relationship with progressivism, with particular focus on eugenics, can be found in chapter 3 of Christine Rosen’s *Preaching Eugenics* [Oxford University Press, 2004].) One suspects that detailed investigation of other figures would likewise reveal views that are more nuanced than Leonard characterizes them.

Along similar lines, Leonard never systematically explores the complex question of what exactly constitutes racism and sexism. He seems to be disturbed not only by progressives’ application of the science of intelligence in, for example, racially-charged eugenic sterilization programs, but also by the science itself. Granted that there was much pseudo-science going on under the guise of intelligence science, the implication that there is no legitimacy whatsoever in IQ testing and data is questionable.

Even more problematic is Leonard’s concept of sexism, which seems to censure any recognition of differential sexual roles. Contemporary orthodox Catholics might agree that patriarchal progressives were unduly dismissive of the capacity of women to take on and succeed in various public roles, but to deny that there was any value in the traditional model of a nuclear family headed by a male breadwinner (which was defended by, for example, John Ryan) seems a bridge too far.

The book is a valuable corrective to conventional views of progressivism, and it helps to clarify our picture of the progressive era in important ways. Nonetheless, some of the implicit theoretical premises and conclusions are problematic. It raises serious questions about progressive ideas and policies—which is a significant achievement—but it does so from a position that is insufficiently critical of the progressive verities of our own time.

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There are many prescriptions for the renewal of genuine political conservatism in the United States, and this is one of the most interesting for readers of the *Catholic Social Science Review*. Yuval Levin is the founding editor of *National Affairs*, and is the Hertog Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. He was chief of staff of President George W. Bush’s Council on Bioethics, and served on the domestic
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policy staff in that Administration. He has authored four books on political philosophy, and science and public policy. He is very qualified theoretically and practically to apply conservative political principles to the future development of this tradition. This latest book is a basic but substantial analysis of the relationship between government and civil society in the broadest sense in the United States today, along with a strategy for progress.

While Levin formally addresses the whole political spectrum from the Left to the Right, he acknowledges that political thinkers and actors from the former are unlikely to sympathize with his outlook. Thus, the book is really addressed with greatest hope to people on the Right. The first half of the book is an analysis of the post–World War II era, and of how the unique historical experience of the 1950s through the 1980s skews the political judgement of thinkers on both sides of the political spectrum. This experience makes both groups pursue political nostalgia, even though the conditions of our own time do not at all fit the period to which they look back as their lodestar and political “final cause.” People on the Left see apparent success with large-scale government programs, culminating in President Johnson’s “Great Society,” and they see a prescription for tackling current problems following that model. People on the Right see the cultural and moral consensus, which starts to overtly break down in the late 1960s, and then the renewal of private sector business under President Reagan, with a serious attempt to re-gain a moral consensus, and want to return to that. The realities of today—from the structure of the global economy to the breakdown of the family and diversity of moral/cultural worldviews—do not fit the policy preferences of thinkers blinded by nostalgia.

Levin especially wants to persuade conservatives who perhaps over-stress individualism and individual rights to channel greater energy to the building up of intermediate associations, and filling in that vast open space of civil society between the individual and the government. Readers of this journal have no need to be persuaded, as we have been looking up to Leo XIII (*Rerum Novarum*), Pius XI (*Quadragesimo Anno*), and John Paul II (*Centesimus Annus*), and their (as well as other popes’) recommendations regarding the non-state sector for our whole political and intellectual lives. In Levin’s book, we have a substantially similar approach recommended by a non-Catholic, and he (not really surprisingly) comes to almost the same conclusions as we who are followers of Catholic social thought.

There are hints in his argument that a perhaps excessive promotion of *individual* rights vis-à-vis government may undermine other important elements of the conservative political philosophy. Again, no surprise for us: we have seen this since the 1960s at least with the “life issues” (abortion,
euthanasia, in-vitro fertilization, etc.), with other sexual morality issues which undermine the family, and even in the employment sector with policies that weaken wages and salaries by weakening unions and thus inhibit family formation as well as family prosperity, upon which a conservative politics must be built in a democratic political system. The latter factor was certainly significant in the success of Donald Trump as a candidate, to the dismay of many conservative political thinkers.

So, the hardest part of the case to be made is actually how to strengthen the intermediate organizations. Levin’s argument is weaker here. We might first start with the family. But a lack of agreement on what constitutes marriage is a huge roadblock. Conservatives have to resist the recent Supreme Court decision (Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015), but if they put themselves in a position of fighting what the rest of society simply sees as a widening of moral freedom, how will they persuade others to agree with them? Yet the definition of what constitutes marriage and family is very significant because government benefits (Social Security, veterans’ benefits, and myriad other entitlement and non-entitlement programs) are distributed according to these definitions. It is not realistic to think these benefits will disappear, or can be legislated away (although future entitlements may be avoided). What about the churches? Here, religious liberty is endangered by these same definitions. Churches ought not to refrain from putting forward the fullness of their positive messages on marriage and family because they are defensively fighting to not be forced to accede to a narrow Supreme Court decision (and this applies less to their worship and more to their schools, hospitals, and welfare/charitable activities). But religious liberty concerns have in fact consumed at least some of the energy and hard-to-raise resources of churches and charities. Probably the best way to persuade is to convert people to full religious belief, in which the total religious view of the human person is accepted and believed.

What will energize people to organize in the civil society sector? Religious and moral commitment (simply contributing to the common good as a citizen) will inspire them, and this will continue. Self-interest, including the opportunities for input and consultation which laws, policies, and custom at different levels of community organization and government permit, as well as in different professional areas, will also motivate them. This type of involvement is encouraged if it can really influence social, community, and political outcomes. Common social and cultural interests are important too: the human person is a social being.

Levin’s argument is open to tactical collaboration with the Left, which is good. And precisely at this time the Left and the Democratic Party have been shown to be weak in their ties with a vast part of the non-urban,
heartland, working class population. They themselves need to strengthen links with these people. There could indeed be cooperation, especially at state or local levels, and conservatives and those interested in Catholic social thought should not be averse to it. It will help us, in addition to helping them. It is possible, however, that the current bitter partisan and ideological divide might cause a fear for overt cooperation. This is a matter that will be decided according to local conditions, and the answers will vary.

On the whole, Levin’s analysis and suggested strategy are sound. As friends of Catholic social thought, we should be pleased that non-Catholic conservatives can be in such agreement with us. But the roadblocks are caused by the difficulty in finding practical ways to strengthen the intermediate associations and the non-government sectors. Whether we like it or not, government does have a large influence over that space, and thus we have to keep defending our freedom in it politically and legally.

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Judging from the mass media in the United Kingdom, it would appear that nobody converts to Catholicism. It is deemed a victim of secularization and indifference bar scorn for its child abuse whose outcome is the demonization of Catholicism. Yet, despite this inhospitable ethos, there are entries as well as exits—all singular, and all with testimonies to account for the peculiarity of their transition. For those who have converted, these tales of others are of peculiar interest, not least when the journey is made from an unexpected direction. Such is the case with Oliver, a sociologist who crossed into Catholicism with his wife in 2009. He died in 2015 so that this work is his legacy, his testimony of self-clarification of what was to him a necessary journey. Again, contrary to expectations, other academics have made similar and unexpected journeys and also felt the urge, not only to make sense of their transition, but to also encourage others to follow. Two others come to mind.

Retired recently as Professor of Indian and Tibetan philosophy at the University of Bristol, Paul Williams entitled his account *The Unexpected Way* (T. & T. Clark, 2002). His tale was of apostasy (his term) from Buddhism. The other example is Christian Smith, now professor of sociology