

PART 14: REPUBLICAN (CONSERVATIVE) VALUES AND WORLDVIEW

In this part I present the Republican world view as much from their point of view as I can.

Sometimes I use the term "Conservative" here for variety instead of always using "Republican". Please recall what I said above about Republicans not being like original Conservatives and about not using the term "Conservative" wrongly for Republicans.

According to us Conservatives (Republicans), the only possible economy is free market capitalism (you don't need to know kinds of free, market, capitalism, or economy). People own things. People can do what they wish with what they own. People have rights to security in property. People have rights to security in contract. We can look at social life in terms of secure contracts. People buy, sell, hire, rent, lease, make, and consume according to what they desire and have. As a result, the US has the highest level of wealth in material things and services ever in the history of people, and we have what wealth brings with it such as freedom and the arts. People can find almost anything they wish for in whatever amount they wish. We can keep a high quality of life with free market capitalism. Even with inequality, even with inequality that runs in groups over generations, this system is the best that can be reached in any practical way. Small amounts of inequality are a tiny price to pay for the net benefit. Even people in America who suffer by comparison to other groups here do much better than other people in countries and in other systems, even better than the people in supposedly more equal systems such as in France or Canada. We can keep a high quality of life only with free market capitalism. Let us call free market capitalism "business". We have the best possible system of wealth and freedom, and we need to protect it against bad ideas and bad politics.

While Liberal (Democratic Party) ideas sound good and might be good in some ways, inevitably they lead to excess and badness. They appeal to short-term morality that often leads to long-term suffering and even immorality. You have to keep your head firmly grounded in practical reality or you will go astray.

It is possible to imagine "pie in the sky" supposedly better systems as the Communists did until the fall of Russia, and as Socialists still do in the United States. But those systems are not practically reachable. The real world is not like that, human nature is not like that, society is not like that, and none of them can ever be like that. The failure of Communism and of various socialisms is clear proof. The failure of entitlement programs in the United States is clear proof. People need to wake up to reality and they should help with what we've got that really works rather than trying to change it into what doesn't work or improve it into what doesn't work.

The people in the United States who suffer by comparison to well-off groups in the United States do not really suffer in some absolute sense and they do not suffer by comparison to the poor elsewhere. They can get medical care, food for their children, enough shelter, and enough education. All the individuals in so-called disadvantaged groups in the United States who have real talent can find a way to advance. We have long had enough education and other programs to make sure. If people in those groups do not

advance, it is not through lack of opportunity. Even in bad schools, a good student can find teachers and resources to show his-her talent and work ethic.

With a focus on business, America can have all it wants including freedom, security, and more-than-enough fairness. Without a focus on business, America can have nothing. You choose.

America is all about business. Business is what makes America and makes America great (again).

If you participate in business, as owner, financier, maker, worker, consumer, teacher, minister, priest, political leader, athlete, or artist, then you are part of America and its greatness. If you don't chose to participate, you are not fully American and can't be great.

The economy does have some weaknesses and some "holes", and these faults do result in a bit of small endemic unfairness, but nothing we really have to worry about.

On the whole, the economy runs great. Anybody who has any talent, is able bodied and-or able minded, has had a little education, is willing to work, has a half-way decent attitude, and gets along with people this side of killing them, can find work or can find an enterprise, can make it, and can be well on the way to the American Dream. There is no excuse for anyone not to make it. There is no reason why anyone can't get by. Even people who are not very smart and who have a physical issue can make it, and many have.

By "make it" we mean "make it". People need not settle with just getting by. People need not settle for living in an apartment or rental house and paying rent all their lives. People can have a job and make enough to buy a house, buy all the insurance they need, educate their kids, and put by enough to retire comfortably. Nobody needs to really worry.

We need some programs for people who are handicapped enough mentally and physically but there are not too many of those people and so we don't need large programs. Programs that try to help people who are not handicapped only entice able-bodied able-minded people to be lazy and to ruin the system for the rest of us who work hard.

The state should never interfere in the economy and it should never interfere with business. Especially the state should not help groups that want to restrain business such as labor unions. The state cannot defend, finance, or promote those people. The state should never help groups that want to get in the way of business by withholding nature and natural resources. The state should never make us clean our own pollution and the state does not need to make us clean our own pollution because nature does that for us for free.

Although the economy is on-the-whole great, sometimes it does need tuning up. Sometimes it is not humming in boom mode. Sometimes unemployment goes up enough to get people to vote wrongly. In those cases, we should not follow Liberal policies of working with what economists call "demand".

Instead we should follow the tried-and-true way of working through what economists call "supply" or, since Reagan, "supply side". We should work through business. We should do what stimulates business and keeps business stimulated. When business has enough working capital, that is money to invest, it will make things or provide services, and thus provide jobs, and people will buy those things with what they make with their jobs, and everybody will be fine. We should always work through business; we should never work through labor or demand.

The economy will grow on its own if we don't hamper it. If we want the economy to grow faster than that, and to grow ever more continuously, we can keep stimulating business ever more with the same methods. The state should keep in place policies that promote business. . The state should be always on the lookout for ways to help business such as by offering mining concessions, lumbering concession, and building roads.

There is a minor contradiction but nothing to worry about. On the one hand, the economy does just fine without the state and the state should never interfere. We believe in the free market just as the old economists used to say. The state should not support labor or any supposedly disadvantaged group. On the other hand, the state should interfere to help business, and, quite often the state needs to interfere to help. There is unemployment. There are bad jobs. Big firms don't make enough profit. There is not enough money to invest. The interest rates for business loans are too high. But it is best not to look too long at this contradiction. This contradiction is misleading. The point is to keep business going at a fairly brisk pace by whatever means necessary. The jargon about no state interference is not intended to apply to business but is intended to give a secure rationale for suppressing the enemies of business, including, sometimes, the state.

The economy is not intrinsically unfair enough to cause any real problems if people have the right attitude and are willing to work. Even if unemployment and poor employment runs in groups such as by ethnicity (Blacks) or religion (Catholics or Muslims), even if unequal pay runs by gender so women make less than men for comparable work, grouping does not show that the economy is intrinsically unfair. Anybody in those groups could make it if he-she would do what needs to be done, get some education, get some training, develop the right attitude, get a job, work your way up, and find opportunities - man or woman, White or Black, Christian or Muslim. No business person has prejudice against these kinds of people no matter what color or gender. These people are always an asset. They make money for any business and all business knows it. Business will hire all the people who show the right attitude.

If anybody can make it, and some people don't make it, then that can be only because they have a bad attitude. If the bad attitude runs in a group such as an ethnic, religious, or gender group, then that whole group will have trouble and should have trouble. It is not the fault of business, and it is not the fault of people who do work hard and do make it, and we should not be forced to make up for their bad attitude and bad acts.

If the people in the group with a bad attitude cause people outside the group, cause business firms, to judge the otherwise good people in the group, the people who otherwise try hard, to judge not by

individual talent and effort, to judge not according to individual merit, that kind of judgment it is not the fault of business firms or people. You can't judge every apple individually. If a lot of apples in a barrel are bad, you throw away that whole barrel and go to the next. Moving on is not prejudice against those apples or any apples. It is rational decision making. It is rational business practice. If a group with a bad attitude doesn't want its good people to be assessed according to the generally low group standard, then that group has to change the bad attitude of the group as a whole, and it has show clearly to the whole country that it has changed. If not, business firms always can, and should, go to another barrel. If business can't rely on Blacks, it can and should go to Hispanics and Muslims. There is nothing morally or financially wrong with that decision. Other people make it about business firms all the time.

Let's get clear about jobs. These days, people need a job to make a living, and people need good jobs to raise their kids right, live safely, and live old age decently. They need secure jobs that don't come and go. Where do you think good secure jobs come from? Do you really think government programs make jobs? Maybe, maybe, more people work for small business firms than big business, but, in fact, secure good jobs are found in big business firms. Where do you think people go to look for good secure jobs? They don't go to some kid in a garage with an app. They go to Google, Microsoft, Intel, and AMD. If you really want Americans to do well, you have to make sure big business does well. If you want big business to do well, you had better follow the policies, do the acts, and not do the acts, that make big business do well. Why do you think people would rather go to a big university with a good name or to a college with a good name instead of to a cheaper local community college that actually offers a better quality of education? You had better do what makes big business grow and so creates the jobs that make people happy and get votes. You had better not do what hurts big business, loses jobs, and loses votes. You had better pay attention to what we say here.

Beware of programs that help people who won't look for work. Those programs enable bad attitudes and entice otherwise decent people into bad attitudes. They are another case of supposedly good ideas gone bad. Look at the evidence. We have had decades of welfare and Affirmative Action, and nothing is any different. The fact that nothing is different cannot be evidence that the economy is intrinsically flawed. It has to be evidence that programs don't work. It has to be evidence for the bad attitude of the people on the programs and enticed by the programs.

Business people know that it is cheaper to keep a person on welfare or unemployment insurance than to keep him-her in prison. Still, to have even some people a lot of welfare and unemployment insurance sets a bad example and it leads to all those entitlement programs ballooning far beyond their original projected costs. Then, in the long run, it might be cheaper to keep a few more people in prison so a lot fewer people go on welfare.

The programs, and other bad Liberal policies, distort and shrink the whole economy. Because the whole economy is smaller than it should be, there is unemployment where there should be full employment, and bad jobs where there should be good jobs. Programs and Liberal policies actually do the opposite of what is intended. They take away jobs from people with a good attitude who otherwise could get jobs, and make the people with good attitudes and jobs pay for the people with bad attitudes and a free ride

from the state. Taking away the programs would actually create jobs for people with good attitudes. Besides directly stimulating business, that is the only way to create real jobs.

In the same way, taking capital away from business distorts and shrinks the economy. It makes fewer business firms, small business firms, and so fewer and worse jobs. Making sure that business has all the capital (money) that it needs is the other best way to make prosperity and jobs. It is the best way to make prosperity and jobs. Any program that takes capital away from business actually takes away good jobs and all jobs.

The best way not to take capital from business is not to tax business. Think about it. Business people do not sit on their profits like a dragon on a hoard of gold and they really don't spend it all on foolishness such as cocaine and prostitutes. Business people reinvest. They make their business bigger. They start new businesses. They work like driven dogs. They create jobs. They create good jobs. If we didn't take profit at all it would be better than to tax it even at a low rate. The lower the rate of tax on profit is, the better.

We can go further. Business can always use more money to invest. Give business low interest rates and so make it easy to borrow and invest. Give business government loans. Give business free money as in Japan and China. Let the state take on some of the big risk for business and so make the general climate of investment better as when the state builds roads, guarantees a big stadium, or gives tax breaks to firms that invest in the local area. Take money from people not likely to use the money for investment, or not likely to use it well, and give the money to business. The upper middle and upper classes invest their income while the poor and working class do not. So, tax the poor and working class to the extent they can stand it, without making them insecure or making it hard for their children to get along, and give that money to business. A sales tax does this job without seeming to do it. It taxes the poor and working class without taxing business, so the state gets the revenue it needs without taxing business, the business tax can be less, and business can have more profit to invest, grow the economy, and make good jobs.

Another way to invest in business by taking money away from people who don't use it well is to invest in a big military. Nobody can argue with that, especially the working class who traditionally support a big military.

Another way is to go into debt. As long as the borrowed money is used for business, and as long as the common taxpayers repay most of the debt through inflation and increased taxes, then it is like a tax increase on them but not on business.

Mike says: As a matter of fact, usually the US economy is awash in capital (money) and it rarely faces a shortage of money to invest. Interest rates are never low enough to make business people happy but they never really face a shortage of money. Business does not need more money so as to invest, grow, and make good jobs. Business needs better sense and better institutions. Republicans reply: Mike doesn't know what he is writing about. There is never enough money for investment. If there was

always enough money, interest rates would not be so high. We would not have to pay people interest to put money in the bank. Business can always use more money. Business always uses the money that it gets to invest to grow the economy to make good jobs. Mike says Republicans are wrong.

Republicans say: What business does through its masses of capital and constant investment never distorts, harms, or shrinks the economy. It never causes bad investment in bad enterprise. It never over-extends and so invites retrenchment and recession. It never leads to fewer jobs and bad jobs. It always and only does good and makes good jobs.

Mike says: Once, referring to the events in the story just below, President Kennedy said "A rising tide floats all boats". Since then, that slogan has become a Republican highest holy mantra. It might be correct about boats but wrong about economies. A pie with holes, missing pieces, and rotting pieces is the same pie if all we do is make it bigger and don't fix the problems. A bigger pie with unemployment and bad jobs is still a pie with unemployment and bad jobs, and it has bigger gaps between winners and losers too.

Mike says: In the 1960s, following LIBERAL advisors, President Kennedy finagled Congress into lowering taxes although America faced a mild recession. He put more money in the hands of CONSUMERS, not business, thus stimulated buying, indirectly stimulated business, and so made the whole economy larger for a while. That, in turn, would result not in a loss of overall revenue to the federal government but in steady revenue. This LIBERAL plan seemingly worked. The US recovered from the recession and the US federal government actually gained more revenue. The recovery would have happened anyway, and the gain in revenue likely was due more to the recovery than the tax change; the tax change likely was ineffective at best; but that part of the story never surfaces. As far as I know, even with the Reagan tax plan, never again has the federal government gained more revenue from lower taxes. Almost always, it goes further in debt, as it did under Reagan and it has since Reagan. For Republicans, this episode from Kennedy is a story from the Bible. According to Republicans, taxes are always too high no matter how low; the economy always grows; lower taxes always help the economy grow; and we always get more total state revenue when we lower taxes. So the greatest revenue for the state would be gained if we had no taxes at all. Neither Republicans nor Democrats give any thought to the optimum level of taxes not for a robust economy, nor for total state revenue over the long haul, nor for the best way to take taxes from various groups. Ouch.

We Republicans are winning the battle to recruit those families that are able to get and hold secure jobs, or at least winning the battle for families who are able and who get enough wealth and security to have political clout as well. We have to convince them we are their best chance to get it and hold it, even if they are in a slight minority in the nation as a whole. We have done that and we can continue to do it.

We don't have to care about any families that are not likely to get enough security and surplus wealth and power, or not likely to hold enough security and surplus wealth and power. No matter how many of them there are, if we hold enough successful families, then they cannot overcome us. We don't care about them in any other way.

The ethnic and religious affiliation of the families that we want does not matter. They can be White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Protestant, Roman Catholic, or, these days, Hindu. It does not matter if the heads of the families are gay or straight. It does not matter if there are single parent, dual parent, or three or more. It does not matter if they are led by men or women. It does not matter if they are working class, white collar, pink collar, or high-end suits. What matters is they are part of a self-sustaining economic and political pattern in which they help us get and hold other similar families. As a matter of historical drift, in America, it is White families, with a married man and woman as heads, nominally headed by the man, of Christian or Jewish faith, previously Protestant but now Catholic or Protestant, who formed this base in the past and so can form a base in the future for us. In the not-too-distant future, gay people, gay families, Hispanic Catholics, South Asian Hindus, and likely some Muslims, will be the right kinds of families, and we have to find ways to appeal to them too. We think we can do this as long as the White Christians don't get in the way too much.

Democrats (Liberals) appeal to families that are not likely enough to get and hold enough security and wealth. They do not form enough of a power base even if they have the numbers. Liberals are not likely to be able to recruit enough successful families away from our base.

What matters is not really Republican versus Liberal, Right versus Wing, those without a heart versus bleeding hearts, those with a brain versus the silly ideologues, goodly versus the ungodly, or even order versus chaos. What really matters is winners versus losers, haves versus have-nots, those with a future versus those without. See the movie "Shooter" with Mark Wahlberg.

To hold and keep power, it helps to have support from among the people who make it at a lower level (middle class), from the people who scabble to make it (stable working class), and from the people who might not make it but still hope to make or hope their children will make it (the working class with some security and maybe some benefits). We need help from among the working middle class and especially from among the working class who have half-way decent jobs and some security. We need to convince them that their best hope for their children to really make it lies with us, Liberals are willing to sacrifice them to get support from minorities and the poor, and Liberals are set to undermine the future of their children. To do this, we have to undermine not only the political credibility of Liberals but also their moral and religious credibility. Luckily our task is not hard. Liberals so clearly pander to minorities and other people who don't fit our needs that people who do fit our needs see right through Liberals and run to us. We have succeeded well so far and we can continue to do so as long as we give the marginal people on our side branches to hang on to and bones to chew. The 1970s and 1980s were a gift to us, a gift we should cherish, hold on to, and make the most of.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries? Until about the 1990s, Republicans could make a plausible case, at least to themselves, that they represent the United States. What benefitted them benefitted the US as well. Moreover, the best way to benefit America is to benefit Republicans. Whatever hurts Republicans also hurts America. In the 1950s, the President of General Motors said "What's good for business is good for America". I cannot remember which President said "The business of America is business" but I

think Calvin Coolidge in the 1920s. Because Liberals and their followers hurt business, they also hurt Republicans, and hurt America. They are un-American.

Beginning in the 1970s, when much of labor and the middle class switched to the Republican Party, for a while, it was easier to make the case that what benefits Republicans benefits America.

Since the 1980s, with "outsourcing", growing disparities in income and wealth, and the rising costs of housing, education, medical care, transportation, and communication, the link between Republicans, wealthy people, business, and America has been harder to make. Wealthy and powerful people in America are now as closely linked to wealthy and powerful people in England, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Korea, China, and other nations as they are to the upper middle class, middle class, and stable working class in America. What hurts the wealthy and powerful in Korea also hurts the wealthy and powerful in America, and vice versa. Does what hurts the wealthy also hurt America? What helps the wealthy and powerful in China also often helps the wealthy and powerful in America? Does that help or hurt America? In part, the close examination of ties between the camp of Donald Trump with Russia was about this question.

It is all-well-and-good to say that fairness or some other similar Liberal value is the true best interest of America; people feel morally warm when they say something like that. But that is not realistic. We cannot have fairness if we don't have enough wealth to go around. In America, we need more than enough for spoiled food and a tin can roof, we need enough for the American dream including health care, retirement, and the success of our children. To get that, we need prosperity. If we don't have enough prosperity, Americans will be at each other. To realistically put into operation any other value, including fairness, social justice, racial harmony, no discrimination, safety, security for women, taking care of nature, and gay rights, we need enough wealth first. To get enough wealth first, we have to be realistic and tough. To be realistic and get enough wealth, we have to think like Republicans. We have to put business first. There is no other way.

To have enough national security, we need enough wealth. To get enough wealth, we need to think like Republicans. We have to put business first. We have to put big business first. There is no other way. If putting big business first in America shows up the worldwide ties of big business, then so be it. There is still a net gain for Americans. There is no other way.

It is not correct to say: We can meet non-business values now because we are already rich enough; we have already put business first for a long time and so gained the wealth that allows us to act on other values; now we can be the real moral people that we want to be; we can let business take second place for a short while during which we show the American morality that underlies it all; if we don't do this, we are deluding ourselves and merely finding a rationale for greed. That sounds good but we simply are not there yet. The presence of the poor and unstable working class are not only evidence of some slight unfairness, more importantly, they show that America is NOT wealthy and strong enough yet. We have a ways to go before we can indulge in unneeded morality. The need for security that drives the working class and middle class is not an illusion and it applies not only to them but nation as a whole. When the

nation is rich enough, then the poor will pretty much disappear on their own. When the poor disappear on their own, then we can take it as a sign from God that we are rich enough, and we can tend to other moral issues. Naturally, when the poor disappear on their own, we won't have to tend to that particular moral issue, and a lot of other moral issues will diminish as well. Focus on business. You are not wrong or immoral to do so. You are moral and right to do so.

As of 2018, likely most people bought this argument because they were afraid of Liberals and the poor than because they really believed it. Rather than think more business, wealth, and power will solve all of America's problems, and let us be the moral people we really are, they want to make sure the poor do not take away what they already have. Still, enough people do accept it.

Religion and Modern Conservatives

To get across a sense of why traditional religion and modern Conservatives get along, it is useful to describe what happened as Christianity began to be widely accepted in the Roman Empire. If this kind of history bores you, you can skip it, but you won't get the real story.

At first, despite some Apostles being fisher folk, Christianity was not a rural religion. It was a religion for semi-skilled and skilled urban workers and small business people. Jesus was of that class. Christianity did not spread in the countryside. The emissaries that Jesus sent to the countryside failed. Christianity spread from city to city, and then out from the cities. It was much like Christian Science, Methodism, Buddhism, or Islam in the last two hundred years in the West.

When Christianity became common, Christians met stiff resistance from rural people. Country people did not wish to give up the traditional gods and in particular they did not wish to give up the traditional gods of the hearth fire and family. They used their gods to hold the family intact in a changing world. They held to the religion of the family. Traditional religion upheld the family and they upheld traditional religion. A person from the countryside was called a "pagan". The religion of the countryside was "paganism". The hip urban Christians with their new god for the new age looked on the country people as backwards, with old gods that were never real, were outmoded, and a hindrance. In modern times, fundamental simple Christians of the country side, those who listen to "big hat, big hair, much makeup" country music, hold family values, identify Jesus with the family, worship old gods, and move to cities where they carry on the old ways on smaller plots of land, are the pagans and their religion is paganism. Their religion of the family would be quite familiar to the pagans of early Christianity. They are what the early Christians had to overcome to spread the word of Jesus. Eventually, the pagans actually won. The pagans absorbed Christianity, and Christianity reverted to the religion of old gods with new names such as Father El-Yahweh, Jesus, Mother Mary, Joseph, and Paul. Christianity-as-paganism-of-the-family is more fitting to human nature than is the original religion of Jesus. The two religions can get along, and do so for many Christians. But, when the religions clash, usually it is the pagan religion of the family and the old-gods-with-new-names that wins out and that serves the state best.

The Roman emperors and politicians found the pagans (country traditional people) useful. They could be used to slow social trends when needed, and to resist foreign influences. They could be used in the military. They could be used to build monuments and fill stadiums. They paid taxes even while all the Senate and ruling class were exempt from taxes. The ruling class selectively supported the pagans and the pagans supported the ruling class – all just like now. When the old gods got new names but the old religion of the family came back in new form, the ruling class found it useful to go along with the new names and to use the new-old religion for the state.

In this story, it is tempting to identify Liberals with then-new Christians, and the comparison does hold up in some ways. But to be fair about that comparison would take more space than can be given to it here. Don't slide into a simplistic view that real Christians and Liberals are just the same. Of course, modern Conservatives-Republicans and the real original religion of Jesus are not the same either.

The actual theological content of current paganism (Christianity) is largely irrelevant to the ruling class. It is very likely that family will be a big part of the content always.

It helps to have particular issues that can be used to consistently separate Conservatives-Republicans from Liberals-Conservatives and to force people into "us versus them". Republicans need to convince the working and middle classes, get them on one side of the issue, and convince them God definitely is on that side of the issue. It helps if the issue never really goes away and always smolders. It does not matter if the issue is really important for deep matters like flaws in the economy. Likely abortion has served that need most often in the United States. I have written on abortion elsewhere and don't go over it again here. If you think about how abortion has been cast in terms of "Life" versus "Choice", and the importance of both key word-symbols, you will get the idea.

Do working class and middle class Republicans really believe that God cares that much about abortion or about the arcane details of catechism class that God will destroy the US if we get it a little bit wrong, a little bit Liberal? Some do but I doubt most do. I think most would like to manage the issues, especially abortion, and they are willing to go along with being used as political soldiers because it makes them feel good about themselves. In other times, in other places, they would not care nearly so much about those issues as long as there was no flagrant moral abuse. Do politicians who use the new paganism (Christianity) believe in the details of fundamentalist religion, know the details of the true religion from catechism class, believe God cares about those details, or believe God will hurt the US if the US does not toe the line to the last iota? Again, a few do, but likely the large majority are content to go to church, to get righteous when it works, and to use the mass of people through religion. What will happen to all these people when they die and have to face God? Luckily, I don't have to say.

There is no war on Christians. That is another ploy in "us versus them". I am sure old believers in the Roman Empire felt there was a war on the old gods, the hearth fire, and the family. Democrats are stupid in their own ways, and their relation with Christianity is one of the stupidest. Rather than credit any religion with any value, some Liberals go after all religion and all its public tidbits. There is no point in going into detail on why they do this now. Liberals pick mostly on Christianity because it is the most

obvious public religion in the West and because it is the matrix from which Western values sprung. Those values have to serve as the basis for a modern plural democracy without referencing religion, and, to do that, it is useful to sever the public ties between the new values and their one-time religious base. So, go after poor old Christianity. This is a silly tactic and the sooner it ends the better. Until then, Conservatives-Republicans and real Christians would be better off with patience, really understanding what is going on, explaining to the large majority of decent Liberals what is going on, and finding the true value in their own beliefs so they can explain that to anyone. Decent Liberals would do well to tell Liberals who go after all signs of religious belief, and who go after Christianity in particular, to "shut up", and then explain to them the roots of Liberal values in Christianity and in all religion.

Conservatives and the Religious Right

It is extremely unlikely that traditional Conservatives similar to Edmund Burke would have adopted the ideas of the Religious Right, many of the histrionic people in it, or their tactics. Conservatives were truly religious but not like that. That religion is more a threat to a good state than a help. Those people are to be controlled rather than used. So what happened about 1980?

The easy-but overly-simplistic-and-so-slightly-wrong answer: Before 1972 or so (Nixon and the Silent Majority), the Republican Party had been a minority party of upper middle class and upper class people who had the moderate religion typical of that group. They led politically because the working class and middle class accepted them as leaders at times, and voted for their candidates, but did not wish to join the party. When the Democratic Party "went ethnics" "whole hog", White working class and middle class people took it that the Democrats had become the party of giving ever-increasing gifts to Blacks, and, in the time of Reagan, the White working class and middle class fled Democrats to join Republicans. The new recruits brought the strong supposedly-traditional religion typical of working and middle classes. That religion then infected the entire Republican Party. Even if many traditional Republicans didn't like the new religion (and still don't), they had to pay lip service to it. They had to be born again. Smart young "comers" such as Newt Gingrich took advantage by making a point of their traditional religious beliefs, and so reinforced the power of the new Religious Right. By 1990, the people who held a strong supposedly traditional religious view could control the whole Party and give the whole Party their feel. The tail wagged the dog because the tail had grown bigger than the dog because the dog had invited the tail to do so. On the Internet, you can read the comments of Betty Ford and later the elder President Bush on abortion to see where the divide had been.

It is incorrect to say the working class, middle class, upper middle class, or upper class is typically more or less religious than any other class. Likely before 1980, they were all about equally religious and of the same general lukewarm type. In ordinary times, the working class and middle class might have brought some warmer feelings to the Republican Party, as when they supported Goldwater in 1964; but that small additional temperature would have been absorbed quickly enough.

Those were not normal times. America had just fallen off its pinnacle, good jobs were disappearing, jobs were turning from good to bad, costs were rising, the bottom got bigger and harder to climb out of, and

the working class and middle class were afraid their children would fall in and never rise out again. Under those conditions, the working class and middle class do adopt fervent fundamentalist religion. Many people who had been lukewarm got hot and they got rigid rather than pliable. This is a big part of what happened also to spur the rise of fundamentalist Islam and Hinduism. Men who can't get jobs or a girlfriend get hostile and religious. Men who get a job but are sure they will never be accepted or never accepted according to their full worth, get hostile and religious. Women who can't get enough security to raise children, get hostile and religious. See the movie "Syriana" with George Clooney.

When the working class and the middle class joined the Republican Party en masse in the middle 1970s, that desperation-anger-and-religious fervor is the mindset that they brought with them. Rather than try to mold the new members into what could be long-term good members of the old Republican Party, in a new good America led by the Republican Party, the Party fanned the flames and used them to burn in Reagan-ism and to burn down the Democratic Party. Then the tail wagged the dog and has been wagging ever since. There is no point in going through more details.

The Great Recession of 2007 was a huge boost to the 1970s mentality, and it fanned the same flames, the same fears. Donald Trump saw that this element had no place to go other than the Republican Party and would support their kind of candidate through the mechanism of the traditional Republican Party even if their kind of candidate was not what the old Republican Party would have supported in the past. Because of all the changes since 1970 and the changes since the Great Recession of 2007, there were enough fanatic White people worried about the future of their kids to elect Trump President, even without the majority of the popular vote, and they did.

Do these people really believe God will smite America if America does not live up to their crazy religious view? Do these people really believe God will reward America with a good job for all Christians and a large profit margin for all Christian business firms if they force their moral code on America? Some likely do but I think most do not. They want to force the institutional conditions that will make sure their kids get good jobs and succeed regardless of what happens to the kids of others. If they have to force down the children of others, and make sure there is a big lower class, to make sure their children succeed, they are happy to do that. If they can use religious motifs to band together to get the power to make sure they succeed in America while others fail, they do so happily. Religious crazies in other countries do the same, Muslims in Muslim nations and Hindus in India.

Why don't traditional Republican leaders stand up to the misguided fold and the rascals, like old true Conservatives? Because anyone who did so would be turned out of office by someone else of his-her own Party, someone who would cater to the Religious Right. So, in the end, the Party consists of those politicians who can kiss up to the Religious Right consistently enough.

The same thing happens to Liberals in the Democratic Party who want to argue against favoring Black voters or any ethnic group and-or who want to argue for a centrist approach to government and the economy.

BTW, I blame the Great Recession of 2007 mostly on Republicans. I blame much of the success of the Religious Right on Democrats because they have not been able to explain the world, explain America, explain what is going on, or offer any half-way believable alternative to the Republicans since about 1966. That is not likely to change.

More on Republican Small Government

Please see "History 7" above.

Small government cannot possibly mean what Republicans say it means. States that vote consistently Republican ("red" states) receive more in federal aid than they pay in taxes. The working class, middle class, and upper middle class voters who consistently vote Republican usually get more in benefits (not direct payments) from the state than they pay in taxes, benefits such as low cost education, police protection, fire protection, insurance subsidies especially on their homes, and medical care. "Corporate welfare" is real and it benefits the secure working and middle class who call for small government. Since Reagan, Republicans have been the biggest spenders. Reagan and G.W. Bush grew the deficit faster and larger than anyone while the deficit diminished under Clinton and did not grow as fast as expected under Obama. Military spending benefits working and middle class Republicans heavily, and the military is totally "big government" and totally subsidized. Jimmy Carter deregulated more than Ronald Reagan. Democrats are more adept at balancing the budget and lowering the deficit than Republicans. Through not getting tax breaks, renters, the poor, subsidize house buyers, the working class and middle class, in hundreds of billions of dollars per year. Tax breaks favor the middle class and upper middle class; and those breaks amount to benefits just as much as welfare. Moderately poor people and poor working people pay a greater share of their income in taxes than do working people, middle class people, and upper middle class people. If the state made parents pay for what college really costs, working class kids, middle class kids, and their parents would riot immediately all over the country. The only people who might really want small government are Libertarians and I think they only want it because they know it will never come to pass because it would be a disaster.

What, then, do "small government" and the call for "small government" really mean? Why do people continue to call for small government and why do people continue to buy into the slogan?

I do not refer to cases where the state obviously over-regulated or over-enforced. We all have stories but they don't get to the general pattern that really counts. The state does increase regulation and enforcement as a way to increase its overall size and power but that too is not what I am after. You have to think beyond your situation and the stories of people like you that you agree with.

"Less government" is a way to say "Reduce the benefits of other people, especially who might be my rivals and whose children might be rivals of my children, even while you keep my benefits, or increase my benefits, and especially while you increase the chances of my children for success. Reduce my taxes for my share of benefits while increasing the taxes of other people who get less in benefits than me so

that they pay for my increased benefits. Keep or increase the institutions and programs that help me and my children while you eliminate and reduce the programs that help people who are our rivals".

Everyone would like to say this but not everybody can get away with saying it. The clients of Liberals, such as ethnic minorities, can say it in different language such as "We have been mistreated, we are still mistreated, and you have to give us benefits to make up for it, benefits that other people pay for, even if it hurts them more than it helps us". The clients of Republicans say "Less Government". Republican politicians know quite well what it really means.

Not funding programs that should be funded such as Head Start is the same thing. In some cases, this tactic of not funding is an out-and-out sin. It is lying and hypocrisy, and it hurts those who need help.

We need an accounting of what people really pay in all taxes and fees and what people receive through all programs, institutions, projects, subsidies, corporate welfare directly and indirectly, and tax breaks. We need an assessment of what really works. Private groups do this kind of accounting but disagree enough so that it is easy to use one group to make one case and another to make another case. On the whole, they agree with what I said above. To some extent, the federal General Accounting Office, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, do this job, but I cannot present their data here, tell what it means, and interpret for this issue.