

unteers help are white.

"I could go on for hours about the changes that Paul Weyrich saw in his lifetime. But in each, the root change was the same: a change from a cultureless state to a nation, a nation of which the state is only part, where the state stands for traditional Western culture but also stands in it, for that culture is now the guide we all follow in our daily lives and work. Indeed, what a transformation! As grateful

Think of the changes just in Russia—the first halting steps in the late 1980s, the then-daring proclamation of General Secretary Khorbitsky in 1992 that 'I am also a believer' and the restoration of the Russian church, the nationwide free elections in 1994, and the orderly transition to the current democratic constitutional monarchy.

—Paul Weyrich

as I am to live in a nation so transformed, I also envy those who saw it all happen, of whom Paul Weyrich was the last."

The Requiem Divine Liturgy for Mr. Weyrich was sung in Holy Transfiguration Cathedral, McLean, Virginia. The interment will be in Racine, Wisconsin, the funeral party traveling from Chicago in the special car "Dolores" on the recently restored North Shore interurban railway.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Now here is a topic to conjure with, to spur the imagination, to evoke daring thoughts. Put the question to a United States Congressman or—if you can bear the smell of burning incense—a United States Senator, and the tendered utopia will be limited and unsurprising: residence in a large white house on Pennsylvania Avenue, with Filipino help lugging in the drinks (all free!), and scads of secretaries and other factotum barring access to the room the minute you nod off.

Put the question to William F. Buckley, Jr. and he would doubtless speak ardently of an eternal sail overhead, glossily varnished deck beneath one's sneakers, and Bach on one's Walkman always. Galbraith would . . . but there is no Galbraith anymore, is there? In fact, one of the unanticipated conditions creeping steadily upon our time is that there are very few personalities of the left or the right or the intelligent center worthy of note. In an age ravaging for personality it is ceasing to exist even among its egotists.

Why is it that as our communications wizards lust for characters to celebrate there are so few worthy of celebration or even of vituperation?

The question of a favorite utopia to which we might repair grows in exigency with every tick of the clock. The present is bland and stupid beyond the far limits of the tolerable. In place of Galbraith who have the liberals given us? In place of Buckley what bird of paradise will be hatched? Is there anyone around who is truly thoughtful or interesting for more than a season?

Phew, let us flee to a favored utopia. For me that would be the late 18th Century but with air conditioning and 20th Century medical corps. There, in the late 18th Century, with both feet firmly planted on the soil of my Virginia domain, and young American flag fluttering above, tobacco in the field, I would relish the freedom and never feel the insecurity of our present era. No Freudian shrinks would be necessary, for there would be hierarchies made tolerable by that deeply ingrained principle of deference; and if deference frayed and a squire's snooty ways did become oppressive off we could flee to life on the frontier.

For most of us, the 18th Century was a better time on practically all counts. The architecture was more pleasing, for it was effective and it made sense. So was the music and the literature. In the symphonies and the concerti of Mozart and Haydn one finds a grace and a sense of order that appeal to a longing both in the mind and in the soul. (I would be allowed a sufficient number of batteries to drive my compact disc player, else what kind of utopia have we?) Further, the debates about political philosophy were over things that really mattered, not as they are today about things that do not even exist, for instance: the rights of trees and animals and international terrorists. Which reminds me, in the 18th Century debates over political philosophy there was still time to do something about Locke's pernicious conception of rights. Possibly his ideas in this category could have been properly limited once and for all. More likely his writings in this area could have been gathered up and turned into confetti. Most of the bogus rights movements of our time look back to his injudiciously optimistic views of rights, and look where we are now: fanatics are propounding Pickwickian rights at the peril of those basic rights that the Founders added to our Constitution.

Yes, an air-conditioned 18th Century is my favorite utopia. And remember, despite the hokey of People for the American Way, many of the first 13 states had what amounted to established churches. That kept the religious impulse where it belongs, in church. Today the religious impulse throbs in our secular realm, fevering every reform, even many irreligious reforms. In the cool, sober, enlightened celebrations of the 18th Century all such thwarted saints would be in church on Sunday, beholding angels, and infinitely less frustrated than they are today.

William J. Bennett

What would an ideal conservative state look like? The question makes me nervous. I'm not sure the conservative imagination should spend much time contemplating Utopia. Conservatism as I like it is not utopian. It begins not with theoretical worlds, but with a real society. It assesses

human nature not as it might be, but as it is and always has been. And within these limits it relies, for its politics, on a government whose duty is to create a safe, good, and improving society. This government is not perfect. It does not try to be perfect, and is probably much the better for it.

Our Founders understood their task to be the establishment of just such a government. Theirs was a noble and principled enterprise. Hamilton said that the question suggested by our Constitution was nothing less than "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice." He and his colleagues were thoughtful, creative men who sought a government designed to secure liberty.

But they were not fabulists or visionaries. The Federalists scorned men "far gone in Utopian speculation." "Have we not already seen enough of the fallacy and extravagance of those idle theories which have amused us with promises of an exemption from the imperfections, the weaknesses, and the evils incident to society in every shape?" Hamilton asked. "Is it not time to awake from the deceitful dream of a golden age and to adopt as a practical maxim for the direction of our political conduct that we . . . are yet remote from the happy empire of perfect wisdom and perfect virtue?"

So in our clear-eyed realism, modern conservatism operates very much in the spirit of Hamilton and the Founders. And the modern conservative presumption is in favor of the political institutions they created, not against them. But that is not to say that we are uninterested in progress—social, economic, or political. Quite the contrary: we are always interested in pursuing policies that will better rein-

force and encourage the best of our people's common culture, qualities, habits, and values. President Carter, you will recall, ran for reelection promising a government "as good as the American people." The conservative task, on the other hand, is to establish a government that does more than merely hold up a mirror to current reality. Conserva-

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—R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

tives are after a government able to *improve* the conditions of life, a government fully worthy of the nation's respect and trust.

Of course, conservatives will not always agree among themselves about how best to accomplish this goal. I am myself perhaps less likely than some other conservatives to reject strong central government in favor of a minimalist state. To support a strong and aggressive foreign policy in defense of Western freedoms, a powerful federal government seems to me indispensable. And I am not sure that Washington's efforts on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged must necessarily be as self-defeating as they apparently have been in the past. 