Welcome and Self-Introductions

Woodstock Business Conference Mission Statement

- The Mission of the Woodstock Business Conference is to establish and lead a national and international network of business executives to explore their respective religious traditions in order to assist the individual executives:
  - To integrate faith, family and professional life,
  - To develop a corporate culture that is reflective of their religious faith and values and
  - To exercise a beneficial influence upon society at large

- The Conference, grounded in the Roman Catholic tradition, welcomes believers who are open to and respectful of one another’s religious tradition. It is committed to the conviction that ethics and values grow out of one’s religious heritage.

Scripture Reading: Mathew 24: 1-14 Beginning of Calamities

Jesus left the temple precincts then, and his disciples came up and pointed out to him the buildings of the temple area. His comment was: “Do you see all these buildings? I assure you, not one stone will be left on another—it will all be torn down.” While he was seated on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came up to him privately and said: “Tell us when will this all occur? What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?” In reply Jesus said to them: “Be on guard! Let no one mislead you. Many will come attempting to impersonate me. ‘I am the Messiah!’ They will claim, and they will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Do not be alarmed. Such
things are bound to happen, but that is not the yet the end. Nation will rise against nation, one kingdom against another. There will be famine and pestilence and earthquakes in many places. These are the early stages of the birth pangs. They will hand you over to torture and kill you. Indeed you will be hated by all nations on my account. Many will falter then, betraying and hating one another. False prophets will rise in great numbers to mislead many. Because of the increase of evil, the love of most will grow cold. The man who holds out to the end, however, is the one who will see salvation. This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world. As a witness to all nations. Only after that will the end come.

REFLECTION: Spend 5 minutes in quiet reflection and if possible share your insights with others.

TOPIC: A New Way to Work

Nathan Schneider

After a talk I gave in Melbourne, Australia, this past June, a friend introduced me to an elderly man who had been in the audience. The man had something he wanted to say. He came close to me and began to speak, from which I recollect only one crucial word: formation.

Formation—yes. I could feel my neurons forming new pathways around that bit of Catholic jargon, and suddenly a bunch of puzzling stuff made sense.

I was in Australia at the invitation of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, but this event was a thoroughly secular one, on the subject of cooperative enterprise—businesses owned and governed by the people who use them. The gentleman was Race Mathews. And despite his reference to a theological concept, he confessed to being neither a Catholic nor a believer. For most of his career, before retiring to study the prehistory of the modern cooperative tradition, he was a politician in Australia’s Labor Party*. The importance of formation was his latest discovery.

Formation is a word Catholics use a lot, in a rather distinct way, rarely pausing to define it. In the life of faith, it is our ongoing conversion to Christianity. It is how we allow prayer, experience and study to mature us. Our formation makes us the kinds of Christians we are, and it comes in many different forms, including quite secular ones. It may be happening when we do not even know it. Mr. Mathews helped me make the simple connection: Business, too, is a kind of formation, for better or worse.

Over the years Mr. Mathews has made a series of visits to the Mondragon Corporation, a network of worker co-ops in Spain’s Basque country that currently employs over 70,000 worker-owners. It emerged under the shadow of Franco in the 1950s with the guidance of a local priest, the Rev. José María Arizmendiarrrieta, or Arizmendi for short. This is a system of factories, schools, banks, retailers and more, all owned and governed by people who work in them. It is also a beacon of possibility, the world over, that democratic business can work at large scale, though it has yet to be outdone or replicated.
Why is it that at Mondragon and elsewhere, Catholics have been so good at creating co-ops? Mr. Mathews’s book *Jobs of Our Own* traces Father Arizmendi’s precursors from Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical “Rerum Novarum,” to the ideas of Hilaire Belloc and the Chesterton brothers in England, to the Antigonish movement in Nova Scotia. But only recently, while studying the Catholic Action and Young Christian Workers movements that influenced Father Arizmendi, did Mr. Mathews zero in on the concept of formation.

Mondragon is a monument not only to a particular way of doing business but to a vision for forming the souls who participate in it. “Hand in hand, of one mind, renewed, united in work, through work, in our small land we shall create a more human environment for everyone,” Father Arizmendi wrote just days before his death in 1976. “Everyone shall simply work for the benefit of everyone else, and we shall have to behave differently in the way we work.”

Before Mondragon’s first cooperative factory opened, Father Arizmendi started a school where he and his students developed their plans together over the course of a decade. They let diverse influences form them, religious and otherwise. Following the teachings of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, the founder of the Young Christian Workers—teachings that also influenced Jorge Bergoglio—they practiced the method of “see, judge, act.” They tested their ideas relentlessly and creatively through practice, and then adjusted the ideas accordingly.

Bergoglio, as Pope Francis, once recalled that while a teenager, he heard his father, an accountant, talk about the kind of patient formation that cooperative business requires. “It goes forward slowly,” his father said, “but it is sure.” Francis has recommended co-ops as an antidote to ills ranging from polluting power plants to a technology-obsessed culture.

How is your economic life forming you? For many of us, business is a matter of duty and necessity, a thing we do in order to do other things. But it still shapes us. The rules we take for granted at work inculcate habits of mind and heart that surely also guide our reach toward God. I worry for myself about what catechism the economy of competition and accumulation is teaching me. Yet by worrying about questions like this, people of faith have come to believe, and prove, that another way is possible.

- **Nathan Schneider** is the author of *Thank You, Anarchy and God in Proof*. Website: nathanschneider.info. Twitter: @ntnsndr.

**Jonathan Haidt: Why We Fight**

*Conservative or liberal, our moral instincts are shaped by evolution to strengthen 'us' against 'them.'*

*Holman W. Jenkins Jr.*

Nobody who engages in political argument, and who isn't a moron, hasn't had to recognize the fact that decent, honest, intelligent people can come to opposite conclusions on public issues. Jonathan Haidt, in an eye-opening and deceptively ambitious best seller, tells us why. The reason is evolution. Political attitudes are an extension of our moral reasoning;
however much we like to tell ourselves otherwise, our moral responses are basically
instinctual, despite attempts to gussy them up with ex-post rationalizations.

Our constellation of moral instincts arose because it helped us to cooperate. It helped us,
in unprecedented speed and fashion, to dominate our planet. Yet the same moral reaction
also means we exist in a state of perpetual, nasty political disagreement, talking past each
other, calling each other names.

So Mr. Haidt explains in "The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics
and Religion," undoubtedly one of the most talked-about books of the year. "The
Righteous Mind" spent weeks on the hardcover best-seller list. Mr. Haidt considers
himself mostly a liberal, but his book has been especially popular in the conservative
blogosphere. Some right-leaning intellectuals are even calling it the most important book
of the year.

It's full of ammunition that conservatives will love to throw out at cocktail parties. His
research shows that conservatives are much better at understanding and anticipating
liberal attitudes than liberals are at appreciating where conservatives are coming from.
Case in point: Conservatives know that liberals are repelled by cruelty to animals, but
liberals don't think (or prefer not to believe) that conservatives are repelled too.

Mr. Haidt, until recently a professor of moral psychology at the University of Virginia,
says the surveys conducted by his research team show that liberals are strong on evolved
values he defines as caring and fairness. Conservatives value caring and fairness too but
tend to emphasize the more tribal values like loyalty, authority and sanctity.

Conservatives, Mr. Haidt says, have been more successful politically because they play to
the full spectrum of sensibilities, and because the full spectrum is necessary for a healthy
society. An admiring review in the New York Times sums up this element of his argument:
"Liberals dissolve moral capital too recklessly. Welfare programs that substitute public
aid for spousal and parental support undermine the ecology of the family. Education
policies that let students sue teachers erode classroom authority. Multicultural education
weakens the cultural glue of assimilation."
Such a book is bound to run into the charge of scientism—claiming scientific authority for
a mix of common sense, exhortation or the author's own preferences. Let it be said that
Mr. Haidt is sensitive to this complaint. If he erred, he says, it was on the side of being
accessible, readable and, he hopes, influential.

As we sit in his new office at New York University, he professes an immodest aim: He
wants liberals and conservatives to listen to each other more, hate each other less, and to
understand that their differences are largely rooted in psychology, not open-minded
consideration of the facts. "My big issue, the one I'm somewhat evangelical about, is civil
disagreement," he says.
A shorthand he uses is "follow the sacred"—and not in a good way. "Follow the sacred and
there you will find a circle of motivated ignorance." Today's political parties are most
hysterical, he says, on the issues they "sacralize." For the right, it's taxes. For the left, the
sacred issues were race and gender but are becoming global warming and gay marriage.

Yet between the lines of his book is an even more dramatic claim: The same moral psychology that makes our politics so nasty also underlies the amazing triumph of the human species. "We shouldn't be here at all," he tells me. "When I think about life on earth, there should not be a species like us. And if there was, we should be out in the jungle killing each other in small groups. That's what you should expect. The fact that we're here [in politics] arguing viciously and nastily with each other, and no guns, that itself is a miracle. And I think we can make [our politics] a little better. That's my favorite theme."

Who is Jon Haidt? A nice Jewish boy from central casting, he grew up in Scarsdale, N.Y. His father was a corporate lawyer. "When the economy opened out in the '50s and '60s and Jews could go everywhere, he was part of that generation. He and all his buddies from Brooklyn did very well."

His family was liberal in the FDR tradition. At Yale he studied philosophy and, in standard liberal fashion, "emerged pretty convinced that I was right about everything." It took a while for him to discover the limits of that stance. "I wouldn't say I was mugged by reality. I would say I was gradually introduced to it academically," he says today.

In India, where he performed field studies early in his professional career, he encountered a society in some ways patriarchal, sexist and illiberal. Yet it worked and the people were lovely. In Brazil, he paid attention to the experiences of street children and discovered the "most dangerous person in the world is mom's boyfriend. When women have a succession of men coming through, their daughters will get raped," he says. "The right is right to be sounding the alarm about the decline of marriage, and the left is wrong to say, 'Oh, any kind of family is OK.' It's not OK."

At age 41, he decided to try to understand what conservatives think. The quest was part of his effort to apply his understanding of moral psychology to politics. He especially sings the praises of Thomas Sowell's "Conflict of Visions," which he calls "an incredible book, a brilliant portrayal" of the argument between conservatives and liberals about the nature of man. "Again, as a moral psychologist, I had to say the constrained vision [of human nature] is correct."

That is, our moral instincts are tribal, adaptive, intuitive and shaped by evolution to strengthen "us" against "them." He notes that, in the 1970s, the left tended to be categorically hostile to evolutionary explanations of human behavior. Yet Mr. Haidt, the liberal and self-professed atheist, says he now finds the conservative vision speaks more insightfully to our evolved nature in ways that it would be self-defeating to discount.

"This is what I'm trying to argue for, and this is what I feel I've discovered from reading a lot of the sociology," he continues. "You need loyalty, authority and sanctity"—values that liberals are often suspicious of—"to run a decent society."

Mr. Haidt, a less chunky, lower-T version of Adam Sandler, has just landed a new position at the Stern School of Business at NYU. He arrived with his two children and wife, Jane,
after a successful and happy 16-year run at the University of Virginia. An introvert by his own account, and never happier than when laboring in solitude, he nevertheless sought out the world's media capital to give wider currency to the ideas in the "The Righteous Mind."

Mr. Haidt's book, as he's the first to notice, has given comfort to conservatives. Its aim is to help liberals. Though he calls himself a centrist, he remains a strongly committed Democrat. He voted for one Republican in his life—in 2000 crossing party lines to cast a ballot for John McCain in the Virginia primary. "I wasn't trying to mess with the Republican primary," he adds. "I really liked McCain."

His disappointment with President Obama is quietly evident. Ronald Reagan understood that "politics is more like religion than like shopping," he says. Democrats, after a long string of candidates who flogged policy initiatives like items in a Wal-Mart circular, finally found one who could speak to higher values than self-interest. "Obama surely had a chance to remake the Democratic Party. But once he got in office, I think, he was consumed with the difficulty of governing within the Beltway."

The president has reverted to the formula of his party—bound up in what Mr. Haidt considers obsolete interest groups, battles and "sacred" issues about which Democrats cultivate an immunity to compromise.

Mr. Haidt lately has been speaking to Democratic groups and urging attachment to a new moral vision, albeit one borrowed from the Andrew Jackson campaign of 1828: "Equal opportunity for all, special privileges for none."

Racial quotas and reflexive support for public-sector unions would be out. His is a reformed vision of a class-based politics of affirmative opportunity for the economically disadvantaged. "I spoke to some Democrats about things in the book and they asked, how can we weaponize this? My message to them was: You're not ready. You don't know what you stand for yet. You don't have a clear moral vision."

Like many historians of modern conservatism, he cites the 1971 Powell Memo—written by the future Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell Jr.—which rallied Republicans to the defense of free enterprise and limited government. Democrats need their own version of the Powell Memo today to give the party a new and coherent moral vision of activist government in the good society. "The moral rot a [traditional] liberal welfare state creates over generations—I mean, the right is right about that," says Mr. Haidt, "and the left can't see it."

Yet one challenge becomes apparent in talking to Mr. Haidt: He's read his book and cheerfully acknowledges that he avoids criticizing too plainly the "sacralized" issues of his liberal friends.

In his book, for instance, is passing reference to Western Europe's creation of the world's "first atheistic societies," also "the least efficient societies ever known at turning resources (of which they have a lot) into offspring (of which they have very few)."
What does he actually mean? He means Islam: "Demographic curves are very hard to bend," he says. "Unless something changes in Europe in the next century, it will eventually be a Muslim continent. Let me say it diplomatically: Most religions are tribal to some degree. Islam, in its holy books, seems more so. Christianity has undergone a reformation and gotten some distance from its holy books to allow many different lives to flourish in Christian societies, and this has not happened in Islam."

Mr. Haidt is similarly tentative in spelling out his thoughts on global warming. The threat is real, he suspects, and perhaps serious. "But the left is now embracing this as their sacred issue, which guarantees that there will be frequent exaggerations and minor—I don't want to call it fudging of data—but there will be frequent mini-scandals. Because it's a moral crusade, the left is going to have difficulty thinking clearly about what to do."

Mr. Haidt, I observe, is noticeably less delicate when stepping on the right's toes. He reviles George W. Bush, whom he blames for running up America's debt and running down its reputation. He blames Newt Gingrich for perhaps understanding his book's arguments too well and importing an uncompromising moralistic language into the partisan politics of the 1990s.

Mr. Haidt also considers today's Republican Party a curse upon the land, even as he admires conservative ideas. He says its defense of lower taxes on capital income—mostly reported by the rich—is indefensible. He dismisses Mitt Romney as a "moral menial," a politician so cynical about the necessary cynicism of politics that he doesn't bother to hide his cynicism. (Some might call that a virtue.) He finds it all too typical that Republicans abandoned their support of the individual health-care mandate the moment Mr. Obama picked it up (though he also finds Chief Justice John Roberts's bend-over-backwards effort to preserve conservative constitutional principle while upholding ObamaCare "refreshing").

Why is his language so much less hedged when discussing Republicans? "Liberals are my friends, my colleagues, my social world," he concedes. Liberals also are the audience he hopes most to influence, helping Democrats to recalibrate their political appeal and their attachment to a faulty welfare state.

To which a visitor can only say, God speed. Even with his parsing out of deep psychological differences between conservatives and liberals, American politics still seem capable of a useful fluidity. To make progress we need both parties, and right now we could use some progress on taxes, incentives, growth and entitlement reform.

Mr. Jenkins writes the Journal's Business World column.

“I have striven not to laugh at human actions, not to weep at them, not to hate them, but to understand them.” Baruch Spinoza Tractatus Politicus 1676 Opening quotation from The Righteous Mind Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion by Jonathan Haidt
Be Attentive: Leaders pay attention to values and how values inform and form us as leaders. Nathan Schneider asks the question: “How is your economic life forming you?” or How has your economic life formed you and what role has political views and politics played in that formation?” What has been the impact on you as you have aged?

Be Intelligent: How has the interplay between your family values, your religious values, your economic values, impacted your political values? How do you managing competing and/or conflicting values?

Be Reasonable: Mr. Haidt’s research shows, “liberals are strong on evolved values he defines as caring and fairness. Conservatives value caring and fairness too but tend to emphasize the more tribal values like loyalty, authority, and sanctity.” How does this mix of values, liberal and conservative, fuel your righteousness or your tolerance?

Be Responsible: In a world that easily divides, how do you maintain perspective, influence, and equilibrium at work, at home, and in your community during these last 75 days of a heavily contested presidential election? How will this conversation impact your thoughts and actions this week, this month?

Closing Prayer: St. Francis Peace Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
Where there is hatred let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And, where there is sadness, joy;  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand,  
To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And that it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen