

A few years ago I was having coffee with a candidate for whom I was consulting. He put down the opinion pages of the newspaper and asked me what I thought of George F. Will. "I like his baseball writing," I offered, "but on politics he is drifting rapidly towards irrelevancy." Little did I know how right my dismissive words would prove. And how soon.

Among the lessons of this election past is that there is no "conservative" movement left in the USA, at least nothing that a core conservative like William Buckley or Mr. Will would recognize. The biggest threat to the conservative movement of Messrs. Will and Buckley was always the hearty embrace they gave to the Reagan coalition of religious fundamentalists and disaffected "Reagan Democrats," those aging, white social-conservatives with whom Lee Atwater expanded the "Big Tent" Republican party of the 1980s and whom Karl Rove beguiled into sticking with an incompetent President Bush in 2004.

The problem with basing the coalition on these people is that while they do not trust government they do at least like to be governed, and they like that government they have to *function* with some level of competency. Over the past eight years the Republican party has proved itself to be singularly incapable of governing, whether a state, or a country, and these big-tent Republicans have deserted that tent just as quickly as they deserted an incompetent Democratic party of 1980. The movement conservatives, by hitching their fate to that of an incompetent party have doomed themselves to the political wilds for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Buckley, through the grace of time, was saved the embarrassment of watching his own son bolt the last vestiges of the movement with his very public endorsement of Barack Obama, and subsequent ejection from the magazine Buckley himself had launched. Will, on the other hand, soldiers on, a potent and frequent scold for the movement he loves, but which has left him behind sounding like just another old warrior who doesn't realize that the war is over, his side lost, and the rest of the world has moved on to the next match.

You can read Will's latest silent scream [over here](#). While you're at the Post, check out [David Broder's weighty analysis](#) of recent voting trends and the sad fate it bespeaks for the GOP.