

CHANGING THE WORLD

CAN THE PUBLIC SQUARE
BE REGENERATED?

*October 4–6, 2023
Charlottesville, VA*

A NEW PLURALISTS COLLABORATION BETWEEN CARDUS AND THE TRINITY FORUM

CARDUS


THE TRINITY FORUM


COMMENT

WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

We all operate with a theory of social change, regardless of whether we've articulated it. We're gathering this group of experienced theoreticians and practitioners to reflect on the theories that inform present practice and to muse aloud together on the impact of the past decade of increased fracture and polarization. Why does cultural regeneration feel like such an uphill battle at this particular juncture of North American life?

We want to explore theory, of course, but we're especially interested in the implications for practice. What are the contours and limits of responsibility for those of us in the "elite" tier of culture? In the context of living with difference, what sorts of strategies and partnerships are most effective to move people towards a common framework of social flourishing?

In addition to learnings that will be relevant to the work of the sponsoring organizations, we trust all participants will leave better equipped for their vocation. Naturally, we look forward to participants also building their networks and being encouraged, both of which are helpful in the task of social regeneration.

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

4:00 p.m. **Check in and Registration at the Boar's Head Resort**

4:30 p.m. **Opening Session – Welcome and Overview**

We have designed this conference to emphasize peer participation. All attendees have something to contribute to a discussion of cultural regeneration and social change—some from their academic study of the subject, and others as leaders and practitioners. In this opening session we hope to hear each participant, so we'll need to limit responses to **2 minutes each** (please come prepared to be succinct.). We'd like everyone to reflect on the following three questions:

1. Why are you here?
2. As you survey the landscape and reflect on your labors with respect to social change and cultural regeneration, what do you most fear?
3. What do you think is most needed?

6:00 p.m. **Reception**

7:00 p.m. **Dinner – Ingredients of Leadership**

There are common features of good leadership suitable for all times, but there are also particular types of leadership that are needed for specific times. If, in this unsettled moment, fear is proving to be an effective form of organizing the present chaos, are there particular attributes, skills, or postures of leadership that we can identify as a helpful antidote? Over good food and around our tables, we are hoping that participants will share their own lessons of leadership and emerge from dinner with something of a list of themes that we will revisit later in the conference.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5TH

7:00-8:30 a.m. **Breakfast available at the Boar's Head Resort (The Mill Room)**

8:30 a.m. **Shuttle to the IASC**

9:00 a.m. **Culture and Change**

We will start the day with the only formal presentation of the conference. James Davison Hunter will argue that the formularies for social and political renewal nearly always miss the cultural factor. It's not that "culture" is underappreciated as much as it is not well understood. The centerpiece of his talk will focus on "culture as infrastructure," and the dynamics by which these operate. If we are to create strategies for constructive and enduring social change, Hunter will argue that it is essential that we invest in and create (or recreate) new cultural economies surrounding a fresh or revived vision of human flourishing tailored to the challenges of our late modern moment.

After Dr. Hunter's presentation, participants will have an opportunity to respond.

10:30 a.m. **Break**

11:00 a.m. Ground-Level Regeneration

How does regeneration look at a local and institutional level? We will have a few participants primed to tell their own stories of how they have tried to create new cultural economies in real-time. We expect their examples to prompt a group discussion in which we can learn from each other's experiences about what works and what does not. (Sometimes failure can be a more forceful teacher than success.) By the end of the session, we trust some overarching themes will emerge.

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. Working Groups – Building or Renovating?

We will divide into smaller groups, each of which will receive one of the emerging themes to tackle in greater depth. Having reflected on some of the lessons and challenges we each brought to the conference, while also following some academic and practitioner deliberation on how we might think about social regeneration differently in the future, the hope is that we might be ready to start honing our theories of change. Do we need to create a new approach to replace the old, or is incremental reform to existing strategies more appropriate? We're not going to try to build consensus about any "one best solution." Instead, we aim to learn from the nuances.

3:00-4:00 p.m. Shuttle available to the Boar's Head Resort

3:00 p.m. Free Time

5:30 p.m. Shuttle to The Forum Hotel (from the Boar's Head Resort)

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Just good food, catching up with old friends, and getting to know new friends better.

8:30-9:30 p.m. Shuttles available to the Boar's Head Resort

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6TH

7:00-8:30 a.m. Breakfast available at the Boar's Head Resort (The Mill Room)

8:30 a.m. Shuttle to the IASC

9:00 a.m. Revisiting Leadership Ingredients

After a brief summary of key themes that emerged from Thursday's discussions, we will break back into groups to revisit questions that focus on postures, skills, and behaviors of leadership that have worked and failed. The outcome is less of a map than an owner's manual about driving social regeneration through the landmines of our present context.

10:30 a.m. Bringing it Home

Returning to the big table, we'll end as we began. Again, each participant will have two minutes, this time to summarize what you'll walk out of the conference thinking or emphasizing differently as a result of these two days together. How might you spend resources differently? What sort of metrics do you expect will help you measure progress?

11:45 a.m. Shuttle to the Boar's Head Resort

12:00 p.m. Farewell Lunch

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

David Bailey, Founder, Chief Vision Officer, Arrabon

Chelsea Langston Bombino, Program Officer, Fetzer Institute

David Brooks, Op-ed writer, *The New York Times*

Geoff Cowper, General litigator, Fasken

James Davison Hunter, Professor of Religion, Culture and Social Theory, University of Virginia

J.P. De Gance, Founder & President, Communio

Brian Dijkema, Vice President of External Affairs, Cardus

Travis Fleming, Founder & Executive Director, Apollos Watered

Katherine Gehl, Founder & Chairman, The Institute for Political Innovation

Justin Giboney, Attorney; Co-Founder & President, AND Campaign

Alison Grubbs, Director of Culture Strategies, New Pluralists

Romanita Hairston, CEO & Executive Director, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

Cherie Harder, President, The Trinity Forum

David Jennings, Attorney, corporate finance and securities law (retired)

Jason Kenney, Senior Advisor, Teneo; Former 18th Premier of Alberta

Louis Kim, Technology Executive

Steven Lawson, President & Founder, Monk Manual

Alan Marty, Partner Emeritus, Legacy Venture

Ali Noorani, Program Director, U.S. Democracy, Flora Hewlett Foundation

Ray Pennings, Co-Founder & Executive Vice-President, Cardus

Isaac Reed, Professor of Political and Social Thought, The University of Virginia.

Lisa Richmond, Vice President of Research, Cardus

Sanyin Siang, Executive Director, Fuqua/Coach K Center on Leadership & Ethics, Duke University

Anne Snyder, Editor-in-chief, *Comment Magazine*

Felicia Wu Song, Professor of Sociology, Westmont College

Sean Speer, Editor-at-large, The Hub (www.thehub.ca)

Phil Styrlund, CEO, The Summit Group

Michael Van Pelt, Co-Founder, President & CEO, Cardus

Christy Vines, President & CEO, Ideos Institute

Tom Walsh, Vice President for Operations, The Trinity Forum

Peter Wehner, Journalist; in-residence Senior Fellow, The Trinity Forum

Travis Wussow, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Stand Together