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THE STAND CONSERVATISM

If you ask the definition of conservatism, you might well get dozens of different answers. In fact, we are all conservatives. Even liberals are. Truth be known, all of us are conservative in some or most areas of our lives and liberal in others. You might for example espouse a conservative position which opposes same sex marriage, but at the same time understand and tolerate divorce for the right reasons. After all, many conservatives and many Christians are in fact divorced.

Some say that the United States is the last remaining country with a genuine conservative movement. That movement is expressed in politics, social initiatives among ordinary people, in the media, intellectual journals and the conservative message lives on even though political philosophy in American academia and the media has been dominated by liberals. Perhaps conservatism is alive and well among the rank and file, ordinary citizens if not the elitists elsewhere. Witness the recent elections which saw significant gains by conservative politicians with conservative philosophies, and the ever-growing popularity of the conservative President Bush.

It may be simplistic common even tautological, to say that a conservative is a person who wants to conserve things. That is true, but the really relevant question is conserve what things. There is hardly any need to conserve an old Edsel, or a twenty-year-old suit except for historical, antique purposes. But the main thing a conservative seeks to conserve is the society, institutions, customs, habits and beliefs which have been inherited and in which one believes. In short, we the people wish to conserve America as we know it and love it. As such, we are suspicious of experiments and innovations that put loyalty to these values at risk.

Conservatism is then a temperament, a state of mind, a position of heart. The conservative tries to preserve society as it is and to prevent social entropy. All societies change or become extinct, sooner or later. But the conservative does everything possible to make it later rather than sooner.

The conservative tends to resist the radicals, the extreme innovators who want radical change sometimes at any cost. These radicals always find things bad in the society, ignoring the good and attempt to throw the baby out with the wash. Conservatives resist that and allow gradual, subtle, meaningful and relevant change only.

September 11 made it clear to us the people that our primary loyalty is to this nation, this great America. The loyalty we feel is in fact inclusive and we welcome immigrants but only if they assume the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. We say to the world that America, its customs and beliefs have their origin in the Judeo-Christian inheritance, and that we intend to cherish that inheritance and protect the values that emanate from it. A conservative would therefore eschew multi-culturalism if in fact it seeks to change or eliminate the Judeo-Christian heritage. The conservative would also aggressively resist any liberal attempt to interpret the constitution apart from the religious and cultural inheritance from which it was created. We welcome differences of opinion but not if they attack the core-essence of America itself.

For these reasons, it is good, very good to be a conservative.