

After failing to adopt a centralized constitution, Franz Josef's imperial bureaucrats decided to save the empire not by tightening control over their fractious subjects but by loosening it. They gave Austria and Hungary separate parliaments, with unprecedented political autonomy. They established unique conditions for economic success by setting up a vast single market that allowed people to buy and sell with a single currency, travel on an unbroken network of roads and railways, conduct business across a grid of telegraph and mail lines, draw credit from a

common banking system, and invest under the umbrella of universally recognized laws. They let the two "halves" of their empire make their own domestic and fiscal policies. The enterprise fell apart only when the Czechs and Slavs demanded similar political power and the emperor tried instead to tighten up.

Brussels should learn two lessons from Vienna, Mitchell writes. First, "a multinational union's chances of success increase in inverse proportion to its determination to concentrate political power at the center." Second, Bill Clinton had it right

when he rested his election campaign strategy on the notion that "it's the economy, stupid." Give primacy to economic integration.

America, too, can learn a Habzburg lesson: Don't push—or appear to push—the European states toward more unification than their own citizens are ready for, and cultivate countries willing to work with Washington on a bilateral basis rather than pursue a top-down strategy. The new member states of Central Europe have common interests with the United States. A smart superpower works with the little guys.

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

# Conservative Complicity

**THE SOURCE:** "Civil Rights and the Conservative Movement" by William Voegeli, in *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2008.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR., THE influential conservative thinker who died in February at the age of 82, opposed every milestone achievement of the civil rights movement. He denounced the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* when it was handed down, opposed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and belittled the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a marginal federal effort to "instruct small merchants in the Deep South on how they may conduct their business."

Yet Buckley was not himself a

bigot, commentators wrote upon his death, but merely either blind or indifferent to bigotry around him. Discrimination simply failed to engage him or many other conservatives in the 1950s and '60s as a struggle of "great moral urgency," writes William Voegeli, a visiting scholar at Claremont-McKenna College. The choice between shrink-

Conservative William F. Buckley Jr. opposed every milestone achievement of the civil rights movement, but he was no bigot.

ing Big Government and defeating communism on the one hand and ending entrenched and periodically brutal racial discrimination on the other wasn't a close call: Discrimination was regrettable, but governmental expansion was worse. Buckley hoped that attitudes would change incrementally in response to social rather than political pressures. "There is no way of knowing whether that train, running on those tracks, would have ever come into the station," Voegeli writes.

Buckley and the conservatives for whom he spoke wound up on the wrong side of history, and they allowed the conservative philosophy to be painted as a ruse designed to perpetuate racial inequality. Conservatives opposed to racial discrimination "had few obvious ways to act on that belief without abandoning their long twilight struggle to reconfine the federal government within its historically defined riverbanks

after the New Deal had demolished all the levees,” Voegeli writes. But they didn’t look particularly hard for alternatives, either. Buckley eventually recanted, saying that his view that America could evolve its way out of Jim Crow was wrong. His own opinion had changed over time, however, and by 2004 he said flatly, “Federal intervention was necessary.”

Conservatives’ complicity in segregation during the early years of the civil rights movement made it easy for liberals to dismiss all their subsequent arguments against busing, affirmative action, and hiring goals and timetables. By drawing a line in the sand and then eventually conceding that it had been politically and morally indefensible, conservatives lost standing to affect the course of the debate. When faced with what they saw as the constitutionally reckless approach of the civil rights movement to ending segregation, these conservatives

shrugged their shoulders and proposed waiting until the segregationists got religion. By letting the best be the enemy of the good, Voegeli argues, conservatives “squandered the opportunity to fashion a constitutionally principled argument in favor of either augmenting the federal government’s powers so they were equal to the task of ending Jim Crow, or activating latent powers afforded by the Constitution that were not being brought to bear against segregation.”

By drawing the line in an indefensible place, conservatives ceded the high ground to those who insisted there should be no lines whatsoever—those willing to embrace any expansion of government that might further racial justice. “Liberals came to grief over civil rights because they had no stopping point,” Voegeli concludes, “while conservatives came to grief because they had no starting point.”

## RELIGION &amp; PHILOSOPHY

## Will Evangelicals Hail Mary?

**THE SOURCE:** “Evangelicals and Mary” by Tim Perry, in *Theology Today*, July 2008.

STARTING WITH THEIR OPPOSITION to abortion access, Catholics and evangelical Christians have a lot in common politically. But they still differ dramatically in their theology and everyday worship practices, and that is nowhere more apparent than in their reverence for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Among Catholics, the role of the Virgin has traditionally been central, among evangelicals, almost nonexistent. Now evangelicals are rediscovering Mary, writes Tim Perry, who teaches theology at Providence College and Seminary in Manitoba, for reasons both devotional and theological.

The near-universal veneration of Mary became a casualty of the

## EXCERPT

## End of the Mainline

*America was Methodist, once upon a time—Methodist, or Baptist, or Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, or Episcopalian. . . . In truth, all the talk, from the 18th century on, of the United States as a religious nation was really just a make-nice way of saying it was a Christian nation—and even to call it a Christian nation was usually just a soft and ecumenical attempt to gloss over the obvious fact that the United States was, at its root, a Protestant nation. . . .*

*The denominations were often engaged in what*

*later generations would scorn as narrow sectarian debates. . . . Perhaps precisely because they were aimed inward, the Protestant churches were able to radiate outward, giving a characteristic shape to the nation: the centrality of families, the pattern of marriages and funerals, the vague but widespread patriotism, the strong localism, and the ongoing sense of some providential purpose at work in the existence of the United States.*

*Which makes it all the stranger that, somewhere around 1975, the main stream of Protestantism ran dry. . . . The great confluence of Protestantism has dwindled to a trickle over the past 30 years, and the Great Church of America has come to an end.*

—JOSEPH BOTTUM, editor of *First Things*, Aug.–Sept. 2008