

Permanent Things



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NEW EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF *STUDIES IN BURKE AND HIS TIME*



The new Executive Editor of Studies in Burke and His Time is Dr. Ian Crowe, associate professor of history at Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Georgia. Dr. Crowe received his M.A. from Oxford and his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina, Chapel

Hill. He is the editor of two collections of essays on Burke: Edmund Burke: His Life and Legacy (Dublin, 1997) and An Imaginative Whig: Reassessing the Life and Thought of Edmund Burke (Columbia, MO, 2005).

In 1992, two studies on Burke appeared—Conor Cruise O'Brien's *The Great Melody* and David Willetts's *Modern Conservatism*—that showed just what could be done to revitalize discussion about Burke's legacy. Indeed, each of these works, in different ways, prepared the ground for a spirited and diverse commemoration of the bicentenary of Burke's death in 1997, when, over a matter of months, a variety of memorials and commentaries appeared. These ranged from public debates and radio lectures to a collection of essays, *Edmund Burke: His Life and Legacy*, which was published by ISI in the United States under the title *The Enduring Edmund Burke*.

It was through that latter publication that Dr. Crowe was introduced to ISI and to the Russell Kirk Center, and to a country where he found perspectives on the relevance of Burke's thought were more varied and accessible than back home, where the very word "relevance" was as likely to elicit a sniff of disapproval as an informed

comment. "This refreshing environment owed a great deal," Dr. Crowe states, "to two figures: Russell Kirk, whose summoning of the 'spirit' of Burke is an astonishing act of sustained historical imagination, and Peter Stanlis, whose founding and inspired editorship of the *Burke Newsletter*, so ably recorded by Jeffrey Nelson in his contribution to *An Imaginative Whig* (2005), gave rise to a flourishing of debate on Burke and his milieu, and an 'uncommon ecumenism' from scholars worldwide, to which Burke researchers and aficionados remain deeply indebted to this day."

The *Burke Newsletter* began life in June 1959 as an insert in Russell Kirk's periodical *Modern Age*, and even when it assumed "an independent status as an international quarterly" seven issues later, and then became *Studies in Burke and His Time* in 1967, it continued to serve as a vital link in the Burkean legacy of Kirk and Stanlis. This link continues to witness to that legacy today through the joint cooperation of the Russell Kirk Center and the Edmund Burke Society of America. In 2005, after some years in abeyance, the title *Studies in Burke and His Time* was revived and the journal re-launched through the vision and determination, particularly, of Joseph L. Pappin III and Jeffrey Nelson. The third issue is shortly to appear and will ably reflect the strengths of the original project in the breadth and depth of its scholarly contributions and the international involvement reflected in its contributors and editorial advisory board.

After this coming issue, *Studies in Burke and His Time* will go on line, accessible through the website of the Edmund Burke Society. "This is an initiative for which the Society is indebted to the Russell Kirk Center, which will continue to host the Society's website," Dr. Crowe notes, "and, as a former Program Director (2000-2002) and Wilbur Fellow (1999) at the Center, I feel privileged to be able to re-engage in this work as the new Executive Editor."



In 1992, Winston Elliott became president of the Free Enterprise Institute. He later began the Institute's Center for the American Republic. In 2010, Mr. Elliott started a blog called *The Imaginative Conservative*, which can be found at www.imaginativeconservative.org.

Please tell us something about the work of the Center for the American Republic.

The Center for the American Republic seeks to form conservative leaders through the study of the history and principles of the American Republic and its roots in Western Civilization. We work with professors, college students, high school teachers and citizen activists with the goal of preparing them to be leaders who are intellectually equipped to restore our culture and reclaim the principles of ordered liberty. In my 19 years of teaching those principles, I have had the privilege of working with a visiting faculty of scholars throughout the country who are committed to the American Republic and the Western culture which made it possible.

I am indebted to Brad Birzer, Gleaves Whitney, Ben Lockerd, John Willson and my wife, Barbara Elliott, for their insight into the principles of conservatism taught by Russell Kirk. Also, I am grateful to Annette Kirk for her generous advice and for introducing me to friends of Dr. Kirk from across the country.

What inspired you to create the *Imaginative Conservative* blog?

In 2010 I was rereading Dr. Kirk's *Program for Conservatives* and was once again moved by his brilliance and the power of his presentation of

INTERVIEW: W. WINSTON ELLIOTT III

conservative principles. We had planned a colloquium on the book to be led by Brad Birzer bringing together about 18 colleagues for a one-day discussion followed by a dinner party of the kind Annette and Russell Kirk often hosted. There were many other friends we wished could be with us for the discussion, and it came to me that an online forum for traditional conservatives would allow us to continue the Great Conversation that had been interrupted by time and distance. My good friend Brad Birzer (who holds the Russell Kirk Chair at Hillsdale College) agreed to be co-editor. We asked our friends to join us in this continuing discussion of the Permanent Things. We of course would prefer to be enjoying a fine meal, good drinks and pipes or cigars together while we speak of the best of Western Civilization. However, since we are spread across the country this electronic community will have to warm our hearts and stimulate our minds. We hope that some of the important work of this excellent group of conservative thinkers will continue spreading beyond our small community and play a part in reinvigorating the American Republic.

How have the writings of Russell Kirk influenced your thinking, your life, and the blog?

The writings of Russell Kirk have shaped my intellectual life, my spiritual life, and my career. I read Dr. Kirk's *Randolph of Roanoke* as a college student. After I became president of the Institute I once again returned to the writings of Dr. Kirk to seek the wisdom of Western Civilization. I expanded our programs to include culture, literature and the arts in addition to an appreciation of private property and limited government. Eventually I began to seek an understanding of the Christian faith and converted while reading *The Roots of American Order* (in particular Dr. Kirk's retelling of St. Augustine's conversion).

Dr. Kirk's work informs the mission of

The Imaginative Conservative, which is to be a forum for those who seek the True, the Good and the Beautiful. We address culture, liberal learning, politics, political economy, literature, the arts and the American Republic in the tradition of Russell Kirk, T.S. Eliot, Edmund Burke, Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Wilhelm Roepke, Robert Nisbet, M.E. Bradford, Christopher Dawson and other leaders of Imaginative Conservatism.

What are some of the major issues that have been addressed on the blog so far?

I am very pleased that we have addressed a wide variety of major issues in the short history of *The Imaginative Conservative*.

- What is the essence of conservatism?
- What was the role of faith in the American Founding?
- Is liberal learning still possible in the modern academy?
- Should conservatives and libertarians be allies?
- What is the proper role for the American Republic in spreading ordered liberty to other cultures/nations?
- Is Distributism a conservative alternative to laissez faire capitalism?

In *The Imaginative Conservative* community there is a great appreciation for the thought of Russell Kirk, T.S. Eliot, Irving Babbitt and Christopher Dawson, among other imaginative conservatives. However, some of us look at the state of Western culture and the American Republic and see a huge dark cloud which seems ready to unleash a storm that may well wash away what we most treasure of our inherited ways. Others focus on the silver lining which may be found in the next generation of traditional conservatives who have been inspired by Dr. Kirk and his like. I hope that *The Imaginative Conservative* answers T.S. Eliot's call to "redeem the time, redeem the dream."

“NEITHER INTERVENTIONIST NOR ISOLATIONIST”: RUSSELL KIRK ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

A SAMPLE COMMENT FROM THE IMAGINATIVE CONSERVATIVE BLOG BY JAMES E. PERSON, JR.

In response to one of Gleaves Whitney's articles on Kirk's Roots of American Order in The Imaginative Conservative, Stephen Mastly asked, "Did Dr. Kirk, there [in Roots] or elsewhere, describe how Americans forgot the unique ingredients in their unique heritage, or was there some other path to their widespread determination to make all the world like them?" James E. Person Jr. responded as follows:

From my reading of Kirk's works, it would seem that Dr. Kirk viewed America's struggle against the squandering of her legacy not as the consequence of a single pitched battle (i.e. the 1960s) but as a long-running, ongoing struggle that has tried the American soul since the onset of "our time of troubles," meaning roughly the era of World War I. There would be neither final victories nor final defeats in this culture war; and whatever gains conservatives achieved would be forever in danger of being frittered away by stupidity.

Dr. Kirk didn't see the American mission in the world as one that involved "making all the world like them." He did see it as one involving *the modeling of all we uniquely are in terms of maintaining a tolerable civil social order of justice, order, and freedom.* In his article "Not Addressed to Vanity" (1976) he wrote: "I venture to suggest that this Republic may bring peace and justice to the modern world chiefly by endeavoring to fulfill its mission: that is, to set an example of a great nation which achieves a high measure of order, and justice, and freedom, which reconciles authority and liberty. This is not at all the same as yesteryear's bragging about the American standard of living.... I am suggesting that we should set our American house in order, and so let the world contrast the American order with the squalid oligarchies that dominate most peoples of this era. If there is to be a Pax Americana, it will come from emulation, not from manipulation.... This Republic of ours still is young, as great states go, and perhaps the best is yet to be. Though chastened by recent

adversities, the American people remain vigorous and resourceful. In world affairs, it is not foolish to aspire to a Pax Americana—still keeping our powder dry."

And in one of his essays published in *The Politics of Prudence*, Kirk spoke further on what he deemed prudent foreign policy, writing: "I have been suggesting ... that a soundly conservative foreign policy, in the age which is dawning, should be neither 'interventionist' nor 'isolationist': it should be prudent. Its object should not be to secure the triumph everywhere of America's name and manners, under the slogan of 'democratic capitalism,' but instead the preservation of the true national interest, and acceptance of the diversity of economic and political institutions throughout the world. Soviet Hegemony ought not to be succeeded by American hegemony. Our prospects in the world of the twenty-first century are bright—supposing we Americans do not swagger about the globe, proclaiming our omniscience and our omnipotence."

JAMES M. WILSON, WILBUR FELLOW

James M. Wilson, Assistant Professor of Literature at Villanova University, spent some time at the Russell Kirk Center as a Wilbur Fellow in the summer of 2010.

During that time, he was able to complete some projects through the resources and hospitality of the Russell Kirk Center. On February 24, 2011 he delivered a lecture at Yale entitled "The Drama of Cultural Conservatism," in which he argued that Kirk's "canons" are expressive of the Christian Platonist tradition.

He also completed two essays that have both been accepted by peer-reviewed



journals: "Retelling the Story of Reason" will appear in *Anamnesis*, and "The Rock against Shakespeare" has been accepted by *Religion and Literature* and will appear in 2012.

Professor Wilson recently thanked Annette Kirk and the Kirk Center with the following words: "All told, I revised and refined three essays in *Mecosta*, bringing to completion projects that I had not been able to get done previously. It is a real pleasure to be able to say that they all have found distinguished homes. The generosity of the Kirk Center will be duly acknowledged."

THE RUSSELL KIRK CENTER NEWSLETTER

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THE UNIVERSITY BOOKMAN GOES GLOBAL

INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITOR, GERALD RUSSELLO

When did *The University Bookman* go online?

The Bookman has been online for some years, posting articles from the print versions. As of January 31, 2011, however, *The Bookman* is online only, with regular content posted on Mondays.

What is the web address of the online *University Bookman*?

www.kirkcenter.org/
bookman

What happens if people had a print subscription that was not fulfilled?

They will receive a copy of *The Essential Russell Kirk*, a collection published by ISI of some of the most significant pieces by the journal's founder, Russell Kirk.

Is there a subscription fee charged for access (or for full access), or is it completely free?

Access is currently free, though at some point we may charge for access to the incomparable archives. They represent one of the longest continuous conservative reflections on books. Eventually, we hope to post the entire run of *The Bookman* from 1960 to the present. Of course, we survive on the contributions of our supporters, and there is a link on the site through which you can support *The Bookman*. <http://www.kirkcenter.org/index.php/donate/>

What are some of the features of the online version?

We have and will be posting the reviews for which *The Bookman* has become famous, on the most important books of our time. In addition, we will be featuring articles, interviews, and other writing from both established and new voices. We will also be carrying over the beloved favorites of the print version, the "Books in Little," and the regular column by Fr. James V, Schall, SJ.



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