

"What's in a name?''', Shakespeare asked, "that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'" That may be true of flowers, but not of political ideologies.

"Conservative'' used to be a label accepted by only a small minority of ideologues and writers, but almost no successful politicians. Then came Barry Goldwater in 1960 who proclaimed a startling new thought -- that conservatives have a conscience. His famous best-selling book captured the imagination and retained the loyalty of 27 million Americans despite the media's smearmongering during the presidential campaign of 1964.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan moved the embattled conservative minority into the American mainstream. Politicians began to avoid the label "liberal."

The 54-million-American, 49-state majority that Reagan rung up in 1984 completed the "mainstreaming'' of the label conservative, and banished the label liberal into exterior darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The liberal politicians and ideologues are now in disarray and leaderless.

Did Ronald Reagan really turn liberals into conservatives? Not likely. What he did was to articulate the many facets of conservatism and allow people who were conservative in different areas of life, and for different reasons, to say, "Ronald Reagan speaks for me."

The libertarians and the rock-ribbed Republicans still carping about F.D.R.'s New Deal were dispossessed from their monopoly ownership of the word conservative. Conservative became a word with which non-ideologues could identify.

In the post-Reagan era, it appears that the movement will not have a leader of Reagan's charm, charisma and communications skill. So, it is necessary that conservatives do a better job of identifying the

different segments of their movement and figuring out ways to harness them to ride to victory at the polls.

If they don't, conservatives can be outwitted by the liberals who lack leaders and even a rational ideology. Liberals can regain power by using their established mechanisms of control in the media, the bureaucracy, the courts, and the election process.

Conservatives need to know who they are, where they are, and what are their goals. Even more important, conservatives need to understand that the old image and definition of conservative has long since been OBEed (overtaken by events -- of the Reagan years).

The reality today is that American conservatives come in (not exactly 59 different flavors like ice cream) but several strains that have different economic, religious, ethnic, and political ancestries. These strains definitely can merge into a definable sense of purpose and politics, and even into support of a presidential candidate who most closely speaks their language.

The neatest summation of the broad reach of the new conservatism was given recently by a liberal columnist. He said, "'When it comes to hard drugs for 13-year-olds, everybody's conservative and nobody is liberal.'"

For those who want to take a look at the philosophical foundations of this conclusion, a good place to start is a new book just published by the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation called "'Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda.'" It presents the many facets of conservatism today, in the family, education, economics, welfare, the environment, religion, law enforcement, the military, and community preservation.

This little volume is based on a recognition of the importance of culture, in the broad sense, as a formulator of our self-image as a people, and of our expectations for ourselves, society, government and

the future. The book is not a wild flight into the clouds of philosophical posturing; it is a practical exposition of how cultural underpinnings can translate into political policies.

Do we, as a people, continue to adhere to the work ethic that built America, or are we a play-now/pay-later people? What are our accepted norms of behavior in terms of respect for life, for the family, for the schools, and for the way government treats the helpless, the wrongdoer, and the taxpayer?

The book spells out a political agenda for policymaking by those who want to build on the broad conservative realignment that occurred during the Reagan years. This book is a good springboard for brainstorming among those who want to keep the Reagan Revolution alive.