



Engaging Ideas



Seattle Pacific University's
Greater Seattle Community Breakfast

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Sheraton Seattle
Hotel and Towers

Featuring *New York Times* Columnist
and Best-Selling Author **David Brooks**

Transcript of Opening Remarks by
SPU President Philip Eaton and
Keynote Address by David Brooks

Philip Eaton, President — “Leading With Vision in a World of Colliding Maps”

SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY



I want to welcome you all to Seattle Pacific University's eighth annual Greater Seattle Community Breakfast. We're glad you are here. It's great to see so many friends in the audience, some of you new to Seattle Pacific and to the breakfast. We welcome you and hope you have a great time this morning. My thanks as well to the table captains and our wonderful sponsors: We are grateful to you for partnering with us, both in the breakfast and in the work of SPU.

I know you are going to enjoy our speaker today. Comments were made in the *Seattle P-I* this last week that David Brooks is “red hot,” a “must-read” in the country. And let me say also, in case you think this breakfast is about politics, it is not. My initial impulse to invite Mr. Brooks to the breakfast came out of an extraordinary article he did in *The Atlantic* on the student generation today. He also recently completed another book, an excerpt of which was in *The New York Times* a couple of weeks ago about the suburbs as a part of the culture of America. So, in addition to being a political columnist, I see Mr. Brooks in the great American tradition of the essayist and the cultural observer — the cultural essayist. In any case, it will be great to hear from him this morning on any topic. Mr. Brooks, we're glad you are here with us.

My comments need to be brief this morning. But I have two tasks, and the first is to tell you something about the purpose of this breakfast. Then I want to make sure that you understand something about Seattle Pacific University and what we stand for, what we are trying to do, what our vision is all about, and how that vision guides our work. As a way of accomplishing those two tasks, I'm going to violate one of my very important principles: I am going to talk about politics.

Now please understand that's a very dangerous thing for a university president to do these days. For a lot of reasons. But hang on for a moment; let me talk about politics. Most university presidents find it more difficult all the time to say much of anything that is political. We have to represent a wide spectrum of political positions on our campuses. We are sometimes hemmed in by the agendas of political correctness. We're pushed and we're pulled from all sides. I want you to know I'm never happy being hemmed in, being constrained. Sometimes I think I would like Mr. Brooks' job. Just say what you're thinking. One distinguished university president wrote recently, “Even our universities are circumscribed by what I suspect are shrinking spheres of influence.” I want you to know that drives me crazy. I spend a lot of time thinking hard about how we can widen the spheres of influence for Seattle Pacific. How can we get this University in the middle of things? How can we get ourselves at the table? How can we be in the mix? How can we make a difference? That's our vision for Seattle Pacific. That's the purpose of this breakfast this morning. But I also wrestle with how to speak into this political climate. I think every leader is wrestling with just that question. How do we do this?

Well, here's a premise I want to try out this morning. In this political climate, I think our culture, and our country, is badly damaged by people who stand up and call each other liars. I don't care which side of the fence you are on. It seems to me this is not good for us. This is not just politics as usual. This is not democracy at work, it seems to me. It's a very bad thing. Two weeks ago, the president of Occidental College in Los Angeles shut down the student senate because it was so divisive. He believed finally that the fierce fighting among the students was damaging and dangerous even to the college as a whole. But go figure. Where are these students learning their political manners? How can we expect our students to behave any differently when they watch what is happening on the political platforms every day? I was settling into my seat on an airplane some time ago and saw a young woman coming down the aisle with big bold letters on a T-shirt that said, “Deny Everything.” And I thought, “What kind of a worldview is that? What kind of a society will we really have if we really believe that T-shirt? And where is she learning to look at the world in that kind of way?” Well, I think

education is surely to blame. And I think our television and newspapers are to blame. And I think our politicians are to blame. I think we had better be thinking very hard about what we are modeling to this younger generation. Because they're watching. They get it. Do we really want a world where we deny everything?

Here's the real problem. The great Jewish novelist Chaim Potok said on my campus a few years ago, "We live in a world of colliding maps. We all have our little maps that guide our lives and give us direction in what we do and how we make our choices. But those maps are bumping into one another, and there is no larger map out there that tells us how it all hangs together." Contemporary philosopher Alistair McIntyre said some time ago: "There seems to be no rational way of securing moral agreement in our culture. We have only rival claims, and rival premises, and no rational way of weighing the claims one against the other." One premise against another becomes a matter of pure assertion and counter-assertion. This is where we get, says McIntyre, the shrill tone of so much of our moral and political debate. And so I ask, is there an alternative to this political climate where we call each other liars, where we deny everything?

Let me make a proposal. It's all about vision. I think our leaders need to go to vision school. I think we desperately need vision. Clear and compelling articulation of a big map. As the Scriptures say, "People perish without vision." And where does such a vision come from? The historian George Weigel recently made the case that Poland prevailed against the crushing occupation of Nazism and communism precisely because of an enduring conviction: that the deepest currents of history are spiritual and cultural, rather than political and economic. History is driven over the long haul by culture, by what men and women honor, cherish and worship; by what societies' deemed to be true and good; by the expressions they give of those convictions in language, literature and the arts; and by what individuals and societies are willing to stake their lives on. Now this is where we get a vision for a decent society. Down there in the deepest currents of culture. Down there where we ask the biggest questions about what is true, good, honorable and beautiful. Down there in the roots of culture that were originally religious.

I've been in 18 different cities around the country over the last 14 months telling everybody who would listen that I think Seattle Pacific University is flourishing. And it is. Part of the reason it's flourishing is these wonderful students who we're hearing from this morning. Part of the reason is an outstanding faculty and an extraordinary team of support. But a big reason we are flourishing is that we have a purpose, we have a vision. There's clarity about a big map for us that draws our best efforts out. And our students get that vision, which is the most thrilling part to me. I have come to the conclusion that vision unites. Vision is a really big deal. Though the deniers and the skeptics want to ridicule vision as naïve, vision brings out the best in us. Organizations flourish with vision, and without it they flounder. So my question this morning is this: If organizations flourish with vision, is it possible to make the same case about our country? We need serious conversation about what men and women honor, cherish and worship; what our society deems to be true and good. It seems to be the world is too serious these days to do otherwise. I understand I may be hopelessly optimistic and perhaps a bit naïve in all of this. But I believe we need to craft a real and compelling vision out of these deepest layers of culture. We need leaders who talk this way. And then we need to learn to let them talk that way, without denying everything, without calling them liars and without assigning political motives to everything they say. And Lord help us if we keep the religious voices out of this vision-shaping and culture-digging work. Those are precisely the voices we need, I think. And a Christian university is one of those places where this kind of work takes place.

So there, I talked about politics a little, right? Not exactly the way you thought that I was going to, and I avoided the problems of university presidents talking about politics. But those are my reflections on what I think is needed for our time. And that's the kind of work we are

trying to do at Seattle Pacific University. And that's what this breakfast is all about, too. So I hope you enjoy your time with us this morning. Thank you for being here. We are very glad you have come to join us, to understand something about Seattle Pacific, something about crafting a vision for the future, and of course engaging the ideas that we will hear about now.

David Brooks — “The Landscape of American Politics”

NEW YORK TIMES COLUMNIST, KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Thank you, President Eaton, for those remarks, which will dovetail with my own. They were some of the more on-point and eloquent remarks I've heard from a college president, well, maybe ever, now that I think about it. I think you and I see the problems that face this country the same way. I think we also see the world in some of the same ways. I think Seattle Pacific's slogan “engaging the culture and changing the world” is the way that I see the world, that you've got to really go down to the roots and engage the culture. I said last night that many universities instruct their students on every tiny aspect of life — SAT prep, academic prep, math prep — except the most important, which is character-building and values, and what it takes to be a good person. On that, the most important subject for any person's life, many universities are completely absent. It's nice to be at a university or a college that is not absent, where there is leadership. Where the students can accept it or argue with it, but at least they're provided with a vocabulary to talk about the most important issues in life. I appreciate the school for that.

I do want to get into politics, but first by talking about culture — because I think the way people live is the fundamental force that shapes our politics. I want to talk about the concrete decisions people make and have been making over the past 10 years on how to live. Specifically, I thought I'd start out by talking about where we live.

The Age of the Great Dispersal

We're in the middle of one of the most demographically interesting periods in American history, which I've started calling the Age of the Great Dispersal. Americans are spreading out. People who live in inner-ring suburbs are moving out to outer-ring suburbs. People who live in the Northeast and the Midwest are going to the Southwest, the West. People in California are moving up here — everybody's just spreading out. The population of the Pittsburgh metro area, for example, over the past 10 years has decreased by 7 percent. But the developed land area of Pittsburgh over those years has increased by 43 percent.

Ninety percent of the office space built in America over the past 10 years was built in suburbs, in those low-slung office parks you see along the highways, far away from cities. It used to be 80 percent of Americans worked in cities. Now almost half work in suburbia and have no contact with city life. You go out to some of these new places where people are spreading to and they're huge. Mesa, Arizona, is the suburb outside of Phoenix. More people now live in Mesa, Arizona, than live in St. Louis, Cincinnati or Minneapolis. Mesa will soon pass Atlanta in population. It's as if Zeus took 500,000-person communities and just plopped them down in the desert, and they grew up overnight. How many times in human history have 500,000-person population centers grown up virtually out of nothing? What sort of culture do you get in such places? What institutions are born there? And what happens to the places that people are moving away from? These are all important changes in actual life. So I thought I'd take us on a little drive across a typical American landscape, which I think will have some relevance to this area. But it has relevance to most areas in the country.

The Urban Hipster Zone

I thought I'd start in an inner-ring suburb, in one of the more socially liberal, progressive, urban hipster zones. Usually these are settled by people who consider themselves bohemian, urban, hipster types, but they wanted to move out to suburbia for the sake of their kids, but

still have enough check-cashing places and homeless people so they could feel urban and gritty. You find that in these places there tends to be a lot of dance collectives, Pottery Barns, sandal stores, because, as you know, political progressives have a thing for toe exhibitionism, which I don't really understand. The local schools tend to be bad at every single sport except those involving Frisbees, and they tend to have high incomes, but sometimes very progressive social ideals, which they're trying to reconcile with their high incomes. They have Ben & Jerry's ice cream there, the ice cream company with its own foreign policy. I've long wanted Ben & Jerry's to make a sort of pacifist toothpaste that wouldn't kill germs, just ask them to leave. But you go out to these places, and you find luxury cars because there's a lot of money out there. But they tend to be Saabs, Audis — any luxury car socially acceptable, as long as it comes from a country hostile to U.S. foreign policy. I actually once thought of writing a book called *Rebel Without a Camry*, about an English professor who bought a Cadillac and lost all his friends. Then there are groups of organic grocery stores — the Whole Foods Markets, where you can get your vegetarian dog biscuits, your basmati rice and your all-natural hair coloring, because if you're going to artificially color your hair, you want it to be all natural. Actually, I was taken to my first Trader Joe's here in Seattle, where all the cashiers look like they're on loan from Amnesty International. My favorite part of Trader Joe's is the snack section, because snacks lead to the obesity of America and are kind of vulgar. So the snacks they have at Trader Joe's are like veggie booty with kale and are made out of seaweed for kids who come home from school saying, "Mom, mom, do you have a snack that'll help me prevent colon-rectal cancer?"

In these sorts of highly educated, highly affluent places you find new groups of people. My favorite group in these areas are the übermoms, who are these highly educated, highly successful, highly intelligent women who have taken time off from being CFOs at Fortune 500 companies to dedicate their \$900,000 worth of education on perfecting their little ones. You can usually spot übermoms because they weigh less than their kids. Even from the moment of conception, they're doing little exercises, plotting which year they can become school chair of the Auction Committee. Then they take so many soy-based nutritional formulas during pregnancy, the babies come out looking like toothless defensive linemen. They're just these massive things. I'm actually trying to get my own kids to go into a field I call Play-Date Law, because I think these übermoms are going to be suing each other when they send their kids over to other people's homes and they get insufficiently nutritious carrot snacks. And these übermoms produce little überkids. They start out at age 6 months listening to the "Mozart for Baby's Mind" CD every second of the day; are programmed to lead to higher education and perfect admissions score; and spend their days in SAT prep, oboe practice, soccer practice and community service. One of my favorite lines about the highly achieving young people we have around us is, "I don't know where they find lepers, but they find them and they read to them." Because of the community service ethos in these inner-ring suburbs, like Redmond on the Eastside here, they tend to be quite Democratic. Al Gore won inner-ring suburbs around the country. Although they don't seem particularly revolutionary or particularly liberal, they do tend to go for Democratic candidates in increasing numbers.

*Exurban
America*

Then you drive a little further out into suburbia, away from the city center, and you find yourself in a slightly different cultural zone. This is the zone where you begin to see more of the cultural influence of golf. Not necessarily the game of golf, but the Zen of golf, the golf ideal, the vision of perfection represented by golf, which is all about very neat lawns, nicely pressed casual pants, and achieving a state of tranquility that is the sort of tranquility you get when you're shooting par, when you're perfectly at ease with the world. You're neat and well organized; your DVD collection is perfectly sorted; your cell-phone rate plan is perfectly tailored to your needs; your car is perfectly vacuumed; and your toenail polish matches the interior of your Lexus. You've got your life so together and you're so always calm, that next to you Dick Cheney looks bipolar.

And so, you're out in a new culture. To me, to get to the core of this culture, you've got to go to a big box mall, which is one of the great institutions of suburban American life. You've got to go to a Home Depot to watch a manly suburban-American man buying a barbecue grill — because that's when he's most emotionally exposed. He's going into the Home Depot, doing the manly walk that men do in the presence of large amounts of lumber. He goes up to the yard machinery section, next to the things that used to be called "rider mowers" but are now called "lawn tractors," to capture the M-1 tank power of the things. He goes up to the grills, which have names like the Thermador, the Weber Genesis Grill, because in America it makes sense to name a grill after a book in the Bible. He approaches them with the look of a saint about to enter a higher dimension. And, you know, they've got this fantastic power that zoom up out of these things — 328,000 BTU heat-generating capacity, 532-inch grill surface, in case you get the urge to roast a bison — and a large man in an orange vest comes up to him, who looks like sort of an SUV in human form, and says, "How you doin'?" That means "How may I help you?" in Home-Depot talk. They exchange a sort of pseudoscientific grill argot, which neither of them understands, because all that really matters in buying a grill, like all major consumer durables, is the cup holders. The guy's going to pick the grill with the best cup holders. He chooses it and puts it in his Yukon XL, which is the manly truck for manly men who haul things, and he's out in the parking lot of the big box mall.

There's a PETsMART over here, and a PETCO over there, and a Bed Bath & Beyond and a Linens 'n Things. Way over on the other side of the mall, which you can barely see because of the curvature of the Earth, there's an Old Navy big enough to qualify for membership in the United Nations. Then, sort of along the highway, there are all the suburban chain restaurants, which, if they merged, would be called Chili's Olive Garden Hard Rock Outback Cantina, serving enough sun-dried tomato concoctions to feed Tuscany for a century. Then the big anchor stores: You've got your Wal-Mart on one side and your Price Club on the other. Price Club is my favorite store in this whole panoply, because it's like Wal-Mart on acid. It's here you can get your 41-pound tubs of detergent, your 30-pound bags of tater tots, your packages with 1,500 Q-tips, which is 3,000 swabs, because there's one on either end. And everybody's having the same conversation about what a good deal they're getting by buying in bulk. So you'll overhear somebody saying, "You know, we should buy 10,000 Popsicles, because we were thinking of having kids anyway." That's exurban, suburban America — and that's the area where the Republican Party is doing extraordinarily well. If you looked at the Senate races in the 2002 election, where the Republicans scored gains in states like Georgia, New Hampshire, Minnesota and Colorado, they racked up huge majorities in these exurban new suburbs — and that's become sort of the core of the Republican Party.

*Across the
Political Divide*

So you look across this landscape, and you drive from the Democratic inner-ring suburbs, to the more Republican outer-ring suburbs, and you're driving across some political divide there. But I really don't think it looks or feels that different to drive across one area of the country to another. From a Democratic neighborhood to a Republican neighborhood, you might notice little things: People might dress a little differently; they might have different window stickers on their cars. But, you know, in the '60s you could tell because one group had buzz cuts and were very conservative, while the other group had beads and were hippies and were very liberal. You could sort of see which side of the cultural war those people were on. Now I think the culture war is over, and the bourgeois institutions have won: faith and family and work. As a result, we've had this incredible period of social repair. There are a lot of problems left in this country, but if you look at the leading social indicators — drug use is down, teen pregnancy is down, abortion is down, teen suicide is down, divorce is down, crime is down dramatically — lots of positive news. I think that's because we had a period of disruptions in the late '60s, which disrupted a lot of things. Now society is filled with good people working on problems, and despite all the problems, we're making progress. Yet the remarkable thing? In this reasonable, affluent landscape you drive across with some progress on the social sphere, as President Eaton said, when you get into the world of politics, it's Hatfield and McCoy. We're back in the

Civil War; we're in this politically polarized era. George Bush is more popular with members of his own party than any president has been in 50 years. Ninety-one percent of Republicans approve of George Bush's performance. He is more unpopular with members of the opposing party than any president has been in 50 years. Only 17 percent of Democrats approve of George Bush.

So the people look the same and they talk the same, and you could have a nice conversation with people all around this country, but they take a look at George Bush, or John Kerry or Bill Clinton, and they see totally different realities — and sometimes they react very angrily to the reality they see. We've seen in this country a sharp decline in split-ticket voting. There used to be a large chunk of people who would vote Republican for this office, Democrat for another or, in different elections, would vote for different parties. There's been a sharp decline in that. We've seen a shrinkage in what pollsters call "persuadable voters": voters they think they can reach to pull across to their party. In '76, by consensus, about 25 percent of the country was persuadable, could go either way during a campaign. Now, if you talk to different pollsters, maybe 8 percent of the country, maybe 10 or 12 percent, is persuadable. More people have made up their minds. We've seen enormous stability in our elections, as the two armies have hardened. Starting really with 1996, I would say, we're basically split 50-50, in election after election: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002. You look at the polls now: still split. We've had 43 million people move every year. We had September 11th; we've had two wars; we've had the Clinton impeachment scandals; we've had a lot of stuff going on; and yet everything changes in America except the political divide. It's weird. Where did it come from? We see it geographically. We see the red-blue map, as you may recall from the 2000 election. I call it the global-warming map, because if the polar ice caps melted and the coasts and the Mississippi Valley flooded, the Democratic Party would be wiped out. I don't know whether that's a good thing or not. I leave it to you.

You see what is really a divide between coalitions. On one side, the Democratic Party side, their heavy votes come from the cities and the inner-ring suburbs, among African-Americans, among coastal secular people, among unions and highly educated women. On the Republican Party side: rural and outer suburbs, evangelicals, business leaders, high-school-educated white men. These are the cores of the two parties. The two parties are made up of different diverse groups of people. Yet the parties are remarkably stable: two armies divided by some sort of chasm that is hard to understand, and between them an atmosphere of viciousness. I see it in my own life in Washington every day. I was invited a few months ago to a home of a democratic congresswoman. She has a salon where 40 members of the Democratic House Caucus get together every month or so to discuss events. She asked me to come over, and I was sort of the first Republican — or Republican-, conservative-leaning person — they had in that room in a long time. So this was the first chance they had to have an open conversation with a person with conservative ideas. If I had more hair, it would just be going straight back, because they just let me have it for about two hours. One gentleman from the South, a moderate Southern Democrat, said to me, "I don't hate George Bush. But I regard him the way I would regard somebody who molested my granddaughter."

*A Poisonous
Political Atmosphere*

The fact is, in Congress especially, the two parties and members of the two parties do not talk to each other. They barely have conversations. The Annenberg Foundation tries to get them together once a year at the Greenbriar Resort in West Virginia for what they call a Civility Conference. The idea is to get members of different parties to go to this hotel for four days with their families, play together, have some fun together and maybe make some friendships across party lines. The absolute highlight of the Civility Conference for me — they always invite a few journalists — was the karaoke night with 170 members of Congress singing in balloon hats. But, aside from that, the highlight, or lowlight, really: I'm walking down the hallway one afternoon, and there's a woman weeping in the hallway. At one of the breakout sessions, which were just little discussion sessions, she had been so viciously attacked by

somebody in the other party that she left the room in tears. So that's a Civility Conference: somebody leaving the room in tears. There's just a lack of conversation where neither side will admit a mistake and neither side feels they can afford to have made a mistake, because if they admit a mistake, they admit some flaw, and then the other side won't give them credit for candor, they feel. They'll just see a weakness and launch an attack.

So we get this artificial conversation. Each side uses scandal to try to destroy the other side. We get these fierce debates over the presidency. If you look more in my world, in the media, we see the best-seller lists: We have *Liar, Liar, Liar* on one side and *The President Is a Big Fat Crook* on the other. We see segmentation among the media. Even in my little discussions with my friends on PBS and NPR, if there's anyplace that we're going to have civil discussions, it's going to be on places like that. Yet even between my friends and I, there are strained relations sometimes, because the atmosphere is so poisonous. Frequently, people go to their own side, the media outlet that will confirm their own views, so they don't even hear the other side. Somebody at Fox News told me a story that many people wake up and turn on Fox News in the morning, and keep it on all day, and then go to sleep and finally turn it off at around midnight. The problem with that is that Fox has a translucent logo they stick on the bottom of the screen. If you leave it on all day on one channel, the Fox logo burns into the TV set. So the network has to move it back and forth so it won't ruin people's TV sets. That's a sign of people in a market-segmented environment.

*Issue
Disputes*

So my question always is: Why are we polarized? What are we fighting about? What exactly has got us so upset with each other? I thought I'd just run down in a few more minutes a few of the remaining issues, a few of the issues that I think are contributing to this poisonous political atmosphere. Let me talk about one that is important, but which I don't think really explains it: issue disputes. We have serious disagreements between the two parties on issues. But I do not believe they are worse than they have been. I do not believe the gap between liberals and conservatives is wider than it was, between, say, when Lyndon Johnson ran against Barry Goldwater, or Mondale versus Reagan, or McGovern versus Nixon. I think in those days you had wider ideological gaps. One of the things I notice is that you go to the politicians, and they are used to exaggerating the differences between the parties. You go to the staffs — you go to the people who are not interested in politics, but interested in policy — and they get along, they find a lot of common ground. Robert Rubin was a co-chair of Goldman Sachs and the chief economic figure in the Clinton administration. His fellow co-chair at Goldman Sachs was a guy named Stephen Friedman, who is the chief economist in the Bush administration right now. They ran a company together. They have disagreements about policy: One is more conservative than the other, and they have different views on taxes, but there's not a chasm between those two. You can see it in foreign affairs, too. You take Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's top foreign affairs advisor. You take Samuel Berger, one of President Clinton's top foreign affairs advisors, and also one of John Kerry's. They have disagreements, but they're not wide. Sandy Berger supported the war in Iraq. John Kerry supported it in his own way. If you go forward, it's very hard to see some of the differences between the two sides. I find it again and again. I'll cover politics and find polarization. I'll go to conferences in Washington where all the wonks are getting together to talk about education policy and health care policy — there's a lot of agreement. There are differences, but there's a lot of agreement. I really don't think the issue war explains the level of hatred.

*The Feud
Feeds on Itself*

So, what's the feud about? Well, one of the things it's about is itself. It feeds on itself. I don't know when it started — with Watergate or the Clinton impeachment or the Bork hearings or the Thomas hearings, but each battleground creates more bad blood, so the next time it's going to be even worse. You get these sort of tribal loyalties, where they're fighting the other side, they believe the other side is completely illegitimate and dishonest. It just happens to be our side and their side, like the Yankees versus the Red Sox. The other side has to lose to vindicate my identity. I think we're just in a cycle, where the people have decided, "I'm in the feud, and I

want to see the other side suffer. The other side is bad, so I have to be bad. They lie, so I have to lie. They exaggerate, so I have to exaggerate.” The feud feeds upon itself.

Education and Ideology

There are other factors, though, which are problematic. The third one I want to mention is education, which is appropriate here. In theory, education should make us all more independent-minded, thoughtful and unbiased. In reality, highly educated voters are more partisan, more doctrinal and more ideological than less-educated voters. In 1960, 4 percent of voters had college degrees. In 2000, 42 percent of voters had college degrees. People with college degrees are more likely to ask themselves this question: Am I liberal or am I conservative? Once you ask yourself that question, once you give yourself an ideological label, it's very likely you will vote for the same party over and over again. So one of the perversities of the educational era — the great ballooning of higher education — is that it makes us better read, and probably smarter, and more economically productive, but it seems to make us more ideological, too, and less flexible across party lines.

Social Segmentation

A fourth factor is marketing segmentation. In the Information Age, we all have choice about where to live. We're not tied down to a factory, harbor or mine. We can choose. We have greater choice about where to live, and we tend to choose to live amongst people like ourselves. In fact, human beings are really, really good at finding people like themselves and moving in with them. We talk about diversity in this country, but we really don't practice it very much in our everyday life. There may be a block in this country where there's a black minister, a white litigator, Hispanic teacher, liberal college professor, conservative professional hunter — all living next door to each other — but I've never been to that block, and I'm not sure it exists. People cluster. There are business firms like Claritoss that help stores locate their businesses. If you own Barnes & Noble, you want to know where your Barnes & Noble people are. Well, Claritoss can tell you where they are, and they can do it with some specificity, because people cluster. People find a neighborhood where people like themselves live, and they segment off. Sometimes they don't know too much about the neighborhoods five miles away with a different culture. They don't know about things that are happening just across the street. They know about their own little cluster. One of the questions I often ask on the East Coast, especially in media rooms, is, “Who here in this room knows who Tim LaHaye is?” Now maybe in this room a lot of people do, but on the East Coast, in some of the media rooms or in Ivy League universities, nobody knows. Nobody's heard of the *Left Behind* series. Whether they like it or not, they just haven't heard about it; it's not part of their market segment. I point out that there's a good argument to be made that Pentecostalism is the most important social movement of the 20th century. From basically zero Pentecostals 100-odd years ago, there are now about 400 million Pentecostals in the world. According to religious sociologists, by 2050, there will be a billion Pentecostals in the world. I sometimes want to walk through the newsrooms of the Washington and New York newspapers and ask people, “What makes a Pentecostal a Pentecostal?” The only people who will know are the people who clean up the place at night. That's a part of our segmentation, and I think ignorance of the other side has led to this hostility. Whenever I see somebody who's viciously hostile to the Bush administration, I always find out if they've ever met anybody in the Bush administration. Have they ever learned how they actually think? The answer is invariably no.

A Battle Over Leadership

The fifth and final reason I think this is going on is that we're having a fight over leadership, and over what values leaders should have. What qualities make for good leaders, and what sort of qualities should America represent as it leads the world? It reminds me of the fight that existed at the start of this country, when Hamilton fought with Jefferson. That was also a fight about leadership. Hamilton believed in business, in commerce, in a meritocratic-striving society that would be very dynamic. Jefferson, on the other hand, thought the best leaders were rural, were aristocratic, were very reflective. It was sort of two different personality types. I look at politics today and find that a lot of people look at George W. Bush, and they just can't stand the guy. They can't stand to see him. A lot of people have the same reaction to Bill Clinton.

They just have some visceral, aesthetic reaction against the guy. I think it's because there are now two distinct leadership styles. There's a Republican leadership style, which Reagan and [George W.] Bush both share. A leadership style that is not particularly intellectual. Those two men are not particularly introspective. They're not particularly philosophical or bookish, but they are clear and decisive. They pick out the salient simple points, and they stress those points, and they stick with them. They talk in clear moral terms. Both of them are comfortable using the word "evil." And they both ignore the chattering classes and go straight to the American people. And they are both — especially President Bush — open about how their faith guides them.

The Democratic leadership style is very different. The Democratic leaders, whether it's John Kerry or Al Gore, tend to be more well-read, tend to have done deep study of the issues, tend to be more cultured. They talk and try to emphasize the complexities and the nuances of things, and distrust people who don't emphasize the nuances. In their own way, I believe they're just as spiritual as the Republicans, but they tend to be less open, or at least talk less volubly, about how faith guides their career decisions. They tend not to use moral categories like good and evil, or feel more uncomfortable with those.

Sometimes I think we're just having a civil war within the educated class, among highly educated people who are bidding for leadership. Sometimes I think it's as crude as the economics and business majors on one side, and the history and English majors on the other. Sometimes I think it's the values of the executive, which I think Bush represents, of being able to manage people well, versus the values of the university — the ability to study, read and be philosophical. Sometimes I think it's the values of the office park versus the values of the university. Fundamentally, I think it's a debate about how we learn. Do we learn as Bush has, through experience in the business world, through managing people, through crisis? Or do we learn as Kerry has learned, through hearings, through reading and through discussion? I think we have a leadership-values divide.

*We're Still
One Country*

But the one thing I would like to close with is going back to those suburbs. If you drive across this country, or if you go outside this country, people have a lot in common across this divide. If you look at America from abroad, it's striking how much we have in common. We all, regardless of what side of the divide we're on, work incredibly hard. Americans are the hardest working people on Earth. We work 350 hours a year more, on average, than the average European. That's nine weeks. That's a lot of work, maybe an insane amount. We move about four times more than people in Europe and Asia. We switch jobs twice as often. We get divorced at much higher rates. We are just a much more energetic and mobile society, and I think we're that way because we were born that way. We have a shared mentality across the divide — a mentality that goes back to when this country was founded and the first settlers came here and saw this amazing promise of land, of virgin forests. They saw flocks of geese so big it took 45 minutes for them to take off, and they would shoot cannons into the flocks just to see if they could change the direction of the flight patterns. They made two conclusions: One was that God's plan on Earth, God's plan for humanity, could be realized here. Some ultimate paradise could be established here — and they could get rich doing it. It is that merger of material and secular things, the sacred and the profane, that some historians have said is the distinction Americans are not very good at making. We never make the distinction between the sacred and the profane. We go to Whole Foods Markets because we think we can get spiritual peace through the things we buy. We work in companies thinking that we can, as well as making money, perform a service and help serve the Almighty doing that. So I think that mentality, more than many others, joins us across the political divide. It's a mentality about the future, about what's possible here. There is a sense that just over the next ridge, just in the future, just out of reach, with the next management technique, the new technological wrinkle, the new cosmetic surgery, the new family, the new hometown, you can achieve some tremendous happiness. I think that's the optimism and the faith in the future that caused people to

move westward in the first place, often with no idea about what they were going to hit. It causes people to invest insane amounts of money in dotcom bubbles, because they're so optimistic about the happiness they can achieve. It causes them to move to new suburbs. It causes them to venture off into wars in Iraq thinking we can create democracy there. We may be right, but we may be wrong. It was certainly a hopeful thing to do. So that is something that unites us all.

I really don't see when this polarization is going to end. I don't think either George Bush or John Kerry are the leaders to do it. Neither has a recipe. I don't have a recipe. But I do think that eventually it will end, because despite it all, we still are one country. Maybe the reason we hate each other so much sometimes is because we know we can't just say farewell to each other. We're bound together in this way.