

Panel 6 Discussion

(Unedited Transcript)

Well thank you, Alan. That's a hard billing to live up to, but I have the easiest job because I actually get to listen to you all talk, and I'm not gonna very much. We've heard so many brilliant speakers today, and I know it's got our minds worrying and a lot of thinking going on. What we want to do is try to translate that into some kind of strategies for action.

And I like to hear from some of the quieter voices in the room: George, and Owen, and Deborah, and some of the other people who haven't had a chance to speak so much. I think we're all, as Dr. Franklin called us, transformed nonconformists, and we have a very important task ahead of us, and it would not be successful without the voices of all of us. So I want to encourage everybody, Tracey, everyone to participate and tell us, where do we go from here?

What I'm going to do is perhaps capsulize some of the things that I've heard, just to give you some food for thought, and then let's open it up and see what might make some sense. I think as one great analyst and observer of history and economics would say, "The question now is what is to be done." Or as Geno Baroni would say, "What are we gonna do about all this?" And if we would channel Baroni, the other one was not so much a theologian, but certainly an observer, nonetheless.

So a couple things that have come up is, you know, we need a narrative. We critically need a narrative. Pablo talked about a plan and detailed programs, but those need to be within the frame of a narrative. What the right wing does, as we know, so well is to be able to put out broad, simple certitudes, moral certitudes, that resonate with people. Our side tends not to be able to do that.

So if we need a narrative, if there is some consensus on that, how do we get there? How do we begin to talk about the common good, the responsibility to one another? How do we do that? And how do we begin to re-create coalitions when the demographics have changed, when we have increasing political and geographic isolation? I don't know how many of you saw the article in the Post today about people living in the exurbs, and it talked about how completely isolated they are. But the biggest problem they're concerned about is their lawn. The only political conversation they have, if you would call it that, is about traffic. And that they vote very unconsciously, maybe based on some cursory viewing of an ad on television, and they vote Republican.

And they consciously move out there so they don't have to be confronted with immigration, African-Americans, they are 89 percent white, their schools are great, there's nothing in their personal life that confronts them with a need for social change. So what do we do about that? When we talk about coalitions with the increasing depopulation of cities, and that kind of thing?

Some people talked about Patriot Pastors. Do we need some Public Morality Pastors? That's a thought that we can explore. Other folks talked about government and the need for us to begin to take government back. None of us sit on the Board of Directors of Chevron or Exxon, as far as I know, or Halliburton, that benefits so much from the Iraq

war. But we do sit on the Board of Directors of government. That's practically the only entity we sit on the Board of Directors of.

But very few of us actually exercise our role as members of the Board of Directors of government. So how do we begin to do that, and how do we begin to exhort our constituencies and the people that we care about, to begin to see government as theirs, and to use it for the implementation of the vision that Geno Baroni so eloquently worked for?

A couple other things, very quickly, that I heard and then I'm gonna open it up to you. We heard from Celinda Lake, the pollster, yesterday, that you know, the number one value that people embrace is equal opportunity. Even as they demonize the poor that Ram talked about, they embrace the concept that people in this society should have equal opportunity. Does that give us some fertile ground, something fecund that we can build from? So that's something to think about. The other question is, you know, with the question of poverty, how do we get that back on people's tables? Celinda told us that Katrina is basically a faded memory already. That in fact, while it got on people's radar screen for a quick moment, it's already gone, it has not created the sense of outrage that has left people saying, "You know, we've got to do something about poor people."

Poor people are so demonized, very much as Baroni expresses in that quote, so very well. So yes, charity is fine, let's help the Katrina victims. But you know, we're not going to do anything about poverty, not going to create a policy that changes that. And in fact, there's no real great outcry about the calls in Congress now to cut all of the programs for the poor in order to possibly fund the war, and the tax break for the rich, and the survivors of Katrina.

So what are we doing about that? Reverend McDonald talked about the black church being under assault from within and without, and the black community being under assault. And it reminds us of the Heritage Foundation, which about a month ago, while everyone was horrified by the images of children starving in the Superdome, instead of looking at the humanitarian impact of the crisis, said, "The margin of Democratic victory for Louisiana is right there in that convention Center, check this out," and are already talking about, "How do we keep New Orleans from being populated quite with the same demographics that it was before?" Because Louisiana, Democratic governor, Democratic mayor, hey, the Superdome and the convention center, that's where the Democratic margin of victory was. And they said that right in the heart of the crisis when we were all, you know, transfixed by the images of human suffering right here in our own lands.

So, there is a political implication, and I think Reverend McDonald spoke about that very powerfully. What do we do about that?

So these are just awesome things -- and we expect you all to solve this, by the way, in the next half-hour --

(Laughter.) A couple of concrete ideas that have come up: One has been Baroni centers, Baroni fellowships, things that can carry forth the vision of Baroni. Other has been a very specific call from Bob Edgar. Be interesting to get your reactions on this -- to the Eisenhower Foundation, to reconvene the Kerner commission, which brought the spotlight on race and poverty so powerfully, back in the sixties. To re-create the Kerner

commission, and then go around from state to state, city to city, and town to town, with those results. Maybe we can bring busloads of poor people into the exurbs where all they care about is their grass. You know?

So what are some things that we can do to address some of these concerns? And I don't want to speak too long, there were many, many other issues that were brought up. But as Pablo said, the 95 percent should be able to win against the five percent. We've just got to assume our seats on the Board of Directors of our government, and we've got to re-create the narrative, and we've got to exhort people to what most Americans already believe, according to the polling of Celinda Lake. And ask the question that I think Dr. Franklin talked about so well: what kind of community, what kind of nation, do we really want to have? And begin to put that vision out there.

So now I'm going to turn over to you, so you can answer all these questions. And as I said, I want to hear from some folks in the room -- Emmett, and then some folks in the room like Jackie and others, who have been listening so patiently for the last few days. What do you all think about all this? What do you see as some of the answers?

VOICE: (Emmett Folger) okay, why don't we start with Celinda? She told us that 88 percent of the people, their most important value was equal opportunity. So let's start with that, an opportunity society. Let's face it, the middle-class has collapsed. And if we link the poor that we've spoken about here with the financially unstable, living paycheck to paycheck, with the third group of the financially vulnerable, we have a winning coalition. Now, what's our deal with that?

I think -- and other people here could construct the deal better, but I would think that health, higher education, and housing, would be a good deal for us to put out there. And what we would say is that in an opportunity society, if you work a full-time job, you have a right to those three things: housing, higher education, and health. If you work a full-time job you have a right to those three things. How we'll do it's another story, but I think that would be the beginning of creating an opportunity society. I didn't like the word -- what was it -- "mutual opportunity." I'd drop the word, "mutual." Sounds a little too Kumbayah. But an opportunity society.

MS. MCDOWELL: And it just -- I think the language that tested actually very well was, "if you work hard and play by the rules" you should be able to have, you know, you should be able to have a house, and higher education and healthcare.

So what do people think about that? An opportunity society that links the poor with people who are living kind of paycheck to paycheck, worried about health benefits, worried about pensions? United Airlines, just after decades, dropped the pensions for its workers, said, "Sorry guys, we're bankrupt. Tough luck, no pensions."

So these kinds of things are happening. They're not getting a lot of attention. We don't have an opposition party that is raising these issues in a way that people can hear it, but is this -- what do people think about this? Father Drinan?

MSGR. DRINAN: I was the national president of the Americans for Democratic action, just for the three years after I left the Congress. These were the Reagan years. And we preached all these things that you just talked about. And we could get 45 percent of the vote. But the country has changed, and there's a certain selfishness, and one of the

buzzwords is lowering your taxes. And they tried this out on a lots of people, and they resent taxes, and they say President Bush says he will never raise taxes, and his father did that too. And that has destroyed the country, I mean just the selfishness.

So, people are whining here that the 0300Liberals have no program and they don't speak. That's not true. We do have a program, and it's based on idealism, and all these great things. But it doesn't help to go on saying, "oh, we get to go to the election thing and bring people back."

We have the blacks, 90 percent of them vote for us. We've lost some of the Evangelicals for a wide variety of reasons. And we just have to say that we have a very tough job on our hands. And as a clergyman, I say it's basically a moral thing, and that the Catholics have always been for the poor, for redistribution of -- for all those things. But somehow, we're getting only 45, 48 percent of the vote.

So, it's a challenge to all of us. But we shouldn't demean ourselves. And one of the speakers here said that the Liberals and the progressives have no program, that's not true. And the Democratic platform is what we believe in, and the Americans for Democratic action is still there, the voice of the Gospel, if you will. They take tough positions on 150 issues. 0301 We're losing to the gun nuts, and there's nothing we can do to change that, and the NRA. We have our own organization, but there's obsessions in this country that I don't know if we can extirpate them, or get rid of them. But as liberals and progressives, we should say, I say I believe in the foundation of Catholic social teaching. And Geno stood for that. He wrote about that. And that is not different from what Bob Edgar spoke about yesterday, from the president of the National Council of Churches. And certainly, the Jewish community is with us on this.

And we have to say, "Well, we're not going to despair, we're not going to let them get away with it." But the one thing that the other side will not talk about is the military. They won't. Why do we have to spend, like, \$300 billion? And I bring this up that there's 11 submarines out there in the Atlantic Ocean, with 700 nuclear weapons. And the same thing in the Pacific. Where are we going to raise these issues?

Now, when the Liberals do that, we lose more votes. So, we're in a very tough 0302situation. And will Senator John McCain be the Republican nominee next time? And who could beat him?

Those are the tormenting questions. And that's why I say all the time, let's get back to the moral basis. And Geno Baroni used to say that "Every person I encounter is Christ himself," and I say that. That's the basis of my apostolate: "whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers in Christ's name you do for me." And that we, the liberals and progressives say, "Listen, we don't want to say that we are more religious than those Evangelicals, but we have a broad vision of the Gospel." And the Gospel has to be somehow incorporated into the American way.

And that's what Roosevelt did, all of those things brought this country to a standard. And that's what the international human rights say, I teach that and write about that. And everywhere, international law now says that everybody has a right to the three things that you mentioned: health, equal opportunity, education, and housing.

MS. MCDOWELL: So, Father Drinan's 0303 raised a couple of issues, that there's some third rails, politically, that people seem to be afraid to talk about: taxes, and military spending. I don't know how many of you have read George Lakoff but he talks a lot about the framing of taxes, which started many years ago, so when Democrats say "tax relief," that's a bad frame because you ought to -- what do you need relief from? Something bad. So, subconsciously you're saying taxes are bad.

And his suggestion is that over time, people begin to reframe it around -- similar to tithing at church. We all understand, you want to be part of a club, you want to be part of a church, you tithe, you pay your dues. We have a responsibility to one another, there is a common good.

And so that over time there needs to be a reframing process that we begin to do with some of these issues that right now, I think as some of the other speakers talked about, people on our side don't have the courage to risk, because they're afraid to lose.

Another question I'd like to throw out to you, and then we'll hear from Ramal (phonetic) and then Jackie, is the African-American vote; we can't assume that we have the African-American vote, because a lot of it depends on who turns out, how big the turnout is, are you motivated to turn out?

And as we know, there's always this dichotomy: do we go after the base or do we go after the so-called "center," and risk losing our base?

In Ohio, which was the state that won the recent election for the current president, African-Americans gave 17 percent of their vote to Republicans. Primarily, on the gay marriage issue. There was a gay rights ballot initiative. And as Reverend McDonald talked about, the dichotomy in the black church, that brought out enough people who voted Republican, 17 percent. It was enough, along with the theft and everything else that went on, to give that President a margin of victory.

So we can't assume that we have the African-American vote. So I just wanted to throw those out for discussion as well. 0305 Ramal, and then Jackie.

VOICE: Reverend Ramal Tune, CEO of -- Clergy Strategic Alliances. In regards to that, which is practical, I think sometimes when I attend meetings such as this in the Beltway, the challenge is trying to bridge the gap between dealing with policy and that which is practical on the grassroots level. It's easy for us to get caught up in the policy and the political implications here in the Beltway, and have it not filter down into local communities.

One of the things that I would suggest in panels like this and others that I have attended and been a part of with the Center for American Progress, People for the American Way, and Jim Wallace and Soujourners is to broaden the table to include national grassroots organizations such as Gamilio (phonetic), IAF, PECO (phonetic), and Dart (phonetic); people who have experience on the grassroots level, and actually deal with the people, and look at how to shape policy that has a direct impact.

The other thing I would suggest is paying 0306 more attention to local elections. Oftentimes in a presidential election year, last year there was so much emphasis on the presidency and other national races, but no one paid attention to local races, no one paid attention to ballot initiatives, who was running for school board, things that people in the

community care about before they ever see the direct implications of the presidency on their lives. And I think we get more buy-in when we start with that which is local, and build to the national applications.

And then, finally, the third suggestion and last suggestion, is for the progressive community to really do some introspection and deal honestly with itself in terms of what our strengths and weaknesses are. I think we talk about the religious right, and Republicans, and all of these groups that tend to look towards the African-American community, but we fail to realize our own shortcomings around race. We assumed that because we call ourselves liberal, progressive, or Democrat, that we don't have any issues of racism. It never comes up, I think because race is one of the hardest things for us to deal with in this country. It's hard for us to tackle but I think if we're ever going to be successful, we must begin to deal with our own issues of race and racial discrimination, even within the Democratic Party, the progressive, and liberal movement.

MS. MCDOWELL: Okay, Jackie. Those are excellent comments, thank you so much, Reverend Tune.

VOICE: Good evening, my name's Jackie Conway from Baltimore. Committee building and partnership -- just asking the question about the better coalitions, because Mr. Bray tapped in on that this morning, and I wanted to know -- where do we start to make a better coalition?

MS. MCDOWELL: That's an excellent question. Does anybody want to answer that? How do we re-create those coalitions with the realities we're facing today? And might I add, and I'm going to turn over to you, Reverend Franklin, what Ramal talked about, which is very key, let's look at some of the key organizations, left of center: MoveOn.org, 95 percent white perhaps, maybe 99 percent white? Center for American progress, I'm not sure, but predominantly white. Campaign for America's future, almost totally white. Go to their conferences, you rarely see a face of color.

How can we win without the kind of coalition that Geno fostered? You look at the employment and the staff of these organizations, and they are just a few, but the staff of the leading organizations left of center, you know, vast majority white.

The leading magazines, "American Prospect," "the Nation," predominantly white.

Yet if you look at the history of social change in our country, it's always been won when there is very visible, vital leadership by people of color, and coalitions that include all of us.

So that's a very important question, Jackie. Thank you for raising it.

DR. FRANKLIN: If I could, Leila, my comment really piggybacks on Jackie and Reverend Tune's point. Let me just make this little observation. I like to pay attention to social and group process. The first Speaker, I don't know the gentleman's name, Emmett, offered a substantive, kind of values package, as it were, and I sense that the fact that it didn't stir any controversy, that we can assume significant consensus about, you know, the direction in which you're pointing. I certainly would. And I think that's significant. Then the next comment was a historical observation from Father Drinan. We've kind of done that before. This isn't new. We have some wisdom about this, it's kind of the take away for me. And I felt good about that exchange.

Then the next question, the next two comments have to do with who are the people who make this happen? And then, Leila, your wonderful framing comments. Seems to me just -- for me, set the ground for a program of a series of conversations, or meetings, or strategic convenings, beginning with the transformed nonconformists.

And I would submit that the meeting that needs to happen, soon if it isn't happening already, the convening, is the transformed 0310nonconformists in the Republican Party. You know, we talked about convening the choir, as it were, in organizations you identified, and the folks that all of us could write down, what are the five organizations you think are absolutely cutting-edge, and leave that. We'd have a terrific inventory of the group that have to be part of this movement.

But most of them would be in the choir, so to speak. Preaching to the choir? I don't think a choir needs -- the choir is doing stuff now. I think it's cherry-picking the University presidents that Pablo identified so importantly, foundation leadership (unintelligible) of the Council on foundations tells us \$32 billion of wealth was given away last year. And she talks about the twin virtues of integrity and generosity guiding philanthropy.

And yet, your diagnosis was right on. Who's convening the philanthropic leaders? Then clergy, especially Latino clergy, the fastest growing population. Real energy in that community, a lot of us know who those folks are. A lot of folk who aren't 0311necessarily talking about themselves as progressives. A lot of these Latino grassroots leaders and church leaders, thousands of people there.

So it seems to be, that kind of convening of transformed nonconformists, who are currently not in the choir, would be a strategic big-impact meeting. And then, the second meeting is bring the choir together sometime next year. That needs to happen.

And in the third meeting I see is -- put us all together and you teach us how to sing.

(Laughter.)

MS. MCDOWELL: And if I sang, everyone would run out of this room. So you're suggesting that there be some broader convenings of some of the sectors that Pablo talked about, and then a convening of the choir, in order to have some unified movement around something, and then a coming together of both sectors.

Okay, I've got Chris, Johnny, and then Pablo. And Susan.

VOICE: My name is Christopher Faha (phonetic), I'm with the Eisenhower 0312Foundation. I've been very impressed in the last two days with how many people were here who spoke eloquently of their faith, and came from a faith tradition.

When I look around the country in the public debate, I don't see very many progressives using a religious vocabulary. I see very, very few. And I think we need to give battle on the biblical interpretation and theological interpretation as well.

I think it's very important that our leaders, many of whom are young people, that have to be trained and encouraged in using religious vocabulary. I know in my life, the most radical person that influenced me was Jesus. Jesus hung out with the poor, and challenged me on so many ways. And then, figures like Amos and Jeremiah. Martin Luther King used that vocabulary beautifully, and I'm sure Geno did. But I don't hear it now. So I would think that would be part of an agenda, is to get into the seminaries, get young

people into the seminaries, that are going to think about how they can use their faith to speak to these issues. 0313

MS. MCDOWELL: And I'm going to put that here, and I'm hearing a lot of that. Father Drinan talked about the moral appeal, you know, appeal to the best of the American spirit. And you don't want to get stuck necessarily in debating the specifics, but appeal to, you know, the best of us. And it's similar to what you were talking about, Emmett, some of these, you know, higher moral qualities. And you're saying, you know, feel free to use faith, 86 percent of Americans believe in God.

So I think -- some of our earlier speakers had spoken about that, that it is a fact of American life. So to try to separate it from our political discourse is a false dichotomy that isn't really real. So I'm going to put that up here under "message," because we've got a couple of pretty good things on message. You guys are going to solve the world problems by 5:30. Okay, so we have Johnny, Pablo, and then Susan.

VOICE: (Johnny Gage) You know, I've heard it said before that we determine our worth here on earth by how we continue to live 0314on in the hearts of men. Even when we're gone, I think that this is just a perfect example of that, some of the principles that I hear from Geno Baroni. But I remember when Leila here earlier, she said, she spoke about a narrative. And I remember at that point, listening for themes to figure out what would be in the narrative? And I think what you did, Emmett, that was perfect, to start out with those common issues: housing, health, and higher education. It's everywhere we go. I had the opportunity probably two weeks ago of being out on the mall for the Millions More Movement. And I went very early in the morning, and I'm standing there, and over the course of the day, as I turned around, I didn't know there was that many black folks in the world.

(Laughter.)

Let alone in Washington D.C. at that time. And I couldn't help but think, here is the mass. It doesn't matter what denomination it is, what religion it is, it's the same issues. It's housing, health, and education. But here was the opportunity, there was the 0315opportunity for the narrative. There was the body, you're right, that was more than just the choir.

I guess the charge before us is, how do we frame the narrative, and what is the vehicle? And the vehicle may not always be in the pulpit, it may not always be in the choir, it may not always be in mosque. How do we get the average Joe do be concerned with the narrative? Because if not for Katrina, was the narrative delivered to the hurricane victims -- if not for that situation, or those kinds of situations, how do we get those kinds of informations? Traditionally, it's done through a Geno Baroni. But in the absence, where do we begin to look?

MS. MCDOWELL: It's a profound question. Any thoughts on that for we go to Susan? Any thoughts on the question that Johnny raised, which is really worth digging into, how do you get people to hear the narrative. Even though 86 percent of Americans believe in God, I don't know what the percentage that go to church, but it was much less. And so they may not get to the 0316pulpit or the mosque, or the synagogue, to hear that message. Any thoughts on that?

DR. FRANKLIN: Well, I would just go back to something that, you know, has been said in terms of the work you do, with respect to media. I once heard a presentation at the Ford Foundation on framing affirmative action, it was fascinating. This was a board meeting of the Ford Foundation, some staff permitted to sit on the wall, and hear the power brokers listening to this guy, Madison Avenue media analyst, talk about how poorly framed affirmative action was. But when they measured opinions of people who precisely weigh in on "Do you believe that America ought to be a society of equal opportunity?" those numbers were off the scale. "Yes, everyone." And the moment it said, "Do you believe that those who have suffered past grievances should be provided assistance as they" -- "Yes," way up high. And, "Do you support affirmative action?" Pow. And your point is Lakoff's point about framing, and we lose the battle over something so -- your point about the framing, and intelligent appropriation of religious language, which for me represents again, it ain't just a Christian story, it really is an interfaith story, so Welton Gaddy's presence is very important in terms of the think tank that informs how we frame messages.

And let's make use of NPR. Let's make use of the radio waves and get our people, our messages on these megaphones, so the people who aren't showing up for church are at least hearing this stuff while they sat stuck in traffic, on the way to the exurb.

MS. MCDOWELL: To their grass. Pablo?

MR. EISENBERG: Well, I think there's two constituencies that have to be mobilized. One I mentioned, the students. The activist students should be encouraged. And when you think about the living wage coalition at Georgetown, you know how many faculty people signed the letter of support, and also wrote e-mails to the president? 25 to 30, no more, out of hundreds of faculty. And so -- you have to encourage the students for activism, you got to organized them. You got to do what the right does. They poured millions of dollars into right-wing student newspapers, into organizations on campuses. I think the center left has got to do the same.

And you've got to organize the faculties. You have a network of 30,000 right-wing professors, spread out through the 11,000 institutions of higher education. They're well-financed, they've been around. They don't admit it publicly. That's a huge movement that is injecting their views with students, and organizing. I think we've got to do the same thing among the more progressive faculties. And that combination of activist students and activist faculty will be useful.

The other thing is, you look back at the seventies, and even the early eighties, in the nonprofit sector you had broad-based coalitions. You not only had civil rights organizations and low income associations -- which have been severely depleted. You don't have welfare rights organizations anymore. You have very few tenant organizations. You have very few legal services-client organizations. You had alliances between low-income working class folks, and you had the middle-class organizations.

And even sort of the health associations, and others. Something happened to create a divorce between low-income, Union, and disabled folks, and some of the civil rights organizations, and more middle-class organizations. The powerful forces in the seventies, League of Women Voters, American Association of University Professors, University

women, business federations of women, you had a number of middle-class organizations who were really on board on low-income anti-poverty issues.

That is no longer happening. And part of the reason is -- and for some reason, low income groups, and even organizations like my former organization, the Center for Community Change is no longer trying to do the bridging that Geno would have liked. They are isolated. They're immigrants and low income folks, think they can fight the major battles by themselves, and they're going to lose.

There's got to be an alliance with the middle-class organizations. And on the other hand, there has to be a reawakening of these huge nonprofits with real power, like the diseases folks and other folks, and the environmental groups, that have lots of money, lots of middle-class folks, who only think about their one issue.

I mean, it is an outrage that the American Heart Association with, you know, five, \$600 million budget and 2000 staff, cannot fight alongside other issues concerning poor people, when in fact, you know, the heart association is correlated to poverty.

So, those coalitions have got to be forged. They are hard to do, and you've got to have some leaders of major nonprofits going, you know, person-to-person, twisting arms, getting them involved. You're not going to do it by an e-mail.

MS. MCDOWELL: Susan, and then Joe, and Bob, and Johnny.

VOICE: (Susan Campbell) Okay, Pablo said a lot of what I was going to say. But a lot of what we are hearing today are really age-old problems, and you know, we could keep rehashing, rehashing all these issues. But the premise of today's forum was to really look at the nine principles, or Baroni's nine principles, and that was kind of the basis on which everyone's presentation was based on.

I think we need to look at those principles, and then define the problems from those principles, and use those as the strength and the backbone of the future of any type of initiative.

MS. MCDOWELL: Joe, Bob? Thank you very much, Susan.

VOICE: (Joe McNeeley) I want to sort of follow up also on Pablo's point. I have three -- I think -- simple things. Someone said earlier today, you know, something about the people demonizing the poor. I don't think the people are demonizing the poor. I think the people are listening to the poor being demonized.

We need to not demonize people. I think one of the mistakes of the progressive movement and one thing Geno was very critical of was demonizing ethnics, or demonizing the working class, or demonizing the exurb people, or demonizing the suburban people. One of the reasons in the polling we get, people didn't think that Kerry liked them. They thought he looked down on people. You know, I think the people we're losing, not the far right but the 20 percent in the middle -- we only need about two percent folks in an election year -- you know, they don't think progressives like them, those people we're losing.

So I think secondly, toward content, I'm always struck with how in the New Deal, we got welfare and public housing, which we've never gotten off the ground, and we got FHA, Fannie Mae, and a Social Security, and they are untouchable.

In Kennedy's war on poverty, we got specialized programs for the poor, which have never survived, and we got a major increase in Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security, to eliminate poverty being a problem of the elderly. And we cannot touch those, those are a third rail.

We progressives have to reformulate policies that can cross a broad swath of the income - we need to say, the airline attendants at United are just as invisible as the poor in the Katrina. They only pop up in a headline now and then.

We have to make that same connection and say, "Isn't it outrageous that there's a government that will let Delphi spin off the corporation with the pension, and then declare bankruptcy to get General Motors out of its pension obligation, and will let United throw its pension responsibility on the government, and will let FEMA be as badly" -- we need a government that will address all of these issues. It's what Geno would say. "We need a program that addresses my mother with her broken leg, and your mother with her broken back." A person with a broken back needs more, but the person with a broken leg needs that walker, too.

Formulating policies for quote "constituencies that deserve them the most" as a someone said earlier today, is a prescription for a targeted program that will never last. And we have to have the courage within our progressive coalitions to say we've got to broaden our agenda. And then finally, and third point, the way to broaden the agenda is, who's included? We've got to do a lot of organizing in the suburbs. We've got to do a lot of living room meetings. That conservative reactionary coalition didn't take over the Colorado school boards by a media campaign. They did it by a million living room meetings. And we've got to get out there, this is hard work. It took them 30 years, okay. Look, it took us 30 years from the turn of the century to the New Deal, to formulate a program and a framework out of which we got a 50 year run. That was pretty good, got a 50 year run out of it, took us 30 years to put it together.

Well, I took them 30 years to put this together, and if (unintelligible) is right, they're only going to get a 25 year run. And the next one, will only get a 12 and a half year run.

But it's going to take time. We've got to go out. We have to include the people that we've been losing in the organizing, and it's got to be about their issues. As Geno would say, organizing can be about the moral commitment to the needs of others. But one that is also anchored in my own self-interest and I can see a connection that gives us a broader common ground, then I've got a long-term organizing strategy. And I think those are some of the lessons of the Baroni -- working the middle.

MS. MCDOWELL: So basically, what I did was put this under what Emmett said, which was linking constituencies. And as Joe Hill, the great organizer would say, "Organize, organize, organize."

So basically you're saying we need to do more grassroots organizing in suburbs and other constituencies, that we need to kind of essentially say what you were saying, which is linking the poor with the middle-class, and the issues that cut across class and race and things like that.

VOICE: (Joe McNeeley) -- part of what they know is that everybody except people on welfare in the United States thinks they are middle-class. All of the polling says -- we

don't want to organize a against the middle-class. Even people who, you know, just 0326got their first job think of themselves as middle-class. And the people that were upper-middle-class, they don't think of themselves as upper-middle-class either. Everybody nominates for the middle-class in the polling data that I saying.

MS. MCDOWELL: But isn't part of the problem, Joe, that if you look at the candidates, they all address the middle-class, nobody talks about the poor? I mean, the question of poverty --

VOICE: (Joe McNeeley) What are they doing to the middle-class? They're screwing them.

MS. MCDOWELL: But what they address, if you look at all of Kerry's stump speeches, if you sit in the room with any Democratic pollster, if you sit in the room with any Democratic adviser, they will say, "Appeal to the middle-class, talk about the middle-class, don't worry about the poor; only 38 percent of them vote."

VOICE: (Joe McNeeley) Well, that's why if we just do it through a media campaign that polls the middle-class, we aren't going 0327anywhere. We've got to go out into living rooms.

And the middle-class in the suburbs have got to be speaking for their issues that are progressive that are aligned to us. And until they do, we're just another Madison Avenue slick campaign that lasts as long as Carl Rove can, you know, take time to shoot it down. So we've got to give up this -- you know, I think the Madison Avenue polling is great. Kerry had all the best pollers that money could buy. He didn't get the people in the middle-class in spite of all that posturing, because we didn't go get them. We let Kerry speak and hoped that they would listen. We've got to go out.

It's your point about they're not all coming to the churches to hear the pulpit. We've got a million living room meetings to do, folks. And until we've done a million living room meetings, we're not going to have a "Million Person March" on anything.

VOICE: (Emmett Folgert) I'm not so sure that they're going to show up in the million living rooms. It's not Tupperware 0328we're fighting against. We're fighting a group of people that are at war with us. They are at war with us, and we don't get it.

We're in a sophisticated democracy. We're 200 and some-odd years old, and so we don't kill our opponents. But our opponents understand media, and they're killing us. They're killing us. It's a suspended animation of disbelief. They're killing liberals, they're killing educators, they're killing the poor, and the liberals and the educators and the poor don't understand that they're in a game that they're getting murdered.

I mean, Ann Colter who I call the "G.I. Jane" of the culture war, he starts out her piece - - I read the conservative stuff every morning, because I want to know who the enemy is. She starts out with an article on Wilson by calling him "Clown Wilson." If that isn't a symbolic beheading -- because she understands she's in war, she understands she needs to kill, and that's how you kill.

And what we have to do, while they're fighting against the poor, we've got to have 0329the same energy and spirit to fight for the poor. The universities are bankrupt. The faculty are bankrupt, because they've sold out to money. Not money about issues, just

money. You make it by talking about nothing, as long as you have money. And until we get people to give them money to talk about something, then we are going to fight against advertising agencies like the Heritage Foundation.

And until we start to really remember that, "Okay, we're not going to kill our enemy but we need to set up institutions to play the game with the enemy." While they're at war and we're not, we lose. And it's time to at least have a spirit that cares for the poor. Otherwise, we just watch them disintegrate in front of our eyes while we all just sort of move on down the road, you know. That's my two cents.

MS. MCDOWELL: So we have Tracy, then Father Drinan. And then the young woman in the red, and Johnny.

MSGR. DRINAN: Let me try to pinpoint this discussion. It's all over the place. The enemy, to be very, very frank -- 0330the opponent -- the element that has changed this country is 30 million evangelicals. And they are all white. They've never had contact in their churches with blacks, they keep the blacks out. And I met recently with 10 evangelicals, and they met with the highest leaders of the Democratic parties, and they are opposed to all of us, being (unintelligible) and all. And they made very clear to us that these people are being orchestrated by the Republican Party on the gays and abortion, and on blacks.

They don't openly say the blacks, but this is an element -- and I'm certain that our friend Geno would be taken aback. They didn't exist in his day. They didn't exist while I was in Congress. And why are they there? Because they been orchestrated, as I said, by the Republicans. But also, these people sincerely think that the country has gone downhill, and they just keep talking about the gays and abortion, and the Republicans are reaching out to them.

The Democrats are going to lose until we have some way of reaching some of these 0331people. They control 11 red states, and they'll continue to be red, unless we reach them. It is possible? You can't say this openly, but they're racists. They have never agreed to the civil rights act, and they became Republicans because the Democrats was paying so much attention to the blacks. And the more the Democrats say that "we're for affirmative action," the more votes we lose among these people. I dialogue with them, they're lovely people. They're probably holier than I am. But this is what they say.

And is there some way by which the Democrats could get them back? They always voted in the South for the Democrats. I mean, certainly before Roosevelt. And these people don't include, because Catholics are another problem. And I know them -- I know them backwards, and they just want to be rich. They don't like taxes. I know them. I have them in my family --

(Laughter.)

-- and we have Reagan Democrats. That's a separate thing. But I think the Catholic can be wooed. They voted for Clinton twice, 0332and Catholics voted for Eisenhower, and for Reagan, and for Bush, too. So they are in between. But it's not racism there. They are in the north, and all over the place.

And they used to aid, federal aid, for their Catholic schools, I think that has abated. But I appreciate -- if Geno Baroni were still with us, he might have a solution. He might agree

with me, and he might have a way of operating. All I can say is that this is a new problem, and we can't whine about it. You say we shouldn't demonize these people, but there they are. 30 to 35 million as a new phenomenon in American life.

MS. MCDOWELL: Tracy?

VOICE: (Tracey Felder) I'm Tracy Felder with the Eisenhower Foundation. I have a comment, and that comment goes to character education. I heard Dr. Franklin speak about that. And I'm a parent who's pulled my children out of public school and put them in charter school because of the character education that they are receiving. So I think it's important for us to educate our children, but I think it's also important for them to have character, to have integrity, to have the concept of conscience, and to be a Brother's keeper. So I'd like to hear a little more from Dr. Franklin on his character education peace.

DR. FRANKLIN: Let me just -- 30 seconds -- urge you to take a look at, or just google the words, "Character Education Partnership." CEP.org. You'll see a terrific organization with extraordinary resources. It is bipartisan, or nonpartisan. Everybody from Colin Powell to a lot of left-of-center and right-of-center folks on the advisory board. And they have resources. Tom Lecona (phonetic) has written some wonderful materials for public and private schools to talk about some of the virtues and character.

But if I can just piggyback on that, it seems to me, one of the convenings that we need, and Leila, maybe you have the seminar already, that I would call a "third rail" seminar. In other words, how do we help people talk about the third rail issues that you've begun to enumerate there? And it seems to me, this is my greatest frustration with, say, Democrats arousing black community excitement. And it's been said a number of times here in a variety of ways, but when I listened to black Democrats and black Republicans in Georgia talk about those third rail issues, I noted the response of audiences.

And the Democrats were clueless, did not know how to frame, or speak in ways that spoke to the deep anxiety that people have. Abortion, homosexuality, these issues are on the third rail list, and we're going to continue to lose this until we get talking points and have the right sort of sensibilities about how -- I teach a class at Emory University on approaches to moral leadership, and one of the big segments in the course is "Outsmarting the Opposition" -- not enemy, I take issue with my colleague, I don't like "enemy" language. And Martin Luther King I think would push back against -- but King always challenged Malcolm X, "Never dehumanize the opposition," or the oppressor, and I'd rather talk about opposition.

But outsmarting the opposition, anticipate and address the resistance. And the Democrats have still not done that in the African-American community. So, Newt Gingrich in Georgia, and the folk that meet with the black clergy that Tim McDonald -- the reason he's so angry is, there are eating our lunch, every day. And even Tim -- I love Tim, he's my brother -- Tim doesn't get it.

But we need to be involved in the kind of conversation that persuades people that are anxious. And we can't just preach sermons to them.

MS. MCDOWELL: Thank you very much, Dr. Franklin. And the young lady in red -- and I just want to say one thing about Tracy's comment, thank you Tracy, because I think

it shows how moral issues resonate. What is she seeking for her children? Character. And I think it really shows what Emmett has talked about, what Joe has talked about, what other people, what Father Drinan has raised, the importance of some moral appeal. Not just the policy. And what Chris also talked about, but the moral frame for that policy.

VOICE: (Gene Taylor) My comment is, 0336with the Delta people. Okay, they've lost their jobs, they probably have to take employment for a while. After the unemployment runs out they'll probably have to be picked up on the welfare roll. So what has that accomplished? They'll probably lose their house. And you know.

And then the next thing is, with all these outsourcing of jobs, how can the unskilled workers -- I'm not talking about immigrants, I'm talking about people that don't have a skill and don't have much education -- that need a job so that they can get healthcare, and a decent wage of some kind for housing, and be able to live; how is that going to work? They don't have any collateral to go in the bank and ask for money to start up a company, so that they can hire themselves or run the company, they don't have that knowledge.

They probably don't know anybody that they can partner with to get this done. So how is that going to happen? And they are taking jobs and sending them everywhere all over the world. And then you have them come 0337over here to take the jobs. So I don't know. I'd like somebody to answer that.

MS. MCDOWELL: And she's raised, I think, questions that are on the mind of many, many, many Americans. Anybody want to respond to that? Talk a little bit about that?

(No response.)

But those are very, very important questions, and certainly the question of immigration is a complex one that the right is also exploiting. Well, but you're right, the outsourcing and all of that. But that's going to be -- that's the gay and abortion issue, for example, in my state, is immigration. And they exploit it very successfully. So those are very key questions, thank you for that contribution.

VOICE: (Johnny Gage) Yeah, I just want to sort of dovetail on some of what Pablo was saying, and that is that as you talk about students, I think there's probably a much broader population that we don't say much about. And that's this hip-hop generation. I mean, this is a generation so large that they define themselves. 0338 Everything we see, technology, is aimed toward them. They put the word out, they follow up on it. While I was at the Million More March, right on stage there an artist, a rap artist, got up and he put together just a few lyrics about the fact that wasn't the Million Man March, it was a Million More Movement, and people began to sing it right then.

I was at the airport picking up my friend the other day and heard someone singing that, that's just the power that has.

And I think that we really need to start talking about the poor in a way that includes them in any strategy that we put together, because oftentimes we continue to talk about the poor as though they're lepers and we're going to save them or do something for them, when as we look in that Superdome there in New Orleans, everyone who probably had a hat turned around backwards or their pants down low, we probably frame quite differently, and it's kind of hard to talk about young people that are in this hip-hop

generation as the poor, as victims, when oftentimes, I think the media portrays them as anything but that.

But I think that any strategy that's put together has to be inclusive of that population.

MS. MCDOWELL: So I've added "Use popular culture" as part of the vehicles, and "must include a broad segment of youth," not just college-based youth. Which is actually an initiative we're starting over at the Eisenhower Foundation, that we'll have to share with you at another time, because I think we've got about another 15 more minutes or so.

VOICE: (John Kromkowski) My question is, in terms of the progressive agenda, I was really fascinated because I was listening, because I think discovering a narrative is easier than creating one.

I was wondering if Tracy's observation about her concern was on the agenda of any progressive organization that we know about?

MSGR. DRINAN: What are you saying that concern was?

VOICE: (John Kromkowski) Charter schools. Our progress organizations related to Tracy's concern about charter schools, and the education of her children?

MS. MCDOWELL: But I think the charter schools were more the symptom, and her concern was the character of her children.

VOICE: (John Kromkowski) No, I mean we can spin it a variety of ways. What I'm interested in is, is this concern part of the progressive agenda?

MSGR. DRINAN: Well, I can speak as a former president of the Americans for Democratic Action, that's a super liberal group, and their coalition. They are opposed to private schools getting aid. They think it's against -- they think it's elitist and all. I mean, that's the general thing. At the same time, everybody says, "Let's get better schools, and let's try almost every device by which that objective can be achieved."

VOICE: (John Kromkowski) Thank you.

DR. FRANKLIN: My simple answer is that no, it's not a sexy issue yet for progressives -- character education, not the charter schools.

MS. MCDOWELL: Emmett?

VOICE: (Emmett Folger) I have an idea that has a prop, and it's a cell phone, something that we all have. When you spoke, Dr. Franklin, about a circle of friends. You can make a circle of friends, speed-dial on your cell phone. I have a circle of friends like that in Boston and we have an academic, a political operative, a housing activist, about 10 of us.

And what the media doesn't know -- oh, we have one thing in common. We are all sources for the media. We are all willing to be quoted, and some of us are willing to go on TV.

So what the media does know is when they called one, they just called us all. And I know -- and I've had to leave this room a couple of times -- if there's certain names I see here, I

have to go to the bathroom. And I know I can count on my friends, if I've got a call from the "Boston Globe," or the "New York Times" and there on deadline at 1:00, I'm going to get two or three people helping me 0342with statistics. And also, I'm going to send that report to some of those people. And they don't even know this is going on. That's a free progressive think tank. Doesn't cost a dime. And perhaps as we go down the road, some people here at Eisenhower Foundation, we might want to form a national circle of folks, once we get to trust each other, that we could help each other. So if I get a call you might have the best answer to that, and it's all -- why don't you try Dr. Franklin. It's just a simple thing to be stumbled upon.

DR. FRANKLIN: That's a terrific -- and you should know, Jim Wallace, who was referenced earlier, is doing a version of this -- I hope I'm not blowing his undercover operation -- but we are a group of religious progressives that are up to this.

MS. MCDOWELL: We'll take a couple last comments, Reverend Tune.

VOICE: (Reverend Tune) I actually had a question for Dr. Franklin.

I think one of the challenges I've noticed working with a number of progressive organizations is that there is no common 0343vision; therefore there is no common destination. And so we work on a variety of issues, never being able to gauge whether or not we've achieved any level of success along the way that would be a marker of reaching that vision.

What would you describe, or how would you describe the vision that should be cast, that would guide a progressive movement?

DR. FRANKLIN: You can't ask me that at 5:30, please don't --

(Laughter.)

Just suffice it to say I have fragments of a vision, and I shared with you, and I'm here to learn and listen, and I'm a part of a lot of conversations, like all of you are. I think it's there. I just think we need to kind of frame it and put it together.

But what I like that you add there is the need for accountability, and for strategic measure. That if we've already gotten this segment of the choir with us, we don't need to necessarily, you know, spend a lot of time cultivating them. We need to figure out what they need, but go on to the next group. 0344That's what I find us not doing; that we continually reinvent certain kinds of gatherings and marches and rallies, and we don't take a step beyond "Now, let's identify our common ground once again." That doesn't make my heart beat fast anymore. And I am interested in strategic, high-impact, cumulative progress. You know, let's talk further.

MS. MCDOWELL: John?

VOICE: Thanks, Leila. John Zuman, director of evaluation at the Foundation. I have a question about the scope of the problem that we've been discussing here over the last couple of days. And I've been listening to some of the strategies about how to respond to the problem. For example, addressing foundations and bringing foundations in to provide resources to help to fund activities. I think I've been on the receiving end of some foundation support, but I think we understand how difficult it is to mobilize a significant portion of the dollars that are available for foundations.

Even if we are very successful at raising, let's say, \$1 billion from a foundation -- just pointed out, \$38 billion are given out -- it is a tiny fraction of what is needed. We were reminded by Father Drinan that the war in Iraq is costing us \$200 billion. I've heard some estimates of what it will take to rebuild the New Orleans area and the Louisiana coast, hundreds of billions of dollars.

We're talking about a scope of a problem that encompasses probably many, many hundreds of billions of dollars in need across cities, not just New Orleans, but any urban area across the country shares many of the same problems that were unveiled by Katrina. And the scope of the problem is absolutely huge, and far surpasses the capacity of private funders to respond.

I think one of the huge challenges is to be reminded by what I've learned over the last couple of days is one of the fundamental aspects of Father Baroni's philosophy, and that is to see budgets, federal budgets, as being moral instruments. And budgets represent priorities, and represent moral priorities. And I think much of what we're talking about here is the result of someone else's priorities being put into action. And the billions of dollars of federal funding being put to war, and being put to support corporation interest, rather than looking at and significantly improving the conditions of urban and rural poverty.

And I think part of the solution has to be for us to address the question of how do we get a voice in reinstating some of those priorities that are reflected in the federal and state and local budgets?

And throughout the last couple of days, I've heard people kind of dismiss the Democratic Party as being bankrupt and, you know, I share a lot of the frustration of the recent past, the recent elections, and the hard-fought losses of the Democrats. But I wonder to what extent the Democratic Party is part of or should be part of the solution that is helping to restate those priorities in terms of budget? And how do we recapture the high ground, the moral high ground, to be able to make the case for helping to lift people out of poverty?

MS. MCDOWELL: Thank you, John. A lot of questions to answer in five minutes. Who wants to tackle that?

DR. FRANKLIN: -- agenda for the next conference.

(Laughter.)

MS. MCDOWELL: Pablo?

MR. EISENBERG: Let me not address the bigger one. Let me address the issue that I thought you were beginning to raise, and that is the role of philanthropy.

I think that a lot of the money that's been pumped into Katrina by foundations is misspent money. That should be public money. The singular role of philanthropy is to be cutting-edge, innovative money, flexible money, capacity-building money. And just think of the impact, had foundations funded watchdog groups in Louisiana that could've taken on the Corps of Engineers and said, "You've got faulty designs in your levees. Your politicians have put in money into boondoggle programs, and not into safeguarding the citizens of

New Orleans" -- what if they 0348supported advocacy groups that would have fought for a minimum-wage increase in New Orleans -- which was defeated by the state legislature.

There were no such watchdog organizations in Louisiana. And the foundation communities were derelict. They would get 10 times the bang for buck if they actually funded policy and advocacy organizations who could prevent stuff, who could get better use of federal funds, who could get decent evaluations of certain programs -- foundation have put billions of dollars into producing so-called "affordable units of housing." If one tenth of that money had been spent on advocacy groups that could forge a better public policy than the one we have now, we might have had a better public policy. There is much more bang for the buck for advocacy issues. And I think the foundation world has got to rethink, that it is more than just doling out a few dollars to Katrina victims. That's the federal government's job. That's the state government's job. That's the city of New Orleans' job. Foundations ought to do better 0349than they have done.

MS. MCDOWELL: Well, thank you all so much. Before I turn over to Alan, I just really want to thank all of you for your generous commitment of time, your thoughts, your hearts, and if you think and ideas, if there's thoughts you have one narrative, or on ways to organize or build coalitions, please e-mail them to the Eisenhower Foundation, I'm not sure what e-mail address we use for that, is it info? Info@EisenhowerFoundation.org, we really, really want to hear from you. And as we all go through our own transformative processes, as transformed nonconformists, then you may get some epiphanies, you may get some thoughts, we definitely want to get them and synthesize them, and this is certainly only the beginning. So thank you all so very much. And I will turn it back over to Alan.

MR. CURTIS: On behalf of Senator Harris and all the trustees of the foundation, I wanted to deeply thank all of you for participating in speaking in today's conference. Leila, it was a wonderful start at advocacy and organizing that you had this 0350afternoon. You finished on time.

(Laughter.)

I wanted to thank Tracy Felder and Susan Campbell for basically organizing this whole thing.

(Applause.)

I wanted to thank the entire staff of the Eisenhower Foundation for all the work you've done over all these weeks. Remember, this is just the start, we will be back to you in many different ways, in many different places. And I wish you all Godspeed, and remember, always remember, it's better to beg forgiveness than ask permission.

(Laughter.)

Goodbye to all of you, thank you.