



The Free Congress Commentary

The Next Conservatism #45: The Next Conservatism Movement

By Paul M. Weyrich

September 27, 2006

If the next conservatism is to mean anything, it must give birth to a new conservative movement. Ideas on paper do not alone change history. They must be translated into action, and that takes either a movement or a coup. As conservatives, we are not much in favor of coups. So in the next three columns in this series, I want to take a look at the potential for a new conservative movement.

The first question we need to ask is what's already happening? Here, there is a good deal of encouraging news. As I have said many times in this series, the next conservatism is not just about politics. It is about how we live. If we look around the country, we see a growing number of Americans withdrawing from the mainstream materialist, sexualized, Politically Correct Culture and taking their lives and the lives of their families in different directions. Not all of these different directions fit within the next conservatism, but surprisingly many do.

The most obvious example, and a very important part of the next conservative movement, is home schooling. The public schools are one of the main conditioning mechanisms the cultural Marxists use to undermine our traditional culture. Thanks to home schooling, over a million children are now being saved from that evil conditioning. Most of them are instead getting a traditional, and real, education. They are studying the history and reading the literature of Western, Christian civilization. They are learning real skills, like arithmetic and writing and speaking with correct grammar. They have increasing opportunities to go on after their home schooling to colleges and

universities that also offer real educations instead of Political Correctness. All this is an enormous achievement, and it points the way to what the next conservative movement should look like. It is an action that changes the way people live.

Conservatives are comfortable with home schooling because it is a movement we initiated. There are some other movements we did not initiate that I think also fit within the next conservatism. One is the movement to throw out the television, especially in homes with children. We have all seen the active, imaginative children who are raised without television (and computer games) and the sad, brain-dead blobs who have been plopped in front of the TV almost from birth (television now offers programming for two-year olds). Television is the Devil's baby-sitter; it is an easy way to keep children quiet and "entertained" ("entertainment has become America's drug of choice), but it does them great long-term damage. "Kill Your Television" did not start as a conservative slogan, but I think it fits quite well into the next conservative movement.

So does the movement to live what I would call "intensive" instead of "extensive" lives. The intensive life uses fewer things and less resources but uses them more thoughtfully and gets more out of them. Examples of the intensive life range from such small actions as having a family vegetable garden, hanging out the wash instead of using a dryer, cycling and walking to run errands instead of driving and taking the train instead of the car to work (you can read on the train) through establishing an organic family farm that sells its products locally (anyone interested in doing this should see [Farming Magazine](#); you can call them at 800-915-0042). All these actions and many more like them are fundamentally conservative, because they represent a return to the way we used to live, in our grandparents' day. I think there are connections between such actions and the good lives our grandparents led. They also represent a value the current conservative movement seems to have forgotten, namely stewardship. God did not put us here to waste His creation.

Perhaps the way the next conservative movement can begin is to build some bridges among people who, for a variety of reasons and from different backgrounds, are resurrecting the old ways in their own lives. The current culture tells anyone who tries to reject it, "You are

all alone. You cannot possibly succeed. There is something wrong with you.” It is hard for individuals to stand against such assaults. But if individuals are tied in with other people who are doing the same sorts of things, resistance to the dominant culture (which is the old counter-culture) becomes easier. There really is strength in numbers.

The next conservative movement is not just a dream. Aspects of it are already happening. In my next column, I will discuss why the existing conservative movement cannot be a successful vehicle for the next conservatism.

Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation.