republican coalition.
PART THREE:
Unraveling the Paradox: Understanding the Heart of Conservatism
I. The Natural Affinity Between The (Christian) Right and The Right: The Origins of an Integrated Platform

The essential philosophy of the New Right movement was simple: Conservatism was a “vital force of American life,” because, when exercised most fully in its social and fiscal realms, it offered the widest “prism” through which the greatest number of Americans [could] see their futures happily unfolding. However, such an overarching ideal could equally have been applied to the idealistic visions of the liberal and progressive movements, therefore New Right leaders sought to distinguish their platform with the promise that simple conservative principles best reflected human nature, the American founding, and the core values of faith, personal initiative, and opportunity believed to distinguish this nation from much of the world. Correspondingly, another key to New Right conservatism, illuminated best when Republicans allied with Christian Right organizations, was that all individuals, from Wall Street bankers to manual laborers, “possessed the capacity to devise a life of her or his own choosing,” with limited interference from government intrusion. While Americans who selected to mobilize in support of the New Right movement recognized there was “no such thing as a free lunch,” they trusted their conservative leaders would not divide the populace into “makers” and “takers,” as was the historical practice of both political parties. Ultimately, the magnetism of the New Right platform was its ability to transcend arbitrary class divisions by offering an integrated social and fiscal vision to connect Americans with the hope of prosperity and personal freedom enjoyed by earlier generations. Most importantly, the critical messenger of this new platform, President Reagan, embodied fully neither orthodox conservative tendencies nor moderate tendencies. Instead, he epitomized the New Right generation perfectly by offering the harmonious syncretism of both.
II. Ronald Reagan: Pioneer of a “Brightly Colored” Platform

Emerging from what is considered one of the most uncertain periods in national history during the 20th century, Reagan offered Americans a revolutionary conservative platform—one that was not simply a refutation of liberalism, but rather an invigorated and “brightly colored” commitment to free enterprise, values, and liberty. Over the next two decades, Reagan fulfilled his promise to restore American identity by plaiting strands of fiscal conservative orthodoxy with the more uplifting social messages of family and inclusion. Critically, in the framing of his policies and the crafting of his speeches, Reagan, along with other New Right conservatives, recognized that ordinary Americans do not spend their evenings pondering the long-term tenability of free trade or the national corporate tax rate. Rather, the overwhelming majority of Americans were consumed with ordinary things, such as paying taxes, buying insurance, and funding their children’s education. As such, Reagan constructed a narrative that combined his long-term vision for American economic and political growth with the short-term ideas necessary to offer the middle class a platform for economic advancement, despite the recession. Through his eight years in office, Reagan rarely lectured on theoretical economic growth rates or abstract tax brackets, since those were implicit tenets of conservatism that could be left unsaid. Instead, Reagan moved Americans of all backgrounds with his candor and direct discussions about the two most fundamental principles of conservatism that covered both fiscal and social realms: freedom and opportunity.

The fusion between social and fiscal conservatism was an organic process. However, Reagan recognized that to be understood fully, the concepts must be explained simply to those it would impact most. Relatedly, when Reagan reformed the tax code and redefined income brackets, he explained his actions were directed to buffering middle-and low-income families from the escalating rates of inflation during the 1980s. Similarly, family unification was offered as validation of his controversial decision in 1986 to sign the largest amnesty bill for illegal aliens of the 20th century.
To become again “the shining city on the hill,” America needed “free markets” and “non-unionized” industries. Reagan extolled such ideals as “much more fitting to the dignity of man” than “exchanges coerced by the state or by other citizens.”[^214] In the same way, he convinced many of his critics that an arbitrary fixed minimum wage was incompatible with the values of a free society, because government would effectually eliminate the number and types of jobs a business could offer to the most vulnerable and least skilled of the working population.[^215] Ultimately, as he highlighted in a number of speeches, the sterling principles of capitalism, including a monetary system that distinguished the United States from the state-planned economy of the Soviet Union, provided “that those who pursue opportunity [had to] have some prospect for reward or return for the efforts and the risks they run.”[^216] Accordingly, when an individual American had success, he lifted society with him. Conversely, with little incentive to risk for such achievements, society would remain stagnant and poverty levels would intensify among the lowest economic classes.[^217]

[^214]: [^214]
[^215]: [^215]
[^216]: [^216]
[^217]: [^217]

In such persuasive justifications that appealed to the inherent sensibilities of American people, Reagan accomplished what other members of the GOP had failed to do for most of the 20th century: he defined and controlled the conservative message.[^218] Consequently, he convinced a majority of bipartisan citizens that, not only would their lives be better with conservative measures, but that their country would be stronger, which would provide future generations with the opportunity to thrive.[^219] For a rare moment in American history, Reagan had shaped the political landscape to a seeming state of “consensus”—this time, a “conservative consensus.”[^220]
III. Bridging Theory with Reality: Validations for Social and Fiscal Conservatism

While Ronald Reagan proved successful in articulating clearly the underlying unity between social and fiscal conservatism, over the last five years, the Republican Party has suffered from the lack of a comparable leader to convey such messages to the nation. Nonetheless, for many conservatives and the Republican leaders who identify legitimately with the New Right, the bond between the social and fiscal realms remains sacred, and the paramount reason for their unwavering commitment to the Party.\textsuperscript{221} Fundamentally, social and fiscal conservatives recognize jointly the three central pillars of conservative philosophy as: liberty; opportunity; and human dignity; which are enabled by the continuance and fortification of the family unit, church, free market, and civil society.\textsuperscript{222} As such, the founding goal of the conservative movement as made manifest by the New Right, was to elect powerful leaders who possessed integrated fiscal and social visions, and who could implore others to help protect the central institutions critical to the endurance of the American identity.\textsuperscript{223}

Relatedly, “conservatism” harkens to the origins of the American experiment, where “the country was churched” and liberty was defined as individual sovereignty.\textsuperscript{224} As Dr. Marvin Olasky, writer and editor-in-chief of WORLD Magazine, observes, while social and economic conservatives “tend to have different sacred texts and heroes,” with social conservatives celebrating the Bible and Jesus, and economic conservatives placing their faith in free-market economists, such as Hayek and von Mises, whose ideas formed the basis of American capitalism, both groups are united by a deeply embedded yearning for a simpler time, when government was “strong enough to protect [Americans’] rights,” but not “so strong that it could violate those rights.”\textsuperscript{225} It is in this state of mind, where individuals’ intimate connection with their God and their Constitution remain unperturbed by the decisions and actions wrought from external forces, particularly the government. Consequently, the “true” conservative leader is viewed as one that demonstrates an understanding of the balance between acceptable and unacceptable government interference. Certainly, conservatives recognize appropriate
realms where government must act. However, regulatory overreach in the form of stifling demands on businesses, high taxes on families, radical legislative measures and executive orders, and unsettling court decisions are perceived by conservatives of both fiscal and social wings, as ominous signs of a government attacking the sovereignty and freedom of individuals.\textsuperscript{226} Relatedly, conservatives believe it is their right and obligation to fight for the enactment of policies that create buffers between society and the state.\textsuperscript{227}
IV. The Biblical Case for Limited Government

The most persistent inquiry regarding the tenability of a dual dimensional Republican platform stems from the apparent inconsistency between “small government” and the regulation of marriage and abortion. From the social conservative perspective, pro-life and pro-traditional marriage obviates the need for arbitrary force and interpretations from an “imperfect” central government, whose will rarely reflects that of God.

Specifically, social conservatives view the theories of modern liberalism and big government as derived from “the Enlightenment belief that man is a rational being who can use his reason to create a better world.” Conversely, social conservatives claim that the Bible teaches, through the stories of Genesis, that man is a fallen creature whose reason is corrupted by his own sin. Through this paradigm, social conservatives assert that perfect and rational policies created by mortals, even those elected to represent the people, are unattainable. Therefore, “limited government is a necessity.”

Furthermore, social conservatives share with fiscal conservatives a great reverence for the Founding Fathers, who designed the Constitution strategically to limit the accumulation of power in one person or branch of government.

Social conservatives look disdainfully at efforts that seek to unravel the checks designed in the Constitution, and to expand radically the power of the federal government to dictate the natural order of society. As I discuss in further detail below, marriage for social conservatives is: defined as a union between one man and one woman; and a divinely inspired concept derived directly from Genesis 2:24, “It was God himself who united a man and a woman in marriage.” For this reason, social conservatives view the efforts of government to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act (1996), as well as the efforts by the California Supreme Court to rule judicially on the legality of Proposition 8, as situations of “imperfect men” redefining a Biblical institution and expanding egregiously the boundaries within which government can act in the future. Similarly, social conservatives view the
allowance of abortion rights by the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as the allotment of federal funding for Planned Parenthood and other similar agencies, as attempts to overrule the fundamental laws of God, specifically, the Sixth Commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.”

Inevitably, the social conservative philosophy will remain theoretically counterintuitive for many Americans. However, from a Biblical perspective, the calls by social conservatives for limited government appear rational and aligned congruously with the views of their fiscal conservative contemporaries.

The Protection of Marriage and the Endurance of a Free Society

Given their intense desire to shield the laws of God from inappropriate interpretation by man, social conservatives fight tenaciously for the protection of traditional marriage between a man and woman, based on their conviction that the time-honored social and legal norms related to such provide decentralized, self-sovereign units of cooperation without significant government intrusion.

Elaborating on this belief, Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, a scholar at the Heritage Foundation, asserts “it is simply not possible to have a low-impact government in a society with no social norms about family structure, sexual behavior, and childrearing…” because, inevitably, the state will feel the responsibility “to provide support for people with loose or nonexistent ties to their families.”

Faith in the “Invisible Hand” of Smith and God

The faith placed by fiscal conservatives in Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” that regulates the nature of markets is strikingly similar to the reliance of social conservatives on the “invisible hand” of God in providing a prosperous society. The overlap of the two “faiths” has proven pivotal to Republicans in their demands for the simplification of the tax code, limits on union activism, and decreased international and domestic trade regulations. Specifically, since the New Right era, conservatives have developed a capacity to integrate seamlessly a moral dimension in their calls for an unregulated market, where people endowed “with a nearly inexhaustible capacity to provide something
of value” can “create and trade goods and services freely” to improve their own lives while “promoting the happiness and satisfaction of those around [them].” Accordingly, in the minds of conservatives, “mere selfishness” and evil intentions to better oneself at the expense of others in the marketplace are punished “naturally” and severely, as demonstrated by the bankruptcies of companies, such as Lehman Brothers and General Motors.

A Right to Life in the Marketplace and at Conception

Conservatives have been lambasted historically for their perceived “extreme paranoia” of any government activity. While some of the critiques are unjustified and hyperbolic, there is a certain veracity in the characterization of conservatism as a philosophy promotive of the superiority of the individual over the central state. Accordingly, conservatives see scant difference between their arguments favoring a free market and those advocating a universal right to life, as both matters relate inherently to individuals’ rights to pursue happiness. Specifically, for Congressman Paul Ryan, the stance of the Republican Party on the economy and on abortion are both necessary in promoting a “system of natural liberty.” As such, individual rights to make free decisions should not simply be confined to the marketplace, but also at the instance of conception. Therefore, the only role government theoretically possesses, is in “maintaining the rule of law that makes all of this possible.” However, in the minds of a majority of conservatives, the landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to grant national access to abortion in Roe vs. Wade not only violated the Sixth Commandment, but served to “disqualify” a whole category of human beings” from the right to life, while providing government with the unlimited power to decide who can be protected.

An “Indivisible” Relationship

Ultimately, conservatives see a number of issues promoted by Republicans as fitting naturally into the social and fiscal framework defined by Party philosophy. While members of various factions of the Republican Party do not celebrate God or Adam Smith with equal degrees of intensity, they are
unified theoretically in their yearning for a society that values personal responsibility and a limited
domain of government.\textsuperscript{249} Despite arguments to the contrary, the fiscal-social components of the
Republican Party platform are not an ill-conceived menagerie of policies. Rather, conservatism should
be considered a pyramidal philosophy, where economic and social issues mesh for the purpose of
maintaining a strong and enduring American identity. As was the case with optimistic supporters
during the New Right era, contemporary conservatives continue to have faith that the growth of the
free market that built this nation hinges fundamentally on a strong American culture rooted in the
existence of sovereign families, churches, and civil institutions.\textsuperscript{250}
PART FOUR:
“A House Divided… Cannot Stand”: The New Right in the 21st Century
I. Time to Throw Out the Rosaries? The Fair Weather Fans…

In a recent New York Times editorial titled, “Less Religion Equals More Votes,” political analyst, Carrie Sheffield, expressed her “disturbance” with the Republican Party’s “harsh religious parlance,” a tone she feels is profoundly out of touch with the increasingly secular values of the Millennial Generation. Elaborating, she contends that, in order for the Republican Party to remain relevant electorally, it must sever its ties to “theocracy,” drop the religious rhetoric, and mute the polarizing pro-life argument—a position with which she believes a majority of Americans disagree. However, Sheffield’s assertions, and other analogous admonitions, ignore the philosophical dependency of social and fiscal conservatism that led to the successful generation of the New Right majority in the 1970s. Secondly, Sheffield overlooks the appeal of “faith,” “family,” and “freedom” within contemporary society. Certainly, political history is marked with ebbs and flows of party popularity. Since their creation, both the Democratic and Republican parties have exhibited tremendous malleability in adapting to shifting demographic, cultural and economic winds in order to remain viable in the national sphere. However, the radical modification that Sheffield and others demand would not only be disastrous for Republicans electorally, given that white “born-again” evangelicals made up 26 percent of the national electorate and nearly 44 percent of the Republican electorate in 2012, but would undermine the fundamental core of conservatism.
II. Validating the Marriage: The Symbiotic Benefits for the Republican Party and the Christian Right

The embrace of social conservatism and, more broadly, the Christian Right majority has been profound for the Republican Party. As Williams claims, prior to the “New Right transformation” in the 1970s, the GOP was a “minority party” that had to rely on “siphoning votes from Democrats” each election in order to amass a simple majority. During that time, the increasingly prominent Christian coalition, which promised a return to “tradition” and “family,” amassed a widespread and diverse following that included Southwest entrepreneurs and Libertarians, Southern fundamentalists, Bible Belt evangelicals, Northeastern blue-collar workers, and newly transplanted West Coast suburban families. Following the alignment of Republicans with the Christian Right, the Party moved swiftly and decidedly from a regional establishment to a national brand. Critically, the varied social and fiscal dimensions that were woven seamlessly into the Republican Platform initially by the Reagan Campaign, offered the possibility of “restoring the nation’s identity through politics.” Ultimately, it has been this belief in the potential of the marriage between the Republican Party and the Christian Right that has led such diverse constituencies to remain committed to the Party over the long term.

A Boon for the Republican Party

Contemporary leaders of the Christian Right movement, such as Tony Perkins, President of the Family Research Council, and Ralph Reed, former Executive Director of the Christian Coalition and current Director of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, admit readily that Republican leaders have not always delivered on their promises to support morally-based legislation, such as that related to the adoption of a federal human life amendment and to the ability for states to sanction prayer in public schools. However, this constituency continues to affirm its allegiance to the GOP, based on the historical pledge of the New Right platform to forever speak for family values, and the basic philosophical promise of conservatism: the liberty and human dignity of the individual.
these pillars have been the central catalysts supporting the modern-day efforts of New Right Christian organizations, such as the Moral Majority, Religious Roundtable, and the Christian Coalition, to fulfill their original objectives set forth in the 1970s:

1. To get conservative Christians to participate in politics;
2. To bring them into the Republican coalition;
3. To elect social conservatives to public office.\(^\text{263}\)

Accordingly, the above organizations have launched the careers of a number of prominent “social conservative” Republicans at national, statewide, and local levels since the 1970s.\(^\text{264}\) Furthermore, such self-identified social conservatives, who, according to the *Washington Post* and *Mother Jones* magazine, make up the greatest proportion of Republican seats in state legislatures across the country, have been far more vocal and have achieved greater success than their Washington counterparts in promoting a culturally conservative agenda.\(^\text{265}\) For example, after Republicans gained a majority in Wisconsin’s legislature in 2010, conservatives placed tremendous pressure on Governor Scott Walker to oppose the state’s expansion of programs providing free birth control to low-income individuals and youth.\(^\text{266}\) In the same year, the Republican-led state legislature in Kansas put forth legislation barring private insurance companies from covering abortions in their health plans.\(^\text{267}\) Ultimately, given the Republican Party’s disproportionate control of state legislatures (Republicans control 27 state legislatures; Democrats control 17; five are split; and Nebraska’s legislature is officially non-partisan), Democrats fear that the GOP may push forth controversial social measures related to abortion, birth control and same-sex marriage at local levels that would have difficulty passing in Congress.\(^\text{268}\)

**Electoral Loyalty**

The Christian Right’s sterling voting record over the last four decades serves as a testament to their commitment to conservatism.\(^\text{269}\) As Clyde Wilcox author of *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*, reports, the level of voter turnout among self-identified “New Christian Right activists” rose from 61 percent to 66 percent between 1972 and 1976, with further
escalation to over 70 percent during the 1980 and 1984 Presidential Elections.\textsuperscript{270} To this day, Republican strategists consider such voters to be among the “most loyal” white Republican voting constituency in the nation.\textsuperscript{271} Elaborating on this characterization, Barone of American Enterprise Institute, notes that, although a number of Christians flowed to the Republican Party in the mid-1970s, there existed a sizable holdout of religious voters in 1976 who remained supportive of Governor Carter, a Southern Baptist from Georgia. However, this constituency would eventually feel betrayed by the “watered-down” Christianity espoused by Carter, including his support for the Equal Rights Amendment and official adoption of a pro-choice platform during the 1976 Democratic National Convention.\textsuperscript{272} According to Barone, as a result, the final coalitions of Christians would transfer their allegiances permanently to the Republican Party in the 1980 Presidential Election.\textsuperscript{273} Consequently, in the 1980, 1984 and 1988 presidential elections, analysts witnessed an unprecedented surge in religious activism for the GOP, with white self-declared Christian Right activists favoring the Republican candidate by a margin of ten points higher than any other white constituency.\textsuperscript{274} Over the next decade, this support continued to expand, with Christian Right voters supporting presidential candidates George H.W. Bush and Robert Dole by nearly a three-to-one margin among white voters in 1992 and 1996, respectively.\textsuperscript{275} Moreover, despite the dire predictions voiced by observers regarding the strength of the Christian Right constituency following the Clinton Administration, such voters remained resilient into the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.\textsuperscript{276} In fact, the evangelical proportion of the total Republican vote rose from 33 percent to over 40 percent between the first and second terms of the George W. Bush Administration.\textsuperscript{277} Even in 2008, with the more moderate Senator John McCain on the presidential ticket, white Christians comprised 40 percent of the total Republican vote, and supported McCain over Obama by nearly a 2-to-1 margin.\textsuperscript{278} Within the statistics, “born-again evangelicals” favored McCain over Obama by 47 points.\textsuperscript{279} However, the most convincing refutation of the alleged demise of the Christian Right occurred during the 2012 Presidential Election. Despite a lower turnout among all conservative voters, evangelicals represented 26 percent of the total electorate (a three percentage point
increase from 2004), and voted overwhelmingly in favor of Governor Romney over President Obama (78 percent versus 21 percent, respectively). More so, President Obama actually lost support from evangelical voters since his 2008 victory, when he received votes from 26 percent of this constituency.

**Legislation Validated Morally—The Gift of Religious Rhetoric**

More critical to the Republican Party than the loyal Christian voter turnout has been their ability to integrate compelling moral-based arguments in support of conservative legislation—an opportunity that Democrats have failed consistently to adopt. As a prime example, Republicans in 1994 were able to derail the momentum President’s Bill Clinton gained during his first term, by offering Americans the values-oriented, though controversial, “Contract with America.” The essence of the “Contract” is believed to have been the manner by which its chief proponents, House Republicans Larry Hunter, Newt Gingrich, Robert Walker, Richard Armey, Bill Paxon, Tom DeLay, John Boehner and Jim Nussle, were able to personalize the issues at stake for the average family, while offering Americans a vivid contrast to Clinton’s big-government agenda. Employing the “New Right framework,” welfare spending and other liberal entitlement programs were demonized by Republicans as responsible for the breakdown of the family unit. Similarly, rising national crime rates were assailed as precursors to the long-term implosion of civil society; and the bloating bureaucracies under the Clinton Administration were projected to lead to the undermining of non-profit organizations and churches. Rallying fiercely behind such forceful messages, Christian organizations followed the lead of House Republicans by issuing a complementary treatise, the “Contract with the American Family,” which served to reinforce the perception that the GOP was strongly committed to the sovereignty and protection of the American family. The platforms meshed brilliantly to catalyze an unprecedented mobilization of Christian voters in the 1994 Midterm Congressional Elections, which enabled Republicans to gain the majority in both houses for the first time since 1952. Most
impressively, the morally uplifting alternative from Republicans ignited a growing bipartisan skepticism among Americans of the value of Democratic measures related to entitlement programs, corporation regulation, and taxes.  

Wise, President Clinton sensed the profound influence of such arguments, and was forced to alter severely the policies he outlined during his 1996 State of the Union speech and subsequent presidential campaign.
III. Compassionate Conservatism: Reagan Redux?

The power of “moral messaging” may have been exemplified best by the “compassionate conservative” campaign conducted by President George W. Bush in 2000. In the eyes of many observers, including political commentator, George Will, the speeches, policies, and outlook of Bush harkened to the governing philosophies of Reagan. Similar to Reagan, Bush jump-started his campaign with a platform that featured ten explicit references to faith-based agenda items. Nonetheless, as Will observes, the lofty religious rhetoric endured well beyond the campaign, as the new president did not merely pander to the evangelicals… he promoted their causes with the conviction of a true believer—Bush [was] the religious right.

With an innate ability to infuse a moral rationale into a number of his policies and directives, Bush embedded himself between “Gingrich ‘revolutionaries’” and self-proclaimed “moderates.” Recognizing early the shifting demographic landscape, including a surge in the Hispanic population, the coming of age of Millennials, and a new social justice ethos among younger evangelical voters, Bush launched the platform of “compassionate conservatism,” a revolutionary shift in a formerly sluggish Republican agenda. According to Rove, Bush’s key campaign advisor, and Gingrich, it was time to moderate the “leave me alone” attitude of the GOP with the genuine recognition that there are instances where government has the responsibility to assist those in need. With explicit reference to the onerous plights of single mothers, aspiring immigrants, and those “down on their luck,” and declaring that “when somebody hurts, government has got to move,” Bush motivated a new coalition of voters, including Hispanics, left-leaning evangelicals and youth, along with the traditional conservative constituencies, to create a 21st century version of the “Moral Majority.”

Importantly, Bush’s connections to Christianity were the strongest of any Republican president since Reagan. Shortly following the one-year anniversary of his first term, Bush established through
executive order the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, dedicated to directing federally-funded social services to regional faith-based and community organizations in order to address more effectively the specific needs of local individuals. In addition to appointing more evangelicals to cabinet positions than any of his predecessors, Bush consulted regularly with prominent Christian Right leaders, such as James Dobson and Richard Land. Yet in the eyes of his loyal Christian following, Bush’s most outstanding achievements related to his active support for social conservative legislation related to abortion, sex education, and family planning.

Inevitably, the tight Christian connections and faith-based initiatives between 2000 and 2004 allowed Bush to benefit substantially from the grassroots mobilization of Christian Right voters in both the midterm elections and his second presidential campaign. In 2000, Bush won 74 percent of the evangelical vote and 84 percent of the vote from “regular church attendees.” In 2004, he commanded an even larger margin of such constituencies. Strikingly, Bush’s “compassionate conservative” platform garnered support from a substantial number of traditionally Democratic voters including an astounding 40 percent of the Hispanic vote in 2004, an unprecedented achievement in Republican electoral history.

The Flickering Glow of the New Right Platform

Explaining his actions through moral paradigms, Bush spoke with Americans, not at them, in a straightforward and humble manner about the importance of family, tradition, patriotism, and faith. The often cited “Bush tax cuts” for all income brackets were not framed as critical for enhanced corporate viability, but rather as means by which parents could spend less time at work and more time with their families. Relatedly, rampant government expansion and regulations were not labeled as impediments to long-term fiscal growth, but rather as encroachments on the sovereignty of the American family. Cutbacks to entitlement programs and welfare reform measures were validated by the conviction that local churches and private organizations—-not a distant federal government---
should be primarily responsible to aid needy citizens. Simultaneously, Bush did not cling stubbornly to a limited government platform. Instead, he challenged the status quo of conservative policies by embracing an ethos of “social justice” and “looking out for each other.” Specifically, in recognizing that, in the name of Christianity, there are many things the state should provide, such as amnesty for illegal immigrants, increased funding for education, and reliable disability benefits, Bush defied rather shockingly the traditional Republican establishment.

A Lesson Republicans Ignored

Not surprisingly, criticism of the Bush Administration rages wildly on the Left. However, the scrutiny that Bush received from Republicans has also been strikingly severe. On one hand, a number of neo-conservatives bellow loudly at any comparison between Bush’s “compassionate conservative” platform and the policies of Reagan. Concomitantly, agitated Libertarian and orthodox conservative wings of the Republican Party complain vociferously that Bush’s domestic policies presented a “philosophical surrender to liberal assumptions about the role of government.”

With Republicans still bemoaning the 2012 Election results, I assert confidently that Bush has something to teach the next generation of Republican leaders. In 2000, Bush campaigned on topics that are associated traditionally with a liberal platform: education, healthcare, immigration, and poverty. Addressing these issues with the same vigor and command that Republicans project on foreign policy and taxes, Bush sparked a newfound belief that the GOP could care about the problems faced by average Americans— not just those of the venture capitalists and entrepreneurs. According to The New York Times political editorialist, Ross Douthat, Bush portrayed himself successfully as a staunch advocate of “pro-market populism,” which allowed him to be seen as an enemy of the “‘bigness on Wall Street and in Washington alike,’” and a committed fighter for the “simple soul who goes to work every day.” Though his presidency was marred by the economic recession and the conflicts in the Middle East, I believe the philosophical principles of New Right conservatism reemerged clearly
through his substantive policies like the “Compassionate Capital Fund,” a national fund devoted to addressing neighborhood inequality by providing assistance to small grassroots agencies (faith and non-faith based) that had historically failed to qualify for federal support; as well as through his decisions to extend federal aid towards “centrist-minded initiatives,” which included $450 million to address the needs of children of prisoners, $600 million to treat drug addicts, $1.2 billion for hydrogen-powered car development, and $10 billion in new funds to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. As such, it is time to focus less on Bush’s “stray from conservatism” and to recognize instead his “Reaganesque” willingness to bear the risks of revitalizing the formerly dormant philosophical components of the Republican Party platform. Importantly, I am convinced that contemporary Republicans should be following the lead of Bush, by extending Reagan’s New Right platform into the 21st century, with laser-like aim on the 2014 Midterm Congressional Elections.
IV. Reversion to the “Party of Hoover”: Values and Social Conservatism Fade during the Recession

Unfortunately, the reemergence of New Right conservatism under Bush ended abruptly in the final years of his second term, as the nation was jolted by extraordinary fiscal concerns.\textsuperscript{314} However, even as the federal deficit exploded, Wall Street imploded, and the housing bubble burst, there was a fleeting moment of opportunity for Republicans to transcend the crisis calmly and to offer Americans a reassuring message of hope and growth.\textsuperscript{315} Instead, conservative politicians panicked and reverted to the “crisis management” tendencies of the Hoover era. Subsequently, as the November 2008 Elections approached, the majority of Republican candidates eschewed social conservative and moral messages in favor of pontificating on topics they believed Americans wanted to hear about: economic growth and job creation. Sensing an opening, then Senator Barack Obama and a cast of Democrats utilized a number of soothing platitudes and reminders that “we are all in this together” in their campaign speeches and rallies.\textsuperscript{316}

Specifically, the lackluster presidential campaigns of Republican candidates Senator McCain in 2008 and Governor Romney in 2012 sent a strong message to Americans that the Party lacked dimension beyond its fiscal focus, and was unwilling to look beyond their charts and statistics to connect to a wider constituency.\textsuperscript{317} Seeking to distance themselves from the Bush “stigma,” including terminating all ties to “compassionate conservatism,” the two Republican presidential candidates allowed internal and public polling, which suggested during both campaign cycles that the overwhelming majority of Americans still viewed the economy as their “top concern,” to dictate the content of their platforms.\textsuperscript{318} As such, they would intensify their emphasis of the tried Republican issues, such as unemployment, tax reform, and regulations, at the expense of offering conservative solutions to emerging crises related to the environment, education, immigration and poverty, all of which have become increasingly prime concerns of the average middle-class American family.\textsuperscript{319}
Relatedly, fearing that becoming embroiled in the abortion and gay marriage debates would deflate the significance of their economic agendas, McCain and Romney avoided conspicuously all contact with evangelical and social conservative groups.320
V. Romney’s Critical Stumble: Ignoring the Grassroots

Though McCain amassed a sizable majority of evangelical and social conservative support on Election Day 2012, the Romney Campaign failed miserably in engaging meaningfully this group of voters upon whom Republicans have relied heavily since the New Right era.\textsuperscript{321} Elaborating on this point, Heritage Foundation scholars cite Romney’s refusal to harness the grassroots antagonism generated by the Tea Party, whose activism proved to be a game changer for Republican candidates in the 2010 Midterm Congressional Elections, as a fundamental reason for his poor electoral showing in critical swing states, such as Ohio and Florida.\textsuperscript{322} Though critics are quick to brand the Tea Party as a fringe, right-wing movement, this coalition, which fuses together a diverse collection of evangelicals, social conservatives, Independents and Libertarians, resembles strikingly the Christian Right movement of the 1970s. Formed as a counteroffensive to the raging economic and cultural liberalism of the prior decade, eventually, the Christian Right identified their desired public platform and philosophical ally in the Republican Party.\textsuperscript{323} With a fast-forward of nearly forty years to 2009, following the proliferation of liberal policies under President Obama during his first year in office, and the apparent reluctance of Republicans to take a stand against him, frustrated fiscal, social, and religious conservatives locked arms with Independents to demand accountability from their elected representatives.\textsuperscript{324} Following the example set by New Right organizations, activists of what would later be known as the Tea Party, issued a simple set of demands, that included: a balanced federal budget; the cessation of all abortion funding; a simplified tax system; the resurgence of morality in the classroom; and legislation tied strictly to the Constitution.\textsuperscript{325}

Due to the straightforward rationality of the Tea Party message, Americans of varying backgrounds, faiths, and ideologies were attracted to a movement that they believed could translate their economic and cultural concerns into political power.\textsuperscript{326} Impressively, the rapid “incubation” period thrust the Tea Party boldly onto the national stage, in a fashion also reminiscent of the Christian
Right in the 1970s. As a testament to the movement’s influence, just as some of their GOP predecessors, such as Congressman Phil Crane and Senator Paul Laxalt, assumed the social conservative mantle in 1978 and 1980, a number of Republican candidates in 2010 identified themselves eagerly as “Tea Party conservatives.”

Clearly, the Democratic Party was fearful of the resurgence of grassroots conservatism, as the immediate activism of the Tea Party translated readily into electoral power during the 2010 Midterm Congressional Elections. In what was described as a “Red November” by conservatives, and as a “shellacking” by President Obama, Tea Party candidates won 14 gubernatorial positions, six Senate seats, and 28 of the 63 House seats won by Republicans, propelling the GOP to take the majority.

Remarkably, according to the 2010 exit polls, 40 percent of the electorate nationwide was supportive of the Tea Party movement (31 percent was opposed), suggesting that the populist messages espoused by its candidates had resonated deeply with Americans of many backgrounds. Ironically, despite the fact that the Republican Party refused to align itself officially with the Tea Party cause, it benefited tremendously from the association, empowering Republican and conservative caucuses in Congress to oppose more aggressively subsequent legislation advanced by President Obama. With such a forceful boost of confidence at the time, many observers predicted an overwhelming Republican electoral sweep in the 2012 Elections.

**History Repeats Itself---But Republicans Were Not Paying Heed**

The apparent congruency between the origins, platform, and immediate effectiveness of the Christian Right and Tea Party movements is rather astounding. However, the reaction by the Republican Party to each movement was radically different. In the 1970s, courageous Republican strategists, including Weyrich, Viguerie, Morton Blackwell, Howard Phillips and Terry Dolan, and, of course, rising conservative stars, notably Reagan, embraced the grassroots movement open-mindedly, realizing that the increasingly beleaguered American populace yearned for an integrated message of
social and fiscal reform to help ease the uncertainties wrought by the Cold War, stagflation, and the cultural identity crises of the decade.\textsuperscript{331} Forty years later, the Republican Party appears to have lost the nerve to rekindle this spirit of conservatism. Instead, the cautious and repressive orthodoxy of the overarching Republican establishment, has pushed leaders, such as House Speaker John Boehner and Senator McCain, to fault Tea Party members publicly for a lack of discipline and consensus. This condescending attitude proved deleterious to the nascent relationship between grassroots conservatives and the Party, while creating the stark divisions within the GOP that came to the forefront during the 2012 Presidential Election.\textsuperscript{332} On his part, Governor Romney should have ignored the warnings of senior Republicans, and referenced history as proof that an alliance with the grassroots movement and the related promotion of a principled social-fiscal platform would be powerfully magnetic to many Americans. To many observers, it was the Republicans’ election to lose after an unsteady four years under President Obama.\textsuperscript{333} However, while the Obama Campaign reconstructed an active network of followers through creative social media platforms, targeted messages, and rousing speeches, the Romney Campaign effectively dismissed certain constituencies, particularly single women, minorities and youth, feeling confident that it could rely solely on traditional fiscal supporters to emerge victorious with “50 plus 1” percent of Americans. Ultimately, the Romney approach translated into more of the same for the Republican Party: an unimaginative, generic, staid presidential campaign that burned hundreds of millions of dollars on negative advertising, direct mail, scripted “five-point” economic plans, awkward appearances in factories and on farms, and overly sterile speeches on the long-term implications of President Obama’s economic policies.\textsuperscript{334}
PART FIVE: “Brightly Colored—No Pastels”: The Future of Conservatism
I. Moving Forward By Looking Back

Currently, Republicans appear paralyzed, occupying essentially the same position as four years ago following the loss by Senator McCain to then Senator Obama. However, looking more deeply, I believe the present state of the Republican Party reflects the period following the defeat of President Ford by Governor Carter in 1976. Then, as now, Republicans faced changing demographics and a shifting electoral landscape, with severe trepidation about the future viability of conservatism.

In 1976, the uncertainty of a favorable future electoral landscape for conservatives prompted an honest self-appraisal and dialogue about the failures of the Republican Party to connect with the American people. While a conservative philosophy still appeared sound, Republican strategists, such as Weyrich and Vigerie, and social conservatives, such as Schlafly and Bryant, recognized that any theory withers without the lifeblood of a resonant voice. Leaders, such as Reagan, emerged in this era, as well as others later, such as Gingrich, Walker, Paxon, and DeLay, who mounted the congressional “Republican Revolution” during the 1990s, to fight unwaveringly for conservative values.

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Despite brilliant flashes of resilience by the GOP, many individuals in both major political parties believe that the transformation of American demographics and culture will leave conservatism to languish in the past. Democratic strategist, Joe Trippi, expresses a very dismal outlook for conservatives, suggesting that the Republican Party has only two choices going forward: “either to redouble the attacks on big government… or give up and try to build a better welfare state.” In rebuttal, Goldberg, and American Enterprise Institute President and best-selling author, Arthur C. Brooks, assert the following: continuing to bemoan the escalating federal deficit and trying to convince Americans to care that our nation has the highest corporate tax rate of OPEC countries will only serve to confirm the perception that Republicans can only speak in numbers and bottom lines; and trying to
outspend liberals and compete in a “game of whose heart bleeds the most” is an “exercise in futility” that will serve only to drain the country’s fiscal resources at a quicker rate.336

At this critical juncture, the decisions that Republican leaders make now will either reinvigorate the conservative brand for Americans, or hasten the pace at which the Party will be considered a “regional” organization that is out of step with the majority of Americans. With due urgency, I echo the sentiments of Goldberg and Krauthammer that there is no need to “reinvent” or “rebrand” conservatism because the essential structural components are already there.337 Rather, Republicans should move swiftly and purposefully in challenging the skewed version of orthodox conservatism that has erected a wall between policy makers and the average American voter.

To disassemble the wall, a new generation of Republicans must create and deliver an inspiring narrative that addresses the needs, hopes and fears of average Americans and extols the virtues of an integrated social and fiscal conservative bridge to liberty and opportunity. The Republican Party must eliminate the tendency to speak in coded language that expresses an air of conservative exclusivity and indirectly divides the country into income brackets.338 New Right politicians were successful in celebrating the dignity and greatness of all Americans by not simply highlighting the contributions of business owners, but rather by focusing on the day-to-day struggles of immigrants, students, single mothers, and blue-collar factory workers.339 While notable new Republican leaders, such as Senator Marco Rubio, Congressman Allen West, Senator Ted Cruz, and older Republican figures, such as former Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice and Governor Mitch Daniels, have conveyed compelling American “rags to riches” experiences enabled by conservative policies, there are still not enough Republicans able to convince citizens that “I will fight for your dream too, regardless of whether you vote for me or not.”340
II. Extinguishing the Platform Paradox Myth: Reclaiming Social-Fiscal Conservatism

The first and most critical step in revitalizing the conservative message is reclaiming the New Right platform. Specifically, it is essential that conservatives genuinely embrace the natural affinity between economic and social messages, while understanding how such principles inherently connect all wings of the Party. However, in order to make this union clear to the American people, rhetoric alone is not enough—it is essential for conservatives “to practice what they preach.” Therefore, Congressional Republicans must begin proposing innovative grassroots programs modeled after Bush’s Compassion Capital Fund, which could not only serve to offer economic empowerment to local organizations, but could simultaneously offer social and cultural benefits to the surrounding populations. Assessing the post-November 2012 Election landscape, I believe strongly that much of the Republican Party’s infighting stems from misconceived internal and external assessments of the need to alter the “paradoxical” social-fiscal message. The pressure to ignore the historical successes of the New Right movement is heightened when Republicans consider the clamorous voices of Libertarians, as well as of fiscally conservative Millennial voters, who admit that they would be more likely to support the GOP if its “free enterprise” economic message was matched with a “free choice” cultural platform.

The reason Republicans can neither revert to a mono-dimensional fiscal platform nor cave to the mounting pressure to “rebrand” its ideology is simple: economic freedom and an enduring American international identity are forged from a strong civil society, the maintenance of the family unit, and the presence of a values-oriented culture. In the 1970s, New Right leaders recognized that such core principles distinguished the United States from the Soviet Union. Forty years later, the new generation of conservative leaders must realize similarly that these philosophical pillars make America the beacon for the world.
Finding Something Between “All or Nothing”

While I recognize that Republicans tend to relegate “social arguments” to the periphery in order to avoid polarizing debates on abortion and gay marriage, I argue that such issues need not be “all or nothing.” Firstly, to ignore the messages and influence of the Christian Right is foolhardy. No longer dominated by strict fundamentalists, its unofficial leaders, such as Ralph Reed of the Faith and Freedom Coalition and Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, have adopted more inclusive messages in alignment with the values that a majority of Americans consider essential: family; caring for neighbors; and preserving the dignity of life.\textsuperscript{344} As Brooks of American Enterprise Institute advises, Republicans must realize that “defending a healthy culture of family, community and work does not mean imposing an alien ‘bourgeois’ morality on others.”\textsuperscript{345} Simply, there is a need for an open social message that is neither judgmental of lifestyle choices nor exclusive to the upper classes. Therefore, what the Republican Party can do is embrace the promises of law and order, familial stability, and a strong civil society. These ideals appealed to Americans following the radicalized 1960s, and these same ideals can appeal to the population now as our country faces a comparable period of economic and cultural uncertainty.\textsuperscript{346}

Furthermore, it is important to note that the social conservatism expressed during the New Right movement was not limited to issues of marriage and abortion. In fact, social conservatives during this era, exhibited an open-mindedness to connect with individuals based on the shared support of other issues, including education and freedom of speech, which affected the nation’s culture and society.\textsuperscript{347} Therefore, for the Republican Party to regain relevance and attract bipartisan support, it must demonstrate a genuine willingness to better understand alternative lifestyles, new familial arrangements, and the personal decisions of women related to the workplace and abortion. In the November 2012 Election, there were instances for Governor Romney to refute the extreme pro-life positions of a small minority of Republican candidates by stating directly that, as conservatives, “We
believe in the conscience of women and we do not feel that the government should intercede in an abortion in response to rape or assault.”

According to former Democratic Congressman and now Republican, Artur Davis, such clear rationality on this issue could have defused the myth of an intolerant Republican social platform. However, the reluctance of Romney and other Republican candidates to clarify or moderate the conservative message on these issues perpetuated the perception of the Party as “extreme,” “out-of-touch” and, even worse, conducting a “war on women.”

Ultimately, I believe the mishandling of the “marriage” and “abortion” issues by Republican candidates relates to the tendency of the Party to dismiss large populations of voters prematurely, specifically, homosexuals, single females, and college-aged women, based on their perceived “Democratic” social preferences. This mistake was glaringly obvious in the November 2012 Presidential Election, as Romney channeled the majority of his money into advertisements directed to the male small business owner and entrepreneur. Furthermore, as observed by Henry Olsen, Resident Scholar at American Enterprise Institute, the Romney Campaign’s website depicted imagery that all women “wanted to be like Ann,” and that youth and homosexuals would never vote Republican. However, these assumptions are not unique, as the failure to look beyond traditional conservative constituencies has been the comfortable habit of Republican candidates through much of the 20th century in national, state and local elections.

As mentioned earlier, social conservatism need not be confined to single issues. As New Right Republicans demonstrated, the social principles of the Party are broadly applicable to increasing liberty and opportunity for the most vulnerable Americans. School choice, workplace freedom, and entitlement reform—all critical components of the Republican’s platform—should be explained morally as policies aimed at improving the lives of all Americans. Specifically, as former Republican Senator and current President of the Heritage Foundation, Jim DeMint, explained at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), the ability to choose one’s school is a
conservative idea that is aimed specifically at enabling low income, minority students to “escape the shackles of failing public schools.”\textsuperscript{355} Further, the ability of states to offer workers the option of joining or not joining a union is essential to the sovereignty of the individual in making decisions best suited for his or her lifestyle needs. Lastly, the conservative vision of entitlement reform is not founded on limiting access to benefits, but rather on improving the system over the long-term in order to ensure that low income and middle income Americans will have the opportunity to receive their benefits, as well as the ability to control their own health care choices.\textsuperscript{356} More broadly, conservative policies, including the promotion of smaller government, balancing of the federal budget, continuing promotion of fair international trade, and a strong, active foreign policy, are tied inextricably to: prosperity of the individual; protection of the family; and a thriving free society for Americans of all backgrounds, ideologies, religions and lifestyles.
PART SIX:
“A Time for Choosing…”: Conclusion
I. Conservatism is Mean… But Conservatives Don’t Have to Be

Ralph Waldo Emerson declared famously, “There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conservatism… joined with a certain superiority in its fact.”\textsuperscript{357} Even a cursory review of global history identifies periods within which conservative policies have produced stellar economic and cultural successes. If one compares the state-planned economies and cultures of the Soviet Union and of China during the Mao regime against that of the United States during the Cold War, it is understood readily that government “statism” implodes inevitably. A more contemporary example of the drastic shortcomings of socialist-style economies is Greece.\textsuperscript{358}

Using economic data from Columbia University, Brooks claims, “The historical record of free enterprise in improving the lives of the poor both here and abroad is spectacular.”\textsuperscript{359} He elaborates that the continued expansion of international free trade, property rights, the rule of law, and entrepreneurship have resulted in the outstanding 80 percent decrease since 1970 in the number of people in the world living on a dollar or less per day.\textsuperscript{360} Concomitantly, low-income populations in Turkey, Russia, China and other countries with vestigial socialist and communist-style governments have exhibited the least mobility and economic advancement in the world.\textsuperscript{361} Furthermore, as many scholars of international relations attest, the endurance of a free enterprise system in newly democratized nations is a function of a strong civil society, anchored at the grassroots by the existence of families.\textsuperscript{362} At their core, all of the above concepts are inherent to conservative philosophies.

Given its apparent virtues, why have many Republican leaders shunned conservatism in public settings? The answer to the question may lie in the first part of Emerson’s quote: “There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conservatism….” given the tendency of its proponents to focus principally on coldhearted statistics, rather than on the affected people.\textsuperscript{363} By contrast, Democratic Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Bill Clinton were outstanding in their displays of genuine empathy toward the plights of many Americans, while crafting and delivering
meaningful “people-based” narratives to sell their policies. Regardless of the voluminous data confirming the negative economic and societal repercussions of expansive entitlement programs, the above Democratic presidents will be remembered firstly and foremostly as individuals who “cared” about the people they governed.\(^{364}\)

Over the past four years, President Obama used deftly the words, “fairness,” “social justice,” and caring for thy neighbor,” to push through pervasive new entitlement programs, like the Affordable Care Act (2010), known colloquially as ObamaCare.\(^{365}\) Regardless of his motives or the level of conviction behind his statements, President Obama created an indelible image of a leader who “cares for the average American.”\(^{366}\) This powerful perception facilitated the passage of other controversial measures, including the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (2010), the National Defense Authorization Act (2011) and the Race to the Top National Educational Program (2010), and has buffered his administration significantly from the fallout of its economic and foreign policy blunders.\(^{367}\) Nonetheless, there is no greater testament to President Obama’s power of narrative than the results of the 2012 Election, when, for the first time in history, a president in office during a period of national unemployment in excess of 7.8 percent for over 48 consecutive months, won a second term in office.\(^{368}\) For Republicans, this was a devastating blow, especially given the bullish projections of a Romney win from political strategists like Karl Rove and Dick Morris. However, in an honest retrospective analysis, the win by President Obama, a remarkably persuasive orator who continued to speak publicly for the disenfranchised within society, really should not be that surprising. In choosing Governor Romney as the Party’s presidential candidate, the Republicans offered a wealthy technocrat who seemed too comfortable distancing himself from grassroots conservatives while failing to address issues, such as education, immigration and poverty, in ways Americans could understand readily. As a result, what looked to many in advance to be a Republican landslide, became instead, a humiliating defeat.
II. A Second “Time for Choosing”

In diagnosing the failed Romney Campaign, Brooks calls out the “empathy gap” that continues to exist between Democrats and Republicans. In the summer of 2012, Brooks released another New York Times best seller, *The Road to Freedom*, within which he described Republicans as “fighting a losing battle of moral arithmetic.”  

In a number of follow-up discussions, Brooks predicted the Republican loss. Elaborating on these prophecies, he explained that the Party of the last two decades has been overly beset by a sense of complacency and the fear of association with “extreme” social conservatism. Consequently, Republicans have drifted perilously from the principles of the New Right platform back to the bad habits of the early 20th century Grand Old Party. Though the dismal 2012 exit poll data, which revealed that only 33 percent of Americans believed Romney “cares about people like me” and a mere 38 percent said he “cared about the poor,” may be the most recent example of the Republican “moral deficit,” this image problem has persisted (with the brief exception during portions of President George W. Bush’s tenure) since President George H.W. Bush’s infamous 1992 campaign gaffe, when he began a stump speech by reading his stage direction out loud accidentally: “Message: I care.”

Similarly, while many will likely remember the irreparable damage that Governor Romney did to his campaign when he was caught on camera complaining about the “47 percent of Americans who don’t pay taxes,” Republican words and actions over this expanse of time have suggested a similar arrogance. Undoubtedly, the mainstream media is no ally of conservatives, and has played a major role in perpetuating the stereotype of the “old, white, out-of-touch” Republican Party. Nonetheless, as Brooks asserts, “Perception is political reality.” As such, with a number of Republican politicians failing to deviate from generic “money arguments,” it becomes increasingly apparent why the Party has fallen consistently short in generating the appeal and grassroots support that proved so critical to the New Right in the 1970s.
Figuratively, it has been a light-year since Reagan and his New Right contemporaries offered “a time for choosing” to Americans of all backgrounds, socioeconomic classes, and religions. There were two paths: freedom or the status quo. To achieve freedom, Reagan explained patiently, America must have a balanced budget, a strong military, a system of laws, and a culture of morality. Implementing such measures required the “meanness” to which Emerson referred in his commentary. Surely, as the majority of Greeks will attest, it is not fun to: cut entitlements; implement austerity measures; balance the budget; abide by laws; and attempt to reverse a culture of immediate gratification. Unquestionably then, there is a “meanness” and “stark reality” to conservatism. However, as Reagan and others of his time explained to Americans through personal messages and appeals, true liberty and opportunity are achieved with self-sacrifice. Furthermore, as DeMint said at this year’s CPAC, “None of [these] ideas, or policies, or vision, will make any difference,” unless conservatives are willing to stand up and convince Americans that they care about them and will fight for them.

At CPAC, DeMint also highlighted the great urgency for conservatives to send a message that “our ideas work.” Relatedly, Republicans must follow the example of the New Right pioneers, by “telling the stories about real people whose lives have been transformed by conservative policies.” As an example of the conservative policy regarding educational choice, DeMint offers the story of an African-American high school student in Washington, DC, who elevated his reading grade level by three years after being allowed the opportunity to transfer from his troubled public high school to a charter school in the area. Beyond the marked improvement in his reading skills, the young man also became the first in his family to go to college. That is only just the beginning though, as there are a number of such inspirational tales of the opportunities and offerings derived from integrated social and fiscal conservative policies, including: the thousands of formerly unemployed workers in North Dakota, who found good jobs once Governor Jack Dalrymple made the bountiful natural resources of
his state available to help supply the energy needs of the nation; or, the woman in Indiana, who can now afford her daughter’s college tuition since she no longer is forced to pay the compulsory union dues in the state’s factories. However, as DeMint warns, until Republicans embrace conservatism with passion and conviction, the GOP will continue to be perceived as the uncompromising roadblock to Democrats and a monolith Party, ignorant of the desires of the average American. \(^{382}\)

Echoing again the words of DeMint, it was conservatives, not Republicans, who transformed the GOP during the 1970s.\(^ {383}\) Similarly, it was conservatives, not Republicans, who initiated in the 1990s one of the greatest congressional revolutions against a Democratic president. More recently, it was conservatives, not Republicans, who in 2010 channeled the enormous energy of the second greatest grassroots political movement in history.\(^ {384}\) Thus, it is beyond time that Republicans, neo-conservatives, orthodox conservatives, social conservatives, war hawks, and Libertarians recognize the philosophy that bonds them: conservatism. Accordingly, Republicans must: cease the trivial debates on the “balance” between social and fiscal conservatism; end the unproductive litmus tests of which candidate is the “most conservative;” stop blaming the media for its “out of touch” image; and take control of the conservative message by creating and delivering a compelling platform to win the hearts and minds of Americans.

Ultimately, we are witnessing the second critical time in the history of the Republican Party where it must convince Americans that it is not simply the antithesis to the Democratic Party. The philosophical tenets of conservatism are not negotiable. Those who believe otherwise do not faithfully represent the Republican Party. Conservatism is, and will always remain, conservatism. Therefore, now is the time to relearn the lessons of history in order to prove that the social-fiscal platform is not a paradox, but rather a blueprint for the future.
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