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Millennials And A New Conservatism

Posted By [Bob Inglis](#) On 2:35 PM 03/16/2016 In | [No Comments](#)

Conservatism has been hijacked onto a dead-end demographic street. The problem is that there are lots of funerals on such streets. Telling the world who we don't like may be a sure fire way to fire up angry old white men, but it doesn't appeal to their children and grandchildren. Those kids and grandkids have black friends, brown friends, gay friends and climate scientist friends. They don't want to be part of a movement emblazoned with the bumper sticker *mean people suck*.

Conservatism has much more to offer than rage. We're the ones who believe that work should be rewarded; that people should be free to be themselves; that life, liberty and property should be celebrated and protected; and that compassion should be evident in what we say and do.

That kind of conservatism could be attractive to millions of Millennials. Many of them are progressives only by default. They're frustrated with the bureaucratic welfare state. They want government at the speed of an app. They're tired of poverty pimps, and they don't want to lock arms with anachronistic labor union bosses. They think the environmentalist left goes too far in implying that humans are some kind of an invasive species. But they hear about walls and discrimination and closets, they sense self-centeredness and greed, they see fear being used to stir up dark passions, and they turn away. Add to these the retro affect of the disputation of climate science, and conservatism becomes toxic.

It doesn't have to be this way. Conservatism can free itself from the populist rejectionism that infects the current political cycle. It's rejection of all things Obama. It's rejection of civil discourse and the constraint of facts in debates. More fundamentally, it's rejection of the notion that we can come together to solve really big challenges.

For some among us, there's no moon shot left in 'em. They're threatened by globalization and automation, the shift away from cars and the decline of the suburban lifestyle, the pace of culture change and the loss of the prerogative of defining normalcy.

Conservatism can meet these challenges with a dynamism that fits the Millennial Generation. Populist rejectionism just lashes out—first with the tongue and maybe later with the fist.

For Millennials the world is full of moon shot opportunities, and solving climate change is high on the list. The new conservatism that can emerge from the field sown with rejectionist tares must grow an ecoRight that out-produces the environmentalist left. The environmentalist left focuses on polar bears; the ecoRight must focus on people. The environmentalist left believes in regulation and litigation; the ecoRight believes in accountable markets where all costs are in on all fuels and all subsidies are withdrawn. The environmentalist left rings alarm bells; the ecoRight answers with solutions that fit the free enterprise system. The environmentalist left says we must do with less; the ecoRight says let's create wealth and innovation that light up the world with more energy, more mobility, and more freedom.

In order for the seeds of the ecoRight to take hold we must first rid ourselves of the merchants of doubt who have been paid to confuse conservatives about the clear lessons of climate science. Next, we need to rediscover the wisdom of Milton Friedman's price signals, Ronald Reagan's precautionary principles, and Margaret Thatcher's passion to care for this part of Eden that remains. We must step forward with solutions and stop shrinking in science denial. If we do, we can reclaim a rich heritage as conservatives who care about conservation, making our man Teddy, the Bull Moose, very proud of us.

There are 82 million Americans in the Millennial Generation. They're into authenticity and innovation. They're afraid of commitments because they've been burned too many times. They're more pro-life than their parents because they realize how many of their would-be peers were aborted. They see a world of opportunity and are sometimes overwhelmed by their range of choices. They believe in science and some of them believe in the Creator of science. They're into discovery more than ideology, and they

know to sift what they read on the Internet. They're looking for a home in a dysfunctional political system. A new conservatism with an abundant ecoRight can be that home.

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