

# OpenTheo

## What is Conservatism? with Daniel McCarthy

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### Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

Several months ago, Daniel McCarthy—editor of *Modern Age* and Editor-at-Large of *The American Conservative*—published an essay in *First Things* entitled “The Right Right.” McCarthy’s essay was a review of Yoram Hazony’s *Conservatism: A Rediscovery* and Matthew Continetti’s *The Right: The Hundred-Year War for American Conservatism*. In this episode of LBE, McCarthy talks about what was commendable in both books, and where both works can be fairly critiqued. Kevin asks Daniel about his review, about Willmoore Kendall’s populist conservatism, and how to reaffirm the importance of Christianity as “public truth” in America.

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Books:

*The Right: The Hundred-Year War for American Conservatism*

*Conservatism: A Rediscovery*

*The Conservative Affirmation*

The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition

Russell Kirk: American Conservative

The Virtue of Nationalism

## **Transcript**

Greetings and Salutations! Welcome to Life and Books and Everything Good to Have You Back with Us. My Name is Kevin DeYoung. Coming to the end of this fall season, this episode, one more, and then I'll be taking a break for about a month or so over Christmas.

And into January and in the process of lining up another wonderful season, hopefully, of guests and conversation on Life and Books and Everything. I want to thank our sponsor, Crossway Books. And just so you know, Crossway, they give me which book they want me to mention at the beginning of the program.

So I didn't choose this, but this one, they said, "Can you talk about the biggest story Bible storybook which happens to be written by me?" and illustrated by Don Clark. So if you haven't seen this, I encourage you, the illustrations are amazing. It'd be a great gift.

For Christmas, it's 104 stories from the Bible, 52 from the Old Testament, 52 from the New Testament, that I wrote trying to connect the whole big story of Jesus' death and resurrection, crushing the serpent and try to tell it in a way that is accessible. I guess you would say maybe children ages six through 12 or thereabouts, a little bit older, but hopefully like all good kids books, adults will learn something too. So go ahead and you can go to [crossway.org/plus](http://crossway.org/plus) to find out how you can get 30% off with a Crossway Plus account or find it wherever good books are sold.

My guest this morning, when we're recording anyways, it's morning, is Daniel McCarthy. Daniel and I have just met now formally face-to-face over Squadcast for the first time after exchanging a few emails, but I read a review of his, which we'll get into in just a moment months ago and then it took this long to set up this conversation. Daniel is the editor of Modern Age, a conservative review editor at large with the American conservative.

He's written in the New York Times USA Today, spectator reason, many other publications. He has been a senior editor of ISI books, which publishes a lot of conservative books, graduate of Washington University in St. Louis. So Daniel, very good to have you on the program.

Tell us just a little bit about yourself. That's the professional biography, but where are you from? How did you get into this line of work and what do you do as an editor speaker writer? Yeah, you know, my day job is with the Interclused Studies Institute, which is one

of the oldest conservative educational institutions in the country. It started in 1953 and it exists in the name of its motto to educate for liberty.

In some ways, a little bit too compact of a description of what ISI does. We actually educate for virtue and for order as well. We try to connect students all across the country with sort of the great ideas that helped found this country and to acquaint them with some of the challenges that are facing not just conservatives and not just Christians, but really, people of goodwill and good faith all across the spectrum in our country today, that we're facing an enormous amount of adversity and enormous amount of kind of ideological heavy handedness from a progressive left, which would like to see everyone conform to its own rather radical ideas.

So I became interested in conservatism in my own college years. And since that time, I entered journalism. I went to work for the American Conservative magazine very soon after it got started in 2003.

And I basically spent the last 20 years working both as a journalist and also as someone who is a part of the world of ideas, not necessarily as an academic, but someone who is very much in tune with discussions that are taking place among the sort of philosophers and thinkers of conservatism and not just the doers and politicians. Very good. So a little bit of background why I'm interested in this is for my listeners as much as anyone.

So I'm a pastor at a conservative Presbyterian church and reformed in my theology and I teach at a seminary. So I am, you know, my calling is not to electoral politics or to get my church to vote a certain way or to even put, I think anybody coming to our church would say there's nothing about politics except and so far as certain issues have very clear stances in the Bible like abortion is wrong and that will come up. And there's no apologies about that.

But that's not first of all a political issue. So my interest is both as someone who likes to read as much as I can in this area, but also it's just a fact that within many conservative, let's say, theologically conservative churches, there are inevitably a lot of political conservatives. And some of what I'm interested in why I'm so glad that you're on Dan is there are a number of debates and factions within movement conservatism and within this constellation of ideas, as you put it, and I see even as a pastor that sometimes these divisions find their way among Christians.

And sometimes we don't even know what we're debating about. And we may think that we've hit upon some really new idea, but actually it's indicative of the sorts of divisions or at least differences that have existed among conservatives for a long time. And so I think just understanding what's going on.

And I mean, it's a truism to say we're always in moment of great change. That's always the case. And yet it does seem like the very definition of what it means to be a

conservative is really up for grabs or not up for grabs, at least is a point of a lot of debate and contention at the moment.

So before we get into this particular review in these two books, I want to ask you maybe maybe the hardest question, are you a conservative? And what does that mean? I am a conservative and when I was first asked this question in a job interview about 20 years ago, I said that conservatism is a defense of normality. And I think that's still a pretty good sort of one sentence definition. But if I were to expand on that a little bit, I would say that it is a defense of the constitutional spirit of, in the case of the United States, it is the constitution of Philadelphia that was created.

In the case of Britain, it's the constitution that was evolving, but certainly had reached a high degree of refinement by the end of the 18th century. Conservatism is an idea that takes inspiration from Edinburgh and from the American founding fathers. And it's not obviously simply a recapitulation of whatever they happen to say and think over 200 years ago.

But it is a defense of the spirit of the kind of constitutionalism, the approach to the world of morals, the world of politics, the world of economics, the integration of all those elements into a civilized order that they both in Britain and in the United States were working upon. And that is being challenged, especially in this country right now, by a revolutionary movement, a movement that in many respects is at least as revolutionary, perhaps much more so than the Jacobin Revolution that occurred in France in 1789. And so conservatism is very much a counter-revolutionary and an anti-revolutionary philosophy.

In one of the debates that continues to exist is to what degree is being a conservative tied to being a person of religious faith. And maybe we'll get into that. I would certainly never say that the two that to be a Christian is to be a conservative or vice versa.

But I would argue that there are certain Christian ideas and ideals that are part of being a conservative. And one of those is a belief in having a human nature that some things about us don't change. And so therefore we can learn something from the past and there's wisdom in the past that ought to be conserved, that it's definition.

That's what a conservative is trying to do. There's something in the past, something that others have learned, have established institutions, ideas, constitutions that's worth preserving, worth learning, worth passing on to the next generation and conserving that. Now let's talk about these two books.

And we'll let this conversation wander far afield. But we'll start here. You wrote in first things.

This was maybe at the end of the summer. A long, very good review on two books that

have come out this year, one by Yoram Hosoni, conservatism, a rediscovery, and then the other by Matthew Cantonetti, the right, the Hundred Year War for American conservatism. I read both of those books.

And I don't know that if we're in absolute agreement, but I read your review and I really appreciated it because I read both of those books and I liked both of them. And there were elements of both of them that I found myself drawn to. And yet I left with wanting to say, yes, but to several aspects in both of those books.

So let's just start with the Cantonetti book because that's where you start in your review. Give us an idea. What is Matthew's book about the Hundred Year history of the rights in this country? And what's your assessment of his historical and really intellectual review? Cantonetti is taken on an absolutely monumental task.

He's tried to present in a single volume of about 400 pages, a hundred year history of American conservatism, and covering not only the political side of things from basically Calvin Coolidge all the way through to the Trump administration, but also the intellectual side of things. And it's a lot for a single volume of any kind to take on. Cantonetti actually does a very admirable job.

He does about as well as I think anyone possibly could with a scope that large. And yet, necessarily, it means that both ideas and political events tend to be covered in a rather summery fashion. And Cantonetti's own point of view comes from a school of thought called Neo-conservatism.

I think that's fair to say. He is the son-in-law of William Crystal, the founder of Weekly Standard and more recently the Bullwork. And he's part of the sort of extended crystal family that begins with Irving Crystal, who was often somewhat humorously referred to as the godfather of view conservatism.

So Cantonetti's view of conservatism is what I call in the review a kind of liberal conservatism. He looks at the American founding and the tradition of conservatism since then as being something that at its best is in fact part of a wider liberal intellectual tradition. It is still the conservative side of Cantonetti himself, of his book, and to some extent of certainly the Irving Crystal project.

I don't know about the Bill Crystal project at this point. But a conservative side to it is that it does take religion very seriously. And it does say that without a moral guidance that religion provides the kind of, you know, economics and politics that we are accustomed to in the United States are simply not sustainable.

The social order is not sustainable. And that in fact one has to take very seriously the religious foundations or very civilization. Now as a pastor in the Presbyterian tradition, we have confessional standards, meaning there are documents that have been written

for us.

It's the Westminster Confession, larger and shorter catechism. These date back to the 1640s. And although there are differences among Presbyterians for sure, at least if you're looking at conservative Bible believing Presbyterians, we have these statements which have served well for almost 400 years to say, this is what if you're a minister at least, you ought to believe.

And if you go to a church that has Presbyterian in the title, this is the sort of doctrine that you can expect to be taught. And I think it serves to give, even though there's lots of internal division, some sense of unity, and at least in understanding of you kind of should know what you can expect. One of the one of the takeaways perhaps from Content Eddie's book is to wonder, is there even a thing called conservatism? And what has unified, I think, you know, one of the themes that comes through at least in his telling of it is, except for being anti-communist, there's hardly anything that conservatives have agreed on.

Do you think that's taking it too far? Has there been more of a core to this conservative project in the last 100 years? Well, I think one thing that comes through quite strongly in Content Eddie's book is a contrast between the liberal conservatism with which he tends to sympathize, and a populist conservatism, which he actually sees as having quite deep roots. And this populist conservatism is already present in Continogas analysis all the way back in the 1920s with Calvin Coolidge. And he points to certain at least surface similarities between Calvin Coolidge and the conservatism of the 1920s and Donald Trump and the conservatism of the 2020s.

And even though Coolidge and Trump are very, very different characters, in both eras, you found that there was a certain amount of, you know, belief that we needed to have a stricter control of our borders, a certain kind of, you know, also a belief that we should be somewhat cautious about our military engagements all around the world, you know, something that critics might call isolationism, but I think would be sort of better understood as a kind of realist, you know, sort of caution about intervention. And then also that, you know, there is a certain, you know, belief in the wisdom of Main Street comes through both in the populist, you know, conservatism of the 1920s and also of the 2020s here. Continogas, however, believes that there's a tendency for this populist conservatism to become xenophobic, to become actually isolationist, and basically to, you know, sort of play to the most, you know, sort of base instincts of the American public, as opposed to dealing with the sort of moral complexities that are presented to us, not only in the liberal tradition, but also by the experience of, you know, a global economy and a nation state as powerful as our own, which has necessarily a number of commitments all around the world, which it has to deal with in a rather, you know, sophisticated fashion, perhaps a fashion that must be in large part idealistic as well as realistic.

I think that's one of the key divisions between Matthew Cantonetti and perhaps certain other thinkers on the right, Cantonetti and the neo-conservative of tradition that he represents, tends to believe very strongly that, you know, by cueing to American ideals when we look at foreign policy and when we engage in especially, you know, conflicts around the world, that this will see us through to a successful conclusion. And of course, the Iraq War of the last 20 years was an example where that didn't work out. And I think Cantonetti is somewhat chastened by that.

Nevertheless, he I think is concerned that Americans, American conservatives are looking at foreign policy, are perhaps losing touch with the idealism that he would prefer to see represented. So the point you bring out about the tensions within the conservative movement with a populist wing come through many places in this book. So here's one of them right in the middle.

He's writing about the 1970s and the new right. So that's a term that's used today for various iterations of conservatives. But here in the 70s, the enemies of the new right were compromise, gradualism and acquiescence in a corrupt system.

Partisan identification had little to do with the antagonisms of new right activists. William F. Buckley, George Will, were just as much the targets of their criticism as CBS in the New York Times. He goes on, he quotes from an article from Kevin Phillips, "There are conservatives whose game it is to quote English poetry and utter neo-matsonian benedictions over the interests and institutions of establishment liberalism.

Then there are other conservatives, many I know, who have more in common with Andrew Jackson than with Edmund Burke." And he goes on. So this has been part of the inter-conversation or debate among conservatives, as you say, really from the 20s. And here he's referencing the 1970s, but could sound very familiar today.

So how do you respond to the argument that some would say that populism is by its very definition the opposite of conservatism. And that conservatives understand that the mass of public opinion is bound to be dangerous and given over to demagogues. And that's why we have these constitutional checks and balances.

And that's why we have the Electoral College to try to prevent the masses from being whipped up into a frenzy to get whatever they want, because they don't usually know what is best for them. Now, I think there's some truth to that, and I think there's some good responses. But how would you respond to that sort of argument that says populism and conservatism are opposites? I think the 20th century thinker who brings populism and conservatism together and shows their compatibility best is Wilmore Kendall, who was born around 1909.

He dies in the late 1960s. And he publishes a book called *The Conservative Affirmation*, for which I've just written a new forward and a new edition brought out by Regory a little

bit earlier this year. Wilmore Kendall was a very unusual thinker.

He was an Oklahoma boy who maintained his sense of connection to what we would now call Red State America. But he was also a child prodigy who went on to study at Oxford University. He became a political science professor at Yale University.

And he was something of a mentor to the early William F. Buckley Jr. during Buckley's own time at Yale. Kendall was an intellectual defender of Joseph McCarthy and his red hunting exploits during the 1950s, which as you can imagine, even back then, was extremely unpopular to a place like Yale University. And eventually Yale winds up buying out Wilmore Kendall's tenure just in order to get rid of him.

They pay him off and set him free. Kendall argues, and I think quite persuasively, both in the Conservative Affirmation and in a few other works, that our tradition as Americans is understood very well in the Federalist Papers. It's understood through the text of the U.S. Constitution itself.

It's understood actually in a whole series of documents going back to the American colonial period. Things like the Mayflower Compact, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, etc. And he says that all of these documents have a history of bringing together both the people and also a certain amount of procedural and other methods in order to get the best out of the people.

Right? So it is popular government, but it's not popular government in a sort of direct sense in the way that you had in ancient Athens, for example. And it also isn't popular government in a plebucitary modern sense. And what Kendall meant by that is the idea that you have one person, one vote in a sort of very large universe of voters.

The paradigmatic case would be the popular vote in presidential elections. Well, of course, if you have that, you really are dealing with an enormous undifferentiated mass. It has sort of very little structure within it.

It's just a huge population of 300 plus million people. And when you have a population that large and without any kind of internal structure, you can only communicate with it in the Vegas and most broad terms. And I like to name it as an example here, the way in which Barack Obama campaigned on this extremely vapid theme of hope and change.

Well, Loomor Kendall had already been writing in the 1960s and earlier that when you have presidential elections conducted in this attempted a plebucitary fashion, they're going to have that tendency towards real extreme abstraction, which is going to cause ultimately a disconnection between the elites and the people. Because you're talking to the people in terms that have very little concrete detail of necessity, because you're dealing with such a large population. Kendall thought the genius of the American system was its localization of the people, the fact that the people make their decisions through



their congressional districts, through their states, ultimately with when the Senate comes to be directly elected in state by state.

Originally, of course, the Senate was, you know, senators were selected by state governments, state legislatures, which of course had, you know, a very localized, you know, sort of voting base, you know, in each state. The Electoral College is another great example of how the Constitution structures and orders public opinion and the public will in such a way as to try to regulate it, make sure that it is, you know, the best of it is brought out. And Kendall thought one of the key things to doing this is a concept called constitutional morality, that basically when you have this channeled and sort of aggregated, you know, localized and then aggregated sense of the American people and their desires, when you have legislators or Electoral College electors come together, they can then actually deliberate and sort of reach specific, you know, decisions about very complex ideas that are not simply these appeals to, you know, sort of the broadest and most open-ended concepts that you get with, you know, presidential, planetary elections.

So I think this shows on the one hand how, you know, rightly structured a, you know, sort of popular system that is also a conservative and a well-channelled system, how these two things fit together. Of course, you know, the left-wing revolution we've been, you know, sort of experiencing over the course of several decades has been trying to undo all of this. It's been trying precisely to create a kind of plebiscitary system.

And even now you see, of course, progressive saying we should get rid of the filibuster, you know, it's unfair that small states have as much representation as large states. There are all kinds of changes to our constitutional system. Progressives would like to make that would point us in a more plebiscitary direction.

But that's how you actually get demagoguery. Whereas when you have, you know, the kind of constitutionalism that the founding fathers envisioned, you can have popular self government that is nonetheless, you know, still balanced and mature and is going to have a certain governing class which acts as a servant to the people. Populism, as we have it today, in part arises from this disconnection, from the fact that when you move towards a more plebiscitary kind of politics, as the progressives have done, what you wind up with is the people realize, wait a minute, we're not really represented.

Or at least large segments of popular opinion are not represented adequately. They're not given a fair hearing. There is no sense of deliberation and constitutional morality.

Instead, there's this approach of kind of winner take all politics. And if you get 50% plus one, you can then try to run the country entirely the way you wish to. And what that does is it generates a certain amount of backlash that you see at the popular level.

And I think that's one of the, you know, sort of key drivers of this sort of chaos and

entropy that we see associated with populism. And not just on the right, but also, of course, you know, Bernie Sanders and various movements on the left occupy Wall Street about a decade ago. There really is this very broad sense among different segments of the American people that they are not represented and they're being governed by people who do not have their interests in heart.

And, you know, if we were to move back, I think, to a more traditional constitutional approach of the sort, you know, advocated by Publius and the Federalist, we'd be able to mitigate some of these otherwise intractable problems. And some of what you're rightly identifying is because, you know, it's the rise of, you know, I know you've done some stuff with Aaron Rand and he was on the podcast a bit ago and have read James Burnham and the rise of the managerial elites and that very influential conservative thinker. But the constitutional system we're supposed to have is with a constant roiling of elections, that is, you're always, of course, the Senate's every six years, but the House is every every two years.

And then you have at state levels and then county levels that you're supposed to be constantly in touch with the people that there's always these elections, everything from school board up to president every four years, but the entire House every two years that you're never supposed to be very far from, am I out of touch with what where the people are at? But of course, more and more as the real movers and shakers, not the real, but at least overlaying that political system would be media, tech, bureaucracy, elites. And I don't use all those, you know, those terms by themselves are not negatives. And sometimes I think conservatives can just use that as a shorthand for making better arguments to just say big and whatever you put after it, you know, is bad or elites.

But Aaron Rind has hopefully pointed out that the answer to a problem with elites is not no elites. Somebody's going to be an elite. Some group of people are going to be influencing in maintaining institutions that the answer is not no elites, but better elites and elites hopefully that are formed by civic virtue or I would say formed by even Christian character that truly do want to serve the people.

So how do you see, is there any way forward? Is there any way to, you know, we can't go back, we can't have a country that's as small as we were when the Constitution was written. And those documents, some would say, well, they can't serve our country 250 years later. Thank you and I would disagree with that.

But what are the practical ways forward, knowing how different our world and our country is from this constitutional order that was set in place in the 1780s? You caught, you know, a big part of it simply by identifying what one of the problems is. And I think this will help, you know, sort of give a sense of, you know, encouragement, maybe not optimism, but at least a sense that, okay, if we recognize what it is, we're dealing with, we don't have to have the sense of despair, the sense of confusion, that occasionally

overtakes some of our friends, you know, among the conservative world. So yes, you're dealing with a very different media environment.

One of the things that's happened is not just, you know, the rise of social media, even, you know, much earlier with the rise of a sort of nationwide broadcast media, television and radio, all of these things, you know, change the way that Americans interacted with and thought about their government. You know, you can point back, you know, to the 19th century, I think of someone like Alexis de Tocqueville writing in *Democracy in America*. He has some very powerful passages in that book where he talks about the role of newspapers in America, the role of these periodical publications and how, you know, each newspaper represented an interest and in each locality and each town and each city, you would have a multitude of these newspapers.

And the newspapers were ways in which, you know, these different elements within the community communicated with one another. They argued things out, they made their persuasive case to the public, and they played a very healthy role in helping to glue together these different interests within, you know, the local sphere of America and helped to, you know, sort of order and channel what was going on at the local level in politics. Of course, you know, since then we've had such vast changes in the media landscape that things don't work nearly, you know, in the way that Tocqueville had described back in the 19th century.

You've also had, you know, the rise of a much more globalized economy. So in the 19th century, you know, one of the big challenges was simply gluing together the United States itself. The United States, you know, still was a land of wilderness in many cases.

It was a land where it was very difficult, you know, to get across the country. You know, you have to build a transcontinental railroad eventually, you have to do a number of other things. You know, ultimately, you know, it's in the 20th century, you get the interstate highway system, but it was difficult enough just to get goods from one end of the country to the, to the other in the course of, you know, the 19th and 20th centuries.

Now, however, you have shipping that goes straight from, you know, into China all the way through to, you know, to the United States and then from, you know, one end of the United States to the other. And what this does is it really lessens the importance of locality in economic life. And as the economic importance of locality gets dissolved, that tends to create problems for the political importance of locality.

So you wind up, you know, this is, of course, not only true with the movement of goods across continents and across oceans, but also with the way in which capital is now pooled in cities, international cities all around the world, rather than being distributed more broadly across, you know, sort of towns and localities, you know, across our country as it had been, you know, until the end, basically, of the 20th century. So this is a structural problem which then combines with this media problem, which is that a

media that is now, you know, delocalized, you know, it's no longer the case that we're all reading sort of local newspapers from our own towns that represent, you know, local opinion in its various channels. No, instead we're dealing with these vast, you know, sort of huge ideological concepts being, you know, expressed by Fox News or by the Washington Post, by a handful of very large, you know, sort of media institutions.

And then you have social media, which I think is perhaps the most radicalizing thing of all, because think about this, you know, when people are distributed among, you know, dozens, hundreds, thousands of towns, yes, you're going to have in every town a certain number of people who are sort of what might be called Jacobin and Outlook, who are, you know, discontented with, you know, the, not just the political order, but even the social order with even, you know, the way that, you know, you know, sort of the different orders and classes and even the sexes and genders of society relate to one another, there are always going to be some people who are misfits, you know, in a, in any given scale of city or town. But once you have the internet, what you can do is you can start to connect all of the discontented, you know, elements across, you know, these different localities and give them a sense that, ah-ha, you could actually have a mass uprising. And so I think, you know, in 2020, for example, when we saw not just a response to George Floyd and various police issues, but also, you know, this frenzy that overtook the economy where people were tearing down statues of, you know, Abraham Lincoln, as well as, you know, Thomas Jefferson, just, you know, things that had nothing whatsoever to do with the immediate issue that supposedly was generating these mob actions.

I think that was a contagion brought about by social media and brought about by the, you know, raising of, you know, difficulties in places like Minneapolis, to suddenly becoming a, you know, a, a, a, a, a conflagration, you know, across the whole country. So what do you do in order to, you know, combat that sort of revolutionary transformation in our institutions and revolutionary changes in the media, the world economy, etc. I think the first thing you have to do is just, you know, recognize what's happened and then see what the tools that are already available and they're constitutionally, uh, this it are, um, you know, at hand in order to at least, you know, stop things from getting worse and then hopefully, you know, begin to improve things once you become adept at using the tools that are available.

So that's one reason I think there's a good case to be made for a kind of conservatism in defense of the nation state and maybe that's going to be called nationalism but the basic idea that I have there is that, you know, if you're able to exert a little bit more control over trade, for example, on the international level, you're then going to be able to somewhat insulate your own country against some of these global markets that are destructive to local economies within the country. So in other words, it's a kind of nationalism in defense of localism, a nationalism in defense of federalism. I would extend that, you know, to issues like immigration and to a whole panoply of other things as well.

Beyond that, I think we just have to, you know, um, be aware of the damage that social media can do. I'm skeptical of a lot of efforts to try to artificially recreate the newspaper environment of the, you know, the 19th century and the 20th century but we should at least, you know, think about, um, you know, um, what we are losing and as you get, you know, a media that is more nationalized of this, you know, sort of no longer channeled through local institutions. And, you know, I don't have a silver bullet for this problem, but it does seem to me that, you know, recognizing the, the difficulty is a starting point.

You know, I think that, you know, things, you know, remedies like the idea of increasing the size of the House of Representatives should be considered. So that's an institutional fix. It's something that, you know, progressives might be somewhat more enthusiastic about than conservatives.

And yet I think that if you had more representatives in the House, that would somewhat mitigate this idea that House districts have become over large. And, you know, when you have hundreds of thousands of people in a single district, they don't quite behave the way that the founding fathers had originally hoped for. And the other thing beyond that is that I would continue to, um, you know, sort of reinforce the wisdom of, what the founding fathers did and, uh, you know, the Federalist Papers and its outlook on the way in which you can have a popular system of government that is not simply going to become a plebucitary or a demagogic, uh, you know, uh, system.

And in order to maintain this kind of structured, uh, popular government, you need to maintain things like the filibuster, uh, things like, you know, the idea that, uh, you know, uh, states are, uh, represented equally in the US Senate. These things that are being attacked by progressives as being anti-democratic are in fact the thing that makes democracy orderly and really make it possible and strong. Whereas if you got rid of them, you would have a plebucitary system that I think would generate much more of a populist backlash, because again, you'd have huge numbers of people who would just feel as if they're not represented at all by a, you know, sort of national, uh, you know, uh, political force, which, uh, may be depending upon, you know, 50% plus one, but, you know, a little beyond that in terms of its, um, you know, base of support, and they even have less than that.

You know, you may have a very sophisticated elite, which is capable of using its media tools, using, you know, economics, using, uh, you know, you know, political, um, electoral systems that it may have control over, in order to, you know, sort of, uh, feather its own bed and to, you know, maintain in power a class of, you know, leaders who, uh, really don't feel a great connection with, uh, uh, you know, their fellow Americans. And in fact, may feel that, you know, they exist in order to represent humanity more than they exist to represent American citizens. I think that's one of the main conflicts, uh, you know, that our politics in general is dealing with right now, this idea that at the corporate level, you have corporations that think of themselves as global

citizens, as opposed to American companies.

Uh, but also at the political level, you have an awful lot of, uh, leaders in this country in both parties who really do think in terms of a, you know, sort of universal system of human rights that the United States should be upholding as opposed to the idea that the United States really exists for the sake of American citizens themselves, which does not mean that it doesn't have to take, uh, regard to, uh, you know, universal rights, but it means that our primary responsibility as Americans is to America and to our, our fellow citizens. And if we, you know, say that actually our obligations to the rest of the world or to, you know, sort of, uh, immigrant populations to newcomers, et cetera, are just as great as they would be to our fellow citizens, then you no longer have a, you know, sort of Republican system of government among the defined people. What you have instead is rather a, a certain leadership class, which is claiming that, uh, you know, these abstract rights give this class a direct authorization to, you know, not just police the world, but also to look at America as something to be managed as opposed to something where the voice of the people has to be heard.

That's right. My, my kids go to our, our Christian school here. They, uh, for a number of years were in a public school.

And one of the, one of the things that always bothered me was, uh, one of the mottos of the public school was to make world citizens. And I thought, well, how does one become a world? There's no citizenship for the world. There's no passport that says world citizen.

It's, uh, it's one of those vapid sort of goals. And yet underneath it, what that says by virtue of what it's not saying, whereas whatever you want to say about what public education is now, certainly one of the aims from the beginning was to create virtuous American citizens. And so to now say we're creating global citizens is something entirely different.

I want to go back to, and we will get back to your first things review and talk about the Hizoni book, but a few more questions. You mentioned Wilmore Kendall, the conservative affirmation. You wrote the, the new introduction or forward for it.

And I've read the book and he was, uh, a very, you know, the word interesting is, is overused, but he wasn't an interesting guy. He did not live a life that was probably a model of virtue in, in certain ways, but of an eclectic and, uh, and intriguing thinker who brought these two things. You said a conservative and a populist impulse, but there's one thing I'd love to get your, your take on.

He writes this in the preface. So this is 1963. And I underlined and starred this.

Let me just read a few of these sentences. This book, unlike other books treats the relation between American conservatism and religion as problematic. The problem put

briefly is this, he writes, the United States is, has been down to now anyways.

This is 1963, a Christian society governed or rather self-governed under a secular constitution. Nothing short of the sea change I mentioned a moment ago is likely to deprive Judeo-Christian religious beliefs of the special status approximating that of a public truth that they enjoy within it. But also nothing short of such a sea change is likely in the foreseeable future to gain for them a more privileged status than they now enjoy.

Attempts to resolve the religious society, secular constitution tension in the United States and either the one direction or the other are not only divisive, but contrary to the American tradition itself. They do a poor service both to America and American conservatism who say and write things that tend to read out of the ranks of conservatives, men in whose hearts Judeo-Christian religious teachings evoke no response as also those who say and write such things that suggest religious men must somehow divest themselves of their deepest commitment in order to make themselves conservatives. I started that because I thought this was very prescient and yet this is 1963 and his basic argument is there's been this inherent problem as it were, attention, that on the one hand America at least no federal establishment, there were state established religions and it took 50 years for that disestablishment to take place.

God has not mentioned in the Constitution and yet he says Judeo-Christian truth has been a kind of public truth and he says there's this sort of detente between the two and it would be very un-American for either of these to fall away. Well now 60 years later what he couldn't see is that Christianity no longer operates at the highest echelons of society as any kind of public truth. Shared sense of morality or public virtue even if in many places in the public square you tried to make an argument from Bible verses you would be laughed out.

Of course you can't make an argument from Bible verses that's just not what we do but of course that's what many Americans did and many public officials did for most of American history and I think it's no coincidence that as Judeo-Christian religion and values and Christianity as public truth has greatly declined and waned that you're now seeing some whether it's Christian nationalists or Catholic integrals or earlier in the 90s it was theonomists. I think you're seeing Christians say wait a minute that that part of the tension has been resolved in one direction where these Christian views are no longer a kind of public truth therefore at the time where it's least likely for any sort of Christian establishment to take place I understand why some conservatives are saying look the only way to retain and regain ground is to have some sort of more official Christian establishment whether it's an established church whether it's a you know Catholic integralism ideas that are as far removed from reality as they've ever been in this country and yet I understand the impulse as a Christian I understand the impulse because as Kendall is saying we've had this we're religious but we're not a religious state formally kind of tension from the beginning how should we make sense of that because I

think he rightly is seeing something about the American spirit and the American tradition and yet what are people of religious faith to do when it seems like no the Christianity has no sort of public truth anymore in most places one of the elite thinking. Yeah I think part of the great challenge here is that even if you want to restore that balance which you know some of our you know more theonomic or integralist friends may want to go beyond restoring that balance they may want to resolve that tension as you've said in the opposite direction by having you know a confessional state basically but even if you just want to get back to the kind of balance that is traditional in America the question is do you do that by making the argument in favor of that balance or do you have to do it by basically trying to counterbalance in the opposite direction of where the mainstream you know institutions of power are pulling us if the latter is the case then you know in order to you know have this game of tug-of-war where the left is constantly pulling us towards you know not just secularism but really a kind of established anti-Christianity if you want to you know even just get back to the center of things you're going to have to pull very hard in the opposite direction back towards a very you know sort of strict Christian order this is something that you know currently causes a great many tensions and conflicts in the American right and you know I again can't say that there is a silver bullet here that will resolve the difficulty and it seems to me that one thing that those of us who are sort of very appreciative of the balance that you know our ancestors were able to reach that of the founding fathers were able to come to and not just the founding fathers but you know Americans throughout the centuries one thing I would say is that you know you don't have to be as afraid of some of the you know sort of friends of ours on the right who are you know sort of pulling for a more strictly you know sort of confessional order but again because of what you pointed out it's very unlikely this is going to come to pass and so you know they are putting out radical ideas but they're radical ideas that are grounded in at least you know components of truth the difficulty of course is always that people will latch on to one thing that is partly correct and you know it's often the definition of heresy that you take a partial truth and turn it into the whole truth and there are all sorts of pitfalls especially spiritually when it comes to the idea that there can be some sort of powerfully redemptive elements in the political order itself and I think you know Christians must always be careful of you know succumbing to a kind of Pharisee and Pharisee as of there or simply you know coming to a kind of civil religion or state worship even if it may be branded with the name of Christianity but we're very far from that you know being a practical problem right now we're in fact you know what we're dealing with are people who are making sort of platonic republics only they're Christian platonic republic so to speak you know in their minds and they're proposing these as models or that may be superior to what we have right now I think that you know project you know it's not something that would stop you know even if someone said hey I think this is irresponsible I think you're going too far and you know advocating the burning of heretics and the creation of you know sort of strict laws you know modeled upon you know early modern Europe you know right after the Reformation or you know sort of the late nitty evil period you know as extreme as those



ideas might be their ideas that again are on the level of Plato's Republic and some of the very bizarre proposals that are actually in the text of Plato things like you know well there's a little bit of communism a little bit of you know sort of the sexual revolution is to be found in Plato's Republic and yet you know very few people you know read Plato and think okay this is you know we have to actually implement exactly this kind of order so it seems to me that there there's going to be that tug of war between you know a left which has a very extreme position and a right which is going to you know at times offer an extreme that is contrary to that but is trying to you know contend against these very fundamental choices that the left is providing us with and then this you know sort of balance the basic American pathway through you know the connection between the transcendent and the practical that's something we're going to have to rediscover the wisdom of as we examine these you know on the one hand a theoretical approach that you know sounds very virtuous in the abstract but that really has very little connection to how we live today or perhaps how we've ever lived which is one of the things that I think you know many of our friends who are you know who look to the middle ages or who look to you know early modern Europe for models of Christian societies all those Christian societies actually had very deep flaws and there's a reason why all those societies actually fail and lead towards something you know that becomes the you know the tendency that we have today you know again political redemption is just something of a an igneous far to us it's a swamp light that people are following it arises from a reasonable impulse but it's it's not going to prevail and but you need I think you know that kind of going to the heart of things and confronting the ideals if you want to resist the left because the left is always making its case in terms of you know universal human rights in terms of the very highest ideals and not simply in terms of some sort of practical you know balance of things what needs to be rediscovered however is the real you know in spirit and serious and ended you know and Christian perspective on the American founding and the American tradition of government in general and and I think Wilmore Kendall you know who himself was very much a man of faith is someone who who kind of shows us how how to do that that you know he has a book called the basic symbols of the American political order which is published after the conservative affirmation and which he shows that from the Mayflower Compact onwards there was this sense that in order for America to work you had to have not just a free government not just you know a government by the people but it had to be a virtuous people and the people had to recognize themselves as deliberating under God you had to have that connection that recognition of the transcendent there was something more to being human more to you know fulfill in our spiritual you know essence than simply you know what a materialistic or utilitarian or epicurean view of humanity would suggest that it's all simply a matter of you know pursuing pleasure or pursuing you know material safety and well-being no in fact there's something much higher the American tradition has always recognized that even you know when you've had great national leaders like Abraham Lincoln whose personal orthodoxy as Christians is very much in doubt nevertheless there's a reason why Lincoln's you know language so powerfully invokes

the transcendent and the idea of providence and you so you work for uh you lead the the magazine founded by Russell Kirk and uh Kirk what one of and I I've read in the past year Bradley Berthard's biography of Russell Kirk and really enjoyed reading it and I'm from Michigan and I've pastored around Michigan State of course he didn't like Michigan State very much and then he moved up to his ancestral home in Micosta but one of the perhaps critiques of some conservative impulses is it can at times be perhaps a nostalgia for some past bygone era and I don't know that continuity is is entirely fair here but he says about Russell Kirk he liked lost causes exercises in imagination in haunted houses he minimized the differences Kirk did between Berke and European style conservatism with its preference for monarchy aristocracy and established churches and American constitutionalism with its belief in enumerated powers individual natural rights and religious pluralism there's much more to Kirk than that and I think there's uh you know I think the conservative mind even if it is somewhat of a mishmash of a number of figures still has a lot to instruct us and I find a lot that I resonate with but one of the one of the the challenges I think is just what you said and that's try to try to come up with not come up with but try to describe the vision that we have in a way that finds some roots in the the world in which we now live I mean it's it's perhaps Catholics would say oh medieval Europe that's late medieval Europe that's when we really had it going on and maybe a reform Protestant would say if we could get to Geneva of Calvin's 16th century and yet as you point out those societies had deep flaws and there's a reason that societies are not ordered in those ways any longer and we have our own American tradition which of course is not sacrosanct it's not infallible and yet anything that is going to have it seems to me some purchase power among the people is going to have to find a way to say if you're trying to sell something that says the Constitution and the Declaration got it all wrong or we'll get to Hisoni here the Declaration got it mostly wrong and the Constitution really got it all right that's that's not I don't think bound to be a winner in the minds and hearts and imagination of people and you bring up Lincoln and you could also talk about MLK for all their differences one of the reasons they were successful with their their sort of moral vision was they were rooting it in what they saw to be the the best of the American ideals or American traditions and so how do you think we try to do this and here we're coming to Hisoni's book which has you know just as as a as a Christian now he's a Jew not a Christian but many of his chapters at the end he talks about being a conservative person he talks about Sabbath he talks about scripture I find myself resonating with would that more people were were serious Christians I would say in reading their bible and keeping Sabbath and yet I think one of your critiques of Hisoni at the end of your review is that's a wonderful vision and it's it's hard to have a vision that requires people to be the absolute best version of themselves and that's one of the geniuses I think of the founders is understanding people rarely are the best version of themselves and I think you even point out with Hisoni not just what he's done but needing to find the sort of wife that he's found that you know wants to pursue this this life together so what is your your what what is Hisoni arguing for in his book on rediscovering conservatism and just our time is running short but what do you resonate

with and what are one or two of the critiques that you laid out of his vision yeah Hisoni you know was educated at Princeton University among other places and he found the Princeton even in the 1980s was already succumbing to all the pathologies that we see on our campuses today in terms of you know not just ideology but also the you know sort of hedonistic lifestyle that students were expected to follow you know a life of promiscuity a life of you know sort of heavy drinking perhaps you know abuse of other substances and Hisoni was you know appalled by this he was not you know an intensely orthodox Jew perhaps when he first went to Princeton but he just found that the degree of libertarianism that existed on American campuses was such that you know it kind of reinforced him the idea that one has to find the you know sort of spiritual fortification to resist this kind of you know almost compulsory debauchery and so Hisoni you know became I think more and more serious you know not just about his faith as a faith but also the practices and the way of life that are appropriate to that faith and he was very lucky he found you know a young woman who you know was going through you know kind of a similar trajectory a similar path and so you know they married and they since you know started a very large family and they actually they live in Jerusalem your arm is you know someone who sometimes advises the Netanyahu government someone who you know is very deeply connected with Israeli politics but Hisoni has also you know noticed that if the state of Israel is going to survive in the future it's going to require that the world respect the idea of national sovereignty and the idea of nationhood and so Hisoni wrote a book a few years ago called A Virtue of Nationalism and one of the important things about that book is that Hisoni is basically trying to communicate basically to the Gentile nations why they should take their own nationalisms seriously why they should not be embracing this kind of universal United Nations you know and in some ways beyond that a kind of almost impulse towards a world government that you see certainly the intellectuals of you know the western world embracing and Hisoni says no in fact you know there are important virtues that a political community is able to cultivate in terms of its way of life in terms of its recognition of the transcendent in terms of connecting you know the day-to-day with the transcendent all these things you know are mediated in part through politics and through nation-states and that's certainly true in Israel and Hisoni tends to take Israel as being kind of a model for the rest of the nations and that's something that you know has bolded strength and its weaknesses I think Hisoni is correct to remind us that in the early modern period of western history there were an awful lot of thinkers who did indeed look at the idea of biblical Israel to inform the idea of nationhood you know even in England even in a number of other places on the other hand that was you know sort of one element of the developing nationalism or nation state consciousness of you know sort of the 17th century it was not the whole of it and there were other you know sort of components in thinking about politics as well and so one small critique I have of a of Hisoni is that I think sometimes he takes that particular element the idea of biblical nationhood and then the model of Israel today as being paradigmatic in a way that it only partly applies to you know sort of western nation states like you know Britain and France and you know applies to the

United States only in a kind of loose way as well.

One of the great things about Hisoni's book conservatism a rediscovery is that he does try to show that in fact there is a deep conservatism and not simply a liberalism in the American founding in the American constitutional tradition that connects with and has a certain number of parallels with and continuities with the British tradition and this now goes back not only to Edmund Burke in the sort of late 18th century but goes back much farther you know in fact Hisoni points to John Fortescue who is a 15th century thinker as being someone who already has in Hisoni's claim a pretty solid grasp on the essentials of what Hisoni would call the Anglo-American tradition of constitutional government. I think all of that is an important you know rediscovery as the title of Hisoni's book suggests that we've been told for a very long time since basically you know sometime after the first world war that America has a purely liberal foundation and one of the things I think is ironic is that some of my inter-religious friends for example have exactly the same view here that many you know quite progressive left-wingers have about the idea of liberalism all the way down. All of it all of its John Locke all of it has been you know liberalism and all liberalism is the same that basically the liberalism of John Locke of Thomas Jetton is identical to you know the political thought of John Adams or Alexander Hamilton or George Washington and all of that in turn is identical to John Stuart Mill and John Stuart Mill in turn is identical to the UN Declaration of Human Resources rights and then John Rawls and then you know everything that we have today up to you know whatever ideologues are running the the Joe Biden administration and all of that is bad history and Hisoni is a correction to that now I think Hisoni may in some respect to be an over correction I think Hisoni you know sometimes you know saying that there are these two permanent camps at conservatives and liberals which were you know at hammer and tongs back during the American Revolution and during the American founding period and that you know these two you know streams of thought these two perspectives have you know a kind of a permanent metaphysical existence which I do not think they have I think you know both of these you know conservatism and liberalism they're both more historical than Hisoni perhaps would tend to lead us to think and also more recent The New York County.

Yeah and they don't just wear black hats and white hats or federalists and anti-federalists or federalists and Jeffersonians or Constitution, yay, declaration not so much as you point out you know John Adams is also influencing the declaration and signing the declaration it's not just a recapitulation of Jefferson's own views but it's a consensus document as is the Constitution so I you know I resonated with your appreciation for what Hisoni is doing in rediscovering these various influences in the American founding and also resonated with yeah but it's not so neat and tidy that the good guys were over here and the bad guys were over here and those sort of platonic ideas and ideals still exist in our own if we could just map ourselves on the right one history is usually messier than that I wanted to ask you one last question I say last but I'll probably think of another

one but I when I read through Cantonese book one of the things that struck me again as it as an evangelical Christian and minister was how little evangelicals played in that hundred year history that he wrote about now they do as an electoral force especially starting in the late 70s you know 1976 is the year of the evangelical of course then it's Jimmy Carter but then with the moral majority and Regan and off we are and so today evangelical almost becomes just a a popular electoral category rather than a theological one but as far as intellectual influences in the movement it's almost exclusively Jews and Catholics now I have my my suggestions on why that may be but you're even more of a student of the history of it than I am why do you think or has continuity just missed it or why do you think evangelicals for all of their vaunted influence that we hear of today either for good or for ill depending on which side you're talking to in the telling of the hundred years of the right in America seem to have played such a insignificant intellectual role in the movement yeah I think it's a matter of parallel intellectual developments so the you know heavily sort of Catholic and Jewish intellectual background of so much of postwar American conservatism kind of leads to a self-perpetuating mythology so the fact that the editors of national review for example tended to be Roman Catholics the fact that an important magazine like commentary you know was published by the American Jewish committee the fact that you had you know all of these particular Catholic and Jewish intellectuals who had a very prominent role in the early days of conservatism led to a a view of conservative thought as being you know if not exclusively Catholic and Jewish you know largely part of a world of discourse that you know Catholics and Jews were primarily constructing and it really didn't have a you know very significant evangelical component what that misses of course is that you know evangelicals were a large movement who had their own institutions their own magazines their own you know radio stations their own media and their own you know civic institutions and there's a parallel history that goes on you know in the postwar era among these evangelical institutions and you know quite understandably you know Catholic journalists and Jewish journalists and academics they don't have any you know sort of native background with what's happening in the evangelical world right at the same time as the development of the Catholic and Jewish conservative movement through national review and through certain other you know sort of very prominent institutions so I think one reason for why why all histories of you know American conservative especially the intellectual American conservative movement in the postwar era tend to inadequately cover evangelical developments is because you know the background of so many people who you know were at some of these key institutions were very far removed from the evangelical experience and so they're just not aware of some of the parallel developments were taking place and and there's so there's some good scholarship to be created by broadening the narrative and showing actually at the same time as you have you know William F. Buckley Jr. or Norman Padorets doing X, Y, and Z you also have various evangelical figures who are leading you know a thought about how Christianity and politics relate to one another now I don't know that story myself so I'm very you know certain that that that lacuna exists that there is in fact this

untold story which someone or many people need to go out and you know retail and rediscover but I'm not the person to do that myself I'm you know Catholic and I come from you know the you know history of a lot of these conservative institutions that are part of the narrative that you find you know in continuity's book and elsewhere and that really you know they may have existed in parallel with developments among evangelicals but they were on separate tracks certainly until you know maybe the 1980s or beyond right yeah that's that's I think that's really well put and I would you know some some erstwhile listener out there should fill in that lacuna obviously there there's a lot that's been done to trace the rise of neo-evangelicalism and Carl F.H. Henry and his book *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* would be one Francis Schaeffer I think makes a guest appearance here there in Content Eddie's book so he would be another key figure among conservatives but there there is and part of it may be too again for for right or wrong but you know the the WASP establishment in the United States I think evangelicals until fairly recently have tended to think you know without any reflection but just have assumed we can talk about this country as our country whereas perhaps Roman Catholics or Jews even more so might be trained to think oh we we need to I know it is every month it is much their country but just intellectually think we need another kind of voice or movement where I think evangelicals have thought of themselves as hey we are the majority and people should listen to us and I think that's meant that they've been slow at times to try to understand and try to speak you don't want to just acquiesce to being an intellectual minority and yet that is the fact now and have been slow to understand okay how do we how do we make arguments now that are persuasive that you can't just appeal writ large and say hey this is America and you're not going to want to lose this no you need to find ways to make new arguments because you no longer have the the cultural institutions and forces supporting those sort of ideas or just the assumptions that if you can just show people it's kind of like with with Billy Graham Crusades Billy Graham for most of his preaching career I think in this country could tap into a residual sense of I should probably go to church being a Christian would be a good thing and I'm I need to have Jesus as a good person and you could tap into some residual sense of guilt or I'm not doing it and and then he presents so powerfully the the solution the answer is to give your life to Christ where I think now you would have to build up a whole lot of other intellectual superstructures to really convince people of that and I think that's happened to some degree with evangelicals but we're playing catch up on that and happy to be in conversation with lots of people who are thinking along the same lines let me give you this is our last question then you just wrote a piece recently where you called for what we need is a conservative avant garde that sounds not conservative but that's not what you but but you explain that in the piece what did you mean by that a an avant garde to the conservative movement? Well you know both in the arts and also philosophically so even though I was talking primarily about culture it really does go up to the level of the highest ideas the shape of the future is usually led by the people who are you know sort of most radical who are trying to expand the possibilities of an art form or a genre or for that matter the possibilities of

you know sort of human expression the human experience and progressives have understood this very well and it's a reason why so many ideas that you find in the academy or in the world of you know sort of arts and literature you know 20 years ago 30 years ago or even longer wind up sort of predicting and tracing the direction that popular culture is going to take you know 30 40 years later Conservatives have you know often lamented that they have not had a position upstream from politics and culture as it were and yet it seems to me that conservatives are pretty complacent and would often rather affirm the glories of the past and try to say what would it mean to actually be at you know the wellspring of the flow of culture what we mean for conservatives to try to get ahead of the progressives philosophically and creatively and that's a big question and it's not one I try to completely answer in my my column but certainly I want to get conservatives thinking about that and if we look throughout the 20th century we find that oftentimes some of the most impressive modernist poets and playwrights and philosophers were conservatives people like a T.S. Eliot for example so certainly there is a kind of conservative modernism and even back then a conservative avant-garde and you can see you know a few indications of such a thing today maybe in you know a French novelist like Michel Wellbeck but but it's but it's much attenuated today and it seems to me that conservatives you know have an opportunity not just to rediscover something they were once much better at but also to respond to the very stultifying and limiting political correctness that is now being imposed upon the arts and upon upon you know the most sort of advanced modes of thinking by progressives and to say well look you can't create you know really vital and transformative art when you have this extremely you know restrictive you know orthodoxy being imposed by progressives and the progressives do it of course in the name of you know human freedom and transgressiveness and all these other concepts that sound radical and revolutionary but in fact it's become very stale just as you know the left-wing version of avant-garde art is in fact you know it hasn't advanced since Marcel Duchamp right it's still hanging a urinal on the wall of the you know art museum and saying oh look how trendy and you know sophisticated we are well Duchamp did it you know over well over a hundred years ago you haven't really you know forged in a new grounds since then but conservatives I think tend to be um they would rather you know sort of um reflect upon the glory of what's gone by and what we may be losing which is there and there's a place for that as I say in in the essay um you know people often need the the opposite of what they already have conservatives already have this great respect for tradition and for the past what they need is the innovative and creative spirit that they often don't have and what more progressive need is not this idea of overturning things and revolution what they actually need and they would benefit artistically if they took more seriously a great you know sort of patrimony both artistic and also spiritual of western civilization. Daniel McCarthy thank you for being on life in books and everything I'm a terrible host in that I was also supposed to uh thank our other sponsor Westminster Seminary Press and just to our listeners go and check out all the great books that they're putting out and also the books that they sell through the through the website often uh

they they try to undersell Amazon so go there and especially look out during this holiday season crossway ESV Bibles 50% off through December what would be a better gift for yourself or someone else than a bible so Westminster Seminary Press Daniel thank you for being on the program hope that we can meet sometime in person and uh until then for all of our listeners hope you glorify God and join him forever and read a good book.

(dramatic music)

[buzzing]